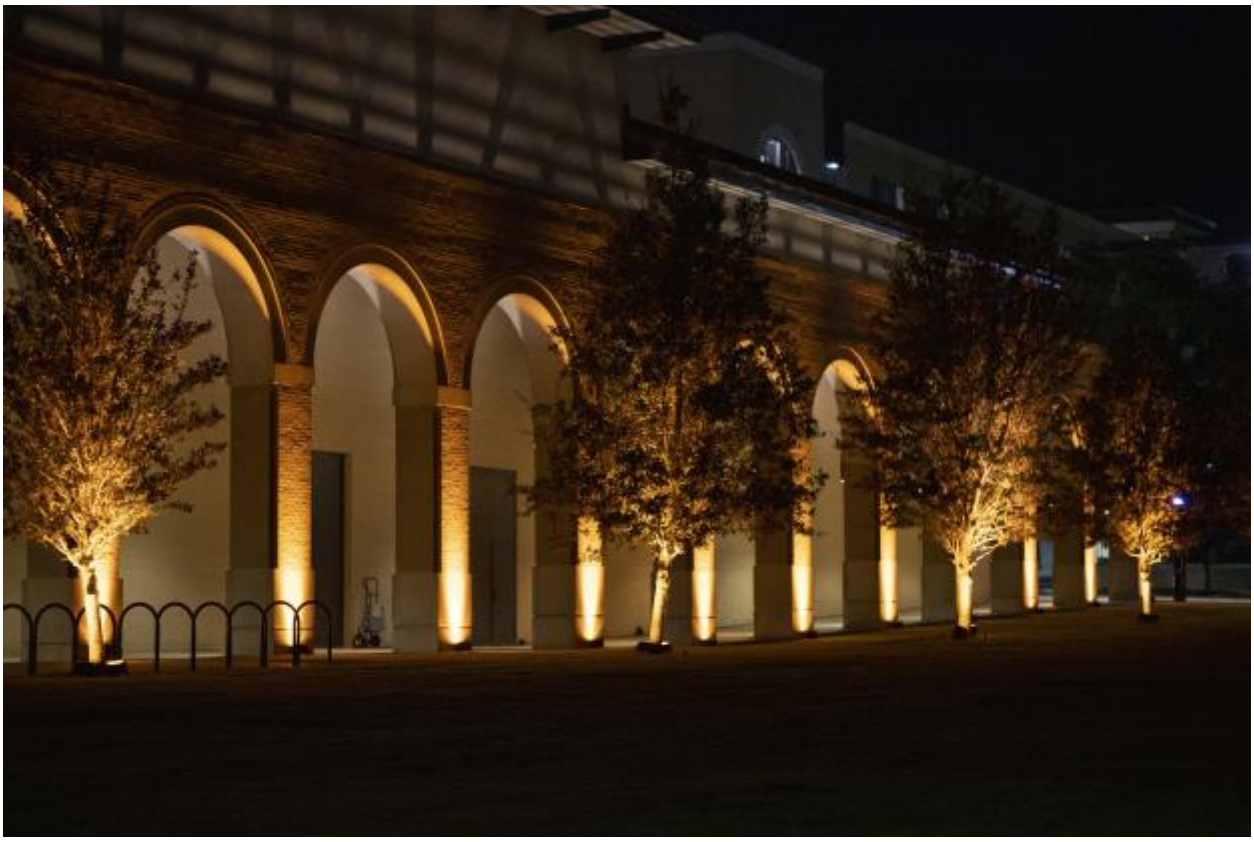

Faculty Senate Bulletin

November/December 2021

The Faculty Senate wishes you a lovely holiday season and semester break. Along with all of you, we are hoping for a calm and productive Spring 2022 semester!

