**Faculty Senate Meeting**

**Friday, July 21, 2017**

**2:00-4:00 p.m.**

**127 Administration Bldg**

**Faculty Senate President Lance Wiliams Called the Meeting to Order at 2:00 p.m.**

**In Attendance (In-Person):** L. Williams, K. Mokhtari, C. Ross, S. Marmion, N. Wycliffe, K. Nimon, G. Duke, B. Hart, M. Fischer, M. Tidwell, A. Mirmiran, V. Betts, B. Wooldridge, K. Camp, C. Swain, S. Davis, A. Azghani, T. Nalbone, W. Hikey, S. Spier.

**In Attendance (Via Zoom):** M. Gangone, H. Wui, S. Buschardt, M. Veronin, R. Claiborne, F. Dykes, J. Brown, J. Klein, A. Tiller, G. Bock, J. Smee, T. Kennedy, S. Morale, R. Cooper, M. Vick, A. Mentahru, V. Pandey, E. Battle, S. Sass, F. Alkateeb, L. Jackson, R. Biswas, B. Haas, M. Sathyamoo, T. Gaddis, S. Strawn, S. Whatley, J. Delello.

**President Remarks: President Michael Tidwell.** President Tidwell provided an update on the university budget. He indicated that state support for institutions of higher education includes funding for “special items,” which are direct appropriations to institutions for programs or projects that are specifically identified by the Legislature for support. This year, special item funding has been adjusted resulting in a 2.5% reduction in funding. The University is projected to experience a small budget deficit (approximately 5%) in the 2017-2018 school year. As a result, the university is working to mitigate the impact of the deficit by being proactive in a number of key ways including, but not limited to, offering a Voluntary Separation Incentive Program (VSIP) for eligible employees, putting in place money-saving measures such as “RightSignature,” a newly acquired software that enables us to get documents signed electronically.

**Provost’s Update: Provost Amir Mirmiran.** Provost Mirmiran announced that the New Student Convocation will take place on August 25th at the Herrington Patriot center. The event is designed for new freshman and transfer students admitted effective Fall 2017. He encouraged faculty to attend the convocation in support of new students and support of the university’s focus on student success.

**Endowment Fund: Dr. Mary Fischer.** Dr. Fischer provided clarification on the Faculty Senate Endowment Fund, which is now invested in the UT System Investment pool earning interest. This fund had previously been placed in a non-interest earning UT Tyler account. Once interest is earned and recorded, it will be reported to the Senate. The principal of the fund is invested but only the interest can be used for Faculty Senate purposes.

**UT System-Faculty Advisory Council (FAC) & Academy of Distinguished Teachers (ADT) Update: Dr. Catherine Ross.** Dr. Ross announced that Susan Doty is the newest member of The UT System Academy of Distinguisched Teachers. Members of the academy have started monitoring current events and writing editorials addressing important and timely educational issues. Dr. Ross noted that UT Tyler has become a much more active player within the UT System. For instance, the UT Tyler was one of the first campuses to be visited by Tony Cucolo and his team in the spring 2017, and he is anticipated to come back and spend a day with faculty in the fall 2017 or spring 2018 semseters. The issue of dual credit is being reviewed by the UT System. Available data indicate that High School students like dual credit; however, there is some misunderstanding about how dual credit courses apply to college degrees, and the benefits of dual credit for students. The review will result in a reporr to produce a report that can delineate the advantages and disadvantages are of dual credit. Other issues under study include faculty workload (number of classroom hours is not a true reflection of workload), and online learning (the need to determine how faculty feel about online learning).

**Faculty Senate Accomplishments: Lance Williams**. Dr. Williams provided an overview of key accomlishments during the 2016-2017 academic year, including the following:

* Members of the Senate leadership served on the Search Committees for President, VP for Advancement, and VP for Marketing.
* Sente encouraged campus discussion of shared governance, including hosting hosting a team from UT System to discuss shared governance led by AVC Cucolo.
* Several members of the Senate participated an Advising Workgroup that recommended to decentralize advising on our campus.
* The Senate commissioned a Tenure and Promotion Task Force. A resolution was approved by the Senate to encourage all Departments to work with their Chairs and Deans on clear Tenure and Promotion policies.
* Gus Gordon and Mary Fischer worked with VP O’Donnell on campus financials. All 3 parties presented data to the Senate.
* Senate leadership participated in a Quantum Leap RFP on Student Success, which was funded by the UT System for 800K+.
* Senate leadership, working with Academic Affairs, revised and simplified the University Committee structure.
* The Senate Endowment has been “re-established.”
* The Senate held a successful end of year Faculty Senate Award Banquet
* Members of the Faculty Senate represented faculty on Strategic Planning committees including university mission, new academic programs, center of excellence, and student success.
* Secured an office space and Admin support for Faculty Senate.

**Previw of Faculty Senate Activities for the 2017-2018 Academic year: Dr. Kouider Mokhtari.** President-Elect Kouider Mokhtari provided an overview of the Faculty Senate work for the 2017-2018 academic year. The overview consisted of two parts. In part one, he he thanked Dr. Williams for his leadership as Senate President, introduced newly-selected members of the faculty Senate Leadership team, and announced that Facuty Senate now shares office and administrative support with the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning. He also announced that future faculty Senate meetings will take place every Third Thursday of the month, between 12:30 and 1:50, at the new Alumni House. In part two of the overview, Dr. Mokhtari shared brief highlights of the faculty Senate priorities for the 2017-2018 academic year. He suggested that, in light of the fact that we are entering a new (and different) era in the history of the University of Texas at Tyler (new leadership, new strategic plan, focused on student success, new system-wide philosophy of shared governance), Faculty Senate proposes that the university consider adopting a shared goal of “strengthening teaching and learning,” while empowering stakeholders (faculty, staff, administrators) to work together to contribute to the health and well-being of the University of Texas at Tyler, which aspires to become “the primary and economic driver of East Texas.”

**Meeting Adjourned at 3:30 p.m.**