

**Faculty Senate Meeting**  
**Thursday, September 21, 2017**  
**Alumni House Call**

**to order: 12:34 p.m.**

**Adjourned: 2:03 p.m.**

**Members Present:** K. Mokhtari, G. Gordon, C. Snider, G. Duke, V. Betts, G. Miller, J. Lamb, F. Dykes, M. Fischer, J. Klein, K. Nimon, S. Spier, S. Sass, L. Williams, A. Hall, M. Veronin (Zoom), C. Ross (Zoom), S. Norrell (Zoom)

**Faculty & Staff in Attendance:** M. Tidwell, S. Davis, K. Marrs, V. Vaughan, B. Deal, M. Souliman, B. Brooks, V. Peña, J. Hernandez, M. Alvarado, M. Thomseh, M. Martinez, A. Perez, G. Bock, J. Francis, D. Patonu[?], A. Hayes, S. Marmion, S. Donaldson, T. Kennedy, J. Delello, G. Parkins, C. Barke, G. Brandenburg, P. Indic, S. Davis, K. Archer, L-K Lauderdale, D. Bailey, C. Han, C. Swain, M. Miller, R. Stevens, W. Geiger, B. Head, B. Master-Smith, C. Chan

**Zoom Meeting Participants:** S. Rainwater, C. Strawn, C. Gipson, J. Brown, L. Summers, M. Hassell, L. Allen, T. Gaddis, C. Marzilli, S. Gossett, A. Kukarni, V. Viesca, A. Consalvo, V. Pandey, M. Gangone

**Invited Speakers:** President Tidwell, Dr. Amir Mirmiran, Dr. Amy Hayes, Dr. William Geiger, Dr. Mary Fischer, Bob Hepler, Dr. Kouider Mokhtari

**12:39 – President’s update – M. Tidwell**

*Strategic Plan* – The Fall 2017 sessions are as important, if not more important, than the sessions conducted in Spring 2017. The sessions will seek input on the Four Pillars (Student Success, Student Engagement, Research/Discovery, and Community Engagement) of the new Strategic Plan. A survey was sent out this weekend for departments, colleges, and faculty to submit proposals for Student Success and Student Engagement initiatives.

*VP of Student Affairs* – The search for a new VP of Student Affairs is underway, with a search consultant assisting in the process. A mockup of the job description is ready to go, and the search will occur in the Fall Semester as Dr. Patterson transitions to serving as the University’s new Athletic Director.

*Naming of Buildings* – In an attempt to make the UT-Tyler campus feel more like a traditional university environment, the university is working to adopt a traditional style of naming buildings, calling them by their names (e.g., Stewart Hall instead of Administration Building). In the coming months, smaller and older buildings will be given names to honor those who’ve made important contributions to the UT-Tyler community. The University will form a committee to address recommendations for names.

*Student Housing* – Student housing capacity is over 100% occupancy for Fall 2017, and the University is looking into new housing options to address the growing on-campus presence of students.

*Shared Governance* – President Tidwell reinforced the value of shared governance in the above items, stressing that this is a community-wide effort.

**12:52 – Approval of July 2017 Minutes – Dr. Kouider Mokhtari**

M. Fischer moved to approve the minutes

Second: R. Stevens

Unanimously Approved

**12:54 – Provost Update – Dr. Amir Mirmiran**

*Annual Report* – The 2016-17 Annual Report from the Academic Affairs is now posted on the web site. It includes the accomplishments of our faculty, staff and students in the six academic colleges, graduate school, university college, honors program, and the library.

*Student Success* – Freshman retention for this past year increased by 7 percentage points to 64%, and if we exclude the CAP students, it would be 76%, the highest we have ever had. Dr. Mirmiran attributes this to the hard work of faculty and advisors, the department of academic success, hiring of new advisors, expanded tutoring center at the library, and especially the embedding of advisors in colleges. The university will continue to work to better our retention and graduation rates.

*Non-Tenure Track Rank and Promotion* – This is an area that the deans worked on last year, and have collectively make recommendations that are being proposed as part of the HOP. We will be discussing with Faculty Senate and the President’s Cabinet before we take it to the HOP Committee and final Presidential approval. It follows System’s rule and allows us to redefine our NTT ranks and promotion criteria. The main issue is the equivalency that the System rules suggest for faculty appointments, and that includes terminal degree for senior lecturers.

