**Faculty Senate Minutes**

Wednesday, July 22, 2020

Zoom Meeting, 3:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

**Attending Senators:** Gwynne Ellen Ash, Rebecca Bell-Metereau, Stacey Bender, Janet Bezner, Dale Blasingame, Rachel Davenport, Jennifer Jensen, Lynn Ledbetter, Vincent Luizzi, Benjamin Martin, Roque Mendez, Andrew Ojede, Michael Supancic, Nicole Wesley

**Guests:** Taylor Acee, Lisa Ancelet, Ames Asbell, Maneka Brooks, De De Gardner, Donna Dean, Gail Dickinson, Shannon Duffy (Senate Fellow), Michael Ellis, Valarie Fleming, Geneva Gano, Megan Mallengee, Gloria Martinez, John Mckiernan-Gonzalez, Casey Nichols, Crystal Oberle, Scott Pope, Anadelia Romo, Aimee Roundtree, Joni S J Charles, Arlene Salazar, Karen Sigler, Lucia Summers Rodriguez, Carolyn Swearingen, Holly Syrdal, Stephanie Towery (Library), Virginia Tufano, Daniel Weeks (University Star)

Meeting called to order at 3:00 p.m. by Senate Chair Bezner

**Discussion of Faculty Senate Survey of Faculty**

Senator Davenport presented the results of the Faculty Survey distributed by the senate on July 13, 2020. Senators discussed how much of the survey results to release, with a focus on releasing comments coded to align with general themes vs. the exact narrative responses. Senators concluded that since the survey stated that data would only be reported in aggregate instead of releasing the exact narratives would violate participants’ confidentiality. Senators agreed to release responses for all Likert scale questions and comments coded to align with general themes per the assurance of aggregate reporting.

Additional discussion of the survey results included a range of concerns submitted through the open-ended response question of the survey as well individual concerns expressed by senators. The discussion included the following topics:

* Electronic course fees for Fall 2020. The senate Chair conveyed that according to the Provost, electronic course fees are not a Cabinet-level decision but are determined by the Board of Regents. Course fees may be done away with permanently, but not in time for the coming semester.
* Notions of trust and concepts of shared governance. A senator recommended sharing the survey results with the administration.
* A senator suggested strongly encouraging the administration to move more classes online, especially large classes. They provided photographic evidence that for their large classroom with fixed seating, even at 50 percent capacity, a minimum four feet distance between students cannot be achieved.
* Several senators expressed concerns about crowded hallways, elevators, bathrooms, and stairwells and that the Roadmap to Return does not address these areas on campus.
* A senator suggested urging the administration to find out what other universities are doing instead of basing course delivery on what they perceive freshman want. The senator provided an example of a Texas A&M freshman whose schedule consisted of all online courses.
* A senator brought up that when faculty were given the choice to put their classes online, more faculty elected to do so. They expressed concerns that some faculty are not able to make course delivery selections because they fear how it will be perceived by their chair/director and future budget decisions.
* A senator brought up that they would like to hear from the administration that faculty have the choice for course delivery method. A guest commented that they would like to have equity in course delivery method between NLF and TT faculty.
* A senator questioned whether the university was safer for faculty or students compared to staying at home and described relative risks for each group (e.g., some faculty may be safer at home because they follow guidelines for distancing, wearing masks, etc., while some students may be safer on campus because that is the only place they follow guidelines).
* A senator explained that local/regional school districts are opening online the first four weeks and then reevaluating the situation and that this would be a good approach for the university to take.
* A senator commented that for those classes that do have face-to-face contact, we should demand randomized testing and a mechanism for further testing, lockdown, or quarantine for classes that have positive cases. Additionally, they argued that class sizes should be limited to facilitate a full six feet of physical distance between desks. An additional recommendation for a hybrid class model where the class was divided into two groups: Group 1 would be face-to-face for two weeks while Group 2 would meet online. After two weeks the groups would switch. They explained the proposed model would work if we had randomized testing to detect outbreaks and quarantine affected groups.
* A senator asked about what happens when a student tests positive and the problems associated with relying on self-reporting positive status to the Student Health Center. An example of a recent survey of college students was provided. The senator said that based on the survey, students indicated they would not “rat” their peers out (for contact tracing) and they would not report they were sick if their symptoms were mild.
* A senator brought up that we went online quickly for Summer II and the current status of COVID-19 in Hays and Williamson counties has not changed. They expressed concern regarding the point in time where the administration makes the decision to move online for the Fall semester.
* A senator raised concerns about the requirement for contingency plans, or faculty agreements to cover colleagues’ courses/administrative responsibilities if someone gets sick. They explained the difficulties associated with that because of current understaffing and recent faculty layoffs.
* A senator recommended that the administration look at what we need to do based on local virus activity and not what other institutions in the state are doing.

The Senate Chair asked senators whether they preferred to adopt a resolution or draft a direct communication to the university administration. Senators agreed to draft a direct communication to convey the most pressing concerns expressed in the survey results and senate discussion.

**Committee Appointments**

Senators discussed committee appointments for the following committees: Piper Committee, Academic Computing Committee, University Performing Arts Committee, Environment & Sustainability Committee, NLFC, University Lecturers Committee, and University Leadership Assembly. Senators voted to approve all committee appointments.

**Discussion of UPPS 01.04.07, Civility Policy and Procedures (New Policy)**

Senators discussed a new civility policy that the administration wants to include in Bobcat Preview. Several senators expressed that they like the spirit of the policy but they do not think the punitive actions outlined in the disciplinary section can be mandated. Senators suggested editing the language to remove references to bullying as it seems like a different issue than civility. The Senate has discussed the need for a policy on bullying in the past and believe it is a topic that warrants a separate policy. Senators also suggested removing disciplinary actions proposed in the draft policy. The Senate Chair agreed to draft a response on behalf of the senate with this feedback.

**Announcements**

The first fall meeting is scheduled for August 24, 2020 on Zoom.

The Senate Chair communicated that Texas State failed another sick leave audit and asked senators to encourage colleagues to report sick leave or the State could take it away. The Chair conveyed the university will be conducting random departmental audits to determine if there is a sick leave process in place at the department level and whether faculty in audited departments are recording sick leave.

The Senate Chair announced that she recently served on a temporary committee charged with looking for a new polling place on the San Marcos campus. The committee selected the Performing Arts Center which will replace the LBJ Student Center. The new polling location for the November election will be announced soon.

**Next Senate Meeting**

August 5, 2020 3:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

**Approval of minutes**

Minutes of the July 8, 2020 meeting were approved by email on July 14, 2020

Meeting adjourned 5:15 p.m.

Minutes submitted by Jennifer Jensen