**Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes**

**April 17, 2024**

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

**Zoom**

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

Members absent: Vaughn Baltzly and Farzan Irani

**Guests**: Julie Lessiter, Jennifer Krou, Jeff Bumgarner, William DeSoto, Erin Dorrell, Shannon Duffy, Bruce Gaultney, Karen Gibbs, Lauren Goodley, Kevin Jetton, Noland Martin, Aimee Roundtree, Piyush Shroff, Karen Sigler, Wendy Thompson, Margaret Vaverek and Toni Watt.

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

The first item on the agenda was a response to questions from the Faculty Senate by **Julie Lessiter, Vice President of the Round Rock (RR) campus**. The first question related to the plan for classes and degree programs offered at RR. She stated that TXST Global will fund the eleven new programs and faculty. The new programs were selected based on the workforce and for the good of the community. Some of the new programs cross over between the workforce and the community, i.e., social workers, counselors, and the criminal justice program for police officers. The computer science and data analytics programs were industry-based, providing a pipeline of employees within this community. The plan will be to track enrollment in these programs for three years and evaluate whether to continue offering them. There may be plans to offer one or two new programs in 2025-2026, but not many more.

The next question was related to the anticipated population growth of RR, and two sub-questions related to how RR plans to accommodate the students in each building and how common spaces will be redesigned. Lessiter stated the goal of TXST was to have 10,000 students by 2030 at the RR campus, but she stated adding 5,000 students by 2030 would be a good number. The Esperanza Hall will provide teaching classrooms and will meet the needs of an additional 5,000 students. Since RR offers many evening classes, classroom availability was not an issue. Lessiter would like to create common spaces and a warm and welcoming atmosphere on the RR campus.

The next question concerned how the RR campus will expand the library to accommodate student and faculty growth and add more equipment and space. Lessiter stated she was working with Anthony Guardado, the head librarian at the RR campus, on plans to update the space and accommodate a growing population.

The next question concerned plans to provide office space for additional faculty and staff to support the anticipated growth in enrollment and programming at the RR campus. Lessiter stated there were two ways to address this: waterfall (all planned out ahead of time) or Agile (try a space to see if it works, adapt, and get your data and feedback, move forward, and adapt again). The RR campus will use the Agile method. A plan was developed based on feedback from their department chairs to work out how to use offices in the faculty suites. RR has a goal to build out faculty spaces as program numbers grow.

A Senator asked Lessiter what resources she needed besides money and space. Lessiter stated that she wants to remove barriers (access to technology, cost, etc.) and increase accessibility for students to attend college. Lessiter stated she was working on a laptop loaner program to provide students access to technology to remove these barriers. She stated she was exploring partnerships with industry leaders to enhance campus facilities, such as securing naming rights for specific areas. Recently, the RR campus hosted a Physical Therapy Olympics for students and the Center for High Performance Systems (CHIPS) Research forum for students and faculty. These forums could have provided an opportunity to have title sponsors for these events to significantly reduce expenses, allowing the RR campus to allocate resources more efficiently. Moreover, it was an opportunity for sponsors to gain exposure to a large audience. She stated that if her campus could adopt creative and innovative fundraising strategies, they could alleviate pressure on shared resources and focus on enhancing the student experience. Her primary objective was to procure resources that enhance student life and foster a collaborative and supportive community among faculty and staff.

A Senator asked if space could be leased at the campus for food trucks or if a quadrangle could be created to support student dining needs. Lessiter stated that some students want a Chick-fil-A and a Starbucks, but she is not currently able to get those. The campus has done some pop-up shop-type businesses, like Tropical Smoothie Café, which were successful. Lessiter is working with John Root, the Executive Director of Auxiliary Services, to install a Costa Coffee vending machine in the fall and innovative vending machines like the Farmers Fridge and Just Baked Vending, which has hot bowl buns, White Castle hamburgers, etc., for students to access fresh foods. The dining area will undergo renovations to make it more of a coffee shop environment with a more engaging atmosphere for our students, plugins for their laptops, different furniture, and big-screen TVs to play esports. Food trucks will help to supplement food options for students. Lessiter has been talking with the new President of Ascension Seton Hospital to collaborate on a swipe card giveaway for our students to eat at their facility, which has a Starbucks.

