Faculty Senate Meeting

Minutes

October 25, 2023

JCK 880

4:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

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

Member Absent: Lynn Ledbetter

**Guests:** Mary Aycock,Kimberlee Howard, David Kilby, Scott Kruse, Omar Lopez, Russell Moses, Paivi Rentz, John Root, Arlene Salazar, Piyush Shroff, Lois Stickley and Margaret Vaverek.

**Vice Chair Davenport opened the meeting at 4:00 p.m.**

The initial agenda item discussed was the debrief from the recent full Faculty Senate and Liaison meeting which took place on October 18, 2023. During this discussion, several recurring themes were highlighted across the colleges. Concerns were raised regarding the university’s reorganization and the transparency of the decision-making process. Additionally, issues such as salary compression among faculty and staff, faculty expectations for student recruitment, and the inadequacy of infrastructure to accommodate enrollment increases were raised. Infrastructure concerns included technology upgrades, reliable Wi-Fi access, the need for additional faculty and staff to support departmental requirements, and a shortage of lab and research space. There were also concerns expressed regarding how faculty reviews will be developed for the new Faculty Title Series.

During the meeting, BookSmart Data was presented, which included the results of the faculty and student surveys. The faculty survey, completed by 113 instructors, showed that 66% of respondents were either somewhat or extremely dissatisfied with BookSmart. In addition, 56% of respondents encountered difficulties with their book order, and 66% had difficulties making their learning materials available to students. Furthermore, 68% of instructors responded that their learning materials were not available to all students in all of their courses on the first day of class.

On the other hand, 301 students completed the student survey. Of these, 80% used the BookSmart program, while 12% opted out and 8% were unsure if they did or did not use the program. Among students who used the program, 43% were either somewhat or extremely satisfied with the cost, whereas 35% were either somewhat or extremely dissatisfied. Among students who opted out, 75% reported that they could access their materials for less money. Of students who could not afford the program, 16% opted out, and 6% did not understand the program.

The Faculty Senate has requested that the survey data be shared with Follett and John Root, the Executive Director for Auxiliary Services. The Faculty Senate would also like to invite Eric Algoe, Executive Vice President for Operations, and John Root to a future meeting to discuss the length of the BookSmart contract with Follett and to find out plans to improve the program.

The next order of business was to select PAAG questions for the upcoming November 1, 2023, meeting. Topics suggested included lack of communication about university changes, an update regarding Esparanza Hall in Round Rock, a move to Astroturf from turf for athletics, institutional research comparing our ratio of nontenure line faculty and tenure line faculty to similar institutions, lagging infrastructure affecting our Run to R1, and an update on the new budget plans and process. The topics were prioritized and the latter three will be submitted for the next PAAG meeting.

There were a few brief comments regarding librarian concerns with staffing, reorganization, career ladder changes, and inclusion in university affairs. The liaison was absent. The Senate suggested reaching out to the liaison and asking for ways Faculty Senate can further support librarians.

The **MOTION** to approve the minutes from October 18, 2023**, PASSED**

Vice Chair Davenport announced that Faculty Senate review groups have been created to evaluate submissions for Faculty Development Leave (FDL). The results of these reviews will be discussed at a future Faculty Senate meeting on November 11, 2023. Instructions for reviewing FDL submissions are available on Teams.

**Vice Chair Davenport adjourned the meeting at 5:38 p.m.**