**Faculty Senate Minutes**

Wednesday, September 11, 2019

JCK 880, 4:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

**Attending** **Senators**: Rebecca Bell-Metereau, Janet Bezner, Natalie Ceballos, Rachel Davenport, Jesse Gainer, Jennifer Jensen, Lynn Ledbetter, Lyn Litchke, Vince Luizzi, Benjamin Martin, Stan McClellan, David Nolan, Michael Supancic, Diego Vacaflores, Nicole Wesley.

**Guests**: Denise Trauth (President), Gene Bourgeois (Provost), Debbie Thorne (Associate Provost), Eric Algoe (Vice president of Finance and Support Services), Lisa Lloyd (Vice President for University Administration), Scott Bowman (Special Assistant to the Provost for Inclusion and Diversity), Stephanie Towery (Library), Shannon Duffy (Senate Fellow), Ruth Taylor.

Meeting called to order at 3:59 p.m. by Senate Chair Bezner

**New Senator**

The Faculty Senate is pleased to welcome a new faculty member to the Senate this week: Dr. Lyn Litchke, Department of Health and Human Performance, representing the College of Education. Dr. Litchke is replacing Dr. Joellen Coryell who recently accepted an Assistant Dean position in the College of Education and is no longer eligible to serve as a Senator. Congratulations to both Joellen and Lyn on their new roles.

**President’s Academic Advisory Group (PAAG)**

Mr. Eric Algoe, vice president of Finance and Support Services, presented information on an ongoing issue concerning deficiencies in [Clery Act](https://clerycenter.org/) reporting from the university (The Clery Act is a consumer protection law that aims to provide transparency around campus crime policy and statistics). In order to comply with Clery Act requirements, colleges and universities must understand what the law entails, where their responsibilities lie, and what they can do to actively foster campus safety. <https://clerycenter.org/policy-resources/the-clery-act/>). A statement from the university regarding issues concerning Clery Act reporting and the annual university security report will be forthcoming.

There will be an e-mail in the coming days to identify Campus Security Authorities (CSA). In the past there were very few identified CSAs, that number may go up to 500 or 1,000. Training requirements will be attached to the e-mail. If anyone reports a crime to a CSA, the CSA will be required to tell a Clery official. This year the law changed. Now, CSAs must not only report to Clery any crimes that were reported to the CSA by others, but also, CSAs must report any crime that they may have become aware of through other means. Failure to report according to the law will result in termination of the CSA. Most faculty will not be identified as CSAs, unless they are advisors to a student organization.

The university discovered that it had misreported data in the past and crime numbers were understated. Currently the university is reviewing three to four years of crime reports. Crime numbers will be going up substantially due to misreporting and underreporting and will likely garner press attention.

President Trauth stated that the university is going to add a new office of compliance and hire a compliance officer familiar with the Clery Act for the entire university. In the past the Clery report has been created by UPD. This new compliance officer will be tasked to put together future Clery reports.

There was a discussion between senators and the administration as to the seriousness of this situation and possible ramifications.

President Trauth presented the [Inclusion and Diversity Action Plan to Build Capacity](https://inclusion.txstate.edu/updates-and-initiatives/campus-climate-capacity) initiative and explained the issues of diversity and inclusion on campus that the administration has been addressing. The American Council on Education (ACE) commissioned a [report](https://www.acenet.edu/Documents/Speaking-Truth-and-Acting-with-Integrity.pdf) on the racial crisis at the University of Missouri-Columbia in the 2015-16 academic year. The report was well done and provided a tool for assessing our university’s own diversity and inclusion issues. There was a cabinet retreat to study the report and the outcome of the retreat was the realization that the university was already doing a lot, but it was not systematic. We needed a university wide approach. The Council on Inclusive Excellence was also looking at these issues. There is a long term strategic plan, but the university needed an action plan for the immediate future.

President Trauth discussed some of the current initiatives taking place and the plan’s purpose to communicate with all constituencies. There was a discussion of the Bias Response Protocol and “Report It” online reporting system and the issues it may engender. The administration stressed that the Bias Response Protocol is intended as a system to assess climate, not a way to control what faculty say. The president stressed that there is nothing wrong with making students uncomfortable. The university anticipates that faculty may be reported through the system, but it will pushed back to the student to have a conversation with the faculty member. The system is not intended to be used in a punitive way at all. However, the system will be subject to open records requests.

