

The University of Texas at Tyler

Office of the Faculty Senate

Thursday November 18, 2021

12:30-1:40 p.m.

Zoom Meeting

Recording with captions is available at:

https://uttyler.zoom.us/rec/share/K5E4W604Nn_5-h09gLhckOeURdhK1UHvTCOMCM0KIDOT1thJ46YDRrSOAeJa4b3.fLAOaMvVUDQ-PAzZ

AGENDA

12:30

Welcome and Call to Order

Dr. Sarah Sass

12:31

Approval of October Meeting Minutes

Dr. Joshua Banta

12:32

Provost's update

Dr. Amir Mirmiran

- Dr. Mirmiran expressed his appreciation for our efforts with teaching this fall.
- The percentage of courses that utilized the flexibility to change modality (from in-person to online or hybrid) was small, and that is a good thing. The students and faculty are happier and less stressed when the modality stays the same.
- COVID is under control and Dr. Mirmiran is optimistic about keeping COVID down in the spring.
- Enrollment
 - There are huge numbers of incoming freshmen for fall 2022, as well as healthy numbers of graduate and international students.
- SACSCOC
 - The comments have been received by the off-site team, and all issues are easily addressable. The site-visit in March can serve as a follow-up to show how these issues were addressed.
- QEP
 - Katie Stone has reached out to colleges to develop pilot programs.
 - SACSCOC will provide feedback about these pilot programs, and the QEP initiative overall, during their on-site visit.
 - An example is that students in the College of Business will work on branding as a case-study.
- The 50 anniversary events are coming up on November 29th. There will be 1971 minutes of giving.
- The Board of Regents approved the new MS program in Cybersecurity and Analytics.

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- Five short-list candidates for the Dean position for the Soules College of Business have been selected and will be brought to campus in early- to mid-December to finalize the decision.
- The state legislature approved the new science building, which will be for all science departments, especially those within CAS.
- The updates to the HOP related to the merger are going well, and by March it will be completed.
- Dr. Mirmiran expressed his appreciation for everyone's efforts with the career success conference. Next year, Senior VP Tolliver, the deans, the chairs, and the Faculty Senate will work together with the Career Success Conference group to increase enrollment. This year some sessions were sparse.
- UT-Tyler is looking to establish a wellness network, similar to the ones at UT-Austin. Dr. Mirmiran shared this idea with President Calhoun. The idea is for the Staff Senate, the Faculty Senate, the Student Government Association, and the administration to coordinate their efforts to make the environment healthier for everyone. His idea is that the different groups to talk to each other on this task force and to report to him.
 - A question was asked about joining the "Building Healthy Academic Communities" network (<https://healthyacademics.org/>). Dr. Mirmiran says he would like the task force to look into this and make a recommendation.

12:44

Health Campus update

Dr. Julie Phillely, 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.
 - This means that those persons must have their first shot by mid-December and their second shot by early January.
 - There is some leeway on these deadlines if the person can confirm they have had COVID recently.
 - There will be medical and religious exemptions.
 - If persons refuse the vaccine, UT Health will try to make accommodations for them of some kind.
 - The mandate only applies to persons who work with patients, not faculty on the main campus
- School of Medicine
 - Final documents are being submitted.
 - A dean has been named, and he will begin on February 14th.
 - The RW Fair Foundation has committed to providing full scholarships for all four years to the inaugural medical school cohort.
 - The location of the building will be somewhere in the medical district, with the exact location to announced soon.
- A task force is working to understand how the health professions on the health campus can be integrated into the programs on the main campus. Dean Gray (CAS) chairs that task force.

