**Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes**

**September 8, 2021**

**4-6 p.m.**

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

**Attending guests:** Sarah Angulo, Jesse Backstrom, Mary Brennan, Tina Cade, Timia Cobb, Kimberlee Davis, Celeste Domsch, Tozi Gutierrez, Jennifer Lamm, Mark Lester, Aimee Roundtree, Karen Sigler

Meeting was called to order at 4 p.m.

**Discussion of FDL Review Process – Senator Ledbetter**

The FDL application process is open until October 1. Chairs and directors have until October 8 to sign off on applications. Deans then have a week to review applications, and they are then sent to the Senate for ranking during our November 10 meeting. The Senate currently breaks into two groups to score and evaluate FDL applications from their respective colleges. Senator Ledbetter proposed a change so the entire Senate scores and evaluates all applications. Senator Ledbetter said the Senate tends to run out of time with our current form of evaluation and discussion. In addition, senators miss out on seeing half of ideas with this current model. Under her proposal, every senator would be available to be part of the discussion for all applications.

* A senator said we should read applications with the sense of what’s acceptable and not acceptable, since funding is typically available for all applications.
* A senator said they find the conversations in smaller groups to be very productive. He seconded the idea of looking for acceptable vs. unacceptable applications and saving discussion time and rankings for supplemental award considerations. A different committee handles supplemental awards, but the senator questioned whether our rankings affect their decisions.
* A senator questioned whether a thorough evaluation of 75-80 applications is feasible. They also questioned whether it’s practical for scientists to evaluate non-science-related applications and vice versa and called for subject matter experts to continue to evaluate applications from their own colleges.
* A senator questioned whether this could lead to highly technical applications facing a bias from senators who don’t understand the subject matter.
* A senator said they’d prefer to continue with last year’s process and procedures, with questions and concerns about a small number of applications being addressed as a full Senate.

A vote showed the Senate will continue with last year’s process of evaluating FDL applications. Groups will be divided up by college after applications are submitted to ensure equal workload.

**Faculty Senate Fellow Report – Tina Cade**

Last year’s Senate Fellow, Tina Cade, returned to provide preliminary results of her project, which was to determine awareness of and attitudes toward current and potential campus sustainability initiatives. The goal was to use this to develop a campus sustainability master plan that included priorities for the campus community. Cade and a graduate student collected master plans from more than 30 peer and aspirant universities to compare their sustainability efforts with Texas State’s current sustainability initiatives. Cade then developed a Likert scale related to Texas State’s initiatives, grouped together into categories like water use management and campus life, for example. Users would then rank a statement, such as “It is important to maintain sustainability initiative comparable to university peer institutions.” on a scale from not important to very important. The survey also provided an area for open-ended questions.

There were 44 responses as part of a pilot test. The Senate, Environment and Sustainability Committee and student volunteers took part in the pilot to check for reliability. Reliability was 0.983 in the pilot test.

The survey was then posted on Qualtrics and distributed to the entire campus three times from early May to early July 2021. The survey went to faculty, staff and students. There were 1,148 responses (365 staff, 142 faculty, 322 undergraduate students and 98 graduate students). Previous research showed this sample size was adequate. Most respondents were white or Hispanic. Two thirds of respondents were female.

Results showed 45.9% rated the university’s initiatives as moderate to extremely important, saying some improvements were needed. Many waste management statements, on topics like having recycling bins on campus, were rated as very or extremely important. Energy statements tended to rank lower, although incorporating alternative energies on campus ranked very highly. Transportation statements were split. Having safe spaces for walking ranked very highly, but scooter and bike share opportunities did not. Cade is now looking at the breakdown in attitudes and perceptions between students and faculty/staff. The impact of storm water and using grey water for irrigation ranked very highly, but retrofitting bathrooms didn’t score as well. Many statements related to campus grounds ranked highly, such as planting more trees on campus. Statements regarding purchasing environmentally products had split results. Environmental certification requirements didn’t score well, but the importance of purchasing energy-efficient products did. With regards to academics, adding a sustainability major at the undergraduate level didn’t score as highly as other statements. Finally, campus life statements were broader, such as teaching students how to live sustainable lifestyles. Cleaning up the river scored very highly. Cade, again, expects to see differences between students and faculty/staff here when it comes to raising student fees to pay for some of these campus life initiative ideas.

