**Faculty Senate Minutes**

Wednesday, February 22, 2023

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

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

**Guests:** Lisa Ancelet, Jesse Backstrom, Karen Sigler

The meeting started at 4:00 pm

**Proposals for Senate Fellow**

The senate discussed some possibilities for the upcoming call for a Senate Fellow.  The following topics were raised:

* Survey and explore university-wide faculty needs for additional staffing and support, especially in the context of the Run to R1.  A senator provided an example based on the planned expansion of courses at the Round Rock campus.  Unless staffing is dramatically increased, this expansion will be problematic since there is little to no academic support currently on that campus (especially for general education courses).  Related to this issue, the Faculty of Color cohort had concerns about how diversity/equity/inclusion may be addressed in hiring staff and other employees of the university. A senator expressed that they thought that this was too big of a topic for one person, it isn’t clear what the outcome of this would be, or whether it would be productive.
* Gather data on the history of tenure and threats to tenure.  This may include potential threats to academic freedom.  A senator noted that there are vast amounts of literature on tenure, including the most recent issue of the magazine for the American Association of College Professors.  This may also be too big of a topic for one person, and perhaps more appropriate for a subcommittee.  A senator proposed that this topic may be a good choice for the philosophy dialogue series.
* Explore how student evaluations for annual review.  Each department is doing something different.  Some departments use quantitative student evaluation scores directly for annual evaluations while others do not use these at all, instead favoring peer evaluations and other metrics.  There are known biases in student evaluations.  For example, women, non-native speakers, and minority faculty tend to score lower than average.  A senate fellow might investigate what our departments are doing and recommend some best practices and guidelines.  A senator noted that this may be a more interesting topic to research compared to the previous two options.

After discussion, the senate agreed that the topic could be left open.  A call will be made suggesting that fellows could investigate topics including student evaluations of teaching or staff and personnel infrastructure, but additional topics that are of broad interest to the larger faculty body will be welcomed.  The senate voted in approval of this call.

**Revision for Workload Release to Include Officers of the Senate**

A proposed revision to AAPPS 01.02.21 was discussed.  The revision recommends that the Senate Vice Chair and Secretary be granted six workload credits/year to be distributed as 3 credits in the fall and 3 credits in the spring.  These positions were previously not awarded workload release.  The senate voted to approve the changes.

**Surveys and Elections**

The senate reviewed the current responses to the Committee Preference Survey and Senate Elections.  Both of these surveys close March 6.  There was a question about the number of potential senators on the election ballots.  Many faculty remain on the ballot even though they are not interested in running since they did not respond to the email.  It was proposed that the senate consider changing the process to an ‘opt in’ instead of an ‘opt out’ process.  This change would also greatly reduce the workload of the senate administrator in removing names from the ballot.

**Full Senate Meeting on March 1**

To prepare for the meeting, the senate is soliciting issues and concerns at the departmental level.  The meeting will be held on Zoom with breakout rooms for each college.  The senate is exploring ways to merge ideas for discussion at the end of the meeting, potentially utilizing a shared whiteboard.

**Policy reviews**

* UPPS 04.04.30: University Leave Policy – Alex White

The February 15 minutes were approved by vote

The senate entered executive session for committee assignments

Minutes submitted by Ben Martin

The meeting adjourned at 5:32