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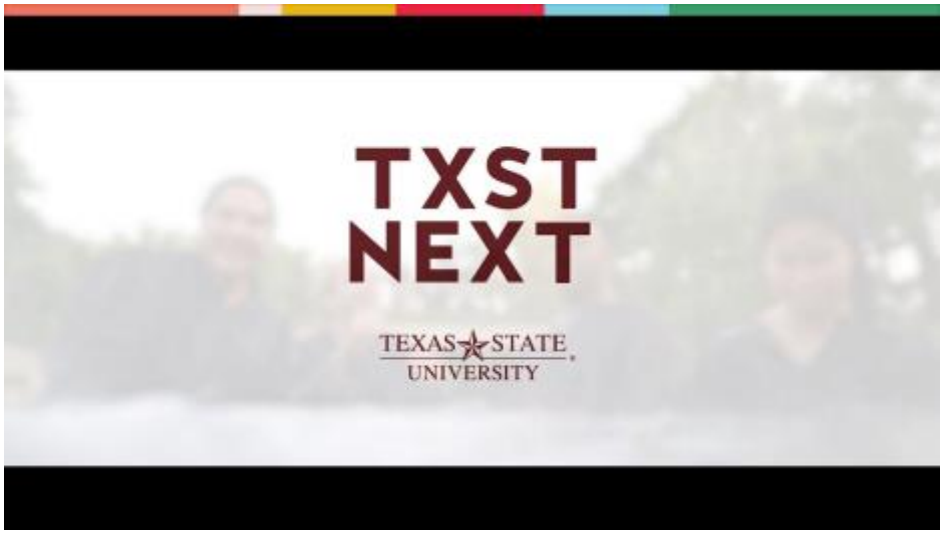
This month:

- **Everette Swinney Faculty Senate Excellence in Teaching Awards**
- **Campus Safety Update, Fall 2021**
- **Academic Freedom Corner**
- **Texas Council of Faculty Senates Fall Meeting**
- **Fall Meeting of the Full Senate**

- **University Lecturers Series**



Everette Swinney Faculty Senate Excellence in Teaching Awards

At the October 13 meeting, the senate endorsed the recommendations of the Piper Professor Committee. The committee reviewed applications for the Piper Award and the Everette Swinney Faculty Senate Excellence in Teaching Award. The senate is pleased to announce the following faculty members were selected for the Swinney Award:

- David Lemke, Professor, Biology
- Michelle Nance, Professor, Theatre and Dance
- Charise Pimentel, Professor, Curriculum and Instruction

In addition, the committee recommended Dr. Lemke as the university's nominee for the Piper Professor Award. The senate appreciates the support the university provides in recognizing and rewarding our high quality faculty.

1 - David Lemke

2 - Charise Pimentel

3 - Michelle Nance

Campus Safety Update, Fall 2021

Mr. Eric Algoe, VPFSS, attended the President's Academic Advisory Group meeting with the Faculty Senate on November 10 to give a power point presentation on Campus Safety.

Campus Safety Update **(Powerpoint Presentation)**

Highlights include:

- There are three committees under the University Safety Committee: Security and Personal Safety Committee, Environmental Health and Safety Committee and Research Safety Committee. All are active.
- Recent improvements to safety include an additional 200 lights across campus at a cost of $2.2 million, an audit of campus emergency phones, replacing first-call classroom door locks with manual locks at a cost of $800,000 and adding swipe card access for the primary exterior doors of all major academic buildings. The university will next begin removing physical keys for these doors from distribution.

- There is a new Emergency Operations Center that will open in January 2022. Three emergency management exercises were held in the previous year.
- The university published its first comprehensive Multi-Hazard Emergency Operations Plan in 2021.
- The university rolled out a cadet training reimbursement program for receiving training with a focus on diversity.
- The university increased walking, ATV and bike patrols and joined the Hays County Joint Emergency Communications Center.
- Old posters related to emergency procedures in classrooms displayed K-12 standards and, since 2017, have been replaced with ALERRT standards of Avoid, Deny, Defend.
- The campus safety/emergency procedures page on the Texas State website provides training on topics like active shooter scenarios. Each scenario contains videos co-produced by the ALERRT Center.
- Regarding communication messages related to life-safety situations, University Police send those without review or delay. Less-than-life threatening emergencies come from University Communications with a goal of getting the message sent in less than 20 minutes. Cabinet and University Communications regularly conduct training on this issue and have a Rapid Response Guide that outlines all protocols on this topic. The Rapid Response team is comprised of cabinet members, the police chief and others who are needed in emergency situations. It also contains people who are in the room, monitoring social media.
- Academic units and larger offices can reach out for UPD trainings or briefings of what to do during an emergency. These trainings can last anywhere from 1-3 hours. Algoe added the two most relevant trainings are Civilian Response to Active Shooter Emergencies (CRASE) and Standard Response Protocol (SRP). UPD regularly schedules trainings, but they will also hold the trainings by request.

