**Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes**

**October 20, 2021**

**4:00-6:00 pm**

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

**Attending guests:** Moonis Ali, Sarah Angulo (Senate Fellow), Amy Benton, Ann Burnette, Kyong Hee Chee, Lisa Chrans, Hunter Close, Timia Cobb (University Star), Luis Intersimone, Paul Jantz, Mark Lester, Ranjini Mohan, Sherri Mora, Jason Reed, Aimee Roundtree, Robert Rutledge, Karen Sigler, In Hyouk Song, Nicole Taylor, Megan Trad

The meeting was called to order at 4:01 p.m.

**Faculty Senate/Liaison Meeting**

The Senate meets every semester with its liaisons, who represent the schools and departments that do not have an elected senator. The goal of today’s joint meeting is to listen to liaisons for thoughts and ideas regarding their roles.

* A liaison said she asked for feedback from her faculty and received three responses. One issue was regarding understaffing, particularly with ODEL, and help with online classes. Another staffing concern is with the Methodology, Measurement and Statistical Analysis (MMSA) office, which helps faculty with research. There was also a concern about the length of time it takes to get a PCR processed.
* A liaison said he received a concern about an email sent out October 18 from the Internal Audit Office, encouraging faculty, staff and students to report fraud and waste of university resources. The concerned faculty member said this is discouraging to ask students and employees to be “snitches” and could lead to students reporting faculty they have issues with. The faculty member said this is the chair’s job to handle issues and/or concerns like this.
	+ A senator said this is related to a university policy (UPPS 01.04.40) that applies only to staff, and he feels sending it to students may have been an overreach by the Internal Audit Office.
* A liaison said his department is concerned about campus safety after a security incident last week on campus. University Police have been outside the School of Art and Design for the past week, despite multiple emails saying there was no ongoing threat related to the incident. He feels there is a lack of oversight and communication related to campus security issues like this.
* A liaison said his faculty expressed two concerns. One is regarding existing faculty salaries not being adjusted for market rate. This means new faculty are making more, in some cases, than existing faculty at higher ranks. The second concern was regarding the amount of red tape involved at the Office of Sponsored Research.
* A liaison said she is recovering from COVID, and she believes she contracted it in her classroom. Her faculty is concerned about the lack of mask requirements and workload regarding nontenure faculty and the number of students nontenure faculty are responsible for teaching. She said there is also concern about the new professor of teaching rank leading to more lines for those ranks and less tenure-track lines.
* A liaison said her faculty is confused about reporting of Title IX incidents. She said there were also concerns about the mental health of students and faculty/staff members having to play the role of therapists.
* A liaison said her faculty expressed concerns about campus safety, like the previous concern mentioned. Her faculty also asked for the university to clearly state the rules/laws regarding guns on campus. She also passed along concerns about the university’s handling of contact tracing. There was a feeling the university has offloaded the task to faculty. Finally, her faculty also addressed a desire to have more updates regarding the presidential search.
	+ A senator said the university’s concealed carry policy is up for full review. In addition, the search for a new president is confidential, so there is nothing that can be shared – other than it is ongoing.
* A liaison said many of her faculty run programs but don’t carry that title. Instead, they are mostly senior lecturers. Summer has become an issue because of salary and cuts.
* A liaison said some of his faculty submitted concerns. One was regarding the quality of custodial services post-COVID. A second concern was over IT equipment in classrooms, particularly regarding audio and visual quality. A third concern was about the lack of new laptops post-COVID. A fourth concern was regarding the overworking of his department’s IT person.
* A liaison addressed a concern about hiring the new assistant provost instead of adding faculty lines.

Senator Ledbetter expressed interest in moving forward with many of these concerns, since they are consistent with many of the issues previously heard at the Senate. She then asked liaisons for ideas on how to solve some of these issues.

* A liaison suggested adding temporary workers during the peak PCR request seasons.

Senator Ledbetter also told liaisons the Senate may reach out for information about how personnel committees in their departments function. Each department is different in size and scope, and some PCs oversee other things like budget and curriculum while others don’t.

