

Faculty Senate
Wednesday, October 4, 2017
4:00 – 6:00, JCK 880

Minutes from previous meetings are available at
<http://www.txstate.edu/facultysenate/about/59th-senate-minutes.html>

Attending senators: Rebecca Bell-Metereau, Janet Bezner, Elizabeth Bishop, Natalie Ceballos, Scott Bowman, Michel Conroy, Jesse Gainer, Dana Garcia, Benjamin Martin, David Nolan, Shane Smith, Ting Liu, Alex White, Diego Vacaflores

Liaisons and guests: President Trauth, Provost Bourgeois, Associate Provost Thorne, Gaye Korenek, Karen Sigler (Alkek Library), Alyssa Newsom (*University Star*)

PAAG Update on Federal Government Higher Education Issues:

The president reported on the impact of administrative rule changes and legislation being considered at the federal level.

Title IX:

A new “dear colleague” letter has replaced the 2011 letter and the Texas State University System policy that governs Title IX compliance is under review. The current policy is not in conflict with new requirements, and it follows a higher standard in a few areas. The requirement to complete a review (with exceptions) within sixty days has been eliminated; now wording requires response in a “timely manner.” Burden of proof is on the university, not the complainant; the Chief Diversity Officer oversees investigations. Some universities have a gag order on complainant and respondent, but Texas State does not follow this practice. The university informally requests that parties not publicize cases. New federal guidelines state that gag orders are not possible. Informal resolution and mediation among all voluntary parties is recommended, but Texas State does not use mediation for sexual assault. Power dynamics will be a factor in formal resolution. The university is considering changes in the evidence standard of preponderance (51% civil) and higher for criminal case “clear and convincing,” but current and previous policy has served the university well, with any further changes coming from TSUS.

Federal budget issues:

Major funding cuts to the Fulbright program are not expected. Likewise, funding for NASA and ALERRT remain, and Normandy Group (lobbying firm in Washington) is monitoring upcoming issues affecting Texas State. Indirect costs, NEA, and NEH appear unchanged for FY2018.

Reporting Sick Leave:

Given the current university campaign to improve compliance with the reporting of sick leave (<http://policies.txstate.edu/university-policies/04-04-30.html>), the Faculty Senate requests clarification of Section 04.09 before review in December. Discussions in the senate, college councils, and departments indicate current policy is complicated, unclear, and sometimes contradictory. Staff is working on clear, accurate ways to implement policy and record-keeping. Chair White suggested categories of sick leave, including routine maintenance or preventative health care, temporary illness, and severe prolonged illness, (3-day) for which physicians must document orders. Gaye Korenek will check the timeline for revisions. Online records may be used, but if submitting to a unit timekeeper, a written form is required. Staff in some departments may prefer that faculty not use SAP. Audit shows few faculty have been reporting sick leave. Senate will ask Associate Provost Thorne if the senate should work on a draft to change sick leave policy.

Faculty Senate Goal to Strengthen Community:

Faculty Senate has established an initiative to secure a place (e.g. a faculty club) for faculty to assemble for collaboration and meetings. President Trauth encouraged the senate to sponsor events at Jones Dining Hall for faculty social and academic interaction, noting that the Jones space was designated in response to Faculty Senate requests. Senate responded that it is not viewed as an appealing location, and that at lunch time, faculty have to wait in long lines with students, with purchase requiring a 25-minute wait or ordering a day in advance. Few know about it, and noise level is problematic because it is open, with no insulation. Renovation of Commons for use as a faculty club was suggested. However, this will only be considered when testing center moves to Nueces which cannot occur until UPD moves out of Nueces. Renovations to Strahan and Jowers do not include plans for a dining room.

Faculty Development Leave:

Chairs have voiced concerns about the interval between FDL applications. Associate Provost Thorne may be open to wording revision to resolve this concern. A committee recently revised the final report criteria in the FDL policy, but did not revise the timeline for eligibility. In the current policy faculty are required to meet with chairs to discuss how classes can be covered. The legislature states that no more than 6% of faculty can be on leave. It is expected that faculty and the chair will negotiate and compromise, for example taking leave in spring versus fall.

CAD October 3, 2017 report:

General education change requests will go to the general education council.

Andrew Carnegie Fellows Program asks for submissions to the program, and university is soliciting nominations from the university.

Marketable Skills: coordinating board (THECB) wants students to be able to articulate skills acquired in each degree program by 2020; by 2030, students will be able to articulate marketable skills. Elizabeth Bishop will represent the senate on the committee.

Compared to the same time last year, the number of applicants and admits for UG and grad are down 10-20%. The university priority is to fund new graduate programs. The Office of Enrollment Management is monitoring schools with lower numbers of applicants than usual and planning recruiting visits. Also, the office is developing a strategy to recruit at Texas community colleges know to have high transfer rates to 4 year institutions.

Budget: Lower enrollment has placed a strain on the budget. It has not been decided yet if there will be a merit raise this spring. The merit pool, if given, will be less than 3%. It is possible there will be no merit for next year, Fall 2018. No more CATS caravan, funds will be used instead for scholarships.

Agenda for Oct 18 Meeting of Full Senate, Reed Parr, JCK:

Help with Survey: Senate will ask liaisons to encourage faculty to complete the committee preference survey and alert liaisons on how the survey is used.

Senate Initiatives: Senate will ask the liaisons to help brainstorm ideas for initiative 2.

College Break Out Sessions: liaisons and senators discuss faculty concerns from their departments/schools. Perhaps debut the faculty concern form.

6:05 Adjournment with RTA: Minutes approval, Senate Fellow Call