Across all categories, the highest-ranked statements involved easy access to recycling containers, replanting and replacing trees, reducing the number of single-use plastics and Styrofoam, collecting cardboard for recycling during move-in, providing mixed-stream recycling and hosting river clean-up events.

Her conclusions, so far, are that most respondents felt the university was moderate to average in sustainability efforts. The majority of respondents ranked many to most statements as very to extremely important. Highest-ranked statements occurred in the waste management/recycling and grounds categories. More analysis will continue, especially related to the breakdown in attitudes and perception differences between faculty/staff and students.

* A senator asked about the racial breakdown of respondents. Cade said multiple reminders were sent to take the survey, and she is now comparing sample results to overall populations on campus.
* A senator said he was glad the Senate helped support this work and thanked Cade. He asked what can be done to translate this to action. How will costs affect any potential actions? Another senator suggested lobbying for these changes to be included in the next strategic plan.
* A senator agreed it was critical for opinions on these topics to be collected and analyzed. He suggested implications could be prioritized by biggest “bang-for-your-buck” opinions from experts in the field. Cade said we can use peer institutions as inspiration for some of these initiatives.

These were just preliminary results. Further conclusions and action plans will be discussed at a later meeting.

**Charges for Committees – Senator Ledbetter**

Senator Ledbetter presented a document that showed each committee and its charge. Each committee is responsible for submitting a report at the end of each academic year. At least one report suggested changes to its committee charge. Senator Ledbetter asked senators to review the document to see if the current charges need attention or direction.

* A senator who now chairs the Academic Governance Committee said the previous chair suggested rewriting the charge for the AGC to align it more closely with Senate goals. She questioned if the current charge is too pedantic. Senator Ledbetter said she views the AGC as a watchdog and a helpful body to help guide changes on campus.
* A senator said she’s felt a lack of shared governance during COVID, and she feels the AGC could play a role in those type of equity studies.

More discussion on the topic of the AGC charge and shared governance will be held at a later meeting.

**AAPPS 01.02.31 Council of Chairs – Senator Davenport**

During a review of the AAPPS on Council of Chairs, a recommendation was made to add non-voting members representing Honors College and University College. Since the Senate has a representative on the Council of Chairs and now represents the Honors College and University College, is it equitable to allow those colleges to have representatives in two ways and all other colleges to have representation through only the one senator? Senator Davenport asked to find out who recommended the change so we could get clarification.

* A senator asked if this was the business of the Senate to consider. Senator Ledbetter said she understood the statement, but she believes more transparency is always a good thing.
* Senator Davenport asked to rescind her comments after clarification that University College and Honors College previously did not have representation on the Council of Chairs.

Consensus among senators was to move forward with the proposed changes.

**Policy Reviews – Senator Ledbetter**

Senator Ledbetter asked senators to always send policy reviews to her and Valerie Anderson.

The following policy was assigned:

UPPS 05.05.05 Use of Transportation Services Vehicles, due September 20 (Senator Ledbetter)

**Around the Table**

* Alexandria Hatcher and Bobby Mason will join Senate on September 22 to talk about Title IX reporting rules.
* A senator asked if there’s anything the Senate can do to improve faculty morale. Debbie Thorne announced at CAD that three surveys would be going out to gauge faculty morale.
* A senator asked if anything ever came of the faculty morale suggestions. Some things were approved, like incentives to vaccination and making the merit bonus a permanent raise.
* A senator asked about implementing a program to congratulate and recognize colleagues with kudos and morale boosters.
* A senator raised concerns over lack of communication from administration to Senate regarding changes related to morale.

Minutes for the September 1 meeting were approved.

Senators went into Executive Session to discuss a replacement appointment on the Environment and Sustainability Committee. Senators approved Ranjini Mohan from Communication Disorders to join the committee.

Meeting adjourned at 6:18 p.m.