**Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes**

**October 27, 2021**

**4-6 p.m.**

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

**Attending guests:** Sarah Angulo (Senate Fellow), Dani Artaza, Amy Benton, Janet Bezner, Timia Cobb (University Star), Vanessa Salazar, Christine Sellers, Karen Sigler, Debbie Thorne (Associate Provost), Samantha Williams

The meeting was called to order at 4:00 p.m.

**Texas Council of Faculty Senates Meeting Report –** Senators Ledbetter and Supancic

The Texas Council of Faculty Senates met on October 15 and 16. Senate representatives from universities around the state attended. Topics of discussion ran the gamut from complaints about administration to curriculum issues with administration, shared governance, COVID management and lawsuits. Senators Ledbetter and Supancic both said the meeting left them feeling better about the situation at Texas State University. The Texas State System will have a similar meeting of its members in the coming weeks. Senator Ledbetter will attend.

**Success Factors Learning –** Dani Artaza, Vanessa Salazar and Samantha Williams, Human Resources

SuccessFactors (SF) Learning launched on October 1, providing the campus with an improved learning management system for employee professional learning and development opportunities. This new platform works on all browsers and mobile. Users will log into SAP and select SuccessFactors from there. After selecting Learning, you will be in the system.

There will be featured courses for everyone every month. Courses you sign up for and required trainings will show up in the My Learning Assignments window. LinkedIn Learning courses will also be available here. A user can also search for specific courses and opportunities through the Find Learning search bar.

Every class a user has taken or completed will be available in Learning History. Users can access certificates at any time through this area.

* A senator asked if trainings that were built in SAP before will still be browser limited. Artaza said there should be less browser issues, in general, with this new platform.
* A senator asked if this is why the system was shut down over the past couple of weeks. Artaza said that is correct, since they were moving everything over to the new platform.
* A senator asked if IRB training will be in this new platform. Salazar said they can partner with Faculty Development to implement that into the new system.
* A senator asked if faculty could request courses from their office. Artaza said requests are accepted. The senator said there is particular interest in a course on campus safety.
* A senator asked if cybersecurity training is available on the new platform. It is and can be found under the Required Training category.

**Cyber Harassment Policy –** Senator Bender

The Academic Freedom Committee is requesting that the Senate reopen the discussion on the proposed cyber harassment PPS, which members of the Academic Freedom Committee recently revised. The biggest reason behind this request is the increase in students engaged in online learning or utilizing online learning resources and management systems. The Academic Freedom Committee is hoping for this to be its own policy or part of another policy.

* A senator asked where this proposed policy stands. Senator Bender said bringing it to the Senate is the first step. A previous effort to get this policy approved stalled, so the committee wanted to get the Senate’s thoughts on whether it should be a standalone policy or attached to another policy.
* A senator said he doesn’t believe this doesn’t belong in the Civility policy. He said this would be a better fit in the Conduct of Classrooms policy.
* A senator agreed about the fit in the Conduct of Classrooms since there are similar topics in section 04.01, but he did want to gauge the Senate’s feelings about the need for this as a standalone policy.
* A senator asked how much cyber harassment is happening on a regular basis. Senator Bender said beyond students experiencing cyber harassment, there are also sites like Professor Watchlist that show faculty are victims of cyber harassment, as well.
* A senator asked if there is a current policy related to harassment. UPPS 04.04.46 is the Prohibition of Discrimination policy, which includes harassment.
* The senator who suggested the Conduct of Classes withdrew his earlier suggestion and said cyber harassment does happen outside of the classroom, as well.

Senator Ledbetter asked senators to think about this in the coming days and decide the best course of action next week. She asked senators to review UPPS 04.04.46 as a potential landing spot for cyber harassment to be included.

**NLF Workload Release Program Request for More Funding –** Senator Jensen

With more applications this year, the Nontenure Line Faculty Committee is recommending that the Senate request an increase in funding for this program for 2022-2023. In the past, everyone who applied was funded. The most applications ever received in one cycle was 13. This year, they received 16 applications. In total, 42 workload credit allotments are allowed to be granted each long semester – a number that hasn’t increased in nearly a decade. This year, the requests totaled 48 workload credits for the fall and 45 workload credits for the spring. Senator Jensen is asking the Senate for approval to ask the provost for more allotments this year and to request an increase moving forward.

* A senator asked how much it would cost to approve all requests for this year. That number is $146,000. Senator Jensen said the request would be for approximately $36,000 in additional funds to approve all requests. The NLF committee is currently reviewing the applications. Senator Ledbetter is going to request information from the associate provost about whether a formula is behind the specific amount of funding and give senators a week to think about this request before voting on it at the next meeting.

