**Faculty Senate Minutes**

Wednesday, April 8, 2020

Zoom Meeting, 4:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

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

**Guests**: Matthew Juge (chair, Academic Computing Committee), Ken Pierce (vice president, Information Technology), Benjamin Rogers (assistant vice president, IT Assistance Center), Whitten Smart (special assistant, Information Technology), Chase Rogers (University Star), Stephanie Towery (Library), Shannon Duffy (Senate Fellow), Dale Blasingame, Lucy Harney, Judy Oskam, DeDe Gardner.

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

**Announcements**

Faculty salary data is now posted on the senate website. Faculty and staff can login with their NetID and password to review the data.

Faculty Senate election results are now final. New and returning senators are:

* **McCoy College**
  + Andrew Ojede, Finance & Economics (2023).
* **Education:**
  + Taylor Acee, Curriculum & Instruction (Taylor Acee will serve the 2023 term, but won't start until Spring 2021, as he's on Faculty Development Leave this fall).
  + Gwynne Ash, Curriculum & Instruction (Gwynne Ash can fill in for Taylor this fall).
  + Stacey Bender, Health and Human Performance (Stacey Bender will complete Lyn Litchke's term until 2022).
* **Fine Arts & Communication:**
  + Dale Blasingame, Journalism & Mass Communication (2023).
* **Liberal Arts:**
  + Roque Mendez, Psychology (2023).
* **Science and Engineering:**
  + Ben Martin, Chemistry & Bio Chemistry (2023).

There are no policies to review.

**Non-Tenure Faculty Committee Report**

Natalie Ceballos, chair, Nontenure Line Faculty Committee (NLFC), and vice chair, Faculty Senate, presented information on the recent NLFC survey results. Information from the survey is will be posted on the senate website. Senators discussed the results from the survey.

Senator Ceballos also presented information on the new draft policy for Instructional Faculty ranks. Senators discussed the policy details concerning the process of promotion, ranks, and titles. The NLFC will work on revisions to the policy and resubmit a new draft to the senate for review. Once a final draft is created the senate will discuss the policy with Associate Provost Thorne.

**Academic Computing Committee (ACC) Report**

Matthew Juge, chair, Academic Computing Committee (ACC), presented information and answered questions concerning the most recent proposals for computer resource funding. Senators discussed the proposals and the decision process for awarding funding. The ACC was able to fully fund the top fifteen proposals and award partial funding to the sixteenth proposal. The Faculty Senate voted to suspend the rules and then voted to approve the recommendations of the ACC.

**NLFC Workload Release Program**

Senator Nolan proposed several changes to the current AA/PPS No. 04.02.03 Non-tenure Line Faculty Workload Release Program policy. Currently, Nontenure Line Faculty Committee (NLFC) members are ineligible for workload release during their tenure on the committee because they review and approve the proposals. Senator Nolan asked for changes to reflect the realities of serving on the NLFC Committee and to allow committee members to apply for the workload release program.

Senator Nolan recommended a change in the language of the policy due to ambiguity in the policy concerning NTLF faculty workload release hours and how that comports with a faculty members’ current teaching/scholarly & creative/service workload in their particular unit.

Senators discussed the issues presented and tasked Senator Nolan to review the current policy and make the suggested changes. The policy changes will be reviewed and then forwarded to the administration.

**Research Enhancement Program (REP) Extension**

The REP Committee has requested a three-month extension of next year’s REP funds from May 31 to August 31, 2021. Senators will discuss this issue during the next senate meeting.

**University Technology Issues**

Ken Pierce, vice president, Information Technology, Benjamin Rogers, assistant vice president, IT Assistance Center, and Whitten Smart, special assistant, Information Technology, presented information and answered senator’s questions concerning several information technology issues. Mr. Pierce also sent written answers to the senate’s questions and they are included below in parenthesis.

Concerning technology issues and technology support:

* Currently there are numerous ITAC support issues due to the loss of student workers being able to take calls, but wait times are still fairly normal. Canvas support is good and wait times are averaging about five minutes. Asked about a call back system being implemented, Mr. Pierce stated that he’s not sure if the current university system can handle a call back system, but he will look into the issue. He encouraged faculty to use chat before making a call as it has a faster response time. ITAC is looking closely at how support systems are being used and making sure they fit faculty, staff, and student needs.
* There are considerable numbers of students without technology. This includes hardware and Wi-Fi access. There are laptops available at the library for students to check out until the end of the semester and ITAC is looking at extending the checkout times into the summer session.
* ITAC is not seeing too many issues with TRACs being slow or unresponsive. Many of the issues are on the user side and could be due to slow Wi-Fi connections. Chat is still the fastest way to get help if needed.
* **Written response**: (Based on the extensive metrics ITAC keeps regarding all support interactions, we have not found that anyone has waited on the ITAC help line for 5 hours. We pulled the information from the phone system to gather some metrics and found the longest wait time we have seen since before spring break is 1.5 hours, and that call is an anomaly. I do, however, acknowledge that support expediency has suffered a bit from normal. The average hold time has been about 5 minutes. Over the past few weeks, our call volume has increased 2 ½ times normal levels, and our staffing is greatly reduced due to student workers who have resigned for the semester. Our Canvas support is divided between ITAC and support provided by our Canvas partner. It is possible the person who voiced this concern was on hold with Canvas and not ITAC. Considerable numbers of students without technology, both hardware and Wi-Fi access).
* **Written response**: (The IT Division has made laptops available for extended, the entire semester, checkout by students. Each student that has reached out has been offered a laptop. When it comes to internet connectivity, many internet service providers are offering free internet to university students during this time. Many Texas State students are leveraging these offers today. For those that are unable to leverage these free resources, we are also loaning wi-fi hotspots for internet access, and we are expecting even more units next week. Pickup is at the Alkek Library, but we have used the courier service to send laptops / hotspots to Round Rock for pickup if that is more convenient. If students just need Wi-Fi, we have used UPS to overnight Wi-Fi hotspots to them. We are not shipping laptops to students).
* **Written response**: (There were intermittent problems with users being kicked off (TRACs) the Monday before this item was raised, but no slowness. The issue was quickly resolved. ITAC metrics indicate we haven’t had many individuals contact ITAC because of TRACS being slow. When we hear about slow connections to any service, we help users conduct speed tests on their home network. Speed tests have shown slow bandwidth to the internet in general from remote locations. We must keep in mind that users are now on home networks, and a lot of perceived performance issues (with TRACS, Canvas, Zoom, and Teams) are related to their own resources (poor Wi-Fi, misconfigured routers, older and slower equipment).

Concerning the College of Engineering and the creation of virtual desktops (VDI) that would allow students (and faculty) to access specialized software from a remote location.

* Many software companies have made their applications temporarily free for university students to install on their personal devices. Titles like Adobe Creative Cloud, SPSS, and Autodesk to name a few.
* **Written response**: (Engineering did start this process during the Ingram Hall construction, and has been working with various vendors such as Dell to get this project going. One delay was that it was expensive, and they were not sure they had the funds to complete it. I believe Engineering recently released funds to get this project going again; however it is doubtful it will be completed during the pandemic window).

Senators discussed the promises and problems with VDI.

**Approval of Minutes**

The April 1, 2020 minutes were approved by senators.

Meeting adjourned at 6:14 p.m.

Minutes submitted by David Nolan