

**USF Board of Trustees  
ACE Committee  
Microsoft Teams Meeting  
February 17, 2025**

**MINUTES**

ACE Committee Chair Oscar Horton welcomed everyone and convened the meeting.

Chair Horton asked Kiara Gayle to call the Roll.

Trustee Suryakanth Gottipati  
Trustee Oscar Horton  
Trustee Luran Monbarren  
Trustee Fredrick Piccolo  
Trustee Melissa Seixas  
Trustee David Simmons

A quorum was confirmed for the committee meeting.

There were no public comments.

Chair Horton proceeded with the meeting.

**New Business – Action Items**

- a. Approval of Minutes:** Oscar Horton led the approval of the minutes from the previous meeting held on November 25th. The motion was moved by Trustee Piccolo and seconded by Trustee Gottipati, with all members in favor.
- b. Faculty Tenure Nominations:** Prasant presented three faculty nominations for tenure as a condition of employment. The nominees were Dr. Zinning, Dr. Sheturu Iguchi, and Dr. Stein Vermund, all of whom have impressive credentials and previous tenure at other institutions. The nominations were approved unanimously.
  - **Dr. Jinying Zhao's Credentials:** Dr. Zhao joined the Morsani College of Medicine on August 30th, 2024, as a professor in the Department of Internal Medicine and Health Informatics Institute. She is an accomplished researcher with expertise in genetic epidemiology, statistical genetics, multiomics, bioinformatics, and computational biology. She has a strong track record of obtaining extramural funding, serving as PI on 10 NIH-funded RO1s with combined funding close to \$31 million. Dr. Zhao comes from the University of Florida, where she served as

the Dean's Endowed Chair Professor of Epidemiology and Director of the Center of Genetic Epidemiology.

- **Dr. Satoru Eguchi's Credentials:** Dr. Eguchi joined the Morsani College of Medicine on January 20th, 2025, as a professor in the Department of Surgery, Division of Surgical Research. He is an internationally recognized senior investigator in cardiovascular biology and hypertension research. His research focuses on cardiovascular endocrinology, and he has made groundbreaking discoveries in this area. Dr. Eguchi has a strong track record in NIH funding, currently holding two RO1 NIH grants, and has published over 200 peer-reviewed papers. He comes from Temple University School of Medicine, where he was a tenured professor. He earned his MD from Tohoku University School of Medicine and PhD from Tokyo Medical and Dental University.
  - **Dr. Sten Vermund's Credentials:** Dr. Vermund joined as the Dean of the College of Public Health on January 1st, 2025, and will hold a Distinguished University Health Professor Public Health & Medicine; Senior Vice President, USF Health. He is an internationally recognized physician-scientist and a member of the National Academy of Medicine. Dr. Vermund has an active federal grant portfolio close to \$3 million and has over 500 publications in prestigious journals and presentations at international conferences. His research focuses on HIV and AIDS, and he has been on the editorial board of 13 prestigious journals. He comes from Yale University, where he was a tenured professor of Pediatrics and Public Health.
  - **Annual Plan for Headcount:** Oscar Horton inquired about the annual plan for headcount and whether these positions were included in the plan or created as needed. Prasant explained that during the annual budget process, a plan for the number of faculty positions for each college is created. However, if exceptional talent is identified, positions can be created above the allocated positions to bring in superstars.
  - **The board approved the tenure nominations for Dr. Zhao, Dr. Eguchi, and Dr. Vermund, with motions from Trustees Piccolo and Gottipati**
- C. New Degree Proposal:** Interim Dean Jenifer Jasinski Schneider presented a proposal for a new Bachelor's degree in Exercise Science and Kinesiology. The degree aims to prepare students for professional certifications and various health and wellness workforce positions. The proposal was approved unanimously.
- **Degree Overview:** Jenifer Jasinski Schneider, the interim Dean of the College of Education, presented a proposal for a new Bachelor's degree in Exercise Science and Kinesiology. The degree aims to prepare students for professional

certifications in sports medicine and strength and conditioning, as well as health and wellness workforce positions such as fitness, strength and conditioning, cardiac rehabilitation, and performance athletics. It also prepares students for postgraduate studies in exercise and kinesiology, physical therapy, physician assistant, and occupational therapy.

