**Faculty Senate Minutes**

Wednesday, February 10, 2021

Zoom Meeting, 4:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

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

**Guests:** Noel Anthony Fuller, Gene Bourgeois (Provost), Mary Brennan, Kiana Burks (University Star), William Chittenden, Carla Ellard, Kym Fox, Geneva Gano, Tom Grimes, Michel Haigh, Lucy Harney, Kristopher Infante, Jennifer Lamm, Tina Marie Cade (Senate Fellow), David Nolan, Judy Oskam, Ruby P. Kishan, Scott Pope (Library), Aimee Roundtree, Joni S J Charles, Christine Sellers, Karen Sigler, Debbie Thorne, Erik Timmerman, Denise Trauth (President)

**President’s Academic Advisory Group (PAAG)**

**February Board of Regents Meeting**

President Trauth provided a brief report on highlights from the February meeting which included:

* The design and development documents for the university’s film and TV studios building were approved.
* Regent’s rule adopted allowing individual institutions to add an additional year to toll the tenure clock.

**Fall 2021 Update**

The President and Provost discussed the process for determining how the Fall 2021 semester was planned and provided information related to vaccinations, mask requirements, classroom capacities, etc. as summarized below.

* President Trauth said that the Fall 2019 semester was used as a starting point for building out the Fall 2021 schedule. The Provost said he wants an “in-person dominant” educational experience this fall. The original schedule was about 88% in person. It is now at 84% and slowly trending downward. He said, where appropriate, there will be conversations about more online/hybrid classes – but that decision will be made at the department/school level.
* Chairs/Directors have some latitude to be flexible with faculty that aren't ready to return to face-to-face courses. If someone cannot get vaccinated for a medical reason, the Provost said accommodations would be made.
* If most adults in the US are vaccinated by fall, the Provost predicts we will not have limited capacity classrooms.
* Dr. Carranco told the Cabinet that masks may not be required in the fall if mass vaccinations are successful. They may still be recommended – but not required. It all depends on vaccinations.
* It is still unclear, but the administration is working under the assumption that a vaccination will keep symptoms mild, even if someone gets a variant of COVID.
* A university cannot require vaccinations unless it is a state law.
* The university will continue to sanitize classrooms in the fall although the frequency may change as there may be a downside to sanitizing too often.

The Summer 2021 schedule is a roll over from Summer 2020, so most classes will be offered online.   
  
A senator requested of the Provost that the university provide reasonable advance notice if the university must make changes in the future regarding scheduling and course modality.

A senator asked if the university was going to promote vaccination and potentially offer transportation to vaccination hubs. President Trauth said the university must have a campaign to encourage vaccinations and they may consider transportation options. Ideally, the state would realize that it is easier to have the university provide vaccinations instead of requiring the student body to travel to a distant hub. The university is continuing to try to obtain vaccine. They have repeatedly ordered vaccines, but the university has not received any vaccine yet.

**Legislative Budget Bill HB 2**

President Trauth discussed the implications of the two budget proposals submitted to the state legislature and summarized the following since the two budget proposals were very similar:

* Chancellor is expecting several additional sessions because of redistricting. As such, the budget may not be passed until summer.
* Formula funding is up 0.2 weighted semester hours, but the rate per SCH is down $2.00.
* It does not look like there will be another 5% overall cut to the university.
* The core research fund did not take a 5% cut and since the university’s research expenditures increased by 6%, Texas State should receive more core research funding.
* TRIP cut by 5% from $17.5 million to $16.62 million.
* Texas grants cut by 5%, but that does not directly translate to a 5% cut for Texas State since the Coordinating Board determines how to allocate funds.
* The university has a request for two new buildings, one for each campus.
* The university submitted a request for equity funding to achieve parity with other Emerging Research Universities in the state.

A senator asked the President for her opinion on the long-term fiscal outlook. Dr. Trauth responded that she is more optimistic than pessimistic.

**PAAG Debrief**

Senators discussed the information presented in the PAAG meeting. Overall, senators were pleased with the plan moving forward and encouraged about the budget information.

Senators discussed how they could promote using recent survey results to guide future course schedules. Senator Davenport will compile a draft report of the class attendance survey distributed to faculty for senate review.

**Joint CAD-Faculty Senate Meeting with CAD March 9, 1:00-3:00 PM**

Senators discussed potential agenda items for March 9, 2021 meetings with CAD. Suggested topics included asking deans:

* What flexibility in course offering means to them?
* Their opinions on course release for undergraduate student mentoring under the QEP program.
* Their perspectives on how to improve faculty morale and what grievances, challenges, concerns deans have heard from faculty during the pandemic.

**March Senate Bulletin**

Senators reviewed a summary of items for the March Senate Bulletin.

**Policy Review**

AA PPS 02.02.21 Limiting the Number of Course Drops for Undergraduate Students at Public Institutions of Higher Education in Texas (SB1231), due March 11, 2021 (Senator Wesley)

UPPS 03.01.15 Custodial Funds, Due March 8, 2021 (Senator Ledbetter)

**Adoption of Minutes**  
Senators voted to adopt the minutes of the February 24, 2021 meeting.

**Miscellaneous**

Senators discussed potential themes for the 2021-2022 Senate Fellow application.

Senator Supancic notified senators to be sure to review the two attachments in the THECB form associated with the BS in Mechanical Engineering major.

Senator Wesley suggested the senate could create an initiative to encourage faculty and staff to bond together to empower university employees and improve morale.

Meeting adjourned at 6:09 p.m.

Minutes submitted by Jennifer Jensen with supplemental notes provided by Senator Blasingame.