**Faculty Senate Minutes**

Wednesday, November 6, 2019

JCK 880, 4:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

**Attending** **Senators**: Rebecca Bell-Metereau, Janet Bezner, Natalie Ceballos, Rachel Davenport, Jesse Gainer, Jennifer Jensen, Lynn Ledbetter, Lyn Litchke, Vince Luizzi, Benjamin Martin, Stan McClellan, David Nolan, Michael Supancic, Diego Vacaflores, Nicole Wesley.

**Guests**: Denise Trauth (president), Gene Bourgeois (provost), Debbie Thorne (associate provost), Stephanie Towery (Library), Shannon Duffy (Senate Fellow).

Meeting called to order at 4:00 p.m. by Senate Chair Bezner

**President's Academic Advisory Group (PAAG)**

President Trauth presented information on the fiscal 2021/2022 university budget.

* The university requested a 3.95% increase in tuition and fees. At the top of the administration’s list for budget priorities was a 3% merit pool for faculty and staff. However, The Texas State University System and all public colleges and universities were limited by the state to a 2.6% increase. Due to the amount of fixed costs in the university’s budget (benefits, insurance, etc.), shouldering a larger amount of fixed costs not covered by the state, new academic programs, and financial aid, among other budget constraints, the 2.6% increase will be needed to cover those fixed costs.
* This means that there will not be enough in the budget for a merit pool in the next fiscal year. There may be a very small amount available, but the president’s cabinet has decided to push that funding into the next fiscal year to try and create a merit pool for the 2022 fiscal year. The president is committed to find the funding in the budget for a future merit pool.
* Electronic Course Fees (ECF) are being used to help balance negative balances in faculty lines. The administration will try and move some personnel from regular funded lines to ECF funding to create more flexibility in the budget.
* The administration will look at faculty workloads, class sizes, and other factors to examine vacant positions to determine whether those positions need to be filled. Faculty workload will be the primary focus to make any determination.
* Due to these budget constraints, no new Ph.D. programs will be considered for the foreseeable future.
* Senators discussed the specific issues raised by the administration concerning the budget. Programs that have declining enrollment will be reviewed by the administration. However, no layoffs are being considered. Enrollment growth is a key factor. Faculty workload is a priority and workloads must be justified.
* Enrollment matters. The new workload policy, which will be released soon, will be tied to tenure/promotion and yearly evaluations.

The president addressed senate questions concerning university environmental and sustainability issues.

* The president recommended that Mr. Eric Algoe, vice president for Finance and Support Services could address many of the issues in more detail.
* Concerning the certification and submission of the University’s STARS report (due by the end of December), the report is finished and moving through the administrative chain for approval and will be submitted on time.
* Concerning the inclusion of a strong sustainability component in the university strategic plan and values, the Office of Sustainability is working on these issues and will forward their recommendations to include in the plan.
* Concerning the exploration of ways to renegotiate and coordinate the university’s utilities contract with the LCRA and the City of San Marcos to shift to more sustainable practices and energy sources, by statute the university must buy electricity from the city of San Marcos. The rate the university pays is fixed so a reduction in use will not reduce cost. The administration feels that trying to change the current statute through the legislature could damage the good relationship the university now has with the city.
* Concerning the inclusion of an academic code for courses in the catalog that have an environmental or sustainability component (similar to multicultural, writing intensive, or diversity designations), a task force would need to be created. The criteria would need to include whether it would be academically meaningful, add value to a degree, and enhance career opportunities for students.
* Concerning a possible shift in university investment portfolios away from fossil fuel and other non-sustainable investments, the administration consulted the Development Foundation and other university endowments. The current endowments buy funds, not stocks, which would make it difficult to manage a portfolio that excludes these properties. After a review the Development Foundation determined that only 3.5% of the current portfolio is invested in fossil fuels. The McCoy College of Business Foundation did not have a response before the meeting, but the administration is committed to request the same analysis.
* Senators discussed the issues presented by the administration. There was a concern about reports from the Round Rock campus about recycling not being accomplished as required. The administration will investigate the issue.

The president updated senators concerning the plan to replace the departing chief diversity officer.

* Ms. Ameerah McBride, chief diversity officer, director of Equity and Inclusion, and Title IX coordinator, has resigned effective November 30.
* The administration has taken a hard look at the structure of the office and equity and inclusion initiatives across the university. Currently, the university does not have the structure that a large university needs. A decision has been made to split the Title IX coordinator and chief diversity officer positions. Also, due to recent compliance issues, the university is going to hire a chief compliance officer and a Clery Act compliance coordinator. These positions will report to Dr. Lisa Lloyd, vice president for University Administration. All of the positions have been posted except the chief diversity officer position.
* The president has asked Dr. Lloyd to study and review benchmarks to create a scope of work for the positions. One possibility is to use the model of the current Graduate College dean. This would imbue some authority on the position and combine many of the diverse initiatives across the campus under one umbrella. There may be several open forums to discuss these issues.
* The Council on Inclusive Excellence is a current initiative that works and it needs to keep going. Dr. Scott Bowman, special assistant to the provost for inclusion and diversity, will continue in that role.
* Many of these changes and initiatives will move forward in January 2020.

**PAAG Debriefing**

Senators will discuss the issues presented by the administration during the PAAG meeting at the next senate meeting at the Round Rock campus.

**Approval of Minutes**

The October 30, 2019 minutes were approved by senators.

**Announcements**

The timeline for Research Enhancement Program (REP) proposals is quickly approaching. Senators decided to hold an additional senate meeting on December 11 to discuss the proposals.

Two senators were requested to consult with the Graduate College on two proposed honorary degrees to be awarded by the university. Due to a short timeline Senate Chair Bezner and Vice Chair Ceballos will attend the meeting.

For the Faculty Senate meeting on the Round Rock Campus next week, senators will discuss the recent PAAG meeting, AA/PPS policy revisions concerning faculty merit raises, adding a senator from the Honors College and University College, take a tour of Willow Hall, and review/revise the University Lecturers rubric.

**Faculty Development Leave (FDL)**

Senators met in closed session to discuss Faculty Development Leave applications.

Meeting adjourned at 6:00 p.m.

Minutes submitted by David Nolan