**Update on NLF Committee Initiatives –** Senator Jensen

Senator Jensen provided updates on three initiatives the NLF Committee is interested in. First, the committee wants development of workshops related to promotion for nontenure faculty, particularly practice-rank faculty. Next, the committee is also working on a dedicated sick-leave policy regarding donations for maternity leave. Finally, the committee wants nontenure faculty to be included in phased retirement as part of the same policy that allows this for tenured faculty.

**PAAG Questions –** Senator Ledbetter

Senator Ledbetter asked for suggestions regarding our next PAAG meeting, which will be held November 10. She suggested campus security be a main topic of discussion.

* A senator agreed, saying this information is buried and not easily accessible. He wants an honest and clear procedure for security situations without being alarmist.
* A senator liaison emailed Senator Ledbetter to ask why the university doesn’t have a clear university policy on threat response like K-12 schools do. The university does have a campus security policy, but the email said the policy is vague on what to do in an actual emergency. Senators will review his email.
* A senator asked if any other senators knew of other, four-year universities that require continuing professional development, such as Texas State does with online education training for faculty who teach online. Senator Ledbetter asked her to do research on this topic and report back. Another senator said universities that recently became Tier 1 research institutions likely include required professional development.
* A senator asked if two assistant deans had recently been hired in University College. If so, she’s concerned about how money is found to hire new administration instead of increasing staff pay or hiring staff positions. Senator Ledbetter said this issue of staff pay and hiring affects faculty, and she’s fine with asking whether there are plans to improve staff pay and workload. A senator suggested the new hires at University College were likely reclassifications of existing positions. A senator said it may be time for a review of the size of administration.

Final questions and topics for PAAG beyond campus safety will be formalized at next week’s meeting. The second half of next week’s Senate meeting will be devoted to evaluation of faculty developmental leave applications.

**Distinguished Professor Emeritus Policy –** Debbie Thorne, Associate Provost

Associate Provost Thorne has requested additional discussion related to AA/PPS 02.04.10 (Honorary Faculty Titles and Emeritus Faculty).

Earlier this year, the Senate received an email from a faculty group concerned over the policy. There was a concern over criteria for this honor and whether service was too much of a factor since it is listed in three of seven criteria. There was another concern that the criteria had not kept pace with university expectations of faculty as it pursues R1 status. This policy is up for full review, so Associate Provost Thorne wanted the Senate’s input of whether a committee should be formed to discuss this issue.

* A senator clarified that the concerns were related to an email from the provost that described a process different from what the policy lays out in terms of how the committee viewed those seven criteria. The concern is the policy overemphasizes service to the university, community and profession at the expense of international and national recognition for research. Thorne said there was another concern over the policy discussing regional and national recognition of research but not international.

An email regarding Distinguished Professor Emeritus is going out next week, before any changes in the policy can go into effect. Thorne has written a draft of what she is calling “interpretive guidance.” It doesn’t take care of the service concern, but it does address the international recognition issue. Thorne is also pointing out that criteria 1, 2, 3, 5, 6 and 7 could rely on activities at Texas State or other institutions and entities. Criterion 4 (program development – both academic and research programs) is the only one that is limited to time at Texas State. The guidance also says the criteria may be contextualized by disciplinary norms for what might be considered extraordinary faculty contributions, which should provide flexibility to the individual disciplines. She also writes that nominations should be fully substantiated and documented in the narrative portion. This would help the issue of the committee having to interpret CVs outside of their discipline and puts the onus on nominators to spell out the qualifications.

* A senator asked about how this would affect nominators having to select three criteria from options 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 when filling out the form. Thorne said expanding the definition of “program” and expanding the contextualization to international scope should help, but the policy hasn’t yet been revised. The senator said these interpretative guidelines would be a help until the full policy can be revised. Even though the policy revision date is November 1, 2022. Thorne said we are within the window of making revisions, and early revisions would be appreciated.

Senators agreed with Thorne’s idea of including the interpretative guidance in the call for nominations.

* A senator asked about the chance of going up for this honor if a faculty member does not self-nominate or otherwise be nominated. Thorne said there is a seven-year window of opportunity. The email call will list all faculty who have retired in the previous seven years. The senator then raised a question from a faculty member over whether nominations could be handled at the department and college levels and move forward from there. Thorne said any decision like that would be considered during a policy revision. There are also system rules that would need to be considered during a review.

There was a consensus amongst senators to form a committee to discuss any potential revisions to this policy. A senator representative for this committee will be discussed at the next meeting.

Senator Ledbetter asked Associate Provost Thorne about an issue raised earlier in the meeting – the NLF Committee request for more resources to grant all leave requests. Thorne said the request could be discussed, but she also said it would be dependent on the committee’s review of applications.

Minutes from the October 20 meeting were approved.

The meeting adjourned at 6:04 p.m.