CLAS Faculty Council Annual Report, F2020-W2021

**Faculty Council Members:** Teresa Castelão-Lawless (PHI), Grace Coolidge (HST), Arthur Campbell (MTD)(Chair), Anna Hammersmith (SOC), Len O'Kelly (COM), Ernest Park (PSY)

Sally Ross (MOV), Shkelzen Shabani (BMS), Randy Winchester (CHM)

**Ex officio:** Jennifer Drake (Dean of CLAS), Monica Johnstone (Director of CLAS Communications and Advancement), Charles Pazdernik (ECS Liaison, CLA)

**Membership:** Outgoing Chair Arthur Campbell is pleased to report that Faculty Council successfully navigated a challenging year. Conversations were engaged and collaborative; the “health” of the College, and the broad spectrum of CLAS voices, were always of primary concern. We have elected a new Chair of Faculty Council, Len O’Kelly (COM), who enthusiastically embraces the position beginning exam week of W21. Sub-committee Chairs Ernest Park (Elections), and Anna Hammersmith (Governance) led their subcommittees with dedication and professionalism. The membership turnover for the coming 2021/2022 year includes just one, duly-elected member, Steven Schlicker (MTH), as Shkelzen Shabani (BMS) completes his term this April (2021).

**Ranking of Faculty Requests:**

In May of 2020, Council met to rank requests for CLAS faculty lines. Using submitted Unit proposals, information provided by Institutional Analysis, and unit-submitted-priority-ordering of position requests, CFC ranked requests in spite of the COVID lock down.

For Spring of 2021, CFC ranking of proposals will not be active. Reasons for this include:

a) The number of full-time positions likely to be approved at the time of this writing is extremely limited. (7-10 expected at the time of this report.)

b) Dean Drake has established a team to revise the process for position-requests with the stated intent of increasing both efficiency and the likelihood of positions being approved.

Faculty Council will continue discussions with the Dean regarding CFC input on the process.

# Governance Subcommittee: The Out-of-the-Box sub-committee suspended its OOTB activities during the pandemic and took on the role (and title) of Governance Committee for 2020-2021. It was decided that the committee would address various governance discussions and commit to improving the CLAS committee Blackboard sites.

# a) The CFC blackboard site accessible to all CLAS faculty will be maintained. The CAFAC blackboard site, regularly used to communicate among Affiliate faculty, will be maintained. Other CLAS committees (CPC, CCC, FDC) have decided against maintaining their all-faculty access sites because the sites are not being used as information-dissemination vehicles. To be clear, all CLAS committees use Blackboard for internal committee work, but only CFC and CAFAC will maintain Blackboard sites that are all-faculty (TT&AFF) accessible.

# b) Post-pandemic, CFC will once again consider hosting high-relevance, low budget impact, OOTB events.

c) Faculty Council developed a plan to more comprehensively represent CLAS faculty. This plan was discussed with Dean Drake and CLAS Unit Heads. Starting in Fall 2021, each CLAS Unit will have a specific member of CFC assigned to their Unit, thereby providing a direct communication contact point between faculty and CFC. Units will be notified of their contact person in Fall 2021.

**Elections:**

Fall 2020: Rosters were full. Fall elections were not required in 2020.

Winter 2021: Tenure Track and Affiliate faculty elections for open seats on University and College committees were held in Winter 2021. 55 positions on 29 committees were open. 52 positions on 28 committees were open for tenure track faculty. 230 of 492 eligible tenure-track faculty voted. 3 positions were open on one affiliate faculty committee. 43 of 99 eligible affiliate faculty voted. At the time of this report, CLAS committees have full rosters with the exception of a vacancy on the Faculty Development Committee. University Committees have full CLAS representation with the exception of two vacancies on the University Assessment Committee, and two vacancies on the University Curriculum Committee. CFC works to resolve vacancies throughout the year. At this time, 35.6% of CLAS tenure track faculty are engaged for committee service for the coming 2021/2022 year; 13 % of affiliate faculty are engaged for 2021/2022 service on AFAC or CAFAC.

The elections process evolved this year. The old technology platform was discontinued and the nominations forms and elections ballots are now run in CMS. Monica Johnstone, Director of CLAS Communications and Advancement, willingly took over the role of managing the technological aspects of the nominations form and the election ballot. She deserves our appreciation. We adapted previous practices to the new platform. The elections subcommittee worked with Monica to make the new platform look as familiar as possible. The new platform is not yet ideal, but we ran effective, accurate elections. While this change was not our choice (especially for this year!), there are two significant advantages to the new system:

1. The technological aspects of the elections will be run from the [CLAS website](https://www.gvsu.edu/clas/election-for-tt-faculty-1041.htm).

2. The administrative learning curve is reduced for our rotating CFC roster because a

permanent staff member is administering the nominations form and ballot.

Faculty Council will continue to prepare, review, and confirm, all information and ballots. Only the technology platform has changed. Along with Monica, the election subcommittee, Ernest Park, Sally Ross, and Randy Winchester, deserve special recognition for their willingness to adopt a new system during challenging times, and for their patience with my preference for redundancy! Because of them the election process made this transition virtually seamless.

**CLAS Faculty Governance Bylaws and CLAS Faculty Council Bylaws:**

a) CLAS Faculty ratified the revised Faculty Governance Bylaws with a 94% positive vote.

b) CLAS Faculty ratified the revised Faculty Council Bylaws with a 94% positive vote.

A note on the process during the Pandemic: Approval of the two sets of bylaws referenced above was suspended the previous year due to the Pandemic. In an effort to proactively respond to the COVID Pandemic restrictions, CFC used the CLAS elections process as a virtual faculty forum, and for the ratification vote. The timing of the elections process served well as our virtual faculty forum. Even pre-pandemic, previous public forums were sparsely (or not) attended. Given this, CFC decided to use the nominations period as a 2-week period for faculty notification and review, and the election itself as a vehicle for ratification. This Chair would encourage this process for future ratifications, even post-pandemic, as it increases the likelihood of faculty awareness and participation.

**CLAS Faculty Development Committee Bylaws**: Approved by CLAS faculty council April 2020. As noted below, the role of FDC is under review at the time of this report.

**CLAS Committee function review:** CFC Chair met with Chairs of CCC, CPC, FDC, CAFAC in March of 2021 to review the functioning of each committee. Chairs reported strong function in each committee with the exception of FDC, which suspended activity during the pandemic. At the time of the March meeting, Associate Dean Anderson, Committee Chair Biros, and the FDC members were in the process of reviewing the future role of FDC. Associate Dean Anderson understands that CFC is prepared to assist with this process moving forward.

**CLAS Dean Search:** CFC continued participation in the Dean search in an advisory, non-voting, role. CFC unanimously supported the hiring of Dr. Jennifer Drake.

**CLAS Budget:** Current Chair of CFC, Arthur Campbell, attended all meetings of the newly formed CLAS Budget Committee. Chair elect, Len O’Kelly, will serve on the committee for 2021-2022.

**Engagement with ECS/UAS:** Charles Pazdernik, liaison with ECS/UAS, made regular reports to CFC.

**CLAS faculty representation:** See Governance Committee above.

**CLAS Unit Service Award:** Despite the noble intentions of the Unit Service Award, current Faculty Council has debated whether the Unit Service Award encourages Units to participate more. Concern was expressed that it might be having the opposite effect. A motion to cancel the Unit Service Award passed unanimously in April of 2020. CFC monitors CLAS governance participation rates and will consider this annually.