

The University of Texas at Tyler
Office of the Faculty Senate
February 25, 2021
12:30-2:00p (via Zoom)

Attendees: Alicia Krenek, Amanda Cartwright, Amanda Whitt, Amentahru Wahrlab, Amir Mirmiran, Amy Hayes, Andrew Pettee, Arun Kulkarni, Ashleigh Day, Beverley Golden, Brenda Burton, Brenna Scott Rothrock, Catherine Ross, Christina Graves, Cheryl Parker, Christian Chesnut, Christine Forisha, Christopher Thomas, Clayton Benjamin, Coby Dillard, Colin Snider, Colleen Marzilli, Cynthia Martinez, David Barron, David Christian, Kathleen Helgesen, Dr. Kirk Calhoun, Elizabeth Sills, Fernando Resende, Gina Doepker, Gisele Abron, Gracy Buentello, Hannah Buchanan, Heshium Lawrence, Jacki Wyman, Janet Gehring, Janice Helfers, Javier Kypuros, Jeffrey Howlett, Jennifer Klein, Joshua Menhennett, Joshua Neaves, Julie Delello, Kassie Archer, Katie Anders, Kerri Camp, Kerrie Anne Ambort-Clark, Kim Laird, Kim Livingston-Cobb, Kim Nimon, Kouider Mokhtari, Lauren Hendley, Lisa Jett, Lori Farmer, Lou Ann Viergever, Lynette Sutter, Lynn Harris, M Gail Weatherly, Marcus Stadelmann, Margo Duncan, Marti Halbrook, Mary Fischer, Matthew Brinton, Matthew Stith, Michael Vick, Molly Crespo, Muthukrishnan Sathyamoorthy, Nicole Schugel, Ona Tolliver, Osama Shoair, Premananda Indic, Randy LeBlanc, Rebecca McKay Johnson, Richard Helfers, Rodrigo Rocha, S. Whatley, Sarah Meisch-Lacombe, Sarah Norrell, Sarah Sass, Saren Spicer, Scott Dillingham, Sheldon Davis, Sherry Howard, Steven Idell, Sonja Morale, Sydni Blundell, Tamela Kimbro, Tammy Cowart, Vandy Dubre, Victoria Gehring, X. Neil Dong, Yonjoo Cho.

- | | | |
|-------|---|--|
| 12:30 | Welcome and Call to Order | Dr. Rick Helfers |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Thank you to Jerry Stuff and Andy Krouse and entire staff for putting in long hours in getting campus back online after the winter storms last week.• Thank you to Dr. Mirmiran and executive team in involving faculty, student input during the past week. | |
| 12:32 | Approval of January Meeting Minutes | Dr. Sarah Sass (for Dr. Amentahru Wahrlab) |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Motion to approve January minutes approved. | |
| 12:34 | President’s Updates | Dr. Kirk Calhoun |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Just came back from Austin, was there for 2 important events.<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. First, quarterly Board of Regents meeting. We received final approval from Board of Regents for the medical school in Tyler. It has now been sent on to Texas Higher Ed Coordinating Board – Dr. Calhoun has spoken with the head of the Board who is enthusiastic and supportive about a medical school in Tyler. We are not anticipating difficulties in the process.<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. We will need to move on getting SACS accreditation. Most importantly, we will require accreditation from the Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME). | |

Having first site visit– in a half hour or so from LCME on our campus President Calhoun is confident the process will be successful.

