Faculty Senate Minutes  
Wednesday, February 7, 2018  
JCK 880, 4:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Attending  
**Senators:** Rebecca Bell-Metereau, Janet Bezner, Elizabeth Bishop, Scott Bowman, Natalie Ceballos, Michel Conroy, Jesse Gainer, Dana Garcia, Ted Hindson (for Vince Luizzi), Ting Liu, Benjamin Martin, David Nolan, Shane Smith, Diego Vacaflores, Alex White.  
**Guests:** Denise Trauth (President); Gene Bourgeois (Provost); Debbie Thorne (Associate Provost); Mr. Kenneth Pierce (vice president for Information Technology); Michael Supancic (Chair, University Curriculum Committee); Micky Autrey (Curriculum Services); Selene Hinojosa (Library); Sandra Sadek (*University Star*).

Meeting called to order at 4:01 p.m. by Senate Chair White

**Presidents Academic Advisory Group (PAAG)**

**Texas Senate Committee on State Affairs**
President Trauth discussed the Texas Senate Committee on State Affairs hearing on Wednesday, January 31, in the LBJ Student Center ballroom regarding free speech on college campuses in Texas. ([https://star.txstate.edu/2018/02/01/texas-senate-state-affairs-committee-holds-free-speech-hearing-in-lbj/](https://star.txstate.edu/2018/02/01/texas-senate-state-affairs-committee-holds-free-speech-hearing-in-lbj/)).

- Stated that it was a very successful hearing and the committee commended the University’s advance preparation for the event.
- President Trauth was invited to present and spoke about the University’s commitment to freedom of expression and the protection of popular and unpopular speech.
- Approximately 30% of the student presenters were Texas State students.
- Hearing is possible preparation for future state legislative sessions and in particular a possible statute concerning a heckler’s veto of conversation (shouting down a public speaker). The president stated that a number of states are looking into these types of statutes. There is no policy at Texas State concerning this issue, but there is a safety plan to deal with these types of situations.
- Testimony was presented to the committee concerning a requirement to have a faculty or staff advisor for student groups on some campuses that would prohibit groups from forming. The president stated that this is not an issue at Texas State.
- Student speakers addressed recent incidents on campus to the committee during the hearing.

The senate discussed some of these issues with the president.

- Would it be productive to create a code of conduct policy that covers issues discussed by the senate committee?  
  - The Texas A&M University conduct policy was discussed.
  - The provost discussed the guidelines that the current philosophy dialogue series has in place as a model for balanced speech on campus.
  - Approaches should be faculty driven according to the provost.
There was discussion of professional development and training for faculty as well as graduate instructional assistants and teaching assistants when teaching and discussing difficult subjects. The provost will investigate including graduate students in any training.

**Current issues on campus**
President Trauth discussed the recent student protests concerning the current student government president. Much of the protests are connected to the University Star article from last year. The president stated that it was important that she, the provost, and cabinet keep a distance from the University Star as they did not want to create a chilling affect on the student newspaper. The president stated that protecting the University Star is very important to her and to the University, and that they remain independent. She also respects the student government constitution and that it is up to the students to take care of the situation concerning the possible impeachment of the current student president. There was discussion of these issues and the president’s response to them. There was a question concerning tracking of third-party comments concerning the University and how we track and monitor them. The provost will ask University Marketing if there is a process in place to track third-party comments concerning the University.

**Texas System meeting update** (Senator White)
Senator White reviewed the recent meeting with senate representatives from the Texas State University System Schools and the Texas State University System (TSUS) office in Austin on Feb 2, 2018.

- Concerns with evaluation of administrators on system campuses. Texas State already accomplishes this through the annual faculty perception surveys.
- Discussion of the level of financial contributions to the Optional Retirement Program (ORP) by TSUS schools and the disparity with grandfathered faculty and with universities in other states that have higher contribution levels. Provost commented on previous discussions and reductions by the state.
- Senators from other schools in the system discussed looking at the productivity and budget for administrative staff versus faculty and academic affairs.
- State financing is not going to change anytime soon. No Hazelwood relief for universities is in sight. Future state funding is concentrating on K-12 education and Hurricane Harvey relief.
- New TSUS offices are now in the historic O. Henry building in downtown Austin at 601 Colorado Street.

