

## Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes

December 9, 2022

1:30-3:00pm

UC 251 (zoom option available)

**Invitees:** Dr. Emily Cutrer (absent), Dr. Melinda Arnold, Ms. Kathryn Montgomery, Dr. Corrine Hinton, Dr. Brian Matthews, Dr. Craig Nakashian, Dr. Brian Billings, Dr. Vikram Bhadauria (absent), Dr. Joy Cooper (Zoom), Dr. Rebeca Cooper (Zoom), Dr. Kelly Cordray (absent), Dr. Sheila Moore (Zoom), Dr. Lisa Myers (Zoom), Dr. James Nguyen (absent), Dr. Godpower Okereke, Dr. Sebastian Schmidl (Zoom), Dr. Faycal Znidi (Zoom)

- I. Call to Order at 1:32 p.m.....Dr. Corrine Hinton
- II. President's Report.....Dr. Emily Cutrer
  1. No report
- III. Provost and VPAA's Report.....Dr. Melinda Arnold
  1. No official report/sent out an Academic Affairs update
  2. Encourage faculty to submit grades on time (December 19<sup>th</sup> by 8 am)
  3. Faculty concerns about not having received justifications for faculty rejected for teaching due to credentialling; Dr. Arnold will pass the message along to IER.
- IV. DEIB Director's Report.....Ms. Kathryn Montgomery
  1. Held first official meeting of the DEIB committee and established the following subcommittees:
    - Inclusive Excellence
    - DEIB Cultural Events and Celebrations
    - DEIB Learning, Training, and Education
    - Campus Climate and Culture
    - DEIB Awards, Rewards, and Recognition
  2. Plans are being made for cultural events in the Spring of 2023. A Campus Climate Survey should be conducted in the last week of January via ViewFinder. Results will be anonymous.
- V. Approval of Minutes from 11/11/2022.....Dr. Corrine Hinton
  1. Dr. Billings moved, Dr. Okereke seconded. Minutes approved 11-0-0.
- VI. President of Faculty Senate Report.....Dr. Corrine Hinton
  1. See attachment
  2. Dr. Sheila Moore questioned why the *ad hoc* faculty complaint committee was struck without general faculty senate approval. Dr. Hinton explained that faculty complaint committee assignments are not generally brought to the full senate to protect anonymity. Dr. Moore was concerned that the executive committee of faculty senate exercises too much power independent of faculty senate; Dr.

Hinton explained that the faculty senate constitution tasks the executive committee with making decisions in the period between faculty senate meetings, though substantive issues are brought to the faculty senate as a whole. Dr. Hinton furthermore explained that meeting with university leadership allowed the president and vice-president of faculty senate to bring concerns from faculty directly to the president and provost, and vice-versa, and was specifically required by section 8.1 of the faculty senate constitution. Dr. Moore asked whether faculty who approached faculty senate for resolution of concerns should be directed instead to their department chairs and/or deans; Dr. Hinton responded that it depended on the circumstances of the concern.

3. Dr. Faycal Znidi wanted more information on how the CIO has addressed faculty IT needs. Dr. Hinton referred him back to the CIOs email (included in Faculty Senate President Report attachment). Dr. Znidi pointed out that his specific concerns had not been addressed, so Dr. Hinton suggested connecting the CIO, Dr. Morsy, and the Educational Technology Committee to resolve the concerns.

## VII. Committee Reports & Business Items

1. Curriculum Committee..... Dr. Godpower Okereke
  - No report
2. Core Curriculum Assessment.....Dr. Kelly Cordray
  - Core Process to Faculty (see attachment)
3. Educational Technology.....Dr. Faycal Znidi
  - Were asked to review Interfolio for use in faculty portfolios and will look after Winter Break; the committee will also arrange a meeting with CIO Aaron Harding to address the above concerns.
4. Academic Rules & Procedures.....Dr. Craig Nakashian
  - Meeting dates for Spring 2023 semester established- 01/27, 02/24, 03/31, 04/21
5. Academic Standards.....Dr. Lisa Myers
  - See attachment
6. Faculty Welfare.....Dr. Joy Cooper
  - SurveyMonkey will be used to distribute faculty and staff morale surveys
  - Dr. Craig M Nakashian will be TAMUTs 2022-2023 nominee for the Minnie J. Piper foundation award
7. FRED.....Dr. Rebeca Cooper
  - Recommendation from FRED committee- Senate affirmed on consent agenda
8. Budget Committee.....Dr. James Nguyen
  - (via email) My committee members have carefully reviewed the CUPA data that our Provost provided and made the following (3) suggestions:
    1. Faculty salaries should be annually/regularly adjusted to keep pace with inflation, in addition to merit increases (if available).
    2. Salaries of newly hired faculty should not significantly exceed those of current faculty members with similar qualifications. If this is

the case, the salaries of those (affected) faculty should be increased accordingly.

