

The University of Texas at Tyler

Office of the Faculty Senate

Thursday January 20, 2022

12:30-1:40 p.m.

Zoom Meeting

Recording with captions is available at:

https://uttyler.zoom.us/rec/share/QXD_T3WmYyj1Bmr_LoWZDFwIwu0nUGSYbLa3FkazK-eTV7PYkpT3J0hVlrJ8cKhN.EAstPlvWyJlf-Oec

Attendees: Lynette Sutter, Karen Walker, Cindy Rutledge, Panda Powell, Cindy Strawn, Mohammed Ali, Kenneth Bryant, Sarah Norrell, Erin West, Barbara Wooldridge, Gracy Buentello, Sharon Calimag, Matt Stith, Cheryl Parker, Vandy Dubre, Cynthia Martinez, Sarah Sass, Mike Kennedy, Joshua Neaves, Gabrielle Davis, Lori Fregoso, Amentahru Wahrab, David Christian, Susan Rossman, Gina Doepker, Ashleigh Day, Kim Elliott, Joshua Banta, Amir Mirmiran, Yonjoo Cho, Stephen, Christopher Thomas, Julie Anderson, Dominick Fazarro, David Barron, Sonja Morale, Gina Jones, Sally Bouis, Lauri John, Sarah Norrell, Jenifer Chilton, Mary Fischer, Dr. Jerry Ledlow, Julie George, Richard Helfers, Chuck Brown, Becky McKay, Saren Spicer, Lisa Jett, Jeff Noblitt, Staci Zolkoski, Stephanie Fenter, Deena King, Pamela Beall, Dominick Fazarro, S. Whatley, Francine Durr, Kerrie Anne Ambort-Clark, Lauren Kirby, Pamela Jones, Kouider Mokhtari, Katie Ramirez, Harrison Ndetan, Kirk Calhoun, RJ Cowan, Takova Wallace Gay, Ona Tolliver, Mohammad Biswas, Meryem Saygili, Melissa Salgado, Vicki Jowell, Rosemary Cooper, Brittany, Lynn Harris, Ryan Shartau, Julie Philley, Rochell McWhorter, Colleen Marzilli, Katherine Stone, Glenn Barnes, Cindy Scott, tgaddis, Leah Velarde, Peggye Mahfood, Cara Wreyford, Amber Friday, Kim Laird, Carl Baranowski, Devon Churchill c/o Dr. Julie Philley, Braden King, Gregory Bock, Vicki Jowell, Lou Ann Viergever, Amy T, EBattle, Margo Duncan, Buka Samten Kim Nimon, Jonathan Moya, Lou Ann Viergever, Andres Garcia, Kathy Gohmert, Brittany Childs, Karen Walker, Vicky Bond, Dominick Fazarro, Sally Bouis, Cara Wreyford, Kristie Allen, Richard Kenney, Jonathan Moya, Patti Olusola, kashley, Barbara Haas, Dixie Rose, Michael Morris, Osama Shoair, Frank Dykes, Andres Garcia, Mary Logan, Jonathan Moya, Scott Dillingham, Lisa Bush, Colleen Marzilli, Citlali Molina, Andrew Pettee, Cynthia Ball, Beverley Golden, Hadley Gasser, Rosemary Cooper, Terra Gullings

