**Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes**

**December 6, 2023**

**4:00-6:00 p.m.**

**JCK 880**

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

Members Absent: Rebecca Bell-Metereau

**Guests**: Augustine Agwuele, Angela Ausbrooks, Matthew Brooks, Stacey Cropley, Joanna Ellis, David Gibbs, Lauren Goodley, Deborah Howard, Lauren Ibarra, Scott Kruse, Noland Martin, Ny’Nika McFadden, Ariel McField, Kimberly Meitzen, Roque Mendez, Russell Moses, Aimee Roundtree, Arlene Salazar, Samjhana Shakya, Piyush Shroff, Reagan Sims, Lois Stickley, Bob Vásquez, Margaret Vaverek and Shannon Willis.

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

**The President’s Academic Advisory Group (PAAG).** President Kelly Damphousse

began the discussion with the topic of SB 17, which will take effect on January 1, 2024.

The Texas University Systems General Counsel has developed a presentation regarding SB 17 to provide their interpretation of the law and answer any questions individuals may have. President Damphousse addressed concerns regarding scholarship reviews in response to SB 17. TXST does not have an independent foundation that oversees our scholarships. The President is working on a solution to utilize current foundations or create an independent foundation option to handle scholarship awards in compliance with SB 17. The President will work with the General Counsel to address this issue and provide information to faculty in the spring. On Monday, December 11, 2024, from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. in Flowers Hall, the General Counsel will meet with the Deans and Chairs concerning SB 17. A Faculty Senator asked if the Faculty Senate could attend this meeting. The President stated he would check to see if this is possible.

The following discussion topic was to address why there was no Task Force created for SB 17, as was formed for SB 18. President Damphousse stated there was no product to be created and preferred to have conversations and rely on the General Counsel’s

interpretation of the law. A Senator noted The President mentioned that the

recommendations made by the Task Force for SB 18 would be given to the next

Provost, who should be in place at TXST by February 1, 2024.

The next topic discussed was the need for a more comprehensive parental leave policy for staff and faculty. To address this issue, President Damphousse requested that Chief Financial Officer (CFO) Eric Algoe and Associate Vice President (AVP) Carol Clerie look at our current parental and sick leave policy and suggest potential updates. The President said he would like to explore what the university can do internally to make a more generous parental and sick leave policy. He also mentioned that while the State of Texas determines the paid leave policy, higher education faculty are not included in this provision. The President encouraged faculty to share their ideas related to this issue. He emphasized that having an effective parental and sick leave policy is essential for retention and recruitment.

The next agenda item was to discuss the recent proposed sale of University Camp (UCamp). The President stated someone had approached the university to purchase the property. The prospective buyers offered twice the appraised value of the property. The President was informed the property was consistently losing money. The President was unaware of the history or how faculty and students use UCamp for research. Once faculty and community members learned of the UCamp being placed on the consent agenda for the Board of Regents to sell, the President received many letters to withdraw this item and keep this hidden gem. The President stated that as long as he was president of TXST, he would not sell the property. The President wants to develop a plan to make this property financially sustainable and accessible to students and faculty. He will create a Task Force to determine how to utilize this area. A Senator was concerned the property was undervalued; the President stated the appraisals reflected market values. A Senator pointed out that the process of selling the property eroded the trust of the faculty, staff, community, and administration. A Senator stated it would be beneficial if accurate data is collected on who is using UCamp for either research or other activities. The President noted that he had reviewed the budget for this property and believed he had done his due diligence. However, he realizes he made a mistake and looks forward to developing UCamp, potentially adding a sustainable research station, and being a good steward of this property.

The President took time to address several additional questions from the Senators. A Senator asked if there was an update regarding a potential change to the umbrella term “non-tenure line” faculty. President Damphousse stated he supported a change to the term suggested by the Nontenure Line Faculty Committee (NLFC), “Academic Professional Track” (APT). This has been forwarded to the provost for further consideration. The President also shared that the tuition discount for university faculty and staff families attending TXST has increased to 50% from 25%. A Senator asked if the tuition discount applies to TXST Global. He stated no that it is only meant for students attending classes on campus. The president shared that the university has seen a 300% increase in applications for international students. A Senator asked if there were any residences on campus for guests. President Damphousse stated the university is buying two apartment complexes and turning them into student housing. He noted that TXST has a significant problem with housing, housing shortages, and housing affordability for our students. It is cheaper to buy an apartment than to build one. There are plans to build a hotel with a nice restaurant which will be appropriate for short-term guests. TXST has a The proposed location is where the Castro Undergraduate Admissions building sits. The President also shared plans to look for housing for our Round Rock campus staff and students. A Senator suggested contacting Mr. Castro regarding the RFP for a hotel developer.

The next agenda item was a **MOTION** to Approve the November 29, 2023, Minutes.

**PASSED**.

The Faculty Senate moved into an Executive Session to discuss the Fiscal Year 2024 Research Recommendations for Research Enhancement Proposals (REP), the election update, the Mentoring Award selection committee, filling a Faculty Senate vacancy, and the upcoming committee preference survey, which begins in mid-January, 2024.

**MOTION** to approve the Faculty Senator from Philosophy to fill a vacancy for the spring semester. **PASSED**.

**MOTION** to approve a Senator to serve on the Mentoring Selection Committee. **PASSED**.

**MOTIONS** to suspend the rules. **PASSED**.

**MOTION** to endorse the Fiscal Year 2024 Recommendations for Research Enhancement Proposals (REP). **PASSED**

**Chair Ledbetter adjourned the meeting at 5:52 p.m.**

The next Faculty Senate meeting is scheduled for January 19, 2023.