Scott Bowman, special assistant to the provost for inclusion and diversity, informed senators that the faculty diversity hiring website will be active soon. There will be training this fall for search committee chairs. In the spring there will be a larger implicit bias workshop for faculty.

**Follow up from PAAG**

Senators discussed the issues presented by the president in PAAG. It was decided that some issues of concern, especially hiring practices, will be identified and brought up in future PAAG discussions. There was a recommendation to look at the Clery report once finished and discuss in a future meeting. A senator asked a question concerning current search committees and any bias training they may receive. Currently, bias training for search committees is optional.

**Use of Pronouns in Policy Statements**

Senators discussed the use of pronouns in current policy statements. Given the current focus by the president's Cabinet, Faculty Senate, and Student Government on diversity and inclusion, she proposed that it might be time for the senate to suggest a change to pronoun language in future policy reviews. After some discussion, it was suggested that the use of plural pronouns may fix the issue. There was a suggestion to bring this potential solution to the administration as a new guideline for PPS and UPPS policy statements. Senate Chair Bezner will forward the suggestion to the administration.

**Faculty Ombudsman Report**

Senator Luizzi discussed several issues that were themes noted over the past year in his role as Faculty Ombudsman that he recently brought forward to the Associate Provost. The three main issues are:

1. There is a lack of clarity about what the standard is for adjudicating faculty grievances. Current standards are not easily accessible. Seems that we need a standard that is less strict for lesser grievances.
2. There may be a need to distinguish between grievances about termination and those that involve simpler, less serious workplace grievances. If so, it may require different standards for the two types of grievances.
3. As a carryover from last fall, there is a continuing need for more guidance about communications among members of the personnel committee prior to, and during meetings about tenure and promotion. Improper advocacy and confidentiality are at issue. There is little guidance to prevent misconduct and how it is handled.

Senators discussed the issues concerning policies relating to personnel committees. There is no current policy statement referencing personnel committee conduct. Senators decided to investigate this issue further, formulate a response, and possibly help in the creation of guidelines for personnel committees. This issue will be discussed in a future senate meeting.

Related to this issue, there was some discussion of department chair interference and influence in personnel committee decisions. Senators discussed the possibility of a more formal training program for department chairs. There was a question as to whether or not the Faculty Senate should be the driving force behind this issue or should this be the purview of the Council of Chairs. There was a suggestion to have the Academic Governance Committee look into these concerns. The issue was tabled to a future senate meeting.

**University Research Enhancement Committee**

A question from Mike Blanda, assistant vice president for Research and Federal Relations, was relayed to the University Research Enhancement Committee and one of the committee members contacted the senate concerning Faculty of Practice and whether they can be a Principle Investigator (PI) or Co-PI for research grants. All Faculty can apply according to current guidelines however, there is a question concerning whether Faculty of Practice are included. Senate Chair Bezner will ask the administration for clarification.

Senators also discussed another situation concerning an associate dean who has a 50 percent administration and 50 percent teaching responsibility. Are they eligible for Faculty Development Leave? Senate Chair Bezner will ask the Associate Provost.

**Texas Council of Faculty Senates**

Senator Bell-Metereau cannot attend the upcoming Texas Council of Faculty Senates. Senator Litchke will attend instead.

**Fellowship Policy**

Discussion of the revised fellowship policy. Senators have reviewed the policy and have some feedback, but are awaiting more information from a meeting between Associate Provost Thorne and former senator Agwuele. Tabled to a future meeting.

**Approval of Minutes**

September 4 minutes were approved.

**Announcements**

* Senators were reminded of the nontenure line faculty reception from 5:00-7:00 p.m. September 18.
* On September 18, the senate will meet from 3:00-5:00 p.m.
	+ At the September 18 faculty senate meeting, Dean Golato from The Graduate College will present the new graduate application process.
	+ There will be discussion concerning Honors and University colleges and adding senate representation.
	+ Senators will discuss the University Plan and mid-cycle adjustments to the plan.

Meeting adjourned at 6:08 p.m.

Minutes submitted by David Nolan