**Faculty Senate Minutes**

Wednesday, October 28, 2020

Zoom Meeting, 4:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

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

**Guests:** Aimee Roundtree, Catching Valentinis-Dee (Student Government President), Christine Sellers, Joni S J Charles, Judy Oskam, Gloria Martinez-Ramos, Karen Sigler, Marilyn Espericueta, Mary Brennan, Rebecca Bell-Metereau, Ruth Taylor, Scott Pope (Library), Sylvia T. Gonzales, Tina Marie Cade (Senate Fellow), Victoria Black

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

**Report from Student Government President**

Mr. Catching Valentinis-Dee provided a report of student government goals and activities, which include listening to feedback from students, focusing on the student body relationship with UPD, and reviewing the first-year experiences of incoming freshmen and transfer students.

Mr. Valentinis-Dee cited specific concerns from some students who are disappointed in their learning experiences in some of the online, asynchronous courses, which led to a discussion with senators about how faculty could potentially improve asynchronous course delivery by incorporating more faculty engagement with students. Mr. Valentinis-Dee also conveyed that the general feeling among students regarding plans for Fall 2020 course delivery is that students want more in-person courses and campus activities because the overall student experience is too limited at present. A senator asked Mr. Valentinis-Dee how the current student government felt about the structure/allocation of student service fees. Mr. Valentinis-Dee said they had not discussed fee details, but that he would bring it back to the student government. Senate Chair Bezner extended an invitation for him to return and discuss student service fees with the senate in the future.

**COVID-19 First Generation Survey**

Dr. Gloria Martinez-Ramos, Dr. Victoria Black, and Sylvia Gonzales provided a brief presentation about the First-Gen Survey results. The survey, adapted from Georgetown University, focused on COVID-19 impacts on first generation students and the unique challenges they encountered when classes transitioned online rapidly in the Spring 2020 semester. Survey results indicated students had difficulty accessing technology; experienced financial instability; wanted more support, communication, and empathy from faculty; expressed concerns about psychological wellness; and had a general desire for better communication from their professors.

Overall, students reported persevering and staying motivated to complete their degree. The full report can be accessed at <https://gato-docs.its.txstate.edu/jcr:bbe13714-f7ff-4091-8649-1c18bf956b73/COVID-19%20Impact%20on%20First-Gen%20Students%20Report%20-%20Final%20.pdf>.

The First-Gen campaign is in the process of doing a more in-depth survey to assess additional needs and resources first generation students require to be successful. Faculty senators can support these efforts to encourage first generation student success by looking at recommendations in the report and promoting them to faculty. Faculty are encouraged to get involved in First-Gen activities and events <https://www.ucollege.txstate.edu/first-gen-proud/first-gen-week.html>.

**Piper Award Committee Recommendations**

Senator Ledbetter explained that the Piper Professor Award application instructions need to be clearer about requirements for the personal narrative and that nominees, nominators, or potentially the chairs or directors need to request support letters early and often. Senator

Ledbetter will provide edits using track changes to the application guidelines for senate review.

A senator suggested an additional revision to the application instructions to explicitly state that personal narratives must be written by the nominee.

**Discussion of PAAG Agenda, November 4, 2020**

Senators discussed potential agenda items for the upcoming PAAG meeting.

**Committee Appointments**

Senators voted to appoint Dr. Logan Trujillo (COLA) to serve on the Academic Computing Committee.

**Approval of minutes**

Senators voted to approve the minutes of the October 21, 2020 meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 6:15 pm

Minutes submitted by Jennifer Jensen