

Meeting: Faculty Senate
 Date: September 5, 2017
 Time: 2:01 p.m.
 Location: BA 343
 Adjournment: 3:31 p.m.

Minutes

Members present: Wilson, Jones, Taggart, Huber, Delgado-Acevedo, Starnes, Araujo, Lubiani, Ballenger, Mitchell, Smith, Davis, Anderson, Stewart, Atinc, Ou, Kelly, Mahoney, Williams, King (President), Jones (for Pierce), May, Sun, Worley
 Members absent: Tanik, Larkin, Randolph-Seng

Issue/Topic	Summary of Discussion	Decision/Action
	May 2017 Senate minutes were approved with minor modifications	Motioned by Ballenger, seconded by Smith
Guest Speakers Dr. John Humphreys, Provost & Vice President for Academic Affairs	President King called for the suspension of the 15-minute time limit for guest speakers. Dr. Humphreys discussed several topics as summarized below: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Humphreys welcomed everyone to the fall 2017 semester. • He mainly visited the Senate to discuss the athletic fee referendum. The University added 22 faculty lines this year. Twelve of those lines were a direct result of the athletic fee referendum – ten lines were funded through budget savings and budget realignment. The University expected that it would be able to add nine new lines year one working under the increased athletic fee (which allowed the University to fund the athletic program with athletic fees rather than using funds from other sources), five new lines year two and two new lines year three – so it was pleased to be able to add twelve new lines this year rather than the nine anticipated. • These new lines might not be enough to keep up with the University’s growth – although growth in enrollment has not been realized this year, it is expected that in years to come the University will continue to see enrollment growth. • The Provost’s office has far fewer crises to deal with this year than last year. 	

The floor was opened to questions from the Senators. Responses to the questions posed are summarized below:

- The University is moving forward with Digitization of tenure and promotion documentation submission, at this point however, submission of the required documents can be done with hard copies or electronic copies.
- The University will use online course/instructor evaluations this year for all courses.
- An update was provided on continued efforts to update policies and procedures for professional track faculty. The Deans are still working on this issue – the Provost should hear back from the Deans this week. The Deans are concerned about the funds being available for promotion. The Provost is not concerned about the funding of promotions; he is only concerned about getting the policy right. If we are going to have professional track positions, then we have to get the mechanisms correct or we should not have professional track positions.
- The President and Provost are committed to supporting faculty to attend and present at the most important national conference within their discipline. Faculty will have \$2000 annual support for travel but only to the most important national conference within their discipline and only if they have a work to present. Deans will not be let off the hook of providing a share of the travel expense. Deans will provide their share and the Provost is committed to finding the rest of the financial support. It is not certain yet if professional track faculty will be eligible for this support. Concern was raised that some Colleges make funds available first come first serve, which places faculty whose main conference falls late in the academic year at a disadvantage of receiving funding. The Provost expressed that this is not acceptable to penalize faculty whose conferences fall late in the year. He will work with the Deans to rectify the situation.
- The State of Texas expects an \$8-9 billion deficit in the next legislative session. Expect to see higher education face significant budget cuts.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Provost is lobbying for merit raises but it may not be possible due to the budget and decreased enrollment. President Keck has not made a decision yet. • The Provost said that President Keck is still committed to a 3/3 teaching load for faculty. This is easier to do in some disciplines than others. Some departments already have a 3/3 load, but still teach a 5/5 load with overload pay. Provost Humphreys stressed that a faculty workload policy should not be uniform throughout the University. Rather, each College should have their own faculty workload policy (which is what the strategic plan calls for as well). More resources are needed to move to a 3/3 load. • A question was raised about the strategic plan goal of aligning faculty salaries to be at or above 75% of the national average based on discipline. Provost Humphreys stressed that he thinks the current strategic plan is highly misguided and should be scrapped now rather than waiting until 2020 to formulate a new plan – the current plan is not a strategic plan at all. Because of the current plan, much time and resources are being utilized acquiring data for Institutional Effectiveness that has no real value to the University – some measurements are meaningless. • Provost Humphreys said that faculty salaries are in fact at the 75% or better nationally – it depends on the metric one chooses to measure against. Some areas we may be behind the curve but some areas we are not. The Provost’s office is working with the Deans for equity adjustments. • For strategic planning, the Provost is more interested in retention and growth, which would make IE an easier process. 	
<p>Communications</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • President King indicated that the remaining Senate meetings will be in room BA290. • UEC meetings were supposed to be scheduled for every Monday to go over big issues facing the campus. Two-thirds of the meetings over the summer were cancelled. UEC meetings are not on a consistent schedule yet. 	

