**Faculty Senate Meeting**

**Minutes**

**August 30, 2023**

**4:00-6:00 pm**

**JCK 880**

**Members Present:** Stacey Bender, Dale Blasingame, William Chittenden, Rachel Davenport, Peter Dedek, Dave Donnelly, Irani Farzan, Jennifer Jensen, William Kelemen, Lynn Ledbetter, Jo Beth Oestreich, Adetty Pérez de Miles, Michael Supancic, and Alex White.

Member Absent**:** Rebecca Bell-Metereau

**Guests:** Eugene Bourgeois, Mary Brennan, Matthew Brooks, Natalie Ceballos, Lauren Goodley, Scott Kruse, Gloria Martinez, Floyd Quinn, Justin Randolph, Piyush Shroff, Karen Sigler, Lois Stickley and Debbie Thorne.

**Chair Ledbetter opened the meeting at 4:01 pm.**

**Discussion on clarification of Post-Tenure Review/Annual Review\* – Dr. Eugene**

**Bourgeois, Dr. Debbie Thorne and Dr. Matt Brooks.**

**\***Relates to[Senate Bill 18](https://capitol.texas.gov/BillLookup/History.aspx?LegSess=88R&Bill=SB18) *which requires each higher education institution’s governing board to adopt new policies and procedures regarding tenure*.

Dr. Bourgeois began with follow up comments made at previous PAAG and Faculty Senate

meetings when the legislature was still in session earlier this year. Bourgeois provided to Faculty Senate the modified policy in the Texas State University System Rules and Regulations regarding tenure review, which was approved at the most recent Board of Regents meeting. Post-tenure review of tenured faculty members must now be a comprehensive evaluation of faculty and their activities in the three traditional areas: teaching, scholarly creative activities, and service. Tenured faculty members must receive an evaluative score or assessment in each discrete area no more often than once every year but no less often than once every six years after the date the faculty member was granted tenure. The faculty member either meets or does not meet expectations in each individual area. A policy will be created to place a faculty member that does not meet expectations in any area on a short-term professional development pathway. Provost Bourgeois is creating a task force to ensure our university policy is compliant with the new System Rules and Regulations. The task force is to develop a policy for the start of the next calendar year. The task force is to be chaired by a faculty member and potentially contain 3 other faculty, 1 dean, 2 chairs, and Assistant Provost Dr. Brooks, with each college represented as well as the administration through inclusion of the Assistant Provost.

Comments and questions from the Senators:

There are some units who give comprehensive ratings rather than giving one for each discrete area (teaching, research and scholarly activities and service), which will not be sufficient according to this new policy. A Senator asked if peer review can be internal within a department or college. Bourgeois stated that reviews would be internal, and there is no mandate to go outside the university and have external reviewers, though they could be included if a faculty member desires. The challenge with using only external reviews is that they say little to nothing about teaching, and typically only review scholarly activities and service. For TXST to complete comprehensive evaluations, faculty must be reviewed in all three areas. Another question concerned how administrative reviews, i.e., Associate Dean and Associate Chair, are conducted. For these individuals, duties may or may not be formally construed as service. The provost said that performance evaluations need to align to workload, with carefully weighted percentages assigned to teaching, scholarly activities and service, which are sometimes calculated with course releases. Another Senator shared a concern from a colleague that in one department/school, post-tenure reviews were done for some faculty, but not all faculty, and that sometimes the reviews were used for retaliation. Bourgeois stated that post-tenure review is supposed to be for every tenured faculty. When the chair and personnel committee find someone not meeting expectations, as defined by policy, conversations should begin. The next step is to create a professional development plan after post-tenure review, which runs through the provost’s office. A Senator expressed concern that there may not be adequate resources to implement a post-tenure professional development plan. Bourgeois stated there have only been a handful of post-tenure colleagues in the last 10 years who did not meet expectations and were moved to the development stage. Higher administration will consider providing support for any future cases.

Another Senator asked if we should make minor changes to our current annual review policy so that tenured faculty were reviewed in all discreet areas each year, or if we should continue the annual evaluations as usual but add an extra six-year review cycle for post-tenure? Several Senators suggested not to decouple, since faculty are already evaluated every year, with several extra evaluations on the path to tenure, and since departments have enough work doing annual reviews already. A Senator asked how many years a faculty member would have to **not** meet expectations to trigger the career plan. The provost said that corrective action would need to occur within one to two years. Another Senator brought up that there seems to be a trend as individuals progress to take on higher service duties, such as being a graduate or undergraduate coordinator, which may not trigger an administrative recalculation of workload. As a result, they may not pursue a scholarly agenda as much while they focus on supporting the department. Would this new policy mean those faculty members would be put on a growth plan and made to shift duty away from service and put more effort into scholarship? The Provost replied that there needs to be a correlation between what the faculty member is doing and how the member is evaluated. Bourgeois recommended the new policy reflect the cumulative and creative nature of faculty work in any given year, as well as build upon what they did two years ago, ten years ago or twenty-five years ago. Activities add up across a career.

