**Faculty Senate Minutes**

**November 2, 2022**

**4-6 p.m.**

**Attending senators:** 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

**Attending guests:** Amy Benton, Elizabeth Bishop, Victoria Black, Carole Clerie, Christine Hailey, Shreekanth Mandayam, Terrance McClain, Rodney Rhode, Aimee Roundtree, Karen Sigler, Beth Thomas, Rose Trevino

The meeting was called to order at 4:02 p.m.

**Presidential Commission on the Run to R1 Update** – Shreekanth Mandayam, Chief Research Officer and Associate Vice President for Research and Federal Relations

Shreekanth Mandayam is the chair of the Presidential Commission on the Run to R1. He gave the Senate an update on the commission’s goals and progress.

The commission’s stretch goal is to make recommendations to the President’s Cabinet on how the university can get to R1 by 2027. There are several metrics to determine R1 status, but the top three are annual research expenditures, number of PhD graduates and number of post-docs at the university. Regarding the first metric, Texas State already exceeds the needed amount of annual research expenditures. The university is now at an all-time high of $110 million, which is three times more than 10 years ago. It’s also more than twice the amount of research expenditures of some R1 universities in Texas like Baylor and North Texas. Texas State needs to catch up with the number of PhD graduates and the number of post-docs. In the 2020 evaluation cycle, the university had 22 post-docs and a little more than 50 PhD students – with only 17 in STEM disciplines. How much the university needs to grow each of those is an interesting question, according to Mandayam.

The commission is tasked with soliciting creative ideas from the university community. Once they are approved by the Cabinet, some of these ideas may be implemented immediately. The other aspect of this run to R1 is to sustain these levels of production so the university doesn’t fall from this status after achieving it.

The commission has met three times so far. The first thing they did was invite the presidential fellow, Dr. Tahir Ekin, who has attempted to reverse engineer the R1 algorithm, and Mark Turner, the assistant vice president of Institutional Research, to discuss data and metrics. The commission then sent word to the Academic Affairs Council to ask how much of an investment would be needed to increase the number of PhD programs. The investments will not be forever investments – these programs should eventually become self-sustaining. The commission is now looking at which investments can be made right away, how long those investments should last and how does the university sustain it. Mandayam is meeting with specific departments about this issue. He’s also preparing for a town hall to open this discussion to the entire university community. There will also be a survey.

The president has set a goal of getting recommendations in by January 9, 2023. However, Mandayam said his discussions with deans and department chairs made it clear the process will need to happen sooner to recruit PhD students. His goal is to have recommendations in by Thanksgiving.

* A senator asked which departments are being targeted first in these discussions. Mandayam said he is talking with STEM programs that currently offer a PhD – Materials Science, Engineering and Commercialization; Computer Science; and Aquatic Resources and Integrative Biology. One reason he’s targeting STEM programs is because the university would need to graduate PhD students by 2026 to be R1 eligible by 2027. STEM programs typically graduate students more quickly than other programs. He said those three programs cannot bear the burden of getting to R1, however. Existing PhD programs will continue to produce, and new PhD programs will be part of the strategic plan.
* A senator asked how much the university needs to grow the graduate student population and post-doc populations. Mandayam said they’re currently trying to determine that. He can’t just look at the algorithm and make a pronouncement. It must follow the investment. He’s hopeful to have that determination in a few weeks.
* A senator said when he arrived at the university a decade and a half ago, it was as if post-docs didn’t exist on campus. Post-docs are not as common in his department, but they would benefit from training to include post-doc funding in grants they receive.
* A senator asked for clarification on the timeline. Mandayam said post-docs would have to be generated by 2024. PhD students would have to be generated by 2025-2026. The senator said the university will have to invest in support staff to do this.
* A senator said it’s very hard to attract PhD students without tuition support and health insurance. Mandayam said this will be the first recommendation. In the state of Texas and across the world, universities do not ask PhD students to pay tuition. He said the phrase he’s been told to use in Texas is “tuition scholarship” and not “tuition waiver.” Another senator said these PhD students need a livable wage, as well. Mandayam said he agreed. His goal would be to home grow students from Texas into PhDs and post-docs.
* A senator said he was surprised to hear Texas State had exceeded the annual revenue expenditures needed for R1 considering the university is way behind in the labor pool to do the work. He said it would be an interesting analysis to see how well the university is doing with its current workforce compared to other institutions. Mandayam said he’s trying to expand collaborations between disciplines and build the research development centrally, which is what R1 institutions typically do. He said the university must also build its intellectual property portfolio, which is quite poor compared to other R1 institutions. The university received its first invention disclosure for the year this past week and is averaging 1-2 per year. He said this is not the fault of the faculty because the university hasn’t enabled them to be able to harvest the technology out of research – and the invention disclosure is impossible to fill out. He wants to change policy to make it easier for faculty.

