**Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes**
September 7, 2022

4-6 p.m.

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

**Attending guests:** Lisa Ancelet, Enrique Becerra, Amy Benton, Gene Bourgeois (Provost), Tracy Chiles, Jason Coates, Macie Conaway, Kelly Damphousse (President), Laura Ellis-Lai, Candace Hastings, Injeong Jo, Jason Julian, James Keefe, Stephanie Larrison, Mark Lester, Yongmei Lu, Scott Mogull, Ben Reed, Sean Rose, Arlene Salazar, Edward Schaefer, Christine Sellers, Larissa Silguero, Mark Stern, Debbie Thorne (Associate Provost), Nancy Wilson, Robert Wright, Martin Zavala, Yidan Zhu

The meeting was called to order at 4:01 p.m.

**Presidential Academic Advisory Group (PAAG) – Kelly Damphousse (President)**

The president began the discussion with the topic of salary equity. He said faculty and staff salaries are a huge issue for the university and something he is paying a lot of attention to. He said the perverse incentive to get a raise in higher education is to get another job offer and then ask for a raise to stay. He wants to build a system that is more equitable than that because he doesn’t want to encourage employees to look elsewhere. Instead, he wants to look at salary increases over time and compare the university to its competitors.

A senator let President Damphousse know the Senate has a subcommittee formed to look at salary data over the years, and the Senate Fellow is undertaking a project to form visualizations related to this data. He said, ultimately, the Senate would like to work together with upper administration to identify areas of special need. He also said inflation resulted in everyone taking a pay cut this year, so the Senate is trying to find ways like other universities have to catch up.

The president said faculty and staff in Round Rock asked about a differential pay scale there because of cost of living in Round Rock, but he said San Marcos is catching up. He asked all vice presidents to look at salary and personnel issues and make modest recommendations to the president on where the university can make headway. He said these would need to be modest because the budget’s already been created for the coming year. One thing he highlighted was the announcement shortly before the Senate meeting of a $1,000, across-the-board bonus that is coming out of university resources. He sees this as a down payment of what the university wants to do in the future. The total recommendations presented by the vice presidents was for $14 million for salary increases and new hires. He said if the university had $14 million, it would have done that already. Part of the strategy of getting to that number is to continue to increase enrollment and continue to maintain retention. The list he received was prioritized, so he will go to each division to see where they can invest and have the biggest impact.

A senator said she was pleased to hear the president was equity minded, but she questioned whether this request from vice presidents was based on percentages. Using data the Senate received from Institutional Research and Eric Algoe, the President’s Cabinet are usually in the 90-something percentage of College and University Professional Association (CUPA) medians for administrators – but deans and below were in the 80-something percentage. She said the optics look like the people close to the top get the money. The president said he had not seen those numbers before and thanked her for sharing those. Provost Bourgeois clarified that the $14 million ask was not primarily based on equity – they were initial financial needs in terms of positions. Two items that will be carried forward in the strategic plan are equity adjustments and the faculty title series. The provost said his office constantly looks at CUPA medians and already knows which academic units and which ranks in those disciplines are below 95% or 90%. His benchmark is to first request a dollar amount to bring those up to 90% and others up to 95% regarding faculty salaries in Academic Affairs. He said this is different from merit. It would be a separate pot of money to take people to the 95th  or 98th percentiles of CUPA medians. Associate Provost Thorne said they discuss equity frequently, and she suggested the administration and the Senate subcommittee work together on this issue. Another senator said his department hires a lot of lecturers every year at CUPA median, and he said it’s very clear how the CUPA median is rising faster than salaries. The provost said someone can look at every rank and there are some that are at 80%, 85% and 88%. He said those need to be addressed first before moving up to the 90%, 92% and 95% ranks. The president told the senator to keep hiring at median because that’s how you keep up with the market. He wants to create a system where the university can continue to make market adjustments to salary beyond cost of living without forcing employees to go elsewhere and get job offers for a raise.

A senator asked about staff salaries moving forward. The provost said staff is a separate conversation. Faculty salaries can be addressed using CUPA data, but staff salaries are determined by the market. He said it is top of mind, as well.