*Core Courses* – Senators asked about the percentage of our core courses that are taught by tenured or tenure-track faculty. For Fall 2017, of the 139 sections of the core, 27% are taught by adjuncts, 12% by tenure-track faculty, and 16% by tenured faculty, the remaining 45% are primarily taught by lecturers or visiting faculty. In order to address this issue, we need to remove disincentives, such as imbalance in faculty workload credits for teaching a core course versus a graduate course.

**1:03 – QEP Topic Selection Survey – Dr. Amy Hayes**

Dr. Amy Hayes spoke on the upcoming preparations of the QEP (Quality Enhancement Plan) as part of SACS accreditation for UT-Tyler. Across the Fall Semester, the university will be selecting a new QEP to fit with the new strategic plan. The university will be seeking input from students, faculty, staff, alumni, community stakeholders. Currently, the QEP committee has developed surveys to send out to these groups. There will be 2-3 surveys across the Fall Semester

that will begin with broad recommendations and then further refine them. At the end of the semester, the results will be presented to Tidwell who will evaluate and make final decision. The first of these surveys should be launched in the first week of October.

### **1:09 – University Committees Update – Dr. Mary Fischer and Dr. William Geiger**

In 2016-2017, in accordance with its powers as described in the HOP, the Faculty Senate began work to address the number of committees in order to reduce redundancies and streamline governance and decision-making on campus. There had previously been 23 university committees; revisiting the HOP to see which were mandated/expected, as well as investigating which committees were needed but were not in the HOP, the Senate managed to trim the number of university committees down to 10, with the remaining committees either being eliminated or reassigned to the college- or departmental-levels. The Senate has recommended these changes to the President.

### **1:17 – Graduate Assistantships – Dr. William Geiger**

Dr. Geiger spoke on the issue of the new program of Graduate Assistantships that began at UT-Tyler this year. Currently, funds from the Provost's office provide 30 Grad Assistantships at \$3500. This funding comes from instruction fees; as a result, those who receive assistantships are expected to support instruction institutionally by helping faculty with instruction (grading, other assignments related to instruction). Currently, awards are given to students who are engaged in formal research and scholarship by working on dissertations or theses. There was some concern among faculty that this excludes students who are in programs that do not offer a thesis/dissertation option, but in which students are still producing intellectual content and material in collaboration with faculty, such as in the Colleges of Engineering, Education, and Business and Technology. Going forward, the university will explore the possibility of opening funding to students via a project option in programs like engineering and education. Additionally, while the 30 current assistantships come from instructional fees, those do not have to be the only source; grants that offer money for research assistantships may be used to expand this number on a case-by-case basis. As the program continues to develop, stipends may also become a possibility.

### **1:27 – Special Recognition of Lance Williams**

Dr. Mokhtari recognized Dr. Lance Williams for his service as Faculty Senate President for 2016-2017.

### **1:29 – Gym Memberships – Bob Hepler**

The question of faculty paying for gym memberships was brought before the Senate. Mr. Hepler provided a report that situated UT-Tyler's gym membership policies and fees in the broader regional context. Faculty memberships help pay for auxiliary services like machinery, facility repairs, renovations for space to meet growing demand, and safety measures. Membership money is about \$30,000 a year (roughly 10% of the gym's operating budget) and helps with expenses even as the gym keeps old equipment up to date. Currently, UT-Tyler memberships are the least expensive of any state of Texas college or university.

-about 10% of gym comes from faculty memberships

### **1:40 – Senate Update – Dr. Kouider Mokhtari**

The Faculty Senate is working on a proposal for Senate activities for the next three years. With a new Strategic Plan in the works for the University, the Senate proposes to “strengthen the quality of academic programs at the University of Texas at Tyler” via shared goals and strategies to address those goals in a coordinated, team-based way. In this process, the Senate seeks to work with other units on campus to address overlapping priorities with deans, chairs, and other offices in order to foster cross-departmental/cross-college research and projects. The vision here is not for the Senate to take over, control, or dictate to others how to operate, but rather to play a role as a facilitator in the broader process of continuing to improve the campus and the university in its capacity as an advisory body representing faculty (as articulated in the HOP) without excluding stakeholders. In the coming years, the Senate will work on areas like faculty engagement, faculty development, core courses by tenure track faculty, student preparedness for college, and intracollegial and intra-university collaboration. Understanding that faculty success is a part of student success, and vice versa, the Senate recommends focusing its efforts in four key areas currently: Faculty Perceptions; Professional Development Needs Analysis; Interdisciplinary Faculty Research; and Teaching Centers. The Senate’s goals and visions will be made available on website, and it welcomes feedback from faculty.

### **2:03 – Adjourn**

M. Fischer moves to adjourn.

C. Snider seconds.

Unanimously approved