3. Specific disciplinary accreditation data (controlled for school characteristics and other factors) or CUPA (Region) data should be used for faculty as those data sets more accurately reflect the true (market) values

VIII. Ad hoc Committee Reports

1. OTAFA.....Dr. Corrine Hinton
  - Meeting 12/13/2022 to discuss implementation
2. Course Evaluation Review.....Dr. Vikram Bhadauria
  - Meeting held 12/08/2022 to discuss revising document
3. Developing No Confidence Vote language.....Dr. Brian Matthews
  - Held a meeting and should have a draft of potential language in February 2023

IX. Unfinished Business

1. Printing degrees on diplomas- Degrees with area of study as part of the name of the degree (BSN, MBA, BSCJ, etc) would not likely need designation of major/concentrations. Other fields of study may be interested.

X. New Business

XI. Meeting adjourned at 2:56 pm.

XII. Next Regular Meeting – Friday, February 10, 2023 at 1:30pm in UC 251 (Zoom option available)

## FACULTY SENATE PRESIDENT REPORT

Dr. Corrine Hinton

12.09.2022

### I. “Between Meeting” Business

- a. Academic Standards Committee (Dr. Lisa Myers, Chair) was tasked with helping create the Enrollment Appeals Committee (put in place after the Academic Appeals and Admissions Appeals process change was approved by Senate in April 2022). Dr. Myers sought members in accordance with the approved process and nominated Dr. Gary Bugh and Dr. Mary Beth Womack as CASE representatives and Ms. Sarah Johnson as the CBET representative. Those nominations were approved by the Senate Executive Board on 11/15/2022.
- b. On November 30, Senate Executive Committee approved a request from the Faculty Welfare committee to revise the previously approved Survey Monkey subscription from a monthly, standard (\$80/month) to an annual, standard with educator discount (\$276/year).
- c. Establishment of an *ad hoc* Faculty Complaint and Appeal committee to investigate a complaint that arrived 01 Dec 2022.

### II. Report from University Leadership Team

- a. University Leadership Team met November 29<sup>th</sup>
- b. Much of the meeting was spent hearing from the system and institution’s state and federal government relations representatives, Julia Crane (Program Manager for External Relations, Texas A&M AgriLife), Emily Howell (Assistant Vice Chancellor, State Relations), and Valerie Offutt (Assistant Vice Chancellor for Federal Relations). Discussion regarding TAMUT’s legislative priorities (especially the Comprehensive Regional University [CRU] funding and Better East Texas initiative [including Phase 3] as well as their early predictions/feelings about this legislative season. I asked our state representatives about non-budgetary concerns from our state officials, particularly those with potentially negative impacts for faculty (academic freedom and tenure, chiefly). The state reps indicated much of their time on these issues included meeting with representatives and their staffers, providing education and clarity on “hot button” issues like tenure and academic freedom (e.g., critical race theory). They agreed to keep me/faculty informed of developments in these areas.
- c. DEIB Director Kathryn Montgomery spoke about some forthcoming training and professional development opportunities for employees, managers, and faculty in areas of interest (drawn from staff council recommendations). These opportunities include some canned trainings provided by TIAA (with whom the system has an existing partnership). More information on those opportunities soon.
- d. A January planning session for the University Leadership team is scheduled for Wednesday, January 11, 2023 from 10am to 1pm to discuss institutional priorities for spring