Mandayam concluded by reminding Senate of the upcoming survey and town hall. He said these ideas will come from the faculty.

**Bobcat Balance Changes** – Carole Clerie, Assistant VP of Human Resources

Texas State is starting the process of transitioning our employee assistance program, Bobcat Balance, to a new vendor effective November 1. The new vendor partner is ComPsych. There is a 30-day overlap with the new services and services from the previous vendor, which will expire November 30.

ComPsych has been around for 30+ years and is the largest provider of EAP services. Global service centers are staffed by clinical, legal, financial, wellness, behavioral and work-life experts 24 hours a day. They also offer critical incident services.

They offer an online platform called GuidanceResources, which includes free, confidential services for counseling, legal guidance on basic questions, financial guidance, work-life balance and other online resources. The goal of this is to prevent small problems in life from becoming big problems for both eligible members and members of that person’s household.

Records of these visits and consultations are kept with ComPsych, so the university has no access to them. The university does receive summary reports, however, to get an idea of trends about why people are accessing the benefits.

Services are available 24/7 by calling 888-228-9831 or visiting guidanceresources.com. The company web ID is TXST.

* The previous contract allowed for five, short-term counseling sessions per issue per year per covered member and any member of that person’s household. That same level will continue to be offered. There is no cost for these short-term sessions. They are confidential and voluntary. They provide resource connections for long-term counseling needs.
* Regarding legal information and consultation, ComPsych offers unlimited guidance from staff attorney on issues like family law, wills, bankruptcy, estate planning, real estate and ID theft. They also provide local referrals with free, 30-minute consultations and a 25% discount on in-network attorneys.
* ComPsych also has staff financial experts with unlimited access for guidance on budgeting, taxes and retirement planning, among others.
* The work-life balance benefits include practical information and referrals regarding child and elder care, relocation, event planning, home improvement and buying/selling a home, to name a few.

The HR website will soon be updated to reflect this new information.

* A senator asked if Clerie was happy with the selection. She said she was very happy – and the provider also offers several professional development training opportunities.

**Success Coaching** – Terrance McClain, Associate Director for Success Coaching, and Victoria Black, Associate Dean of Student Services

Success Coaching promotes academic excellence by helping students reach their highest potential. McClain and Black visited Senate to bring more visibility and awareness of this program to faculty.

The program started in 2012 and was originally called Academic Coaching. It was part of the university’s QEP to provide services to first-year students. Since 2020, Success Coaching has shifted efforts to work closely with students on academic probation. (About 20% of all first-year students, on average, go on probation after their first semester.) They have also started to work with students enrolled in developmental education courses.

The mission of the program is to foster an intentional and interactive partnership with students to enhance their overall academic success by assisting them in developing skills to become self-advocates in their education. McClain said the goal is to help students view academic help in a positive light. Success Coaching is grounded in two theories: Schlossberg’s Transition Theory and Appreciative Inquiry. The program employs 22 graduate students as coaches. McClain listed benefits of the program, including individualized academic strategies, enhanced classroom performance, increased productivity, increased GPA and enhanced communication skills.

Black hoped this meeting with Senate will help draw more attention to the program, since students are not forced to take part in it. When they do take part, they are matched with a certified success coach to gain insight on their learning/work style, develop a plan and assess areas of growth.

When should faculty refer a student to Success Coaching? McClain listed a few scenarios:

* When a student is on academic probation
* Students who desire to increase their productivity and classroom performance
* Students who are juggling too many things

Students can sign up on the Success Coaching website. They are located on the 2nd floor of Commons Dining Hall.