* A senator raised a question from the Academic Freedom Committee about the previous security issue in question and how this applied to a class assignment and academic freedom.
* A liaison suggested faculty know the address of the building where they teach - in case they need to call 911.
* A liaison followed up regarding the security issue, saying students felt like there was a real threat, despite how university communication portrayed it. Students were also concerned about a lack of communication regarding what happened to the student at the heart of the security issue – whether he was going to be in class moving forward. He said the Dean of Students Office came to speak with them but, according to him, was defensive and combative during the discussion. The liaison is concerned there is no faculty representation during issues like this.
	+ Senator Ledbetter said this could be added to the upcoming PAAG agenda.
	+ A senator reminded attendees that the previous UPD chief resigned abruptly. Several faculty members are on the committee to find the new police chief. An email should be going out soon regarding campus visits for candidates. He’s concerned about the lack of police leadership during this time.
	+ A liaison addressed concern about the lack of trauma counseling services in the aftermath of incidents like this. He said there should be a strategic plan in place from the administration to deal with incidents such as the one from last week.
* Two liaisons also raised concerns about their sense that administration believes the pandemic is over when faculty and staff have young children at home who cannot yet be vaccinated.

Senator Ledbetter asked how liaisons feel regarding their role in relation to the Senate.

* A liaison said she feels comfortable with her role and how faculty come to her with any issues. She said holding monthly meetings between liaisons, senators and the dean fell off during COVID, but there are efforts in her college to make those meetings start again.
* A newer liaison said he struggles to provide timely updates to his faculty. He requested minutes be released to liaisons earlier so they can provide updates or to make the Zoom recording available to liaisons who can’t attend.
	+ Senator Ledbetter said the Senate can discuss methods to streamline the process of approving minutes and releasing them sooner.
* A liaison said it would help to provide best practices for the role of liaison and said she would be happy to have a bigger role as liaison.
	+ Senator Ledbetter suggested liaisons lobby department chairs to be included on faculty meeting agendas to provide updates from the Senate.

**Minutes Approval**

Minutes from the October 13 Senate meeting were approved.

**Policy Reviews**

Senators volunteered to review four university policies:

* UPPS 07.07.04 Student Employee Termination, Separation, and Grievance Procedures - Due October 25, 2021 (Senator Acee)
* UPPS 04.04.01 General Workplace Policy - Due October 25, 2021 (Senator Mendez)
* UPPS 03.01.19 Procurement Card - Due October 27, 2021 (Senator Ledbetter)
* UPPS 05.06.04 Travel Advances - Due October 29, 2021 (Senator Wesley)

**Liaison Meeting Debrief**

* A senator said she found the question about the bloating of administration to be interesting and thought it could be a PAAG question. She believes salary compression is also an issue the Senate should continue to push on.
* A senator said he felt that was the most productive liaison meeting the Senate has ever held. He echoed the calls for better communication regarding campus safety. He also suggested the Senate push for solutions to staff shortages.
* A senator said the Senate should present the security concerns to the highest levels.
* A senator said the administration should look into options and ideas to help incoming faculty with supplemental loans to deal with the price of living in this market.
* A senator reiterated the concern about hiring administrative positions instead of filling staff roles. She suggested the Senate collaborate with Staff Council to help with morale.
* A senator said the Senate should continue to push for salary adjustments.
* A senator said she recently sat in on a staff listening session that was concerning. She said the Senate should work as a team with staff to push for solutions. She also said the Senate should fight back regarding a cut in summer pay related to administrative duties.
* A senator suggested the Senate address the issue of lecturers who are not in fully funded positions and will not be eligible for the proposed teaching rank career ladder. She said chairs and deans will need to be allies in pushing for this to change.
	+ The Senate will ask for this issue to be added to the agenda for the combined meeting of Council of Academic Deans, Council of Chairs and Senate. The Senate will also ask for the issue of summer salary cuts to be added to the meeting agenda.
* A senator pushed for adding concerns about campus safety to the next PAAG agenda. He also raised concerns of infrastructure problems related to registration. The computer system, again, crashed during registration this week, as it has done in previous semesters.

The Senate moved into Executive Session to fill a spot on the selection committee for the Texas State Outstanding Senior Woman Award. Dr. Sarah Blue from the Department of Geography and Environmental Studies was approved for this position.

Meeting adjourned at 6:05 p.m.