A senator asked how associate professors can be paid more than full professors and whether those with families are paid more than those without families. Another senator said this could be CUPA percentage wise but not in raw dollars. The president said this can happen, though. Because a full professor has no higher rank to achieve, they may serve for 20 years and no longer receive raises. At the same time, an assistant professor is coming in at a higher salary and could earn more with the raises they receive. The president said this shouldn’t happen, broadly, but it can happen. When those inversions get created, he said the university should come through with equity adjustments. The provost said the standard for the past 15 years has been that departments are told the starting salary they are authorized to hire for at the different ranks, and departments and schools have latitude to go below the CUPA median or up to 5% above the CUPA median. He said going above median has happened frequently lately because of market issues. The provost said before the meeting he provided the president a historical account of equity adjustments at Texas State. There was a $2.5 million pool for equity adjustments in the mid-2000s. Since then, there has only been one major equity adjustment, and it was about $500,000. Other than that, it’s been on a case-by-case basis from dean requests with funds out of the available provost salary funds. That money comes from salary recaptured if a faculty member leaves and a new hire comes in at a lower rank. The provost said they intend to request a pool for equity adjustments in the strategic plan, if not before that. As for people being paid less because they don’t have families, the president said he’s unaware of that happening at Texas State – and he wouldn’t support that. He asked for evidence of this if there was a particular situation the senator was alluding to.

The next item on the agenda was the amount of money it will take to launch the new nontenure faculty title series and promotions that will come with it. A tenured faculty who is promoted automatically gets a 7% raise from their last salary. The cabinet funds these raises automatically in a line part of the university’s budget. The nontenure title series will require a new line in the budget for promotion from senior lecturer to assistant professor of instruction and so on. The university has estimated it will cost $1.2 million if 75% of nontenure members of the career path pursue promotion in any given year. That number will be $800,000 at 50%.

The president said he previously served at an R2 institution that became an R1. One of the things they worked hard to do was reduce the teaching load of research-active faculty. He said that will have to happen at Texas State. R1 universities typically have 2-2 teaching loads. One way to do that is to hire more adjuncts and graduate students who are teaching. At his previous institution, his department was spending $7 million a year on adjuncts. They offered an opportunity to teach a 4-4 schedule with a 5-year renewable term, and they were called renewable term faculty. They discovered these renewable term faculty aspired to make a career at the university – so they differentiated between ranked renewable term faculty and unranked renewable term faculty. This required them to create a standard through which these renewable term faculty could get promoted – and the regular faculty were not excited about it. They eventually decided on a teaching portfolio as a means for promotion. When the first renewable term faculty member became a full professor, he said this created even more buy-in with the renewable term faculty members – so he loves the idea of this. The issue is the timing. The president said his understanding is this would be decided next year and implemented in fall of 2024. He understands there are requests to move it along earlier. The provost said he doesn’t think it can be installed earlier because the 2023 budget is already approved, but he does feel confident that – given planning and enrollment – the university should be able to implement the title series in fall 2024.

A senator said that, right now, the title series seems like a rumor amongst faculty. She asked if the administration could get departments working on promotion guideline policy needed to make this happen sooner rather than later. The president said he agreed 100%, and the university should move forward as if it’s happening. He said they may not have the money for it, but they should have everything in place for when they do. The provost said the tenure-line and tenured faculty at the university have supported this idea completely.

A senator brought up questions from faculty about someplace else to find money. The provost said this is a good point. The university must determine which money to pay for a faculty title series. Is it money that would go for equity adjustments and salary increases? The provost said the money all comes out of the same pot. The president said there is a finite set of resources now, but the university needs to grow the pie because there’s nowhere else to cut and find money.

A senator asked how faculty turnover hurts the university, since new faculty may have to be hired at a higher salary based on the market. The president agreed and said turnover could lead to a downward spiral. That’s why he wants to stay ahead of the curve with salary adjustments. However, he said his biggest concern right now is with staff – since they are so far below market rate. Another senator said staff play a critical component in the run to R1, and this has been neglected for the previous 7-10 years. The president said the run to R1 must be holistic. Doing more research will require other faculty to teach classes and staff to support that research. The president said he feels like the university is at a critical phase right now regarding infrastructure.

A senator said he is happy to hear the president is concerned about staff. He said the main way for staff to currently get promoted is to leave a job in one department for a job in another department, which causes massive issues. The provost said his team is trying to address this issue. His office doesn’t have money to deal with staff leaving one department for another to get a raise. He said this is a legacy issue with the way M&O and staff salary budgets have been constructed at the university for many years. The provost said Academic Affairs is trying to find solutions to these funding inequities with staff where the same positions are paid drastically different amounts in different departments.