A Senator asked how the Faculty Senate could help reinforce Vice President Lessiter's vision for the RR campus. The current market landscape has changed from a decade ago to even before the onset of COVID-19. RR has renewed energy and new opportunities to make this campus successful. Lessiter stated they were building as they go, and the RR campus cares about the success of the organization—one university, two campuses. Success at San Marcos will be our success, and vice versa. Both campuses will work toward helping the next generation be successful.

A Senator asked three questions. The first question concerned what support services (ITAC, classroom space, advising) for students and faculty were in place and which services would be implemented by the launch date of the new programs in the fall of 2024. The second question concerned what stage RR was at regarding the marketing of the new programs and whether TXST Global would be responsible for marketing the programs or if there would be a different marketing firm to assist in this area. The third question concerned how Lessiter would measure the success of all the programs, many of which would have a small enrollment. Lessiter stated there was an ITAC division at the RR campus. The campus provides an after-hour group assisting till 8:00 p.m. for faculty. The Avery building has adequate classroom space. Night classes use the rooms more than day classes. Lessiter stated there was plenty of classroom space, including large lecture rooms that could house a hundred students and classrooms that could seat twenty students. Design plans for the Esperanza building’s future capacity include large classroom spaces with roll-down whiteboard divider walls to create a sixty-seat classroom or a hundred-seat classroom with technology to facilitate both sizes. Regarding student success, the RR campus hired Marimar Miguel, Director of Student Success and Academic Services last fall, with two open positions in the final stages of hiring who will be knowledgeable in various support services for students but who can refer students to specialists at the San Marcos Campus. The campus provides a writing center that may be turned into a student success center to provide support services for their students. The RR campus has a great library and a great staff. Regarding marketing, the RR campus uses a third party focusing on specific digital market targets. RR utilizes click-through rates (CTRs), which refer to the percentage of people visiting a web page from an ad that measures the effectiveness of email campaigns. The CTR helped to get 200 students to sign up in six weeks for our recent Bobcat Discovery Day. Lessiter circled back to a Senator’s question about resources and said she would put it into marketing if money were available. We need some time to measure the success of the new programs. She stated the university will have small classes, but we anticipate seeing an impact of what we do now in the fall of 2025. TXST Global has committed to helping us run the small classes for the next three years. At that time, we will have an opportunity to decide how to move forward.

A Senator asked if the marketing would address how the student experience at the RR campus will be different from that at the San Marcos campus, including whether all the courses in a program will be offered at the RR campus. The Senator also noted that the webpage indicated course numbers only and should include the course names. Lessiter stated that for the RR web page, a template was created for each academic program that will come to the RR campus to be consistent and student-friendly. Before this change, students who visited the psychology page would have been taken to the San Marcos website, which informed students of opportunities at this campus but was not transparent about the RR experience. Lessiter stated it was not positioning RR to be the same experience as the San Marcos campus; it would be completely different. The RR campus does not have many student clubs but has many student activities.

A Senator mentioned that the math department provides courses at the RR campus, in the support service category. The Senator asked if there could be clarification regarding the computer science program, indicating that students would need to take a range of math classes and incorporate that information into the class rotation. Lessiter replied that the web pages were recently created and have been sent to each department chair for review and feedback. Lessiter mentioned that she does not envision RR offering every single class for every degree program. There will be some courses offered online and some face-to-face.

A Senator stated online offerings impacted their face-to-face courses. Lessiter asked department chairs what additional courses were offered online. Depending on the number of online courses, only a few will be listed on the RR webpage. Lessiter plans to communicate the benefit of taking classes on a college campus, i.e., teamwork, and supplement these courses with online course offerings.

**MOTION** to approve the April 10, 2024, Minutes. **PASSED.**

The Faculty Senate moved to an Executive Session to receive an update from the Committee

On Committees and identify Senators to serve on the Faculty Senate Fellow Application Review

Subcommittee.

**Chair Ledbetter adjourned the meeting at 6:03 p.m.**

The next Faculty Senate meeting will be on April 24, 2024.