**Faculty Senate Minutes**

Wednesday, September 23, 2020

Zoom Meeting, 4:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

**Attending Senators:** Gwynne Ellen Ash, Stacey Bender, Janet Bezner, Dale Blasingame, Rachel Davenport, Peter Dedek, Jennifer Jensen, Lynn Ledbetter, Vincent Luizzi, Benjamin Martin, Stan McClellan, Roque Mendez, Andrew Ojede, Michael Supancic, Nicole Wesley

**Guests:** Geneva Gano, Gloria Martinez, Christine Sellers, Judy Oskam, Dwonna Naomi Goldstone, Tina Marie Cade (Senate Fellow), Ricardo Delgado Ahumada, Scott Pope (Library)

Senate Chair Bezner called the meeting to order at 4:01 pm

**Meeting preparation**

Senators discussed preparations for the Joint Council of Academic Deans, Council of Chairs, Faculty Senate Meeting on September 24, 2020. Senator McClellan agreed to present the topic of adding an external observer to PC meetings. Senators Luizzi and Bezner agreed to present and discuss creation of a bullying/harassment policy at the meeting.

**COVID Updates/Discussion**

Senators discussed the response by Dr. Carranco to the Faculty Senate’s letter sent to him on September 9, 2020. Senators continued to express concerns about COVID testing and risk mitigation on campus. Concerns included:

* Inconsistencies in contact tracing and when faculty are contacted. Some senators are concerned about reliance on the self-report process and the relying on students to provide accurate information about who they were in close contact with, especially in cases of classrooms with assigned seating charts.
* Lack of classroom seating diagrams provided to faculty for fixed seat classrooms.
* Lack of testing asymptomatic people.
* The planned surveillance strategy does not appear to be working.
* Rapid PCR testing machines sitting idle and the dearth of less expensive tests.
* Lack of a mobile-friendly COVID-19 dashboard.
* Lack of supplies for custodial staff and uncertainty about whether they are cleaning regularly at all. A senator suggested a cleaning log to track whether a room was cleaned or not and Senator Bezner plans to inquire about this with Eric Algoe.
* Concerns about Dr. Carranco not listening to Faculty Senate and Staff Council concerns. Senator Bezner volunteered to reach out to Staff Council to coordinate a response and elevate the issue to the PAAG.

**Discussion of Pilot Chair Training with Candace Hastings, Faculty Development**

Dr. Hastings presented the context of how she went about compiling topics for Chair Training.

In response to a question from a senator about hiring external chairs, Dr. Roundtree briefly explained different policies related to hiring external chairs and suggested workarounds in the policy exist.

Overall, senators support the Pilot Chair Training schedule and sessions. Senators provided several recommendations to improve the pilot training program including adding or expanding sessions focused on:

* Having difficult conversations, which are particularly challenging for some chairs. Dr. Hastings indicated she planned on incorporating into Conflict Management.
* Conveying the importance of academic freedom and urging chairs to respect every faculty member’s academic freedom.
* Coalition building and faculty morale.
* Active listening.

**Discussion of Registrar Providing Faculty a Daily Digest of Student adds/drops during the first 12 days of class in a semester**

Senators discussed concerns about students adding/dropping prior to census day and the difficulty in maintaining seating charts, challenges with assignment due dates, and communicating course expectations for students that add later. Many senators were in favor of a daily digest for all classes with the option to opt-out of the reports. Senate Chair Bezner will communicate with the Registrar regarding faculty preferences as they build an automated system to notify faculty of add/drops going forward.

**Update from Council on Inclusive Excellence and Task Force on Diversity Training for Faculty**

Senator Martin provided updates on the Council on Inclusive Excellence and the Task Force on Diversity Training for Faculty. The Task Force is waiting on final selections. Senator Martin was asked to serve as committee chair. The Task Force on Diversity Training for Faculty has two charges: 1) Should training be required of all faculty members? and 2) What should diversity training look like?

Senators asked several questions, provided suggestions, and expressed concerns including:

* Texas State needs an institute or resource center that creates awareness of racial issues.
* The frequently with which diversity training will be offered.
* Whether there will be a diversity certificate.
* Concerns about the existing quality of diversity training available on campus.

Senator Martin summarized that the Council on Inclusive Excellence is currently working on several issues/actions including:

* Discussion of upcoming election and how to plan for post-election tensions that may play out on campus.
* Restorative Justice and collaboration with Life Anew, who provides strategic counseling by providing strategies to facilitate understanding people’s concerns and having people work together for more productive outcomes.
* Listening to student constituents who have expressed experiences with racism in extracurricular activities and in the classroom, issues with police, lack of trust in the administration, and communication.

**Report on meeting of the National Council of Faculty Senates, September 18/19**

Senator Bezner summarized her participation at the second annual National Council of Faculty Senates meeting. She specifically discussed three items for senators to consider. The first item involves the importance of the faculty role in budgeting and budget decisions. At present, although there are student representatives on the Board of Regents, faculty do not have representation other than through the university Cabinet. The second item related to faculty workload increases during the pandemic and how faculty could respond by documenting their time as a means to verify shared faculty experiences of increased workload, service expectations, etc. as a result of the pandemic. Lastly, Senator Bezner explained the Shared Governance Index, a rating system based on metrics designed to move toward improved shared governance.

**Announcements**

* Jonathan Zimmerman - $200 to support his presentation on October 29, 2020.
* Senator Mendez will serve on a renaming task force for two dorms and two streets to be named after a POC from the campus community.
* The Faculty Development Leave application deadline is October 1, 2020.

**Policies reviews**

* UPPS 01.04.31 Access to Student Records Pursuant to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (October 1 – Senator Davenport)
* UPPS 04.01.03 Computer Equipment Repair Service (October 5 - Senator Dedek)
* UPPS 08.01.20 Exterior Signage and Graphics Standards (October 1 - Senator Mendez)

**Approval of minutes**

Senators approved the minutes of the 09/16/20 meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 5:57 pm.

Minutes submitted by Jennifer Jensen