12:49

Hadley Gasser, M. Ed., Manager of Culture and Diversity

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- President's Advisory Council has their first meeting this month with people from across campus. It's called the Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI) Council.
 - The membership has already been appointed.
 - The focus is on faculty/staff/students/visitors making everyone feel like they belong here.
 - Community involvement will be important as well.
 - They will revamp the university's inclusion statement.
 - They will develop a JEDI certificate program:
 - Designed to help everyone relate to those who are different from themselves, especially when one's beliefs tell them that those other persons are wrong.
 - Topics will include:
 - Intersectionality
 - Privilege
 - Microaggressions
 - There will be modules available for faculty to add as part of their course content.
- Gasser believes everyone should be able to be their authentic selves no matter where they are on campus or who are they are with.
- Gasser would like to form a network of diversity leaders on campus that represent "safe spaces" for students to talk to.
- The campus climate survey that everyone filled out will be very useful. It will give his office ideas of the current campus hits and misses, and can help with course correction.
- There will be events on campus for the various heritage months coming up.
 - November is Native American Heritage Month.
 - In honor of this, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs Nicole Prescott (a Miami tribe member) talked to our campus.
 - Also, in about an hour, the work on the Caddo Mounds that's being conducted by our campus is being presented.
 - The presentation is available at www.uttyler.edu/diversity
 - Earlier was Hispanic and Latin American Heritage Month.
 - There was a fiesta on Harvey Deck.
 - There was a panel discussion
 - There is an art exhibit in the art gallery
 - Earlier also was Disability Awareness Month, with "windmills" workshops.
- Gasser's office is interested in developing some new approaches to search committees to ensure that as much bias is removed from the hiring process as possible.
 - The approach used by Oregon State University serves as a model.
- Gasser is having conversations with the Office of Student Success about adding more student success centers to support tailored to different groups.
- Input is welcome from the campus community.

1:03

Library update

Rebecca McKay, Executive Director.

- The library has received money to further renovate the third floor (the "noisy floor."), in response to evolving student needs.

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- The third floor is jam-packed with studying students. They need more space.
 - This is backed up by student feedback surveys.
- There are 80,000 books that have never been checked out in the last 10 years that are slated for deselection.
 - The library will additionally keep specific books if requested, and some academic departments will inherit some of these books.
 - The deselected books will otherwise be digitized and available through the Internet Archives as the UT-Tyler Robert Muntz Library collection. Available for free at www.archive.org.
 - 7,000 of our 10,000 students are distance learners, so having digitized collections actually makes them more available to those students as opposed to less.
 - Moving people are coming soon to make this happen.
 - You can provide last-minute feedback if desired. Reach out to Sarah Norrell.

1:09

Faculty Senate President update

Dr. Sarah Sass

- There is a task force working on the university's strategic priorities, based on input from various stakeholders and the faculty senate.
 - The priorities that have been identified are:
 1. Enrich the Student Experience
 2. Grow Enrollment and the Quality and Quantity of our Programs
 3. Advance Excellence in Teaching, Healthcare, and Research
 4. Partner and Collaborate in Service to our Community
 5. Ensure Sustainability and Accountability through Fiscal Responsibility
 - Dr. Sass is soliciting feedback from the task force and others to create three goals from each priority. These will be presented at the next meeting for feedback. Dr. Sass welcomes your questions or comments on this initiative in the interim.
- Dr. Sass requests that you let her know one way or the other if your university committee has been meeting and if not when it plans to meet.
- The next Faculty Senate meeting is scheduled for 12:30pm on January 20th.

1:13

Miscellaneous

There was an earnest discussion about the university-wide policy on computer purchases. The current policy, dating a "belt-tightening" period, is for each faculty member to be allowed to own only one computer, which is either a laptop or a desktop. Additional computers can only be owned with permission from IT after what was depicted in the discussion as, frankly, a tedious and onerous bureaucratic process. Several faculty expressed that they would like to have departmental- or college-level control over their budgets as it relates to computer purchases. It was discussed that some faculty need more than one computer for their teaching, for instance, and that not all computers come out of the academic budget, but that, in either instance, such purchases are still subjected to the same caps and IT gatekeeping. Nothing definitive was

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decided as to whether this policy will be amended, or in what way, but the dialogue was opened up. Dr. Mirmiran suggested there may be some more flexibility in this policy on a temporary basis, because of COVID relief funds, but, again, nothing definitive was decided upon.

1:31 Adjournment