

Faculty Senate Minutes, Wednesday, October 10, 2018

JCK 880, 4:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Attending Senators: Augustine Agwuele, Rebecca Bell-Metereau, Natalie Ceballos, Michel Conroy, Rachel Davenport, Jesse Gainer, Lynn Ledbetter, Ting Liu, Vince Luizzi, Ben Martin, Dave Nolan, Michael Supancic, Diego Vacaflares, Alex White

Guests: Eric Algoe, Micky Autrey, Gene Bourgeois, Eugene Curtin, Sonya Gutierrez, Selene Hinojosa, Malarie Ohrabka, Ken Pierce, Karen Sigler, Denise Trauth

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

President's Academic Advisory Group

Senators asked questions about 1) the fiscal status of the university and 2) change management. Answers were provided by President Trauth, Provost Bourgeois, and Mr. Eric Algoe (Vice President for Finance and Support Services).

1. *Fiscal Status of the University:* For the second year in a row, enrollment has been flat, and it appears that faculty merit raises will be small ($\leq 1\%$) and late. Faculty have expressed a concern that the enrollment growth of the past that fueled university budgets and allowed for consistent raises is gone. At the same time the cost of utilities and retirement benefits continue to increase. The senate is interested in what plans the university has to deal with this challenging fiscal environment. How does the university see funding new faculty lines and merit raises in the near and midterm future? Is a change in budgeting priorities being considered?
 - President Trauth described the university's plans to address these issues. The administration is in the process of adding a significant number of new academic programs with higher-level semester credit hours (SCHs), which should result in greater levels of state funding to the university, as well as increased enrollment. President Trauth noted that because these new programs will address existing workforce demands, the financial risks associated with these investments should be minimal, while the returns are expected to improve fiscal stability during times of flat enrollment.
 - In response to a question from Senator Davenport, Mr. Algoe described the mechanism for administrative merit raises. With the exception of President Trauth, whose salary is set by the TSUS Chancellor, administrators receive raises from a merit pool. Mr. Algoe noted that the percentage distribution of these funds tends to have greater between-person variation for administrators compared to faculty (e.g., one administrator may receive a 0.5% raise, while another administrator may receive a 3% raise). Mr. Algoe indicated that, when raises are averaged across all administrators who are eligible for the merit pool, the mean percentage increase is approximately 1%.

2. *Change Management*: On the academic and research side, the administration has a well-earned reputation for placing a strong emphasis on strategic planning. However, the senate is interested in learning more about the university's approach to change management in other parts of the university. The concern stems from two recent issues discussed in the senate. The first issue arose from the fallout of a change in custodial policy implemented several years ago. The senate has received several inquiries about the fate of the custodial staff as the percentage of buildings maintained by outside contractors grows. The second issue was the very sudden (at least from our perspective) reorganization of the IT division. In each case, it was not clear to the senate that the university had a plan to communicate with and support the staff directly affected by these changes.
- Mr. Algoe explained that the decision to outsource custodial services occurred approximately eight years ago. At that time, the administration decided that the transition from in-house custodians to external contractors would occur entirely through attrition. As Texas State custodians retire, their positions are filled using external contractors. He confirmed that no one will be asked to leave their custodial position because of outsourcing. Mr. Algoe has recently met with custodians, staff council, and various affinity groups to explain the situation, to answer questions, and to provide reassurances that no one will be laid off.
 - In response to a question from Senator Liu, Mr. Algoe described communication channels between his office and the custodial staff. He noted various efforts to simplify and streamline these interactions.
 - In a future faculty senate meeting, Mr. Pierce will discuss change management within the IT division.

Introduction to PIM system: Micky Autrey, Director of Curriculum Services

- Ms. Autrey and Ms. Gutierrez demonstrated the new online Program Inventory Management (PIM) system. The new online form includes an automated workflow feature that generates individualized FYI emails with links to the form and full proposal attachments. Senators will begin receiving these FYI emails in November for the review of the new BS in Health Sciences program. The PIM also has an "ecosystem" feature that shows how changes within one program may affect other programs across the university.
- Senator Supancic noted that the PIM system is totally transparent -- it is possible to see exactly where a proposal is situated in the workflow at any given time.
- Ms. Autrey offered to visit departments and workgroups as needed to give tutorials on the PIM system.

Piper Committee Report: Eugene Curtin, Chair of the Piper Professor Committee

- Dr. Curtin revealed the committee's nominee for Piper Professor, as well as the two winners of the Everette Swinney Faculty Senate Excellence in Teaching Award. There were eight applicants this year, and all were of good quality.

- Dr. Curtin also described two changes to the policy / process for these awards:
 1. “Any application for the Piper Nomination from a current faculty member made in the past two years will be considered for the current year, provided that candidate did not get the nomination.”
 2. “Except in the case where a faculty member receives a Swinney award one year and the Piper Nomination the next year (thereby automatically obtaining a second successive Swinney award), no faculty member may receive a Swinney award in two consecutive years.”
- After Dr. Curtin exited the meeting, senators voted to endorse the committee’s recommendations for this year’s Piper Professor nominee and Swinney Award winners. The proposed policy / process changes for the two awards will be discussed in a future senate meeting.

Proposals from Academic Freedom Committee (AFC): Senator Luizzi, Chair of the AFC

- Senators voted to approve two recommendations from the AFC.
 1. The faculty senate supports the creation of a chapter of AAUP at Texas State as a measure to protect and promote academic freedom.
 2. The faculty senate endorses the Chicago statement and adds its condemnation of targeted harassment and intimidation of faculty members that undermine academic freedom.

Minutes from the October 3rd senate meeting were approved.

6:03 pm Adjournment by Chair Alex White

Minutes submitted by Natalie Ceballos, Secretary