<p>Committee Reports</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • President King wants all Senators to serve on at least one Senate committee. President King explained the purpose of each committee. • Academic Life: President King will accept nominations and present a nomination for chair of this committee under new business. • Academic Practice: The committee is still working on drafting procedures for the evaluation of administrators. The committee has 13 members but can accept more members if others are interested in serving on this committee. The Academic Practice committee will not be responsible for developing the procedures and instruments for the evaluation of administrators. • Admission and Retention: No work was conducted over the summer. The committee has not yet met with Dr. Dobbs and Dr. Lee to discuss the 1st year experience. The committee currently has five members and needs more. Plagiarism was discussed as an issue that the University needs to address to inform students what it is and how it will be dealt with (the University needs to adopt formal policy in this regards). Some Colleges do not want faculty to deal directly with their student’s plagiarism issues rather they want their faculty to report plagiarism and let it be investigated; yet there is no formal policy on how it should be dealt with. Information regarding the Writing Center needs to be easier to find and better disseminated to faculty and students. • Budget: Over the last 3-4 years the budget committee has morphed from a committee to just a chair of the committee who attends BRDC meetings and reports back to the Senate. The budget committee will be reconstituted this year and assume a larger role if needed. • Curriculum: President King encouraged more Senators to serve on this committee and to ask their colleagues to serve on it. • Faculty Awards: This committee involves more work in the spring than the fall semester. President King asked the committee to develop a calendar for the year which should include all deadlines, when applications will be reviewed, etc. in order to more easily inform the faculty and avoid complaints from faculty who might miss the e-mail announcements. The committee should also put out a document summarizing the criteria for each award and how applications will be evaluated so that it is clear to everyone. The committee needs to make sure that the awardees are in some way notified to be at the awards 	
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	<p>luncheon in the spring, ideally without notifying them that they are an award recipient so that the element of surprise can be maintained. The committee should move forward the due dates for nominations with a due date before the winter break so that nominees have more time to prepare their application packets. It needs to be better articulated whether full-time or part-time administrators are eligible for Senate awards. Nomination packets need to be sent out via blind CC so that someone does not mistakenly reply all revealing who they nominated to all of their colleagues.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organization of the Senate: Needs more members. This committee is only made up of Senators since its sole purpose is to deal with the functioning of the Senate. This is not a busy committee. More eyes are needed to update and amend spur of the moment work. • President King will forward committee descriptions to all Senators who can then encourage their colleagues to serve on one of these committees. 	
<p>Unfinished Business</p>	<p>President King formed an ad-hoc committee to work on developing administrator evaluation procedure for Deans, the Provost and President spring/summer 2017. Those interested in serving on this committee should contact President King. It was pointed out that Provosts and Presidents are not evaluated yearly at most universities.</p>	
<p>New Business</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • President King opened the floor for nominations to chair the Academic Life committee. No nominations were made from the floor. President King nominated Charlotte Larkin to chair this committee – she had previously been contacted to ask if she would chair the committee and she said that she would. A motion was made that Senator Larkin chair the Academic Life committee. The motion passed. • Former Senator Jennifer Sennette, who was to serve on the Senate this year, had to step down as Senator for Curriculum & Instruction since she is now Interim Department Head of Curriculum & Instruction. She was going to help maintain the Senate website this year. President King asked for a volunteer to assume this duty. Senator Taggart volunteered for this role. • President King asked for volunteers to be recording and communications secretary for the Senate this year. 	<p>Motioned by President King. Senator Davis seconded the motion.</p>

	<p>Senator Ballenger and Senator Delgado-Acevedo volunteered to share these duties, which was unanimously approved by the Senate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • President King opened the floor to discussion regarding what items the Senate should focus on this year. One item of discussion was whether faculty had any concerns with the Center for IT Excellence. The University wide issue with logging into myLeo was mentioned. It was suggested that communication with faculty should be improved to avoid issues such as this and major changes such as the new myLeo portal should not be rolled out at the start of a semester. Document cameras on campus seem to be of worse quality. A knowledge base for common problems should be created (if a knowledge base existed within myLeo this would compound the problem if myLeo was not operational). If faculty cannot have administrator privileges on their computers, then IT should push out updates to all software in a timelier manner to help faculty avoid technical issues. It takes too long to address IT issues – one week without service in an online class, for example, is not acceptable. IT needs more professionals or they need more training for their staff to handle a greater variety of issues (such as a greater knowledge base within IT to deal with PC, Mac, UNIX issues). • Last year, President King had a goal for the Senate to gain greater visibility and recognition within administration. Other issues Senators suggested the Senate could consider working on included 1. Working with administration to make the University more conducive to research. The University has a goal to be more research oriented but some faculty see no support for this to happen. More financial resources, more TA positions, more travel support could be devoted to research programs for example. 2. The University seems to be positioning more graduate students as instructor of record, which ultimately means hiring fewer part-time or full-time faculty. Coupled with this, University policy and procedures does not adequately (if at all) describe the role and evaluation expectations of a GA instructor of 	
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	<p>record. 3. Maintenance and custodial services are not consistent across campus. The BA building, where most administrative offices are housed, seems fairly clean in contrast to other buildings such as the music building or library, which are both high traffic areas. The library has two custodians to tend to the entire building. Much needs to be done to improve these services. 4. Faculty should have more input when enrollment caps are increased on their courses. The process for increasing enrollment caps should be consistent across campus; currently faculty in some departments receive notification before enrollment caps are changed whereas faculty in other departments have no input or notification. This occurs at both the undergraduate and graduate level.</p>	
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