**Faculty Senate Minutes**

Wednesday, February 8, 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, Brenda Rodriguez, Aimee Roundtree, Karen Sigler, Lois Stickley

The meeting started at 4:02 pm

**Proposed Expressive Activities Policy - Brenda Rodriguez (Director, Department of Student Involvement)**

The senate previously discussed the Expressive Activities Policy.  At the time several questions were posed.  The Department of Student Involvement developed this policy to replace several existing policies regarding outdoor spaces.  This is important because some of these policies had contradictory statements.

A senator asked for clarification about whether the policy impacts university property including computers.  The policy is designed to cover university spaces, rather than individual university property.  The authors will consider whether clarification is needed.

Another senator asked about the process that occurs when a group is interested in visiting campus.  Visits may be planned, or they may be spontaneous.  Either way, the university generally tries to accommodate gatherings.  If an activity requires amplified sound or if large crowds are expected, the organizers may be asked to move to an area that can accommodate them.

A senator relayed that the Academic Freedom Committee was concerned that the role of police regarding expressive activities is not clearly defined in the policy.  It was suggested that this be clarified, and/or linked to appropriate resources.

**Bullet Points from Academic Freedom Survey – from Academic Freedom Committee**

A summary of the report from the Academic Freedom Survey was developed for distribution to faculty and administrators.  This will be linked on the next Senate Bulletin.

**Run to R1 – Brainstorming Ideas**

President Damphousse invited Mr. Mushtaq Gunja, Executive Director of the Carnegie Classification Systems & Senior Vice President, to the San Marcos Campus on January 26, 2023, to meet with key leaders to engage in a robust discussion about our Run to R1. Mr. Gunja provided an assessment of our progress to date and gave us guidance on our next steps toward achieving R1 status and sustainably thriving as an R1 institution.

He discussed the important linkage between our two highest aspirations: elevating students’ success and running to R1. He also shed light on Carnegie’s new Social and Economic Mobility metric. The time that was left was devoted to gathering feedback.  More in-depth conversations with key teams will likely follow at later dates.  Senators raised the following points regarding this meeting:

* The need for additional staffing was highlighted in the report, but it has not been widely discussed in the context of the Run to R1.  The senate would like to know how budgeting decisions will be made regarding new staff positions.
* Many of the ideas generated appear to be chasing metrics, which is contrary to statements by the president in introducing the Run to R1.
* There is concern about the emphasis on rushing Ph.D. students through programs to meet the metrics.
* Secondary vs. primary \_\_\_\_?  Research questions?
* A suggestion proposed that we should stop funding underperforming degree programs.  What underperforming degree programs are being funded?  A senator clarified that and underperforming program graduates 15 students over 5 years.  There is currently one such program in the College of Education.
* The document suggests ways to increase graduate enrollments, including considering a ‘5-year bachelors-to-Ph.D. program'.  A senator asked what this means.  Another senator responded that programs including psychology and neuroscience have options that skip a master’s degree.  Such a program is currently being discussed in Health Professions to allow more applicants.  Several senators noted that in many fields this is already the norm, but not at Texas State.  Alternately, a 4+1 model could help generate more masters students.

**Changes in President’s Cabinet**

As posted in a Feb. 3 email from President Damphousse titled “Hopes & Aspirations High:  Progress Update”, certain changes have been or will be enacted, including:

* Elevating the position of Vice President for Research and Federal Relations to that of Vice President for Research.  Effective immediately, Dr. Shreek Mandayam reports directly to the president and will serve as a member of the President’s Cabinet.
* Creating a new Vice President for Global and Online Initiatives – the search will begin soon.
* Merging the Office of University Communications and Public Relations into one division headed by Sandy Pantlik.  This new Cabinet level position will be retitled Vice President for Marketing and Communications.

Senators responded to the changes in a discussion:

* Many of these decisions are being made in closed door meetings, and some members of the university are feeling out of the loop.  There is not a feeling of shared governance.
* Administrative bloat has been an ongoing issue of concern, and this message raised eyebrows.  The university is already running at a deficit.  At the same time, critical functions at the university continue to be nonfunctional or slow to respond.
* The University College is being reorganized.  There will be 1-2 VP’s in the college that will be reclassified.  The new positions are not open searches, but rather a transition from an existing position.  It is feared that current duties will ultimately fall on staff that are not present.
* The search for the Director of International Affairs search was cancelled, perhaps because this will be converted to a new Associate Vice President position.

Other issues related to the university were discussed:

* Senators recalled issues ongoing problems related to accounts payable.  After speaking to helpful individuals at accounts payable, it is clear that accounting personnel are very stressed and overworked.  The staff are helpful, but they are unable to keep up with the workload.  The university desperately needs more people who do the work, and they need to be compensated appropriately.  The lack of support negatively impacts everyone, including faculty research productivity.  Senators shared stories about shrinking support due staff leaving and positions being eliminated.  A staff member of 20+ years left explained that they left the university because of the lack of support.
* Senators expressed remorse that at some point, faculty will leave.  This will ultimately require rehiring at market rates, which are likely to be more expensive in the long run.  A senator posed that it is possible that the university is unable to make necessary investments now even if they will be of benefit later.
* The recruitment of international graduate students may be outsourced to an external agency.  A senator mentioned that when they removed the GRE requirement for their program, international student applications increased dramatically.  We are generally behind in international student recruiting, and we need to increase this to be successful.  An agency may be able to do this more efficiently than ad-hoc recruiting efforts.

Due to inclement weather and university closures, the senate voted by email to extend the University Lecturer Series Applications deadline from 2/3/23 to 2/8/23.

The January 25 minutes were previously approved by email vote.

The meeting ended at 5:34

Minutes submitted by Ben Martin