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Academic Freedom Corner

Academic Freedom Committee Portal

The AFC invites faculty to share their concerns with the committee through its portal on the Senate's webpage.

Recent concerns submitted through the portal:

- Online harassment and the extent to which the university will protect those who are victimized
- Not being allowed to require or air grievances regarding basic Covid-related public health measures (mandating masks and vaccines in class, etc.) without threat of termination of employment, particularly for those who are tenure track or untenured
- Concerns that academic freedom is honored regardless of rank or tenure status
- Concern about political pressure on university administrators to fire faculty for having certain political or academic opinions
- Worries about honors college policies regarding the selection of faculty and the courses they teach
- Bad working conditions for lecturers leading to a lot of people quitting

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Note that AAUP publishes a Journal of Academic Freedom.

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The Chronicle of Higher Education recently published an op-ed on the restrictions on academic freedom in Florida. Texas is mentioned as well.

Texas Council of Faculty Senates Fall Meeting

On October 16, Senate Chair Ledbetter and Senator Supancic attended the 2021 virtual meeting of the Texas Council of Faculty Senates, which includes leaders from the faculty senates in all public institutions

of higher education in the state. The meeting was held jointly with the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) and the Texas Association of College Teachers (TACT). General topics of discussion included faculty workload, administration/faculty communication, salary issues (e.g. inversion, compression, policies), administrative overreach in curriculum, COVID management, evaluations of administrators/indicators of sound governance, and nontenure track faculty/contingent faculty. The keynote speaker was the Chancellor of the University of Houston System and the President of the University of Houston, Dr. Renu Khator. The next meeting of the TCFS is scheduled for February 11, 2022 in Austin.

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Fall Meeting of the Full Senate

The senate met with the Faculty Senate Liaisons Wednesday, October 20, 4 - 5 pm via Zoom. The Senate meets every semester with its liaisons, who represent the schools and departments that do not have an elected senator. Liaisons were tasked with reaching out to their faculty and sharing what they found. Some of the main themes that came from the meeting include concerns about understaffed positions, communication related to campus security and faculty salary compression. The Senate will move forward with raising these concerns to university administration.

2022-2023 University Lecturers Series

The University Lecturers Committee reviews requests from colleges, schools, departments and campus organizations for assistance to bring outstanding guest lecturers or mini-symposia speakers to the university during the long semesters (funding is not available for Summer sessions). Limited Student Services Fee funds are awarded based on the committee's review of proposals and recommendations to the senate. A call for proposals was issued on November 11 to alert faculty and university organizations to the February 4, 2022 proposal due date for lectures to be offered in Fall 2022 or Spring 2023. More information is available on the committee's website.

63rd Faculty Senate, 2021 - 2022

Applied Arts: **Michael Supancic**, Criminal Justice

Business Administration: Andrew Ojede, Finance and Economics

Education: College of Education: Taylor Acee, Curriculum and Instruction; **Stacey Bender**, Health and Human Performance

Fine Arts & Communication: Dale Blasingame *(Co-Secretary)*, Journalism and Mass Communication; Lynn Ledbetter (*Chair*), Music; **Nicole Wesley**, Theatre and Dance

Health Professions: Danette Myers, Health Information Management

Liberal Arts: **Rebecca Bell-Metereau**, English; **Peter Dedek**, History; **Jennifer Jensen** (*Vice Chair*), Geography; **Roque Mendez**, Psychology

Science and Engineering: **Rachel Davenport**, Biology; **Ben Martin** *(Co-Secretary)*, Chemistry and Biochemistry; **Stan McClellan**, Engineering

Contact Us!

Do you have a question, concern or issue you want the Faculty Senate to address? Want to make a suggestion? Contact the senate via our website.

More information about these and other topics can be found in the Faculty Senate minutes posted on the Faculty Senate website, or by contacting your Faculty Senator (email links above) or Senate Liaison. The Faculty Senate encourages you to voice your concerns and comments on any faculty and shared governance topics to these representatives or directly to the senate.

photo credits: Stephanie Schulz-Down and Chandler Prude, Office of University Marketing