- b. The regents looked at a number of issues at the meeting – nothing that could envision disrupting faculty lives across the UT system.
2. The Second important activity was the budget hearing at the capital with senate finance committee chaired by Senator Jane Nelson. The first group to testify from UT was Chairman Eltife and Chancellor Milligan. Chairman Eltife was asked about Tyler – and alignment of the 2 campus. They see it as a good thing. First, they highlighted that it will help elevate the gravitas of the UT Tyler campus. It immediately is going to have us jump in our Carnegie designation, it will bring other benefits in terms of increased research funding to campus, and by joining the resources of both campuses, including physical space, vivarium, student support services, they add together nicely to help us become a larger more robust campus with more options than we would have had if we had remained apart.
- Dr. Calhoun’s most important priority was to ensure to faculty that we would not disrupt the day-day lives of how we do our job of educating students. Also, administration would not play a role in causing us to experience more angst in getting things done. A second priority was that we have good lines of communication with faculty senate in particular, as well as deans, faculty, students, staff, and across the entire university.
 - There are various issues in bringing two campuses together. External events like COVID and winter weather did disrupt our activities. Dr. Calhoun is proud of how faculty responded, cooperated with the administrative team, and how helpful we have been in terms of bringing the two campuses together.
 - Health science people have been welcomed by what was UT Tyler faculty. Dr. Calhoun is not having to do much work to find opportunities and synergies that can occur, faculty are doing it well, administrative role is to facilitate opportunities for cooperation and communication.
 - Dr. Calhoun has reorganized things around how he likes to function. Every university president does things a little bit differently. Dr. Calhoun has a clear vision of what a President needs to be focused on, which is the big picture, the major issues facing the university.
 - Dr. Calhoun needs to spend time interacting with BOR, keeping UT Tyler top of mind, spending time with state legislature when it is in session protecting funding. When Dr. Calhoun testified for the senate finance committee yesterday, he asked for the restoration of the 5% cut and that formula funding be maintained going into the next biennium, with additional funding for student growth that has occurred on campus.
 - There were questions about the needs of our region, and our region in NE Texas is older and poorer with a higher risk of death. UT Tyler can play an important role in

addressing these needs in the region. Dr. Calhoun is not claiming that we are going to be the economic driver of the region. If we do a good job, we will be a leader and a driver, but we need to stay focused on our core responsibilities and functions as a state institution in terms of serving NE Texas and helping this part of state have an adequate workforce, a well-educated populace, and the economic and health care benefits that can come from what a university can bring to the community. Dr. Calhoun views his role as a big-picture responsibility as President to raise money, help get more scholarship and grant support, helping faculty advance and get tenure, etc.

- The day-to-day operations will be taken care of by leadership – principally through those who directly report to Dr. Calhoun, for example, audit, legal, and others, but the four leaders in the organization that impact faculty the most include Dr. Mirmiran as Provost, who is an executive vice president. He is responsible for the day-day operations of the academic side. Dr. Calhoun and Dr. Mirmiran talk daily and Dr. Mirmiran keeps Dr. Calhoun informed. Dr. Calhoun doesn't want to become disengaged.
- Dr. Calhoun has faculty senate to have a representative on the Cabinet, so when the Cabinet meets, faculty input is garnered. Dr. Calhoun wants to make sure there is faculty representation. Dr. Calhoun generally gets a report from Cabinet meetings and then acts on recommendations of Cabinet.
- Dr. Julie Philley has been appointed executive VP of Health Affairs. Joe Woelkers has worked closely with Dr. Calhoun and was appointed Chief Business Officer. Ona Toliver will continue to be Head of Student Services. Ona will report directly report to President Calhoun so that he is involved in many decisions that directly involve students.
- One of the most profound changes in the org chart is to elevate the role of the HR department. Dr. Calhoun believes our workforce is our most important asset, and how we recruit, pay people, and deal with things like salary compression, need very talented individuals. Cindy Scott-Lunau has vast experience working with faculty and will be leading HR.
- We have some Deans roles to recruit. Dr. Calhoun wants to fill these jobs along with a VP for Philanthropy – this vacancy was present on both the Health and Academic side- so we can combine resources to recruit and afford a skilled individual for fundraising who can help us go state-wide if not nationally. Will probably start recruitment soon.
- The issue of vaccination has come up and why haven't we vaccinated more faculty and students so far. The Health Center was chosen to be a vaccination hub. In being a hub, you give up a bit of the independence. There is limited ability to move Pfizer vaccine due to freezing requirement. Other complication is that the state outlined who could be vaccinated first – health care workers, seniors over age 65, and people with

certain health conditions. We have delivered nearly 30K doses to the area. We now have the Moderna vaccine and the Johnson & Johnson vaccine will be approved soon. Both Moderna and Johnson and Johnson can be moved around more freely than others and a single does vaccine. Our goal is to figure out how we can get vaccinations on the main campus. As the categories open up, hopefully those in education will be prioritized, we can offer to faculty and ideally to students as well, maybe as soon as Spring. Maybe by next fall we'll be closer to normality.

- Know that when faculty speak to Drs. Mirmiran, Philley, or Volkens, know that they will be bringing the message back to Dr. Calhoun pretty promptly.

1:00 Provost Updates

Dr. Amir Mirmiran

First, want to thank faculty for patience and hard work this semester to avoid surge in COVID cases. As of today our dashboard shows only 7 cases and we have clearly avoided a surge in cases.

