**Faculty Senate Minutes**

Wednesday, January 19, 2022

Zoom Meeting, 4:00 pm – 6:00 pm

**Attending Senators:** Taylor Acee, Stacey Bender, Dale Blasingame, Rachel Davenport, Peter Dedek, Jennifer Jensen, Lynn Ledbetter, Ben Martin, Stan McClellan, Roque Mendez, Rebecca Bell-Metereau, Danette Myers, Andrew Ojede, Michael Supancic, Nicole Wesley

**Guests**: Sarah Angulo, Karen Sigler

Meeting began at 4:02 pm

**Council of Academic Deans and Council of Chairs Meeting Updates – Senator Ledbetter**

Senators were updated on the process that led to the decision to shift to virtual instruction. The two-week delay was based on projections that the regional infection rate would peak in mid to late January. Several departments are receiving emails and calls from parents who are concerned about the decision. Such messages can be forwarded to the Deans. A senator commented that these concerns have lessened recently after other nearby universities have made a similar decision.

The Council of Chairs is creating a subcommittee to review the personnel committee guidelines. The rollout of the guidelines will be delayed allowing this committee to provide feedback.

**University Leave Policy UPPS 04.04.30 – Senator Davenport**

Several departments are being audited regarding faculty leave and are failing the audits due to faculty not reporting leave. By Texas law, all faculty have to report any time spent not working between the hours of 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday. Faculty object to reporting this given that they work outside of those hours regularly and make up missed time during other hours. The University Leave Policy (UPPS 04.04.30) gives clear guidance regarding how and when faculty should report medical leave. Despite this policy, medical leave continues to be underreported.

Based on senator feedback, departments take different approaches to assist faculty in reporting leave. Some departments have faculty report absences using forms, some use links to make it easy to report, and some faculty report averaged absences. Chairs are encouraging faculty to report leave. A senator expressed concern about using up accrued sick leave in the case of extended illness for the purpose of appeasing auditors. Others pointed out that the purpose is not to falsely report sick leave, but rather to accurately report leave. Auditors grow suspicious when there are long strings of 0’s in the report. Faculty should report any absence during their regular working hours using SAP or whatever mechanism their department has established for reporting.

The law regarding faculty reporting leave: <https://statutes.capitol.texas.gov/Docs/GV/htm/GV.661.htm>

The law regarding working hours: <https://statutes.capitol.texas.gov/Docs/GV/htm/GV.658.htm>

**Representative to Texas Council** **of Faculty Senates**

Upcoming meetings are currently scheduled to be in Austin on Friday, Feb. 11 (all day) and Saturday, Feb. 12 (9 am-2 pm). The Council is surveying members to determine the modality of the meeting, and it is considering delaying the meeting. Senator Davenport volunteered to attend the meeting if it is virtual or if it is postponed.

**Suggested Questions for the Vice President for Institutional Inclusive Excellence Interviews – Senator Jensen**

Senators made suggestions regarding six questions that will be asked to candidates. The questions cover the candidates’ relevant experience as well as their goals for the position.

**Nontenure Line Faculty Committee (NLFC) Workload Release Program- Update – Senator Jensen**

Following the recommendation of the NLFC and the faculty senate, the Provost’s office fully funded all of the applicants. A total of 48 workload credits were granted for Fall 2022 and 45 credits were granted for Spring 2023.

**Dr. Sirry Alang, Guest Lecture – Update - Senator Ledbetter**

Tuesday, Feb. 15, 2022 4:00-5:30 PM by Zoom (up to 300 registrants)   
Moderator: Ben Martin, Associate Professor, Chemistry and Biochemistry

Abstract:

***Who Fixes Broken Systems? Undoing Legacies of Exclusion in Colleges and Universities***

Higher education is a microcosm of society. Our educational institutions are formal sites for knowledge creation. For good, we shape minds. For bad, we shape minds. Minds that enter different fields – law enforcement, politics, education, business, science, health care, art, humanities, and so forth. What happens when the processes of knowledge production, dissemination, and application are grounded in white supremacy?  How can colleges and universities contribute meaningfully towards building a just and equitable society?

*Sirry Alang, Ph.D. is an Associate Professor of Sociology and Health, Medicine and Society at Lehigh University. Her research explores the role of social structures and institutions in creating and undoing inequities.*

Wednesday’s Joint Meeting with Faculty Senate and Liaisons (February 16) will be a facilitated discussion about how to implement strategies to address racism in the academy. We will be joined by Faculty of Color, and staff/faculty in the Institutional Inclusive Excellence unit.

The event is being advertised on the Common Experience calendar, email from the Provost’s office, the university event calendar, the University Star, and the Faculty Senate Bulletin.

**Life Anew Update – (see attached) - Senator Ledbetter**

After the initial report from Life Anew was sent out to Cohort members, an invitation was extended to Cohort Leaders to attend a Council for Inclusive Excellence meeting on October 1st.  The Council restructured the report into a strategic plan and delegated responsibility to respond to administrators. This plan will be updated annually by VP’s, and will be posted on the Institutional Inclusive Excellence webpage.

**Other Items**

A search committee is forming to appoint the next ombudsperson for the university. The committee will be comprised of three faculty members and three Chair/Dean members.

Suggestions were made for upcoming meetings:

* Revise the Faculty Development Leave process (scheduled in April)
* Invite the new Chief of Police to an upcoming faculty meeting

**Policy Review**

UPPS 05.06.05 (Business Travel), due Feb. 1 – Senator Acee

**Executive Session**

The senate approved a replacement member for the Presidential Award for Excellence in Teaching committee.

Meeting Adjourned at 5:24 pm

Minutes submitted by Ben Martin