

# The University of Texas at Tyler

## Office of the Faculty Senate

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Thursday June 17, 2021  
12:30-1:40 p.m.  
Zoom Meeting

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### Minutes

12:30 Welcome and Call to Order Dr. Rick Helfers  
12:35 Approval of May Meeting Minutes Dr. Amentahru Wahrab

- Thank you everyone. I have not heard from anyone suggesting corrections to last month's minutes. So, if someone would like to make a motion to approve the May meeting minutes, we can get them approved and then I will hand the mike over to President Calhoun. Motion approved and passed.

12:40 President's Update Dr. Kirk Calhoun

- Legislative session is over but it may come back. Two pieces of good news: 1) legislative endorsement of medical school. Medical school should come on with formula funding. Means that tuition might be around 25K per year (without it would be more like 80k). 2): legislature approved funding enrollment growth. Going forward we will go back to previous funding. Anticipating two special sessions. Governor wants "election integrity" legislation passed. He may veto some aspects of current legislation order to persuade senate to renegotiate election legislation ...anticipated special session in September. Covid delayed some of the census data. Texas gets two new house seats and the legislature draws those lines (likely in September). Also, the state has received 16 billion dollars in CARES ACT funds. Lots of strings attached. Waiting for clarification to see how the money can be spent (also discussed in the September legislation). UT Tyler has some requests (new science building) but unclear if we can use it that way. UT Tyler received millions already for student aid. Some can be spent on online capabilities. We are trying to apply for as much of this funding as we can. Financial aid for students is one of the big ones. Money can be used to encourage students to get vaccinated. Lots of ideas to encourage students to get vaccinated using CARES ACT money.
- New Strategic Plan is underway. Moving from how to integrate the two campuses to transformation. Every university wants to get better, grow, hire new faculty, and compensate faculty and staff better. Ideas should be directed to Senate, Provost, Chairs, Deans etc.
- Q and A: web site idea (mentioned by Dr. Calhoun) where students could register whether they've been vaccinated, get information about the value of vaccination, and hopefully sign up to get vaccinated on campus.
- Critical Race Theory question. Is the legislature going to restrict it at the higher ed level? Unlikely but one never knows.

12:55 Provost's Update Dr. Amir Mirmiran

- 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of UT Tyler. 1979 we became UT Tyler.
- Radio station launched.

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- Enrollment doing well. 99 percent of what we had last year. Record number of first time in college students. Lagging behind in freshman retention from last year.
- Better than expected funding from the state. Hoping to see some new funding based in enrollment growth. This means that we should be able to honor all precovid commitments.
- 2% pay raise across the board. Not merit. Starting September.
- HOP approved faculty senate merger. Just needs President's approval and starting in September we should have a completely merged faculty senate.
- SACS is going well. Hiring a QEP director.
- In one month, RFP for faculty creation/development of affordable or open access textbook. Should come out before end of summer
- On campus vaccination incentives should be outlined shortly by VP Ona Tolliver.
- Q and A: what is being done to do an orientation for the Sophomores who did not really get one last year? Dr. Swain suggested that something is in the works. Our goal is to be "student ready" because we need to keep in mind that a lot of the students have had a rough past 18 months.
- Q and A about 2% pay raise and salary adjustments. Hoping that we can keep working on better/fair compensation. Some of these adjustments have already been made (quietly and strategically). Dr. Calhoun said that this is a high priority.

1:10 Military and Veteran Inclusivity Mr. Coby Dillard

- Building a foundation of inclusivity. See presentation/PPT. It was very informative, and it is worth spending a few minutes to listen/watch. Mr. Dillard has a nice Syllabus statement that some might want to include in their syllabi.
- Offers a training (MAAS).
- Please contact Mr. Dillard or his staff if you have any questions dealing with military and affiliated students.
- There are roughly 550 students in this category, but most are online.

1:30 Faculty Senate Update Dr. Rick Helfers

- Senators—please send me your committee reports as I will be reporting out on those at our July meeting.
- The merged HOP policy that combines our senate with the Health Sciences Center was approved by the HOP yesterday, so it will now be sent to Dr. Calhoun for approval
- Once approved the Health Sciences Center will conduct their elections and once those are completed Dr. Sass will fill out next year's Executive Committee
- Many academic policies in the HOP are under review. I will be asking several senators to assist in the review and merging process.
- Next meeting is on July 15<sup>th</sup>.

1:40 Adjournment

- 1:30pm

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Dear UT Tyler Faculty & Staff,

The summer is now well underway and many of us have already enjoyed a little vacation. If you haven't had the opportunity to take a break yet, I hope you do so in the next couple months. Even though it is summer, there is still a lot of work being conducted on campus and I hope each of you can join us for our June Faculty Senate meeting. Also, remember to encourage others to get the COVID-19 vaccination to ensure we have a safe learning environment for everyone during the Fall semester. Again, here is a link from the CDC that may help better inform our students about the COVID-19 vaccination. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/toolkits/schools-childcare.html>

Our next Faculty Senate meeting will occur on Thursday, June 17th at 12:30pm. We will have updates from Dr. Calhoun, Dr. Mirmiran, and an update from the Military and Veterans Success Center from Mr. Coby Dillard.

Attached is the Faculty Senate agenda for the June 17th meeting along with the following links—

- May Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes
- Zoom link for the virtual Senate meeting

Hope to see you on the 17<sup>th</sup>!

Rick Helfers  
President, Faculty Senate