

The University of Texas at Tyler  
Office of the Faculty Senate

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Thursday, January 16, 2020  
12:00-1:50 p.m.  
Alumni House

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**Meeting Minutes**

**Senate Members Present:** Althea Arnold, Amentahru Wahlrab, Amy Hayes, Christine Forisha, Coiln Snider, Frank Dykes, Gina Doepker, Kathleen Helgesen, Mary Fischer, Joseph Glavy, Mena Souliman, Nathan Smith, Richard Helfers, Sarah Norrell, Sarah Sass, Venu Gopalakrishna-Remani, Wycliffe Njororai, Randy LeBlanc

**Faculty and Staff in Attendance:** Barbara Haas, Vicki Jowell, Belinda Deal, Kleanthe Caruso, Bill Geiger, Kerrie Anne Ambort Clark, Robert Beatty, Jordan Beaver, Sydney Blundell, Kerri Camp, Gloria Duke, Ramona Grad, Gabriel Hidalgo Marquez, Lauri John, Gina Jones, Kouider Mokhtari, Kim Nimon, Olivia Paek, Andrew Pettee, Shawn Rogers, Nicholas Ruth, Colleen Swain, Tai Wang, Theresa Young, Rebecca McCay Johnson, Joshua Menhenne, Kimberly Harvey-Livingston, Saren Spicer, Heshium Lawrence

(Zoom link did not work so there were no Zoom attendees)

**Invited Guest Speakers in Attendance:** President Tidwell, Provost Mirmiran, Blake Bumbard, Bill Geiger

12:00 Lunch

12:25 Welcome and Call to Order Colin Snider

12:28 Approval of November Meeting Minutes Amy Hayes

12:29 President's Updates Michael Tidwell

- Updates on UT-Tyler and UT Health Science Center at Tyler merger
  - The chancellor and board of regents of the UT system have charged us with moving forward with the merger of these two institutions.
  - The process of discussing the mechanics of the merger have already begun, including meetings of the cabinets of both institutions.

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- President Tidwell presented slides about the process and the timeline
- We have to get through SACS first before we are able to move through the merger process. August 1, 2020 will be when we send a document to SACS about the plan for the merger.
- President said we should think of the merger as “UTT acquiring UT Health Science Center Tyler” and all of their assets.
- Goal is to create a singular University of Texas at Tyler. It is expected that combining the two institutions is going to immediately increase our research funding portfolio (they have 15-18 million in research spending every year, compared to our 4 million). We will immediately become an R2 institution after this merger.
- President Tidwell discussed the assets and capabilities brought to the table by both institutions.

12:42

Provost's Updates

Amir Mirmiran

- Updates about Fall to Spring retention numbers. The numbers are better than they have ever been in the history of the university (90% overall retention).
- Publication of first two open-education resources, both from Department of History and Political Science. Provost Mirmiran encouraged all faculty to think about writing and open educational resource textbook.
- UT-System will support 25 faculty completing an Association of College and University Educators online teaching course. It would be a commitment from March to December of 2020. There will be spots for people from every college. Please be on the look out for a call for applications soon.

12:50

Title IX Updates

Blake Bumbard

- Texas Senate Bill 212 Sexual Misconduct Reporting for Higher Education Institutions
  - Effective date: September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019, but penalties and sanctions effective January 2020
  - Law has changed employee reporting requirements for sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating violence, or stalking against a student enrolled at the institution or an employee of the institution.
  - Change is that all employees are mandatory reporters (used to just be “responsible employees”).

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- Confidential reporting resources (like counselors, doctors, legal; anyone with privileged communication) must report the type of incident to the title IX office without revealing the identity of the victim.
- Exceptions:
  - Disclosures made at public awareness events are not required to be reported (for example, if students talk about dating violence at a student candlelight vigil do not need to be reported).
  - If the employee is also the victim, they are not required to report their own victimization.
  - If the employee is also a student, reporting is not required under the state law. For example: RA's are not required to report under state law, but they ARE required to report under university policy.
- The law also required new institutional reporting about the number and types of cases. President's report that is given to the Board of Regents each year will also be required to be posted on the university website.
- Immunity: employees who report an incident in good faith will be immune from civil and criminal liability. The bill also prohibits retaliation against any employee for reporting.
- Penalties: Failure to report is a Class B misdemeanor, and intentionally concealing an incident is a Class A misdemeanor. Finally, the university **must** terminate an employee who has committed an offense.
- The bill gives the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board the responsibility for enforcing the law. They can fine an institution up to \$2 million for noncompliance.
- HOP 2.4.3 has the revised, updated Title IX reporting requirements on the university website: <https://catalogs.uttyler.edu/en/UTTyler/HOP/Series-200-General-Policies-and-Procedures/2-4-3-Sexual-Harassment-Complaint-Investigation-and-Grievance>
- **Contact the Title IX Office and Blake Bumbard with questions.** Additional information and training materials will continue to come out over the next few months.

1:07

Comments on Calendar Process

William Geiger

- Dr. Geiger reviewed the calendar committee processes that have occurred up to this point.
- Although the committee recommended a longer, 16-week calendar, the consensus from faculty and senate surveys was to keep the current 15-week calendar.
- Any changes would start Spring 2021
- Dr. Snider presented resolutions from the Student Government Association and the Faculty Senate about adopting calendars.
  - Faculty Senate resolution is to 1) keep the current 15-week calendar and 2) add a Fall Break (several possible options for this, start Fall Semester after convocation on a

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Wednesday and start class Thursday and Friday, then use that extra Thursday and Friday to have a four-day weekend in October).

- Senators voted to approve the calendar resolution (all in approval with one abstention).

1:20 Senate Resolutions and Matters Colin Snider & Faculty Senate

- Resolution from the Ad Hoc Committee on Family Leave Policies
  - Faculty senate resolves that the current HOP policies related to family leave and care are inadequate.
  - Also resolved to create an ad hoc committee working with all of the colleges to write new policies addressing:
    - Lactation rooms across campus
    - Inclusion of childbirth and adoption in the extension of probationary periods
    - The inclusion of principal caregivers to infants
    - Child care services provided with support from the institution
    - Paid parental leave available from 6 to 15 weeks
    - A more flexible emergency leave
    - Automatic extension of the probationary period for tenure-track faculty who become new parents
  - Senators voted to approve the family leave policy resolution unanimously
- Resolution from the Ad Hoc Committee on Free Speech
  - The resolution reinforces that what constitutes free speech should be very broadly defined on our university campus. Outdoor spaces on campuses are essentially fair game for speech, but reservation of indoor spaces is not.
  - The resolution says that the UTT Faculty Senate endorses the UT System FAC resolution.
  - The resolution basically says that we will enforce HOP policies on speech.
  - The senate voted to pass the resolution unanimously.

1:33 Adjourn