We had to cancel all classes last week due to power/water issues. Dr. Mirmiran appreciates our patience as we have had to balance between consistency and flexibility, and having to make decisions at times with very limited and reliable information. Thanks to the leaders in Faculty Senate for help with this.

Three updates:

- First, thanks to LouAnn Berman and entire team in putting together the SACSCOC document we need to submit on/prior to March 1 deadline. We expect April 12-14 will have the virtual site visit from SACSCOC. There will be another submittal in September. We are in good hands with Dr. Berman.
- Second, yesterday we had the HOP committee with Faculty Senate representatives (Drs. Helfers, Fisher). The HOP committee made changes regarding conflict of interest that Deena King will be updating the campus on soon, and approving promotions for lecturers and clinical positions that are non tenure track. We are expecting to submit the documents to Dr. Calhoun for approval. Once approved by the university, we will ask Deans and Department Chairs to create guidelines for these positions which will then be approved by Academic Affairs for consistency with university guidelines. Individuals without a terminal degree can start going up for promotion starting this summer for next academic year. This is an exciting development which opens up doors for professional development growth of faculty.
- The last update is plans Fall 2021. Dr. David Lakey came to the Provost's meeting of UT system about 3 weeks ago to discuss expectations for Fall. We have issues of vaccine availability and hesitancy, we need to know whether we have to maintain social distancing and what our Fall 2021 schedule will look like. Dr. Lakey and Provosts agreed that Fall 2021 will look more like Fall 2019 than Fall 2020, with more face to face than hybrid or online options. Come June or July, if there is surge, or not a big reduction in cases or hospitalization, we will modify as necessary. Will leave it up to the departments, not top-down from central administration.
- **Announcement and a thank you** to Dr. Geiger, who has served 2003-2012 as the Dean of the College of Education and Psychology, and in 2012 was appointed as Vice Provost and Liaison with SACSCOC, and in 2013 he was appointed Dean of Graduate School.

After 18 years, he is going back to the College of Education and Psychology. We want to sincerely thank him for everything he has done.

Q: Do we have a sense from the students – is there any survey from students about what their fears are.

A: We haven't formally surveyed students yet, we have a mixture. We have heard that they want to get to a normal experience. We have built trust with them in how we handled our return to campus and have been consulting with students every step of the way on input. SGA has pulse on student body, which has been very vocal. Unlike other campuses, residential halls have remained full. Capacity is 83%.

Comment: Dr. Calhoun: yesterday in senate finance committee, two important points came up: lack of traditional interaction with faculty contact and students has taken a toll on our students and not what they expected. There is a desire on everyone's part to get back to normalcy.

The other important part is we have learned a lot about virtual learning that could enrich learning and assessment of learning and the student experience. We will likely want to learn these from faculty and continue these kinds of activities in the future. We have learned what works/ does not work well. Faculty should pass this info along to Deans, Dr. Mirmiran, Dean Tolliver, so it can be passed up to Dr. Calhoun, in terms of tools to maintain or make more robust.

Comment – Dr. Ross – at the FAC, there is a strong desire for diversity and inclusion. April 7-9 UT System ADT – 2nd day is about diversity and inclusion. First and last days about what have we learned about teaching during COVID and how it can make us better moving forward. An agenda will go to Deans and Provosts and should be going out to everyone soon – it will be open/free to everyone in the system who wants to attend.

Dr. Calhoun – Diversity and Inclusion will be part of our mission. In making appointments, trying to make sure we have gender, racial, and ethnic diversity in leadership. Dean Tolliver and Dr. Calhoun have had conversations about diversity issues for modern universities.

Merger Question: are we functioning as separate entities with some overlap or more integrated?
Dr. Calhoun: the desire is that we function as one university with the recognition that those that do their teaching and bulk of experiences in a clinical realm, or faculty that derive the bulk of their income, e.g., a neurosurgeon, will come from clinical activities. We will be one, but need to recognize where subtle differences will be in place, with respect to tenure, etc. We can write our policies to accommodate that necessary diversity. One Faculty Senate one Staff Advisory Council, one SGA, but at this point allowing FS allowing faculty senate to talk about it and come back with their recommendations, the same thing for students. Dr. Calhoun is not trying to impose top-down how faculty, students, staff need to come together. So far, have been very pleased with how discussions are going and how accommodating everyone is trying to be to one another. We are going to be one UT Tyler. At the same time, we have one of the larger health operations of any of the UT institutions. We have a large, sophisticated clinical enterprise. Now we need to blend it with our educational missions and research.

