**Faculty Senate Minutes**

Wednesday, September 16, 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:** Mary Brennan, Jenny Buschhorn, Ricardo Delgado Ahumada, Jaden Edison (University Star), Elizabeth Erhart, Marilyn Espericueta, Lisa Lloyd, Cristian Lieneck, Tina Marie Cade (Senate Fellow), Judy Oskam, Joaquin Palacios, Scott Pope (Library), Aimee Roundtree, Chris Russian, Joni S J Charles, Christine Sellers, Karen Sigler, Debbie Thorne, Julie Weng

Senate Chair Bezner called the meeting to order at 4:01 pm

**Statement by Vice President University Administration**

Dr. Lisa Lloyd acknowledged that she made a mistake in her communication with the senate in her statements about the investigation and university response concerning men’s basketball coach Kaspar. She indicated she mixed up the internal and external communications within and by the university. She emphasized that she made a mistake, there was no ill intent on her part, and that truth and transparency are important to her. Dr. Lloyd said she appreciated Senate Chair Bezner reaching out to her and is looking forward to working together with the senate to repair the fracture in trust. Some senators disagreed about the adequacy of Dr. Lloyd’s response to the Kaspar matter.

**Continue discussion of AAPPS 04.02.20 Tenure and Promotion Policy revisions**

Dr. Beth Erhart (Academic Governance Committee, AGC) and Dr. Debbie Thorne joined the senate to continue the discussion of proposed revisions to AAPPS 04.02.20 - Tenure and Promotion Policy.

Dr. Erhart communicated that the AGC discussed the potential inclusion of clinical faculty for PC composition and voting privileges and that some AGC members were open to increased participation on a PC but disagreed about voting privileges. Dr. Erhart said that the goal was to try to find a path for improving shared governance in a way that was fair and inclusive.

Several senators agreed with the need for the policy to provide an explicit definition of ‘administrator’ because some administrators (i.e., academic administrators) have HR leverage over faculty while others (e.g., grant administrators) do not. Other senators voiced concerns about the lack of revisions in the policy related to PC composition and voting including that the policy revisions were not inclusive enough for non-tenured associate professors or tenured assistant professors.

Dr. Thorne explained there was not much revision to the PC section in the policy because she thought Faculty Senate was working on a Personnel Committee policy. Additionally, the policy revisions were not intended to change PC structure, but to ask units how they are going to gain feedback from non-tenured faculty. She emphasized that the proposed revisions leave it open for local governance. A senator mentioned that pushing down substantial governance to local-level decisions results in increased inequities across colleges and academic units. Dr. Thorne expressed that is why it is important to have a solid PC policy.

A senator asked about status of tolling the tenure clock due to COVID-19. Dr. Thorne said that Dr. Bourgeois has contacted the system office and should have a response soon.

Senators also discussed the revisions associated with the general flexibility in remote voting and their concerns about leaving the decision to individual units or colleges. Senators advocated for a more universal, standardized approach to remote voting policies by arguing that giving faculty more guidance will result in increased consistency and fewer surprises. Per the proposed revisions, unit-level policies may result in increased grievances across academic units.

The Senate expressed concerns about adopting the policy changes quickly this semester and Dr. Thorne emphasized there were critical pieces to the revisions, including requirements for academic units to develop policies to gain feedback from non-tenured faculty. Additionally, the remote voting revisions are critical because of upcoming PC voting in late October/early November. Therefore, approving some of the revision is critical by that deadline.

The senate will continue to work on a draft PC policy and invite Dr. Thorne back for discussion.

**Dr. Carranco’s response to letter from Faculty Senate.**

Senate Chair Bezner updated senators that Dr. Carranco acknowledged receipt of the letter and that he is working on a response. The senate also received updates that the COVID-19 Dashboard now includes active cases, surveillance testing will involve faculty and staff in addition to students, and that the administration has communicated that there has been no evidence of classroom or dormitory transmission.

Senators expressed ongoing concerns including:

* Texas State still does not include the number of tests administered per day or the positivity rate on the Dashboard
* Testing is only *recommended* for close contacts identified by contact tracers
* Members of the campus community that need to schedule an appointment at the SHC for COVID testing must wait several days for an available appointment
* Sanitizing stations are not being refilled or maintained
* Lack of adequate testing relative to other universities and that the lack of testing gives the appearance that expanded testing of the student body at Texas State is not a priority
* Tier 1 football teams are resuming their programs but will shut down if teams have a positivity rate at or above 5% and whether Texas State athletics is pursuing a similar strategy.

Senate Chair Bezner updated senators with information that the state of Texas is in the process of signing a contract with a COVID testing vendor that may result in a mobile testing unit on campus that can perform additional testing as soon as October.

**Discussion of agenda topics for 2020-2021 consistent with Senate Theme**

Senators brainstormed topics that included:

* Support Dr. Cade’s project on Environmental Sustainability
* Sponsoring discussion on academic freedom in October
* Inviting Twister Marquis to discuss the Common Experience
* Monitoring policy reviews to evaluate use of gender-neutral pronouns
* Continuing to work with Dr. Thorne on a bullying/harassment policy that includes cyberbullying
* Making the PC policy a top priority this year

A senator expressed concern about lack of an approved civility policy, particularly in light of the upcoming election. Several senators are concerned about lack of civility and lack of clear repercussions for uncivil behavior. Senate Chair Bezner will report back to the senate on the status of the civility policy.

NTF Career Path Proposal: Senator Ledbetter met with Debbie Thorne who was going to move the proposal forward, but the pandemic slowed things down. She followed up with Dr. Thorne during the meeting and Dr. Thorne suggested that if it is not too late, to add it to the agenda for the Joint Council of Chairs, CAD, Faculty Senate meeting on September 24.

**Upcoming VPSA interviews**

Senate Chair Bezner updated senators that she will represent the senate during the interviews and asked senators to provide questions they would like to ask the candidates. The interviews are scheduled for September 22-23, September 24-25, September 29-30, and October 1-2.

**Retention video**

Senators discussed the recent “Retention is Our Mission” video distributed to faculty. Most senators thought the video was in poor taste and that the current support from the university does not match the increasing workload or burden placed on faculty.

**ITAC wait times**

Senators communicated very lengthy wait times for ITAC support. Senate Chair Bezner will escalate the issue directly to Ken Pierce.

**Policy reviews**

AA/PPS 04.01.01 Faculty Hiring (pen and ink changes), due September 22, 2020 (Senator Ojede)

AA/PPS 04.01.02 Hiring and Employment of Temporary, Non-Continuing Faculty (pen and ink changes), due September 22, 2020 (Senator Jensen)

UPPS 01.03.02 University Construction Policy, due September 25, 2020 (Senator Supancic)

UPPS 04.04.60 Workplace Accommodation (pen and ink) (Senator Ash)

UPPS 04.04.30 University Leave (full review – October 5, 2020 (Senator McClellan)

**Approval of minutes**  
Senators approved the minutes for the September 9, 2020 meeting.

Meeting adjourned 6:03 pm

Minutes submitted by Jennifer Jensen