**Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes**

**May 4, 2022**

**4-6 p.m.**

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

**Attending guests:** Sarah Angulo,Amy Benton, Gene Bourgeois (Provost), Jake Fillman,Mark Lester, Alana Rossenwasser, Karen Sigler, Debbie Thorne (Associate Provost), Denise Trauth (President)

The meeting was called to order at 4:03 p.m.

**President’s Academic Advisory Group**

President Trauth’s final PAAG meeting started with a discussion of Lieutenant Governor Dan Patrick’s recent comments and recommendations regarding tenure and academic freedom. Trauth said she is not fearful for the future of higher education in Texas. She said her experience in this state is that Texas lawmakers really believe in economic development – and there is an understanding that economic development is rooted in higher education. Trauth said that, yes, lawmakers are talking about whether tenure is the right approach – but the alternative of tenure is to pay professors much more to stay competitive. She expects rough rhetoric to continue in the lead up to elections in November, but she has serious doubts that anything will change with regards to tenure. Trauth believes the new president of Texas State will have an opportunity to visit with many members of the legislature and take a stand on this issue if he chooses to do so. She also reminded senators that the Texas legislature develops bills in an ad hoc fashion, so it is often survival of the fittest in terms of bills that are introduced. There are so many ways that a bill can die – so there is no assurance that a bill will make it through the process just because it’s introduced. Regarding a question about whether the TSUS Board of Regents want to get more engaged in the tenure and promotion process, she doesn’t see that happening and doesn’t know how that would happen from a time standpoint.

The second item on the PAAG agenda was a cost-of-living adjustment of 7% passed Monday by the Hays CISD board and whether something like that was in the works at Texas State. Before the state shot down any requests for tuition and fee increases in November, the university’s top priority, according to Trauth, was to budget for a 3% pay increase for faculty and staff. Instead, faculty and staff will receive a one-time, 3% bonus. The ability to pay for raises is tied directly to enrollment. Trauth said enrollment looks good for fall of 2022, but she doesn’t want to spend money they don’t have or make promises they can’t keep. Provost Bourgeois then provided an update on enrollment and registration numbers. In terms of freshmen, the number of housing contracts is typically a firm indicator of the size of your class. As of Monday morning, the university had 6,287 freshmen put money down on a housing contract. That’s 1,130 more than this same time last year. New Student Orientation registration is also up 15% from this time last year. Bourgeois expects an increase of 600-700 students, which would be the first significant increase in enrollment in the past five years.

A senator said these first two agenda items are related in that they both involve the state legislature and decisions they’re making. He said there’s a nervousness that there isn’t a true respect for higher education in the legislature and that decisions are being made for political reasons. He asked how the university can make sure this is on the front page of people who are making decisions. Trauth said she cannot tell anyone who to vote for, but it’s important to vote and know a politician’s record on higher education when going to vote. She believes there are many members of the legislature who truly value higher education – but there are also people in every state who don’t understand how universities operate and how to finance them. She believes most of the legislature values higher education, but she acknowledged how the rhetoric makes people nervous.

The topic then shifted to the university’s push for R1 status and National Research University Fund eligibility. The metrics of R1 and NRUF status are very different. With R1 status, the two biggest categories are research expenditures and PhD productivity. In the 2021 fiscal year, the university awarded 42 PhDs. We average 54 PhDs a year. The median for R1 universities and other institutions at the top of R2 status is 100-125 or more. Increasing this number is going to cost money. A new PhD program needs more than $1 million in funding. Each new program would likely graduate 5-7 PhDs a year, so you must do the math needed to get Texas State to that 100-125 range. The Grad College has estimated the university needs $2-2.5 million to double output in STEM PhD programs. The university also must keep in mind the time it will take to graduate new PhDs, which is anywhere from 3-8 years. Regarding NRUF status, meeting this eligibility would result in a direct state appropriation between $5-6 million. To be eligible, you must be an NRU, which Texas State already is now. You must have $45 million in restricted research expenditures for two straight fiscal years. Last year, Texas State had $34 million and is on pace to be around $39-40 million this year. You must have an endowment of $400 million, which Texas State expects to hit in the next two years. You also must award 200 PhDs for two years in a row as an optional criterion. Since the university won’t hit that benchmark, it is focusing on a freshman class of high achievement where 50% or more of your freshman class graduated in the top 25% of their class. Texas State was over that mark a few years ago, but we have recently dropped to 40%. There are two other ways to qualify for this metric. One is the SAT or ACT scores of that freshman class, and we’ve always been right at or above that mark. The second is proven programs of high quality for underrepresented students, which Texas State has had every year. You also need institutional recognition of research capabilities, which Texas State qualifies for through Phi Kappa Phi and Association of Research Library membership. Two remaining factors are high-quality faculty and high-quality graduate education. High-quality faculty means employing five tenure-line faculty who have a Nobel Prize or are members of national academies for two years in a row or seven Pulitzer, Guggenheim or NSF Career Award recipients for two years in a row. If you don’t hit those numbers, you need to have five PhD programs and their faculty evaluated by their peers at AAU institutions. The provost expects to hit the research expenditures and two other critical metrics by fiscal years 2024 and 2025. That means we would request review of PhD programs and faculty in fiscal year 2026. If the university passes, it would be eligible by 2027.

President Trauth and Provost Bourgeois then read comments from external reviews of faculty members who were approved for tenure and promotion. Trauth said it’s clear many of our faculty are already operating at an R1 level. She said the number of women being promoted to full professor continues to increase. This year, it’s 35%. At the associate professor level, 68% are women. The number of non-white faculty members moving to full professor is at 36% this year. She is encouraged by these improvements in diversity of the tenured faculty. In all, 68 applicants were successful with tenure and promotion this year. They were notified in late April and will now go to the Board of Regents.

The Senate presented President Trauth with a gift to mark her retirement and 20 years of service to the university.

**Seating of 64th Faculty Senate**

Newly elected senators Farzan Irani (communication disorders) and Alex White (math) joined the 64th Faculty Senate, replacing Stan McClellan and Danette Myers.

**Executive Session**

The Senate then moved into Executive Session to elect officers for the upcoming year.

* Lynn Ledbetter, chair
* Jennifer Jensen, vice chair
* Dale Blasingame and Ben Martin, co-secretaries

Minutes from the April 27 meeting were approved.

The Senate also approved committee appointment recommendations for the 2022-2023 academic year.

The meeting adjourned at 6:10 p.m.

Minutes submitted by Dale Blasingame.