**Faculty Senate Minutes**

Wednesday, September 14, 2022

JCK 880 and Zoom Meeting, 4:00-6:00 pm

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

**Guests:** Lisa Ancelet, Enrique Becerra, Kimberlee Davis, Ruby Kishan, David Nolan, Aimee Roundtree, Karen Sigler, Lori Stiritz

The meeting began at 4:03 pm

**“Finance 101” – Eric Algoe, Vice President for Finance and Support Services**

By request, Eric Algoe presented an overview of university finances. Approximately 50% of university revenue comes from student tuition and fees. Twenty-five percent of our funding is supplied by the state in what is referred to as ‘formula funding’. The remaining 25% of revenue is generated by auxiliary sales and services (housing, dining, bookstore, etc.).

Formula funding is based on student discipline and level (doctoral, masters, lower division undergraduate, and upper division undergraduate). It is based on the philosophy that some courses are more expensive to teach than others. However, the funding of the formula per student credit hour has not increased over the past 10 years (and in fact it has decreased). Furthermore, the formula has not been fully funded by the legislature in recent years. Texas State University ranks 30th out of 37 Texas universities in terms of formula funding per student credit hour based on the distribution of courses that we offer.

Fifty-three percent of expenses are for salaries and benefits. Remaining expenses include utilities (5%), capital improvements/repairs (12%), financial aid (18%), and other expenses (12%). Many budgetary items are restricted due to the revenue source. The university also requests special items, such as funding for new buildings, which are outside of the budget and approved by the legislature as line items.

Our budget is based on actual (past) enrollment, not predictions. This is problematic when enrollment decreases, as it has over the past four years. This year is a year of growth which should help stabilize the budget, but the budget won’t reflect this increase until the next fiscal year.

The most significant change in the budget over the past couple of years is an increase in financial aid. The university tripled freshman scholarship funding from approximately $5 million to $15 million, annually. Since these scholarships are continuing, this totals an additional $50 million over four years of expenses. This expense brings Texas State University in line with other public universities, making us more competitive. The average student at Texas State pays 32% of the ‘sticker price’ to attend. Even though our sticker price has increased by 16% over the past six years, the actual amount paid by students to attend has decreased by 11%.

For the first time in more than twenty years, the university is operating on a deficit. $10.2 million is being drawn from our reserves, attributed to the increase in scholarship funding. The university considers this an investment that will yield returns. The increase in enrollment indicates that that this is already the case (the university spent an additional $11.2 million on scholarships and brought in an additional $12.2 million due to growth). However, this growth places additional pressure on university resources, which must be accounted for. A senator asked about the feasibility of continued growth. The university estimates that the university could physically support an additional 20,000 students (assuming commensurate funding is available for supporting infrastructure).

**Committee Charges**

* A request has been made for the Academic Freedom Committee to review tenure policies in the faculty handbook. Specifically, faculty have requested that the rules relating to pursuing early tenure be reviewed. However, it isn’t clear how this issue relates to academic freedom; the committee will be consulted about this.
* There was a concern about whether the faculty handbook committee is consulted when polices are revised. The provost’s office should send notices of policy revisions to the faculty handbook committees as policies are approved to allow the appropriate sections of the handbook to be updated.

**Faculty Development Leave**: Faculty Development Leave rankings by the senators are due to the provost by Nov. 14. Applications will be split into three approximately equal groups for review. A senator noted that the senate’s standing rules need to be updated to change the review procedure. The current rules state that a minimum of seven senators will review each FDL application. The update would require fewer than seven senators to facilitate application review into three groups.

**Bonuses for Per-course Faculty**: The most recent note from the President regarding the one-time bonus in November for merit-eligible employees has created a conversation about how we can extend the benefits to per-course faculty, as well. Senators agreed that we should advocate for a bonus for per-course faculty who are continuing their service at the university. The bonus could be scaled to % effort at the university (for example, a 50% bonus to an instructor who teaches two courses).

**Workload for Senators:** The senate debated whether faculty senators should receive workload release for their service. Three hours (one course or equivalent department service credits) of release per year was proposed as a reasonable amount given the high workload of senators. This was proposed in part because the senate has struggled to find volunteers for some time-consuming assignments. Not all of the senators supported this proposal. The senate will investigate workload assignments for other committees at the university to decide if this is appropriate. This will be returned to a future agenda for discussion.

**Presidential Commission for the Run to R1**. The commission will identify strategies to identify metrics, strategies, and resources that are most important to achieve R1 status. The senate was asked to identify a nominee, but no senator immediately volunteered. The senate is seeking clarification to see if it is possible to nominate a senate liaison or other faculty member to this commission.

**Minutes:** The senate voted to approve the September 7 minutes.

The meeting adjourned at 6:00 pm

Minutes submitted by Ben Martin