**Faculty Senate Minutes**

March 30, 2022

JCK 880/Zoom Meeting, 4:00 pm – 6:00 pm

**Attending Senators:** Taylor Acee, Rebecca Bell-Metereau, Stacey Bender, Dale Blasingame, Rachel Davenport, Peter Dedek, Jennifer Jensen, Lynn Ledbetter, Ben Martin, Stan McClellan, Roque Mendez, Danette Myers, Andrew Ojede, Michael Supancic, Nicole Wesley

**Guests**: Sarah Angulo, Madison Bendit (University Star), Lisa Cruces, Kevin Huffaker, Farzan Irani, Cristian Lieneck, Nathan Pino, Karen Sigler

The meeting began at 4:00 pm

**Cyberbullying and Harassment Policy language** **- Nathan Pino, Chair, Academic Freedom Committee**

It was recommended that information related to cyberbullying and harassment be incorporated into existing policies, rather than as a standalone document. The academic freedom committee is suggesting revisions to three policies listed below in order to incorporate anti-cyberbullying/harassment in our university policies. There are only minor changes to two of them. The main revisions are in 01.04.07 (Civility Policy and Procedures). Other polices with minor edits related to cyberbullying include UPPS 04.01.07 (Appropriate Use of Information Resources) and UPPS 04.04.46 (Prohibition of Discrimination).  Based on procedural comments from Dr. Debbie Thorne, after the Senate approves these changes the PPSs then go to the senior reviewer:

Senators agreed with the changes, but noted that portions of the civility policy are aspirational and therefore it may be difficult to enforce offences. It is important that cyberbullying/harassment be defined in policies that are enforceable. A list of formats in which cyberbulling may occur (social media, online forums, etc.) was considered valuable, but some senators though that such lists are too specific for a policy. Senators debated whether the nature of the electronic communication matters, including if Texas State University property was used.

The policy will be reviewed with Associate Provost Debbie Thorne before it is endorsed by the Faculty Senate.

**Policy Reviews**

UPPS 04.04.30 University Leave Policy, full review, due April 4 (Senator Ojede)

UPPS 04.04.56 Non-Retaliation Policy, full review, due April 8 (Senator Jensen)

UPPS 04.04.11 University Classification and Compensation, pen and ink, due April 8 (Senator Wesley)

**Other Items**

* The March 23, 2022 Minutes were approved by vote.
* The Texas Council of Faculty Senates will meet April 8-9. The senate is seeking a volunteer to attend.
* Newly elected senators were welcomed: Farzan Irani, Alex White. Senators Rebecca Bell-Metereau, Nicole Wesley, and Stacy Bender were reappointed.
* The search for a new administrative assistant to the senate is ongoing. The posting opened on March 28.

**Canvas Inbox and Academic Dishonesty Concerns – Kevin Huffaker (Customer Engagement Team/ITAC) and Cristian Lieneck (Chair, Honor Code Council)**

The Canvas Inbox feature has been disabled since August 10th, 2020, due to concerns about students’ ability to gain visibility into their classmates for the purpose of recruiting them and enrolling them in an external platform for the purposes of dishonest activities. This change had to be made campus-wide, which has restricted the ability for students to interact in project courses, graduate level projects, etc. There is anecdotal evidence through the Honor Code Council that this change reduced the number of cases of academic dishonesty.

A new Microsoft Teams integration feature will be implemented into Canvas which will allow students to “see” each other, contradicting the approach of disabling the Inbox. However, this feature can be disabled by faculty who are concerned about academic honesty issues. The Inbox, in contrast, must be either enabled or disabled campus-wide.

Senators questioned whether students would actually use online features to communicate rather than text, GroupMe, or other forums. Senators debated the pros and cons of giving students access to contact information. Students are prone to send unrelated messages to each other which can clog email folders. There is also evidence that when students develop a culture outside of the classroom, it can disrupt the learning process. A senator explained that the Discussions tool in Canvas can be set up to allow students to organize study groups and ask questions, while keeping these conversations visible to faculty and central to the course.

The Learning Management System (LMS) Steering Committee is in the process of collecting feedback about changes. They will visit each college to identify concerns. The recommendations of the committee will ultimately be presented to the Faculty Senate for approval before they are implemented.

**Upcoming Events**

* Tuesday, April 5, 2022 Joint Meeting of Council of Academic Deans and Faculty Senate
* Thursday, April 7, 2022 Nontenure Line Faculty Reception

**Update on Non-tenure Line Faculty Committee**

Debbie Thorne updated the committee on the teaching policy, now called the ‘Faculty Title Series’. The earliest implementation will be Fall, 2024. It will be part of the strategic plan, and the cost analysis is ongoing. Background research is being done on how other universities have implemented such a policy. One question is how faculty will be migrated into the track. For example, will current nontenure-line faculty by default be at the ‘Assistant’ level when the policy is implemented, or will senor faculty be promoted immediately? Salary increases at promotion will be based on a percentage of salary, not a flat amount.

Meeting adjourned at 5:47 pm

Minutes submitted by Ben Martin