* A senator asked how this program interfaces with the PACE Center and coaches for first-year students. Black said this is the redesign of that program. Instead of focusing on first-year students, they’re focusing on students on academic probation. The senator asked about students in developmental education classes and how Success Coaching will handle increasingly larger freshman class sizes. Black said they’re trying to be very intentional in identifying students who have the most need. The program works with advising centers so some students can transition straight into coaching. There is no requirement that students go into coaching, however. Another senator said the math department received grants to bring their grad students on as coaches.
* A senator asked how long it takes for a potential coach to be certified through the Association for the Coaching and Tutoring Profession (ACTP). McClain said the coaches go through 2-3 weeks of training, which ends up being 30-40 hours. Coaches must recertify every three years.
* A senator asked if this is only for first-year students on academic probation. Black said no – especially if a student is on continued probation. The goal is to help them, so they don’t get suspended. They also work with students appeal to get their financial aid active again.
* A senator asked if grad student coaches are paid like a regular job or if it’s part of their tuition. They’re paid as a regular job.
* A senator asked about students showing early signs of problems in the classroom who are not yet on probation. Black said they’re hoping more faculty will submit referrals to help identify who is trending toward failing.
* A senator said she appreciated that Success Coaching sometimes encourages students to drop to part time – since many students think it’s all or nothing.
* A senator asked if SLAC refers students to Success Coaching. McClain said they work closely with SLAC and are looking for more collaboration. They also refer students to SLAC, as well.
* A senator asked if it would make sense to train tutors on how to spot signs that a student should be referred to Success Coaching. Black said they just recently trained student workers in all support centers to do this. There will be more training in the spring.
* A senator asked if Success Coaching plays a role in New Student Orientation. Black said yes, and they also present information to parents.

**University Lecturers Proposal Approval**

The Senate then considered the call to request proposals for the University Lecturers Series. A senator asked if anything had changed from last year’s call. Senator Ledbetter said she didn’t believe so. The rubric used to judge the proposals has been updated. The call was approved.

**PAAG Topics**

The next PAAG meeting is November 9. Senator Ledbetter asked for ideas of what to include on the agenda.

* A senator said she wants to hear the president’s environmental plan for the university. Another senator agreed, saying the university is behind many other institutions in this regard.
* A senator asked if it’s the time to ask for updates on the administrative burden findings and the Senate’s ongoing frustrations with IT. Senator Ledbetter said the findings aren’t due until January 9, 2023.
* A senator asked about ongoing frustrations with the Dean of Students Office. Senator Ledbetter said this may be a topic for the future since the DoS is still working on processes and procedures.
* A senator said he was surprised to hear Provost Bourgeois talk about next year’s freshman class size goal of 8,000. He wants to know how the university will continue to grow the size of the class when it can’t provide on-campus housing for the size of its current class. Another senator said he was concerned that around 1,500 of the current class of first-year students were deemed as not college ready by the Texas Success Initiative Assessment. The goal is for all those students to take a developmental class their first semester, which would be offered by his department. Another senator said this sounded like the previous discussion of selecting PhD programs that can produce more graduates sooner than other programs. He said it felt strange that speed was being used as a leading consideration instead of salary data or job markets. Another senator asked if the university was anticipating any of those 8,000 students to be online students. Another senator said it was discussed that the university’s policy on requiring first-year students to live on campus may need to be revisited. He wants to discuss the president’s vision of totally online programs and the use of an outside vendor to develop these programs.
* A senator wanted to ask the president about his goal of having 85% students registered in student organizations by 2030. She’s concerned with the decreased funding of student orgs and wants to ask him if he plans to increase funding or resources for student orgs.

The environmental plan and general enrollment growth were moved forward as agenda topics.

**Other Business**

Minutes from the October 26 meeting were approved.

Wording was approved for a Senate request of personal narratives from faculty regarding salary equity or compression.

A senator reminded other senators to encourage their faculty to apply for the Service Learning Excellence Program director position.

The Senate then went into Executive Session to discuss an issue with Faculty Developmental Leave applications.

The meeting adjourned at 6:08 p.m.