AGENDA

12:30

Welcome and Call to Order

Dr. Sarah Sass

12:31

Approval of November Meeting Minutes

Dr. Joshua Banta

- Approved at 12:31

The University of Texas at Tyler

Office of the Faculty Senate

12:31

President's Update

Dr. Kirk Calhoun

- COVID
 - The administration has been focused on how to bring students back to campus in a safe and reasonable fashion. They are striving to strike a balance between precautions and openness in a way that will keep everyone safe.
 - The medical and higher education literature are both actively debating what mitigation protocols and modifications are best to keep people safe. But there is an emerging consensus that we need to re-think COVID and our response. Shutting down completely is not good for students. It diminishes the college experience. The emerging consensus is to figure out how to live with COVID. He presented some ideas towards this goal:
 - Vaccination. As more people become vaccinated and more therapeutics become available, efforts will be enhanced to keep things open.
 - Ventilation, crowd control, and testing capacity are better now.
 - The community standards in our area, where things are generally open and functioning normally, are an important consideration when deciding how open and normally-functioning the university should be.
 - The administration has been spacing out events but not cancelling them. The idea is to give students a taste of what college is usually like.
 - Despite all of this, the recommendation is for courses to be online throughout the month of January whenever possible, and this is up to the discretion of the individual faculty. The hope is for in-person instruction to resume in early February, but online instruction will still probably continue to be allowed as long as it is in consultation with the relevant deans and chairs.
 - Omicron is more contagious and does appear to be a bit milder, on average, although it is still putting people in the hospital with serious illness. The reasons for Omicron's milder qualities are uncertain. It may be due, in part, to the prevalence of vaccinations, which do provide protection against the worst outcomes. But the strain itself also appears to be milder.
 - 100 people (students/faculty/staff) are quarantined at present. That number is drifting down. The positivity rate is also drifting down.
 - Contact tracing has been stopped because it is futile.
 - There are no plans to reimplement travel restrictions. Permission to travel is up to the chairs and deans. Our community often has more COVID cases than the places we are travelling. That said, he is asking everyone to minimize travel, and urging people not to travel if they are not vaccinated. He is minimizing travel himself to set an example. He again reiterated the importance of universal masking for the time being.

The University of Texas at Tyler Office of the Faculty Senate

- The salary study by Evergreen has been completed and the report is with Human Resources. They are creating an executive summary for him.
 - This is for the main campus. The health campus has already been through this process and made salary adjustments accordingly.
 - The goal is to make salaries fair.
 - The executive summary will be shared with Faculty Senate leadership who can then decide how to best disseminate it to the faculty.
 - Take-home message: there are some issues but it may not be as bad as feared. It's a manageable situation. He needs to figure out how to move money around to improve salary equity.
 - A question was asked about whether the study would be updated, since it was begun in several years ago. He said he doesn't know.
- The administration is talking about how to address facilities needs, such as: the medical school and health professionals building, the new science building, the remodeling and addition to the nursing building, expanding student housing (sorely needed), additional athletic facilities (e.g., for track and field)
- Miscellaneous questions:
 - Are there plans to add more faculty/staff?
 - He expects staffing to track enrollment to keep the faculty:student ratio the same.
 - Are there are plans to hire more IT staff?
 - He's been giving this question some thought. Part of the issue is how to best utilize the existing IT staff from the main and health center campuses now that we are one institution.
 - The overall goal is to bring UT-Tyler up-to-date with its peers, and merge the main campus and health center email systems (there are conflicting issues with FERPA and HIPAA standards).
 - He is listening to his IT staff and their recommendations because he himself is not an IT expert. That said, he also wants to bring in an outside consultant. Issues for the consultant to help with include:
 - What would it cost to update our IT infrastructure and staffing? There's currently a labor shortage, and it is also hard to find IT specialists in Tyler under the best of circumstances. IT expertise is concentrated in big urban areas, not smaller cities like Tyler.
 - Is it possible to move a lot of the IT support to the cloud, so that companies with expertise in IT support can handle it for us? Example is Amazon AWS. They would probably have good solutions for merging HIPAA and FERPA-compliant email systems, for instance.
 - What are the plans for the fourth floor of the Soules COB?
 - There are no plans yet. It is vacant and he is open to suggestions.

The University of Texas at Tyler

Office of the Faculty Senate

12:58

Health Campus update

Dr. Julie Philley, Executive Vice President for Health Affairs

- Vaccine mandate
 - The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services has directed that UT Health must mandate COVID vaccines for healthcare workers, staff, volunteers, and students.
- School of Medicine
 - There will be a site visit with the coordinating board soon. She hopes to hear their feedback by June.
 - The new dean of the medical school is starting in February or around that time.
- A lot of caregivers are currently sick with COVID and the hospitals are full. All of this means that they are short-staffed at this time.