**NCAA faculty representative**
Dr. Paul Gowens, professor in the Department of Finance and Economics, and the current NCAA faculty representative, is retiring. President Trauth has asked Dr. Vicki Brittain, professor in the Department of Political Science, and the current special assistant to the president, to fill this position and she has accepted.

**Salary compression**
The president and provost discussed the issue of salary compression. President Trauth stated that these are serious concerns and it is very difficult to deal with due to limited
resources. She understands that salary compression is worse in some departments than others and for those that have been here the longest. The provost stated that this issue, as well as merit, graduate student stipends and other salary issues, are discussed and weighed in by the various deans. Merit usually wins out. When salary compression issues for individual faculty are brought forward to the provost they are dealt with on an individual basis.

**Learning Management System change**
At a recent Council of Academic Deans (CAD) meeting the provost discussed the new learning management system (LMS) process. Conversations turned on project management and that it was clear that Sakai is more than just an instructor/class only system. Deans expressed these concerns as well as training, timing of the changeover, possible vendor, etc. Mr. Kenneth Pierce, vice president for Information Technology, was asked to discuss the process with the senate.

- Discussed the need for a new LMS.
- Stated that the faculty survey showed satisfaction with the current system (TRACS/Sakai). The Faculty Senate has not seen the results of the survey.
- There are three major LMS companies: Canvas, Blackboard and Desire to Learn.
- Support is waning for Sakai from publishers and other third party vendors because it’s used by only a handful of higher education institutions. ITS wants to include more features and options not currently available on Sakai.
- Stated that the LMS committee may not want to go forward with a change from Sakai to a new system, but we need to have the conversation.
- Request for proposal (RFP) discussion with committee would not have changed the outcome of the RFP bidders.
- Outcomes will align with involvement from faculty.
- Early stages of this process.

The senate asked Mr. Pierce several questions:

- Concerning the RFP process and bypassing the LMS committee and the senate. He explained that this was a planned process not meant to bypass anyone. He stated that feedback but would not have affected the process since the three major providers are the only vendors who could meet the requirements of the RFP.
- Project sites are an important part of the process in identifying a new LMS.
- Concerning input from the senate. He stated that after vendor demonstrations and testing in March would be a good time to discuss outcomes and receive input.
- Discussion about the process with vendors. Best value is what we look for, not least expensive.
- Senate expressed importance of buy-in by faculty and faculty input.

**Curriculum Committee report** (Dr. Michael Supancic, Chair of UCC)
Dr. Supancic shared the recent work accomplished by the University Curriculum Committee.

- There have been two meetings concerning course proposals using the new Curriculum Information Management (CIM) system.
- There were 665 courses in the system in 2017 and 763 in 2018.
  - 2017: Added 153; deleted 107; changed 405; total of 665.
  - 2018: Added 307; deleted 200; changed 256; total of 763.
• Work coming up in the committee is very heavy with multiple proposals. Stated that the new CIM system helps in the proposal process.
• Senate asked about a drop down menu of Bloom’s Taxonomy terms for the CIM system when writing proposals. Bloom’s Taxonomy is copyrighted which prevents that type of menu.

Council of Chairs update (Senator White)
• The senate chair has been invited back to the council.
• Discussed changing the PPS for the Council and our standing rules to formalize a relationship between the two bodies.
• Will draft a change to the senate standing rules for the vice chair of the CoC to be a liaison to the faculty senate and for the senate to attend CoC meetings.

PAAG debrief
• Discussion of Mr. Pierce’s LMS presentation.
  o Must be transparent in this process to create buy-in and acceptance by faculty.
  o Senator White said Mr. Solis will attend the senate once a month and update members on information technology issues.
• Given issue of salary compression, Senator Bishop has investigated benefits provided by to faculty in other states. She gathered information about tuition remission for dependents of faculty. Wants permission to survey housing costs as well. Senate approved.
• Increased higher education funding is not coming from the state legislature anytime soon. Senate will look at comparable institutions used for salary data, how Texas State is compared, and the formula used for that comparison.

Policy reviews
• UPPS No. 04.04.39 Consensual Relationships: Senators Ceballos and White
• UPPS No. 07.07.01 Satisfactory Academic Progress for Undergraduate Students on Financial Aid: Senators Conroy and Smith

Approval of Minutes
Minutes will redistributed via e-mail for changes and approval.

Meeting adjourned at 6:04 p.m.

Minutes submitted by David Nolan