- **Workforce Demand:** Dean Jasinski Schneider highlighted the growing demand for jobs in exercise science and kinesiology at both the national and state levels. The degree is needed to meet this demand and provide students with the necessary skills and certifications for various health and wellness positions.
  - **Program Structure:** The proposed program includes a core curriculum with three new concentrations: sports nutrition, strength and conditioning, and exercise and wellness. The program provides experiential learning opportunities throughout the curriculum, with students gaining hands-on experience in various fields. The current enrollment is 450 students, and the projected headcount is expected to increase over five years based on market analysis.
  - **Support and Approval:** There is support for this degree among other state universities, and the current Master of Science program already exists in the appropriate CIP code. The proposal requests that the Bachelor's degree join the Master's program under the same CIP code. **Trustee Piccolo motioned for approval with a second by Trustee Monbarren. The proposal was approved unanimously by the board.**
- d. **Master's Degree in FinTech:** Dean David Blackwell presented a proposal for a new self-supporting Master's degree in FinTech. The program aims to provide students with expertise in both finance and technology, with strong demand and high starting salaries. The proposal was approved unanimously.
- **Program Overview:** Dean Blackwell presented a proposal for a new self-supporting Master's degree in FinTech. The program aims to provide students with expertise in both finance and technology, covering areas such as blockchain, cybersecurity, and algorithmic trading. The degree is a STEM program, emphasizing the deep involvement and learning of technology in financial transactions.
  - **Industry Demand:** Dean Blackwell highlighted the strong demand for FinTech expertise in the financial services industry. The program is designed to be accessible to both traditional students who are looking to up their skillset and professionals looking to upscale as well. The demand for FinTech professionals is growing, with starting salaries ranging from \$80,000 to over \$100,000 per year.

- **Program Support:** The FinTech program is supported by the FinTech Center within the Kate Tiedemann School of Business and Finance. The center has strong donor support, and faculty members are in place to teach the program. The program has also received positive feedback from industry executives and has collaborated with the Tampa Bay Wave on a FinTech accelerator.
  - **Self-Supporting Model:** Dean Blackwell explained that the program will be self-supporting, with funding primarily coming from student tuition. This model allows for flexibility and scalability, enabling the program to grow and add faculty and staff as needed. The self-supporting model also provides flexibility in student support and the acquisition of specialized software and data to satisfy the needs of the program.
  - **Approval and Comments: Trustee** **The proposal was approved unanimously by the board.** Trustee David Simmons commented on the importance of developing a strategy for self-supporting programs and praised the FinTech program as a good example for this model. Student Trustee Gottipati expressed enthusiasm for the program, highlighting its benefits for international students due to its STEM designation. **Trustee Gottipati motioned for approval with a second by Trustee Piccolo. The proposal was approved unanimously.**
- e. Reduction of Credit Hours-Chemical Engineering:** Vice Provost Terry Chisolm presented a proposal to reduce the credit hours for the Chemical Engineering program from 131 to 125. The BOT has the authority to approve a reduction of credit hours in programs approved to be greater than 120 credit hours. This recommendation was made after careful review of the curriculum and ABET standards. **The proposal was approved unanimously.**
- f. Textbook and Instructional Material Affordability:** Vice Provost Steve Stark presented updates to USF regulation 3.029 to align with BOG Reg 8.003. The updates require faculty to submit textbook order forms for all courses and attest that they have reviewed the materials.
- **Regulation Updates:** Stephen presented updates to USF regulation 3.029 to align with BOG Reg 8.003. The updates require faculty to submit textbook order forms for all courses, including those that do not require textbooks or other instructional materials for purchase. Faculty must also attest that they have reviewed the materials and that they are appropriate for the course.
  - **Attestation Process:** The attestation process requires faculty to confirm that they have reviewed the required course materials, including textbooks, test and assignment questions, supplemental readings, and any other instructional

materials. **Trustee Monbarren** motioned for approval with a second by **Trustee Piccolo**. The updates were approved by the committee.

#### **New Business – Information Items**

- a. **Accreditation Update:** Christopher Combie provided an update on USF's reaffirmation accreditation process. The site visit is scheduled to begin today, February 17, 2025 and will conclude in December, 2025. USF has performed well in the off-site review, with only minor additional documentation required.

Having no other business Chair Horton adjourned the ACE Committee meeting.