A senator asked if the state legislature supports Texas State’s run to R1. The president responded that he was going to testify on September 9 and ask for more money to support what the university hopes to do. NRUF money may be on the horizon if certain criteria are met, which would equate to $5-6 million. The president said there are many states that are not provided the additional funds because they only want the flagship schools to be R1. The president said he feels like the state wants the university to get there. The ask is for $25 million per year to transition from R2 to R1, and the chancellor and the system are fighting for Texas State to get that funding.

A senator asked about issues related to faculty hiring, PCRs, keys and computers. The provost said he finds it absurd that a new faculty member doesn’t get access to their lab, office or classrooms until after their first classes start. The president and cabinet are aware of these issues – and he said they need to continue to be made aware of issues with processes and procedures. A new effort is being made to clean up the bureaucracy. The president said frustration over bureaucracy is the one thing that unites people at the university. He is launching a new task force on this topic. It will be composed of people from all walks of life on campus who know what the complaints are with team members. The provost said one of these issues is with externally funded grants. He’s moving $250,000 to create up to three positions that are dedicated to helping externally funded faculty members.

The president said he wants to return to the Senate for further discussions on how to increase the budget. Because the university’s budget is mostly tuition dependent, he plans to continue attracting more students to come to school here. Because of the size of the freshman class this year, the university ran out of space to house students. Two new residence halls will be built with 1,800 more beds, meaning the university might eventually reach a freshman class of 9,000 or so. The president said he wants to think bigger than that, though. His first area of growth is international students. He said he was shocked to see how few international students Texas State has compared to his former institution. He also wants to look at online education. He said there is a market for people who want to attend Texas State but can’t be in San Marcos or Round Rock. He said these opportunities are available from other top universities. He said this isn’t solely about more money – it’s about increasing access to a four-year college degree. He also sees a big opportunity with the Round Rock campus. The enrollment there has dropped from 800 or 900 to 500 or so now, and the university has invested a lot of resources there. He said the university needs a new strategy with Round Rock to change what’s happening there. Finally, he said there’s an opportunity to recruit more out-of-state students. About 95% of Texas State students come from Texas.

**PAAG Debrief**

A senator said it was refreshing to hear the president’s plan for recruiting international students and out-of-state students.

A senator said it was a breath of fresh air to hear new ideas, and she feels hopeful that things will change. She especially liked the email that was sent out with the one-time, $1,000 bonus announcement because she was hesitant to share that with her faculty before the formal announcement was made. She was happy that it was mentioned to the Senate one week ago and then happened so quickly. Another senator asked for clarification on when bonuses will appear in faculty paychecks. The $1,000 bonus will be on the November 1 paycheck, half of the 3% merit bonus will be on the October 1 paycheck and the second half will be on the April 1 paycheck.

Senator Ojede volunteered to serve on a Senate subcommittee looking at faculty salaries based on his expertise with inflation and economics. A senator said it was nice to hear the new president acknowledge the rising cost of living in both Round Rock and San Marcos.

A senator recommended the university look at providing subsidized housing for staff and faculty like some school districts in Austin and universities in California are now doing. Texas State currently does this with housing for visiting scholars.

A senator questioned why equity would be determined at the department level instead of an individual level. Another senator suggested he ask that question at future meetings.

A senator suggested a way to speed up the nontenure career track is to begin the review cycle now before raises would kick in, it might make faculty feel better than things are happening.

**Task Force and Committee Positions**

Senator Jensen volunteered to serve on the new Recruitment Task Force, which will review current recruitment practices at TXST and benchmark them against Emerging Research Universities, as well as aspirants and national peers. It will also review institutional need-based and merit-based financial aid award strategies and recommend programs and practices to sunset, strategies to increase transfer and graduate student enrollment, and ways to increase online enrollment.

Senator Blasingame volunteered to serve on the search committee for faculty director of the Service-Learning Excellence Program.

Minutes from the August 31 meeting were approved.

**Executive Session**

The Senate went into Executive Session to approve committee assignments and assign senators to dean and chair summative reviews.

The meeting adjourned at 6:15 p.m.