**Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes**

**January 24, 2024**

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

**JCK 880**

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

**Guests**: Jeremy Bohonos, Daniel Carter, Marla Erbi-Roesemann, David Gibbs, Lauren Goodley, Matt Hall, Jeff Housman, Samantha Krause, Scott Kruse, David Levy, Chris Russian, Piyush Shroff, Karen Sigler, Thilla Sivakumaran, Vederaman Sriraman, Lois Stickley and Kelly Visnak.

**Chair Ledbetter opened the meeting at 4:09 p.m.**

The first agenda item was an **overview of the Curricular Process Pilot Program** by

Vedaraman Sriraman, Vice Provost forAcademic Innovation and Success,

Thilla Sivakumaran, Vice President for TXST Global, and Jeff Housman, Vice Provost

for Curricular Academic Programs.

Before discussing the pilot program to simplify curricular actions, Vice Provost

Sriraman began his comments by commending the University Curriculum Committee

(UCC) and Senator Supancic's work reviewing the eleven program proposals and 251

courses completed this past summer.

Sriraman shared that he met with Senator Supancic, Chair of UCC, and Jeff Housman,

Vice Provost for Curricular and Academic Programs to discuss creating a simpler

process to approve some curricula actions. The Curricular Process Pilot Program

will study the implications of implementing a simpler one-page form to approve some

curricular actions for certain existing programs that will launch in the fall of 2024. For instance, a face-to-face program in psychology is moving to an online format. The

current procedures require detailing the curriculum, learning outcomes, marketable

skills, and engaging with faculty colleagues in inter-department discussions. Many people question the necessity of such administrative burdens when the only modifications requested were to the modality and location of the offering. The pilot's goal is to test this new approach and obtain user feedback to help determine the program's effectiveness and identify areas for improvement. This spring is the data-gathering phase. Final approval for curricula changes must follow the standard process and be submitted to both UCC and the provost. One Senator noted a concern that this process would not be as transparent and visible as it is on the current Program Information Management (PIM) and Curriculum Information Management (CIM) systems online. The new form is only visible to Housman, his office, Sriraman, and Thilla. A Senator shared that Housman would attend CourseLeaf's Annual User Conference in February to learn about available platform updates and explore the possibility of Integrating this process into the PIM and CIM systems.

A Senator shared a concern that any curricular process ensures that the curriculum is owned and driven by the faculty. Thilla mentioned that new programs launched under TXST Global will be evaluated for marketability and resource allocation. Still, final approval will follow the current curriculum process and go through the provost’s office. A Senator pointed out that using the PIM system creates a duplicate catalog page. The only difference between the two pages is that one is for a TXST Global online program, while the other is for a program being offered and launched in Round Rock. This could confuse students and advisors, who may not know which page to use.

During the discussion, a Senator mentioned the concern that the quick development of proposals last summer and the launch of a new curriculum pilot this spring did not align with the strategic plan or a logical progression from the department to the college to the provost. The Senator asked whether faculty members would have control over the curriculum through the strategic planning process. Thilla mentioned that while the 5-year strategic plan provides guidance, there may be additional opportunities beyond the plan. A Senator stated that last spring that every college generated a list of proposed programs, and it is unclear what happened to those lists. The faculty are accustomed to this planning process. Still, due to changes, i.e., the formation of new divisions in the university, it is unclear to faculty what the planning and implementation process looks like. Thilla explained the top five programs and timelines from each college have been curated, and the list has been aligned with the strategic plan, including any newer developments, and will move forward to the provost. Furthermore, Sriraman stated as the university expands its footprint through TXST Global and enrollment increases at Round Rock, there will be a volume increase in curricular actions, and this pilot will provide some data to determine possible next steps, including but not limited to creating multiple review cycles and expanding the UCC. The goal is to simplify the curricular review process and reduce the burden on the UCC.

The next agenda item was the introduction of **Matt Hall, Vice President for**

**Information Technology and Chief Information Officer (VPIT/CIO)**. Hall provided an

overview of various aspects of the university’s assets, contracts, staff, and

spending across campus. He mentioned that there are 18,000 personal computing

devices, including 3,700 Macintosh devices. He also stated that Microsoft is currently

the university’s number one contract. He is taking an inventory of every application in

use, stating an initial count of 736 applications with an expected increase to over 1,000

after a more thorough review. He is interested in building Artificial Intelligence (AI)

fluency throughout the university. Hall is offering licenses for interested faculty to pilot

Microsoft CoPilot to test for instructional delivery, curriculum development, and other

capabilities and receive feedback on this platform. The Faculty Senate encouraged

Hall to contact the Department Chairs to solicit interested faculty to be considered for a

license. Hall acknowledged the challenges of the procurement process, including

insufficient documentation and a lack of visibility, and expressed a desire to create a

more transparent and efficient system. Hall stated he has ongoing interviews to gain

insights into various themes and issues facing the university. A Senator stated there

are seasonal spikes in technology at TXST and asked if this is a vendor’s product issue

or how the university has deployed it. Hall aims to tackle both aspects by implementing

suitable technology and securing adequate funding.

The next agenda item was a **MOTION** to approve December 6, 2023, Minutes**.**

**PASSED.**

The Faculty Senate moved to an Executive Session to discuss the following topics:

Identify a faculty member to serve as the Faculty Senate Liaison for The

Department of Geography and Environmental Studies, identify a faculty member to

serve on the Voter Registration and Civic Engagement Committee and identify a

faculty member to serve on the University Lectures Committee.

**MOTION** to suspend the rules. **PASSED**.

**MOTION** to suspend the standing rules to endorse the faculty member to serve as the Faculty Senate Liaison from the Department of Geography and Environmental Studies. **PASSED**.

**MOTION** to endorse a faculty member to serve on the Voter Registration & Civic Engagement Committee. **PASSED**.

**MOTION** to endorse a faculty member to serve the unexpired term on the University Lecturers Committee**.** **PASSED**.

**Chair Ledbetter adjourned the meeting at 6:19 p.m.**

The next Faculty Senate meeting is scheduled for January 31, 2024.