**Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes**

**March 1, 2023**

**4-6 p.m.**

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

**Attending guests:** Moonis Ali, Lisa Ancelet, Jesse Backstrom, Vaughn Baltzly, Amy Benton, Emily Brunson, Ann Burnette, Lisa Chrans, Hunter Close, Kimberley Davis, Autumn Guel, Kyong Hee Chee, Luis Intersimone, Paul Jantz, Jim Keefe, Omar Lopez, Sherri Mora, Danette Myers, Chris Russian, Robert Rutledge, In Hyouk Song, Lois Stickley

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

The Senate meets once a semester with its liaisons to discuss issues and concerns they’re hearing from faculty in their departments or schools. Attendees went into breakout rooms to discuss by college.

Senators and liaisons then returned to discuss amongst the entire group.

Senator Supancic from the College of Applied Arts shared their list of talking points:

* Staffing – both administrative staff and advising staff
* Pre- and post-award assistance
* The faculty hiring process
* Culture and expectations for R1 and faculty/staff morale
* Lack of infrastructure with the run to R1
* Teaching load with the run to R1
* Lobbying in DC for the run to R1
* Salary compression and inversion
* More faculty interface with the Development Office
* Faculty recruitment and DEI concerns with the legislature/governor
* Academic freedom
* Bloating of top administration
* Excessive burdens
* Reorganization of University College and removal of Common Experience
* Collaboration with other universities and medical centers

Senator Ojede from the McCoy College of Business Administration shared their list of talking points, along with those of the university librarians.

The librarian talking points included:

* Salary compression
* Organizational change under Academic Affairs
* Librarian career ladder needs to be revisited

Liaisons from McCoy shared the following talking points:

* The opt-out method of Senate elections
* Divisions between research and teaching faculty with the run to R1
* Quality of online teaching

Senator Ledbetter said there will be a referendum at some point to change the Senate election process from opt-out to opt-in.

Senator Acee shared the following talking points from the College of Education:

* Restoration of travel funds that were cut during COVID and differences in the amount of travel funds department by department
* Tech support in classrooms and lack of urgency
* Custodial concerns since positions were outsourced
* Bringing in marketing experts to help faculty with student recruitment
* Cuts in coordinator pay

Ann Burnette, a liaison in the College of Fine Arts and Communication, shared these talking points:

* Staffing concerns
* Salary compression
* Future of a new PhD in communication and how that will impact faculty
* Non-tenured faculty career ladder
* Student evaluations and how they impact tenure and promotion

Senator Irani shared talking points from the College of Health Professions:

* Questions of whether upper administration understands the cohort system in this field
* Reaching maximum capacity per accreditation
* Resources not available to expand cohort or recruit new graduate students
* Health Information Management has had trouble recruiting in-person students since moving to Round Rock
* Lack of residence hall, dining hall and student services at Round Rock campus
* Research support and summer teaching loads
* Faculty compensation for summer research productivity
* Faculty salary concerns compared to clinical fields outside academia
* M&O budget cuts not restored post-COVID
* Lack of community at Round Rock campus
* Protection of tenure and academic freedom
* Increased benefits (like gym memberships) have been appreciated

Senator Jensen from the College of Liberal Arts shared these talking points:

* Tenure protection and executive orders from the governor related to DEI
* Teaching ratios related to non-tenured faculty
* Staffing concerns
* Faculty and staff morale
* Administrative pay issues during the summer
* R1 expectations of faculty and students and three-year PhD programs
* PhD program expectations during the run to R1
* Non-STEM colleges left out of discussion during run to R1
* Lack of communication and transparency with regards to faculty salary equity distribution and Follett textbook plan for students
* One-time bonuses vs. actual salary raises
* Rapid online enrollment increases and workload balance

Senator White from the College of Science and Engineering shared these talking points:

* Salary compression and inversion
* Non-tenured faculty salaries
* Salary competition with industry for technical staff
* Challenges with rapid enrollment growth
* Hiring specialized faculty and enrollment
* How Engineering Technology fits in with the growth in other engineering programs

Senator White asked Senator Irani how the Round Rock campus feels about calls to offer more general education level classes in Round Rock. Senator Irani said the topic was brought up with their College Council today and things are quite uncertain. Round Rock would welcome pre-req classes being offered there, but the big concern is with classroom space. Senator White asked who they should talk to about issues like the best time to offer classes and which classes to offer. Dean Welbourne is currently also the VP for the Round Rock campus, but they are separating those positions into standalone spots. Senator Irani recommended talking to Associate Dean Janet Bezner about these topics. Liaison Chris Russian said Amy Wong handles all scheduling for classrooms on the Round Rock campus. Senator Supancic urged caution on any proposal until there is a commitment to establish infrastructure at the Round Rock campus. He believes the best course of action is dedicated faculty in Round Rock instead of asking or incentivizing faculty to drive from San Marcos.

Senator Ledbetter told liaisons the Senate would move forward with trying to get answers or clarification to issues brought up in this meeting.

Minutes from the February 22 meeting were approved.

Senator Jensen asked if next week’s PAAG agenda can include discussion about the pause in strategic planning. It’s been added to the agenda.

Senator Ojede asked if there were any issues from the liaison meeting that could be added to PAAG. Senator Ledbetter suggested having a discussion next week to talk about steps moving forward with these topics.

Senator Irani raised a concern over the Follett subscription plan with textbooks and whether this would cause the library’s book subscription budget to be cut. He also raised a concern about a backlog of annual reviews because of a change to allow faculty to respond to the chair or director’s comments in the review.

The meeting adjourned at 6:02 p.m.