Dr. Helfers- in regards to the two faculty senates, the leadership from our faculty senate and the faculty council at the health center have been talking for several months, and at monthly meetings with Provost, all are involved with discussion. We will be looking at policies but by the beginning of the Fall semester, we will be one faculty senate.

Q: medical school what will it take to build the medical school (faculty hires, buildings, etc).
Dr. Calhoun: We have been a HSC within UT system since 1978. We've been growing faculty, have had medical students who have been rotating with us from area institutions. We have over 100 residents in graduate education and have faculty to support that. We don't have to hire as much in the way of faculty. We have space to get started and 60 million from Board of Regents to build a graduate medical education building, we will likely get a bit more from them to include other healthcare activities- e.g., simulators for medical students. Will most likely be built closer to the hospital (UT Health East Texas and Mother Frances). Through philanthropy, about 80-90 million dollars over 11-12 years. We are in a good position than anyone starting a medical school from scratch. We are adding UG to grad programs in a downward expansion, which can be accomplished much more cheaply, and resources more or less in place.

1:35 Student Engagement Update Mr. Joshua Neaves
An update on where Student Engagement is and a 2020 review. Student engagement includes campus activities, Greek affairs, new student and faculty programs, student organizations, leadership and service, SGA, and transition program. Students are looking for a traditional experience from each of the offices, a common question is "when can we go back to normal." For now, we have been balancing the traditional experience with safety.

Samantha Cockrell is Assistant Director of Student Engagement and over **Patriot Strong** which addresses academic, financial, and housing concerns – submit a Patriot Strong alert.
Andrew Bell is the new student programs coordinator and over freshman events, and Swoop camp.
Selena Olivares is the parent coordinator
Camry Tharp is the Assistant Director of Student Engagement and oversees leadership programs, student organizations, and oversees Patriot pantry.
Dwala Thompson – Campus activities coordinator
Robert Smith is in charge of Greek affairs
Lauri Dillman is the Administrative Assistant
Joshua Neaves- director of Student Engagement
See also <https://www.uttyler.edu/sll/staff.php>

We had good engagement even during COVID in terms of events hosted and student organization involvement.

Dr. Helfers – Military and Veteran's success – Coby Dillard – would like to point out that UT Tyler will be recognized as a military friendly institution for 2021-2012. Great job Coby.

Dr. Idell – introduced himself as Senior VP of Research and Dean of the Graduate School. He wanted to address the question of how synergy of institutions will be helpful. As we engage students and consider format (person, outdoors, indoors), we have a strong faculty in medicine

who can provide useful input. We look forward to helping with consolidation of research activities and keeping everyone safe as we move forward.

Dr. Mokhtari- Will have East Texas Research Conference on April 15. It will be a fully virtual conference that is focused on COVID. It will have a series of live webinars focused on the pandemic. There will be a keynote address, a series of invited speakers, and an expert panel. We will be in touch with more info in next week or two.

1:45 Diversity Committee Update

Ms. Ona Tolliver
Mr. Joshua Menhennett
Ms. Sydni Blundell
Dr. Rick Helfers

Update on the task force: Some recommendations have been made to leadership. 1. Campus should assess and evaluate campus climates. 2. Having a statement of diversity and using the survey to help develop a plan for our campus. Having a dashboard of diversity for students, faculty, and staff. This will be a work in progress. Will have the opportunity to create a website that can house all Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity efforts. Dr. Calhoun is in full support. The Diversity and Inclusion Taskforce has 17 reps – student, faculty, and students. It includes faculty senate representation.

Sydni- Subcommittee looked at climate surveys. Landed on Insight Viewfinder – it is mostly already built, we have flexibility, and we will have assistance. We will be able to give a survey to students, and a separate but similar survey to faculty, staff, and employees.

1:57 COVID: Faculty Notification

Mr. Andrew Pettee

- Thank you to faculty for work being done with students in isolation and quarantine.
- Our notification process has been streamlined to let us know when a student cannot be in class. If a student says they have COVID/not coming to class and haven't been notified by Student Success office, let Andrew know so we can get them additional support as needed.
- If ever interacting with a student and feel they need more support, remember the CARE report form – it allows for early intervention and support

2:00 Adjournment