**Faculty Senate Minutes**

Wednesday, July 20, 2022

JCK 880 and Zoom Meeting, 3:00-5:00 pm

**Attending Senators:** Taylor Acee, Rebecca Bell-Metereau, Stacey Bender, Dale Blasingame, Rachel Davenport, Peter Dedek, Lynn Ledbetter, Ben Martin, Roque Mendez, Michael Supancic, Andrew Ojede, Adetty Perez de Miles, Alex White

**Guests:** Lisa Ancelet, Janet Bezner, Valarie Fleming, J D Jamieson, David Levy, Karen Sigler, Debbie Thorne

The meeting began at 3:00 pm

**Faculty Development Leave Evaluations**

Previously, the senate debated whether to modify the evaluation process that is used for faculty development leave (FDL) applications. The senate’s goal is to streamline the process and to better align the evaluation procedure with the role of the senate in approving the proposals.

The chair proposed that the senate continue to evaluate proposals according to the current rubric but omit the in-person discussion that has been implemented for the past few years. A senator proposed using holistic rankings (for example, a score out of 20) rather than the itemized rubric currently being used. The senator explained that this would allow very strong (or weak) proposals to be identified, but it would reduce the workload. Other senators disagreed with this approach and supported the chair’s proposal.

Currently, the pool of proposals is divided roughly in half, such that each senator reviews half of the total proposals. A senator suggested that the pool of proposals be split up into additional groups, ensuring that at least three senators read each proposal.

After further discussion, the senate approved by vote to retain the current rubric and divide the proposals into approximately three groups for evaluation. The proposals will not generally be discussed in a senate meeting.

This issue was later raised with Dr. Thorne. Senators requested that we receive notification of who was awarded supplemental funding. Dr. Thorne agreed to share this information after the spring, 2023 evaluation cycle.

**Ombudsperson Clarification (Dr. Thorne)**

The senate asked for clarification of the duties of Dr. Colleen Myles and Dr. Todd Jewell, the two ombudspersons selected to begin this academic year.

There is a trend in other universities to increase the number of ombudspersons. This allows them to better serve the needs of a large faculty body. Texas State is piloting the way to manage the change. Each of the ombudspersons will receive a 3 workload course reduction each semester in addition to a summer stipend. The work will be shared, and communication will be initiated through a single email address. Individuals may request to work with either Dr. Myles or Dr. Jewell, or they may leave their request open to whoever is most available. The two ombudspersons will provide an anonymized report to Dr. Thorne annually. This will be used to determine whether the pilot was successful, and how to proceed in the future.

An information campaign will be initiated in September to increase awareness of the ombudspersons as a campus resource. A visit with the faculty senate is planned, along with visits to the Council of Academic Deans (CAD), the Council of Chairs, and possibly meetings through faculty development. An office hours/open house is being considered. A senator proposed that the ombudspersons be introduced during faculty orientation.

A senator asked if these positions would also serve staff. A separate staff ombudsperson has been created. An announcement of this position is forthcoming.

Dr. Thorne clarified that while our ombudspersons are trained as certified mediators, they will not serve as the mediators for any cases. Independent contracted mediators will be assigned as needed through a contract service. Instead mediator training is a component of the ombudsperson skillset, viewed as a critical component for conflict resolution.

**Nontenure Line Workload Release Program (Dr. Thorne)**

The senate asked for an update on the amount of workload credit hours devoted to nontenure line workload release. The total amount has not increased since this opportunity was initiated, despite the tremendous increase in the number of nontenure line faculty. For the first time, this year there were more high quality applicants than the workload hours allotted to the program. The university approved the excess this year, but the senate argued that additional workload should be devoted to this valuable program. This is especially important considering the need for faculty to develop their portfolios in preparation for the upcoming Faculty Title Series. Dr. Thorne will review the process used to assign the workload to this program to make a decision about how the pool could be increased.

**Personnel Committee Guidelines (Dr. Thorne)**

The most recent version of the document developed by the faculty senate was shared with Dr. Thorne. Dr. Thorne generally agreed with the edits made by the senate, but raised two questions:

1. The senate recommended that eligibility should be based on years of service, not the number of courses taught. Dr. Thorne asked for clarification about whether part time years of service should count.
2. For hiring and promotion decisions, how is rank defined for PC eligibility? For example, is an associate professor of practice eligible to serve on a decision regarding a tenure line assistant professor? The hierarchy needs to be clearly defined for such decisions.

The senate reinforced that the document is designed as a set of guidelines, and that departments should provide details in their own personnel committee policies.

The document was returned to the council of chairs for review. Once there is an agreement, the guidelines will be brought to college councils, and then to the council of academic deans.

**Update on Summer Commencement (Dr. Fleming)**

The senate reviewed the list of mace bearers assigned for the summer 2022 graduation ceremony. A senator asked for updates to the commencement procedure based on feedback regarding the new way that students are seated. Students are no longer seated alphabetically, which makes the ceremony difficult to follow in the program. Dr. Fleming explained that these comments have been read and reviewed. Decisions on changes in seating procedures have been made in part to help with accommodations, and partly to ease the logistical challenges associated with organizing these large events.

**Announcements**

* The national council of faculty senates is meeting in Houston on August 4, 2022. Senators are invited to attend.
* The new tenure-track orientation breakfast with faculty senate is Wednesday, August 17, 2022 from 8:00 am – 8:25 am in Encino Hall 104.
* The next senate meeting is August 24, 2022 from 4:00 pm - 6:00 pm

The June 22 minutes were approved by vote.

The senate entered executive session at 4:20 pm to create committee appointments.

The meeting adjourned at 5:03 pm

Minutes submitted by Ben Martin