Faculty Senate Meeting

Minutes

September 27, 2023

JCK 880

4:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

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

**Guests**: Thillainatarajan Sivakumaran, Emma Parsley, Colleen Myles, Shetay Ashford-Hanserd, Jeremy Bohonos, Chad Booth, Edwin Chow, Stacey Cropley, Theresa Garcia, David Gibbs, Lauren Goodley, Deborah Howard, Scott Kruse, Jason Kwak, Cathy Lamm, Stephanie Larrison, David Levy, Catherine Messinger, Russell Moses, Judy Oskam, Aimee Roundtree, Susan Schwinning, Piyush Shroff, Karen Sigler, Kathryn Smith, Vedaraman Sriraman, Lois Stickley, Lucia Summers, Dimitry Tetin and Amy Weimer.

**Chair Ledbetter called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.**

**The first item on the agenda was a presentation on** **TXST Global Initiatives** (Thilla) Sivakumaran, Vice President for TXST Global. Sivakumaran provided an overview of Texas State's Online initiatives. The purpose of this initiative is to provide access to adult learners 25 and older in Texas and nationally, to complete an online degree at TXST and meet workforce demands to reskill and upskill workers nationally. Sivakumaran provided a brief overview of the roles and responsibilities of departments, faculty, TXST Online, the Online Program Managers (OPM), funding (start-up funding will come from TXST Global), potential programs to be launched in the summer and fall of 2024 (including 8 undergraduate degrees, 14 master's degrees, and 6 doctoral degrees) and revenue sharing. Sivakumaran said all degrees belong to the department they are housed in, including the curriculum and instructional faculty. TXST Online helps to support launching the programs, provides advisors for students and instructional designers for faculty, and pays for the hiring of Nontenure Line Faculty (NLF). An OPM will be responsible for marketing, recruiting, and following up with students who have applied to the programs. There are plans for regional and international locations in Italy (at a university) and Spain (at a museum). TXST will offer a degree with partner universities and courses will transfer between the institutions. Faculty will be able to teach at these international sites during the summer.

A Senator asked if the online degree would be designated as such on the degree. The response was “No. It would be a degree from TXST.” A Senator asked if additional programs could be developed beyond those already submitted for approval. The answer was “Yes.” A Senator asked who the graders would be and how they would work with the faculty teaching the online courses. Sivakumaran stated that a company would be hired to provide graders for the course. The minimum requirement to be a grader would be a master’s degree (appropriate to the course/department). A Senator asked about the instructional design of online programs. Sivakumaran’s response was that shell courses would be developed by faculty within each department with assistance from instructional designers. The purpose of this is to ensure a seamless transition in case the original faculty member becomes unavailable to teach the course.

A Senator asked if Sivakumaran anticipates recent legislative changes regarding the use of OPMs to affect the proposed model. Sivakumaran stated the Legislature is still considering the third-party option which requires more paperwork and filing information with the Federal Government or if the current OPM will still be considered a full-service vendor. This option provides multiple services and functions to recruit students. A Senator asked Sivakumaran to describe the role of advisors for the online system. He stated advisors working with program coordinators would only do course advising. Advising on financial aid, graduation, etc. would be done by other offices. Another Senator asked how the rise of AI and ChatGPT would impact online programs. Sivakumara stated this is a challenge and that TXST Online will follow campus policies related to AI. Sivakumara hopes TXST can be a leader related to security issues and assessment programs with TXST online.

**The next agenda item was an update related to the sunsetted Environment and Sustainability Committee.** Speakers for this item wereEmma Parsley, Sustainability Coordinator, and Colleen Myles, Associate Professor in the Department of Geography and Environmental Studies. Emma Parsley requested the creation of an Environmental and Sustainability Advisory Council to include faculty, staff, students, and administrative members. The goal is to create an action plan for TXST to include sustainable policies such as implementing electronic and paper purchasing; creating commuter programs (there is no carpool system currently in place); and reducing carbon emissions for the university.

A Senator asked how many people work in the Office of Sustainability. Parsley stated she and four student workers currently work in the office. A Senator asked how the Advisory Council would be selected. Parsley has created a short list of prospective members but would appreciate additional recommendations from the Faculty Senate. A Senator suggested adding someone from the city to participate in the Advisory Council. A Senator asked if there were any initiatives of concern by the city. Parsley explained that the City of San Marcos does have issues with litter accumulation in the river and safeguarding the wild rice. A Senator noted there has been a lack of communication regarding efforts from the Office of Sustainability. Parsley replied that they have sent emails related to drought status updates, and event updates, including about a Sustainable Expo held last spring. There has been a request to host the Expo annually. The Faculty Senate suggested the Advisory Council include up to nine members comprised of faculty, staff, students, administration, and the city of San Marcos. It was also suggested Parsley could be an ex-officio chair of the committee.

A Senator noted the Round Rock (RR) campus does have an automatic shut-down feature for lights. The RR campus is newer and sustainable elements were incorporated in its construction. A Senator provided suggestions for projects the Office of Sustainability could implement, i.e., more green space, eliminating plastic bottles, and bringing back the Green Cat challenge.

**MOTION:** support the creation of an Environment and Sustainability Advisory Council. **PASSED**.

**The next item on the agenda included a debrief on the Meeting of the Academic Advisory Council, Council of Chairs, and Faculty Senate.**

The University Classification and Compensation UPPS 04.04.11 policy review and comments are due October 2, 2023. All comments for the Instructional Title Series AA/PPS 04.12.06 are due by October 11, 2023. Unless there are any significant changes to AA/PPS 04.12.06, the Faculty Senate may not have the opportunity to review the changes. Dr. Thorne created a template for departments to help develop promotion guidelines related to the Instructional Title Series. Initial guidelines from the departments are due January 2024 and promotion guidelines are due in spring 2024. Nontenure Line Faculty (NLF) are encouraged to participate in committees establishing department guidelines for AA/PPS 04.12.06. A Senator asked who could vote on the proposed guidelines. Another Senator shared the following quote from the meeting: “The guidelines will be developed in collaboration with all voting faculty in the academic unit and consistent with parameters in AA/PPS 04.01.26.” The Faculty Senate constitution defines voting faculty as those with 50% FTE or higher. A Senator asked how departments are creating committees to address this new policy. Several Senators shared that subcommittees have been formed in several departments across campus and are made up of five to six members with at least two NLF members. Many of the committees are chaired by an NLF member.

The Chair provided a few reminders to the Faculty Senate: The Faculty Senate will create topics for the upcoming President’s Academic Advisory Group (PAAG) meeting scheduled for October 11, 2023, at the next Faculty Senate meeting, October 4, 2023.

Additionally, the Faculty Senate is encouraged to attend the NLF Appreciation Reception next Thursday, October 5, 2023, at the Wittliff Collection from 4:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

**MOTION** to approve the September 20, 2023, minutes. **PASSED**.

**Chair Ledbetter adjourned the meeting at 5:41 p.m.**