1:01

Provost's update

Dr. Amir Mirmiran

- He is thankful to the faculty for being flexible this semester in the face of the challenge of switching modalities.
- How will the modality changes (going from face-to-face to online to face-to-face, etc.) affect students and faculty?
 - The current plan is for end of course teaching evaluations from this semester to count towards annual review and tenure and promotion. He will encourage Deans and Chairs to keep omicron in mind when looking at end of course evaluations and does not want this semester's teaching evaluations to be excluded from T&P dossiers across the board as a university-wide policy
 - A question was asked about whether this decision could be revisited after further discussion with the Faculty Senate. It was mentioned that several faculty have reached out to convey their concerns about students complaining about modality changes. Dr. Mirmiran said he would keep an open mind to further discussions with the Faculty Senate.
 - He says that teaching evaluation scores did not drop in 2021 compared to other years and were largely positive. He believes that students are forgiving and understanding of modality changes, and that they are not penalizing the faculty for them. He believes that faculty are handling the modality changes quite well, and that their teaching effectiveness is not suffering because of it.
- SACSCOC
 - The merger with the health center campus was approved.
 - The offsite review was conducted in November.
 - The on-site visit will be in March. We will highlight the QEP initiative to incorporate real-world problems into the curriculum.
 - Director Katie Stone is working on incentives for faculty to learn and adopt the QEP.
- The HOP section 3.6.1 states that faculty have a say in all academic matters. Any and all changes to academic programs need approval from the undergraduate or graduate council. The administration has streamlined this process by creating a "viability analysis" step before

The University of Texas at Tyler

Office of the Faculty Senate

these changes make their way to the relevant undergraduate or graduate council. The idea is to involve the chairs and deans and to determine if the proposed changes would even work at all. For instance, there's no point in letting a proposal for a new course go forward if there is no student demand to sustain the course. This new step is like a preliminary pre-proposal to prevent the undergraduate and graduate councils from wasting their time.

- Enrollment has been the same for the last couple of years. No overall increase or decrease.
 - He says we need to make this better. Flat numbers are not good enough. We need a better retention strategy. Ideas:
 - Faculty-to-student mentoring and peer-to-peer mentoring.
 - Paid internships (through Office of Research and Scholarship)

1:09

Deena King, Chief Compliance Officer

Office of Compliance

- Compliance and legal are different things.
- The goal of the Office of Compliance is to prevent, find, and fix compliance issues.
- Compliance protects the university in a lot of ways. There are both federal and state compliance issues to consider.
- Any compliance questions should be addressed to Deena King, except for healthcare-related compliance questions, which should route to Donny Henry on the health center campus.
- There are many compliance leaders on campus, for instance for HR, for Title 9, etc.
- Visit uttyler.edu/compliance for more information.

1:27

Office of Research and Scholarship

Dr. Steve Idell, Executive Vice President for Research and Dean of the Graduate School

Dr. Kouider Mokhtari, Associate Vice President for Research and Associate Dean of the Graduate School

- Compliance
 - PCR (CITI) Training is needed by everyone. Faculty, staff, and students need it. The basic module takes about four hours. More modules are added depending on the person's role and their research program. This is due by May 4th. If there are students working on research with you, undergraduate or graduate, they need it too.
- Dr Kent Willis is assuming responsibility for both graduate admissions and recruitment. He is an associate Dean, and the graduate school and an assistant senior vice president for research.
- Research updates:
 - The Math Department has received an NSF grant!
 - The School of Community and Rural Health has received a grant from DHS!
 - The Department of SMBS has recruited a faculty member who already has an R01 award!

The University of Texas at Tyler Office of the Faculty Senate

- Internal grant proposals can be submitted. Collaborations between the main and health campus will receive priority. Dr. Idell sees people already putting together these collaborations. Due 2/28.
- Research newsletter coming out at the end of January
- Miscellaneous questions:
 - A question was asked about staffing in ORS. The answer given was that new hires are coming on board to replace the turnover.
 - A question was asked about where PCR (CITI) training notes will be disseminated. The answer was that they will be provided to the chair and vice-chair of the Research Council, who will then decide how to disseminate the notes more broadly.

1:36

Faculty Senate President update

Dr. Sarah Sass

- She thanks everyone for their flexibility in meeting students' needs during the Omicron wave. It was because of the input provided through shared governance that faculty were able to have the discretion to choose online or face-to-face modalities during this time.
- She hears the faculty's concerns about teaching evaluations during topsy-turvy semesters like this one. This will be on the agenda for the next faculty senator-only meeting.
- The plans to establish a university-wide wellness committee are still underway. This would be a committee comprised of faculty, staff, and students. A person is needed to chair the committee, so please volunteer if interested.
- Director of Diversity of Hadley Gasser had some ideas that he presented to the Faculty Senate executive and will present at the Senator's-only meeting about reducing bias in tenure and promotion.
- The task force on 3.6.0 HOP policy is going well, and she has sent a draft to all senators.
- Elections for Faculty Senate are in March. A president and an at-large senator are needed.

1:39 Adjournment