

## **Walters State Community College**

### **GUIDELINES FOR COLLABORATION AND TRANSPARENCY**

Faculty Senate, Office of the President, and Academic Affairs

**Adopted: October 16, 2023 at 5:15pm EST**

---

#### **PREAMBLE**

In Fall 2021, the Big Picture and Bits & Pieces Academic Reorganization Committees recommended several changes to Walters State's academic structure. To fulfill Recommendation #6 of the reorganization proposal, a taskforce—comprised of the Faculty Senate leadership, volunteer representatives, and willing administrators—collaborated and agreed upon the following guidelines that will streamline communication and effectiveness regarding future endeavors.

#### **GUIDELINE 1 - INTENT TO COLLABORATE**

To improve and maintain the college's health during organizational changes that affect faculty and staff, administration will continue to include the Faculty Senate in the decision-making processes.

#### **GUIDELINE 2 - PROJECT TIMELINE**

Timelines for future projects will be discussed and agreed upon in partnership to serve the college's sustainability and success. When establishing the timeline, all parties should be mindful of the project phases in Guideline 6.

#### **GUIDELINE 3 - PROJECT FOCUS**

Stakeholder(s) will prioritize working closely with the Faculty Senate on future large-scale projects, including but not limited to reorganizations, mergers, or other campus-wide needs.

#### **GUIDELINE 4 - TERMINOLOGY**

Faculty and administration have defined related terminology as follows:

- A. Reorganization – changing of:

1. academic structure that results in the creation or elimination of a department, program, or division
  2. administrative structures that would significantly impact Academic Affairs
- B. Merger – combining of existing departments, programs, or divisions into a single unit
  - C. Stakeholder – an individual or group that has a vested interest in the college, primarily the President, Vice President of Academic Affairs, other Vice President(s) whose duties most closely relate to the project, faculty, staff, community members, and students
  - D. Affected unit – any department, program, or division that would be impacted a project
  - E. Affected faculty – all full-time, part-time, or non-temporary faculty who have appointments in a department, program, or division that would be impacted by a project

Other terminology may need to be defined and agreed upon at the initiation of a project.

#### **GUIDELINE 5 - ESTABLISHMENT OF NEED**

If WSCC's stakeholder(s) would like the Faculty Senate to lead or contribute to a project, then they must clearly establish the need(s) for the project. To do so, the stakeholder(s) will provide a clear case for meaningful change in an official presentation to the Faculty Senate that includes the following:

- A. The problem(s) or harm(s) facing the college
- B. Data to support the problem(s) or harm(s)

This information should be presented within the Fall or Spring semester during a regularly scheduled Faculty Senate meeting. Faculty Senate will consider the request at the following meeting, and if the project is approved, then the Senate will work with the stakeholders to collaborate on a timeline.

#### **GUIDELINE 6 - PROJECT PHASES**

If Faculty Senate accepts a project presented by the college's stakeholders, then the Senate's burden will be to provide solutions to the problem(s) or harm(s) that were presented. To maintain consistency, alignment, and transparency across the board for any project within Faculty Senate, the project will be planned with four phases similar to those

outlined in Article II – Senate Duties and Powers, Section 2: Regular State of the Faculty Evaluation of the Faculty Senate Constitution:

- Design Phase: The Faculty Senate will determine project leadership and committee members at the next regularly scheduled meeting so that faculty have time to reflect on the stakeholders' presentation. The Faculty Senate President should privilege equal representation from each division on any committee formed to query and offer solutions through the project.
- Query Phase: Once the committee(s) are formed, they will decide on the method (instrument) through which data can be collected or summarized. During this phase, the committee will study the project-oriented data and will, as deemed necessary, seek out institutional data, conduct interviews with Walters State's content experts and/or administrators, and/or consult with our librarians about available research related to the problem(s) or harm(s).
- Solution Phase: The committee(s) will formulate recommendations or solutions within the agreed upon timeline and present those recommendations and solutions according to the Presentation Phases noted below. The committee will also submit an official memorandum that outlines and justifies all recommendations and solutions to the problem(s) or harm(s).
- Presentation Phase 1: The committee(s) will present their recommendation(s) for an official vote during a Faculty Senate meeting.
- Presentation Phase 2: Of the recommendations that carry through the Faculty Senate, the chair(s) of the committee(s) will present their final proposal to the administration: the President, most importantly. Other higher administrators, limited to our Vice Presidents, Academic Deans and Assistant Deans are welcome to attend the presentation.
- Presentation Phase 3: The chair(s) of the committee(s) will present their recommendations to the college at large during the next Convocation Week.
- Decision and Response Phase: Stakeholders at a minimum provide a written response that includes a full or partial acceptance or denial of the Faculty Senate's recommendation(s). Faculty Senate welcomes a live presentation of their response.

## **GUIDELINE 7: ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATION AMONG COLLABORATING PARTIES**

Consulting with all stakeholders during the project is crucial to its success. It is imperative that all stakeholders, especially Walters State's administration, engage with project managers, and provide any literature or insight that could be helpful in the decision-making process. Faculty Senate invites collaboration with other divisions or departments who are working on other initiatives that align.

## **GUIDELINE 8: DECISIONS AND PROTECTIONS**

To maintain a collaborative spirit and to minimize casualties or harms as a result of any implemented project, we will honor the following clauses:

- A. Decisions: To foster equal, collaborative opportunities for nine-month faculty, all parties will make their best effort to ensure that no formal decisions on any project's timeline be made during scheduled academic breaks, especially summer and winter.
- B. Protections: If academic divisions merge, if a department disaggregates to form a new division, or if a new department is formed, all tenure or promotions awards will be honored in their new academic units.