**Faculty Senate Fellow, Piyush Shroff –** Shroff plans to conduct surveys with faculty and students to learn how AI is or is not being used in classes across the university. Shroff intends to coordinate with Faculty Development to host a workshop to help instructors design creative assignments in innovative ways using AI. He plans to create surveys to collect data on the effectiveness and information presented in the workshop. Additional plans for the project are to interview prospective individuals from the Service-Learning Excellence Program; Dr. Maria De-Arteaga, an Assistant Professor for Information; Risk and Operation Management at The University of Texas; and a core faculty member in the Machine Learning Laboratory and affiliated faculty of Good Systems. Shroff will review any policy regarding use of technology. He will also contact the Honor Code Council and the Academic Freedom Committee to determine what procedures need to be in place.

A couple of Senators stated they are willing to participate with Shroff on this project. One Senator is going to present soon with Faculty Development on this topic: <https://signup.txstate.edu/sessions/9283-9-14-23-how-to-talk-to-your-students-about-ai.> Faculty Senate will provide whatever assistance Fellow Shroff needs.

**PAAG Questions for Sept. 6**

Before identifying questions for PAAG, Senators shared suggestions and concerns.

**Senator concerns:**

At a recent Academic Affairs meeting, there was discussion and concern about the Follett BookSmart roll out. Vice President for Finance & Support Services Eric Algoe will go to the Council of Chairs on September 7 to share faculty and student concerns regarding the new system. The Faculty Senate will also create a subcommittee to gather data, comments, etc., from faculty on this issue. Algoe will also create a committee to discuss the concerns from this semester and provide a remedy for next semester.

A Senator attended the Liberal Arts Chairs meeting and shared that Algoe met with bookstore representatives on several issues. There were robust conversations about the BookSmart program, including issues such as books originally requested having been substituted for books that faculty did not order, and the availability of paper books versus digital books. Initially, faculty were told they could pick any textbook they wanted. However, Follett prefers to provide digital editions. If a faculty member wants a paper book, there may be a higher fee charged to the students. The fee could range between $10 and $30 over and above the cost of the program. In some wet labs, students are asked not to bring digital books because it is not safe to bring electronics into the lab. There needs to be a better choice for faculty and students. There were issues shared about the lack of messaging and poor communication of the new book process. Follett has never worked with a university this size before, though they did not share that this was their first time during the presentation last year.

One Senator shared that an instructor learned that their printed materials arrived at the bookstore, but the bookstore could not find them. The faculty member was told the books were somewhere in the back, but it was not known where they had been placed, and bookstore staff was not actively working to locate them. A Senator shared that a faculty member in Round Rock said some textbooks were delivered, but the code to access materials from the book was sent on postcards to the San Marcos bookstore. Students were told they would have to each pay a $10 shipping fee to get the code sent to Round Rock. After the Chair contacted Follett, the issue was resolved without students needing to pay. A Senator shared that the new director of a school did not receive materials for many students enrolled in a program. The faculty members could not teach the courses properly, so the materials were purchased using the school’s budget.

A Senator shared that an instructor mistakenly uploaded an ISBN number for an older edition of a hard copy text when reporting course materials to Follett. There was no follow-up with the instructor by Follett to ask if the member wanted a newer digital edition, which led to no book being available for students at all. There was a suggestion to contact Timothy Jackson, the new manager, to help with any future textbook issues.

A Senator asked what it would take to discontinue this program and look for another textbook ordering system, though we do not know what contract was signed or the length of the contract period. We also do not know who negotiated the contract. A Senator asked how many students opted out of the program and learned it was ~1200 students. Graduate students are unaffected by the BookSmart program. We look forward to learning what is shared and decided upon during the upcoming Council of Chairs meeting. Then we can decide whether to invite someone from the bookstore to come to the September 13 or 20 meeting to speak to Faculty Senate about the textbook roll out.

**Questions for PAAG**:

A Senator shared a concern regarding two previous issues that have not been resolved: **PCRs and keys**. Many faculty and graduate students were hired in August, and their PCRs were not processed quickly. These faculty have had issues accessing Canvas, getting parking, and they are not eligible to make a key request yet. Universities and businesses manage to get employees keys to do their work, and we should do the same. How do we resolve these issues?

Another Senator shared a concern regarding the Nontenure Line Faculty Title Series. The original draft timeline from Dr. Thorne requires every department to have a document related to the title series completed by December 15, 2023. However, the university policy has not been distributed and it is unclear to departments what their charge is regarding the policy. The administration has also not distributed the tenure and promotion policy that Dean Hailey’s committee put together, nor a template of any kind. We need to get the information distributed soon in order for departments to complete the first documents before the deadline.

The Chair asked and the Senators agreed to submit two questions to PAAG related to Keys/PCRs and the NLF Title Series.

**The next Agenda item is to approve the minutes:**

**Motion** to approve Minutes for July 19, August 4, and August 23, 2023**. PASSED.**

**Chair Ledbetter moved to Executive Session.**

**Executive Session.** Senators discussed the following items:

Website change and liaison list change

Presidential Work/Life Advisory Council

Meeting adjourned by Chair Ledbetter at 5:58 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

JB Oestreich, Secretary