**Faculty Senate Minutes**

Wednesday, May 6, 2020

Zoom Meeting, 4:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

**Attending** **Senators**: Taylor Acee, Gwynne Ash, Stacey Bender, Rebecca Bell-Metereau, Janet Bezner, Dale Blasingame, Natalie Ceballos, Rachel Davenport, Jesse Gainer, Jennifer Jensen, Lynn Ledbetter, Vince Luizzi, Benjamin Martin, Stan McClellan, Roque Mendez, David Nolan, Andrew Ojede, Michael Supancic, Diego Vacaflores, Nicole Wesley.

**Guests**: Denise Trauth (president), Gene Bourgeois (provost), Debbie Thorne (associate provost), Stephanie Towery (Library), Shannon Duffy (Senate Fellow), Cynthia Gonzales, Stacey Bender, Lois Stickley, Judy Oskam, Ginger Williams, Karen Gibbs, Jennifer Hale, Micky Autry, Joni Charles, David Navarro, David Gibbs, Erik Timmerman, Nicole Hengst, Amanda Houser, Aimee Roundtree, Laura Lane, Steven Spivey, Scott Pope, Nadine Mozon, Asha Hegde Niezgoda, Cristian Lieneck, Gwynne Ellen Ash, Amanda Houser, De De Gardner, Michelle Nance, Alexander McLeod, Amy Schwarz.

Meeting called to order at 4:00 p.m. by Senate Chair Bezner.

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

President Trauth presented information and answered questions concerning issues related to COVID-19 and the university budget:

* The university is financially assisting students through two programs, a new program called Bobcat Cares and an expanded Bobcat Promise program. The university is using a myriad of student programs to push out $30 million. Of that $30 million, over half of it comes from the federal government. As of May 5, 12,800 students have applied for the Bobcat Cares grants.
* The university received $15.9 million in emergency aid for students. Seventy-five percent of the money is being handled through financial aid and scholarships and the other 25% is being handled by the Dean of Students office. Between April 27th and April 29th, 4,684 students were awarded a total of $4.5 million.
* The other half of the money came from a variety of internal sources. The university is putting $5 million into emergency grants for summer courses. Any student who signs up for Summer I will automatically get a grant of $50 per semester credit hour up to $600 to defray the cost of going to summer school. Additionally, students in Summer I, because it is being remotely delivered, are not being charged the student recreation fee, the LBJ Student Center fee, the transportation fee, or the student health center fee. This also extends to graduate students.
* The university gave back $10 million in prorated refunds to our students. About $8 million of that was in housing. Also, about $250,000 worth of parking refunds have been made. Students who had unused meal plans are able to roll that over to next fall and that's about a $3.5 million roll forward. Graduating seniors and students who are not coming back to Texas State can apply for prorated refunds and they would get those more quickly. The university has over 230 students who are employed in federal and state work-study programs and who've been unable to work. Those 230 students are receiving their pay as an emergency grant. International students don't have access to the CARES Act funding.
* Bobcat Promise is the second program. A freshman who was regularly admitted to the university and came from a family with an adjusted gross income (AGI) that didn't exceed $35,000 qualified for the program. The university is now raising that AGI limit to $50,000. The university has admitted 5,600 first time freshmen for the fall who qualify for the program. At today's tuition rates, a four-year Bobcat Promise scholarship is worth a total of $46,160.
* The university will take a 5% cut on state subsidies for fiscal 2021. The only other source of revenue at the university is enrollment. For every percentage point cut in our subsidy, the university loses about a $1 million. For every percentage point decline in our enrollment, the university loses about $2.6 million. Enrollment makes a much bigger contribution than state subsidy makes. The university is planning on an 8% enrollment decline for the next academic year. Counting the 5% subsidy decline and the 8% enrollment decline, that comes to a budget cut between 9.5% and 10%.
* When the comptroller told the university in March to start saving money, that's when a freeze was placed on hiring and travel. The university also deferred as much construction as possible and put a 50% freeze on operating budgets. The cut in subsidy from the state of Texas will most likely be a permanent cut based on previous cuts from the legislature. The cabinet has not approved any kind of overall salary cut that would cut across all faculty and staff at the university. The cabinet has also not approved any furloughs, which are different than salary cuts. Furloughs are one-time savings. Each department will have to figure out how they're going to achieve their given budget reduction target. The provost is not stepping in and indicating specific departmental targets on designated method or operating support accounts.
* A senator had a question that if cuts must be made to permanent positions, what if some chairs try to convert lecturer and senior lecturer positions to emergency positions? The provost stated that won't necessarily be possible because units have to cut the permanent budget. The only way they can get temporary funding will be by approval from the provost’s office and those accounts are also being cut. The reserve that the provost uses to fund temporary budgets is also experiencing a roughly 10% cut. So, units will not be able to do that.
* There was a question asked at the Council of Academic Deans (CAD) concerning the $600 research travel funds that go to each department for tenure line faculty and whether or not departments can use those against their targeted cuts? The provost stated that as of right now, the answer is no, but only because those represent temporary funds.
* The senate asked that if some positions are going to be lost can the university put out a strong message to deans and chairs to do everything possible to avoid losing faculty? The provost stated that he could, with the caveat that it's not going to be possible for individual Chairs or Deans to do that. The nature of staffing patterns in certain units mean that some units will have to eliminate some positions.
* A senator asked whether positions could be kept temporarily to give dismissed faculty time to find a new position elsewhere? The president stated that the university can't use one-time money to fund continuing obligations and that the single biggest continuing obligation is people and their salaries. The president has not wanted to put furloughs on the table for this reason. It's a tool that the university may need during 2022 and 2023 if the legislature cuts the budget again.
* The president discussed the university work groups that are exploring issues related to COVID 19 and university operations. The first report from the working groups are due on May 22nd and their recommendations will be finalized by June 15th.
* Based upon an inquiry from the senate concerning more faculty representation on the Continuity of Education work group, the university is planning to ask a number of faculty who teach in large classroom settings to form a subcommittee to look specifically at classroom settings. That subcommittee will be tasked to give their specific recommendation to the work group.

Partial minutes submitted by David Nolan, Secretary (2019-2020)

**62nd Faculty Senate.** Outgoing senators Ceballos, Gainer, Nolan, and Vacaflores were honored for their outstanding service. New senators Acee, Ash (Fall 2020), Bender, Blasingame, Mendez, and Ojede were seated. Senators Bezner, Bell-Metereau, Davenport, Jensen, Ledbetter, Luizzi, Martin, and Supancic and will continue their service during 2020-2021.

* Officers for 2020-2021 were elected as follows. Senator Bezner, Chair; Senator Ledbetter, Vice Chair; Senator Jensen, Secretary.

**Summer Meeting Dates and Times.** The next senate meeting is scheduled for June 17, 2020 from 3:00 – 5:00 pm.

**Workgroup Appointment.** The senate voted to appoint Dr. Tom Grimes to the COVID-19 Health, Wellness, and Safety Work Group.

**Senate resolution.** The senate adopted a resolution to recognize ITAC and ODEL staff for their work to help faculty transition to online course delivery.

**Minutes.** The minutes from the April 29 meeting were approved.

6:25 pm Adjournment by Chair Janet Bezner

Partial minutes submitted by Jennifer Jensen, Secretary (2020-2021)