### III. Report from Senate Leadership Meeting

- a. Dr. Matthews and I met with Drs. Cutrer and Arnold on Thursday, December 1 (our original November meeting was rescheduled due to a conflict with the President's schedule)
- b. Our agenda [**and responses received thus far**] included:
  - i. Differential Tuition (where are the funds going?)  
[see **Appendix A. Dr. Arnold's response, email dated 12/6**]
  - ii. Budget/FY23 salaries in the library? [**Emily is checking on this**]
  - iii. BET 3.0 legislative request [**copy of appropriations request received by Drs. Hinton and Matthews; available for any faculty to review; copy of BET, Phase 3 page provided at meeting**]
  - iv. Staff Salary study deadline (M.A. indicated mid- to end of January for completion)
  - v. Senate requested a copy of the SACSCOC 5<sup>th</sup> year interim report from June 2022 [see **Appendix B. Document received from M.A. on 12/6**]
  - vi. Delay in dropped students not being removed from Blackboard or Web for Faculty [M.A. provided response from Jana acknowledging delays after a backlog of 100+ requests and staffing issues. As of 12/6, the Registrar were down to about 30 requests.]
  - vii. Faculty reception originally scheduled for Dec 1 [**per E.C.: to be rescheduled for January**]
  - viii. Data from Ad Astra study [see **Appendix C, attached with Senate items**]
  - ix. Curricular approval process corrections needed with IER [see **Appendix A. Dr. Arnold's response, emailed dated 12/6**]
  - x. Summer compensation discussions (forthcoming in the spring) [M.A. predicts no major changes except in administrative release/compensation arrangements. Will be a change in appointment letter process because of the cumbersome nature of producing individually tailored preliminary and final letters. New process will be generic preliminary (with enrollment/compensation formula so faculty can calculate their own) letters and then individually-tailored final appointment letters.]
  - xi. Faculty evaluation form process (We're going to administer some practice runs with faculty through the approvals chain to try out the form before it goes live. Dr. Hinton sent solicitations to department chairs for volunteers.)
  - xii. Faculty involvement in SACSCOC has been limited to one faculty thus far. [**SACSCOC all-call for faculty (launch meeting scheduled for Friday, January 20) and QEP focus selection forthcoming. Dr. Arnold will send some ideas from what other folks are currently doing, but faculty need to design a process for accumulating ideas and selecting for approval.**]

IV. Old Business

- a. Follow-up from Aaron Harding, CIO regarding faculty IT needs and concerns (from an email dated 11/30/2022 and shared with permission):

*Corrine,*

*Hello. Just a quick update to let you know where we are with the mitigation of the faculty concerns/needs items that you provided. We have not yet scheduled the meetings with the department chairs, but we will now start scheduling those. We wanted to have some new processes in place in order to discuss those with the department chairs when we met. I wanted to make sure that the faculty senate and you knew that we had not forgotten about the documented issues and concerns. Below are a few things that we have implemented since we last communicated about those. These changes do not reflect all that we are doing to improve services and support, but they represent a start.*

- We have added focused attention to the software/hardware vetting process; that is a primary concern from the faculty. Judy Martin, End User Support Specialist, is now the primary agent for those requests as they are submitted. She is now coordinating the security, accessibility, and technical feasibility tasks that we are required to perform on every new request as well as software license renewal requests. Even with these steps in place there are additional steps that we are looking to add which we hope will vastly improve the turnaround time on these.*
- We continue to migrate the service desk personnel to more focused assignments; breaking down the requests by disciplines and automatically assigning them to agents more familiar with the issues. We are also internally assigning “primary” and “secondary” agents for each discipline. Example: Classroom Technology: Primary – Jayson Ferguson, Secondary – Lance Taylor.*
- Customer Service Focus – Adam is working with the service desk personnel to ensure that we are meeting customer needs from a “human” perspective; being more courteous and offering assistance beyond the systems and processes we have historically supported. (example: End-users reporting Blackboard Issues which are typically handled by the Learning Technologist in the VPAA division are directed to create a ticket for Blackboard (typical response). Instead, we offer to create the ticket for them. (better response).*
- We have a dedicated team addressing issue in the virtual environment and are recommending a more “hands-on” approach to resolving them. We are now sending team members to the labs to see the reported issues in real-time. This gives us a better sense of what the root cause may be. This also gives us a presence in the classroom environment that demonstrates our commitment to making it right.*

*We will keep you updated as we schedule these meetings, and we will share outcomes and updates with you as we move forward.*

V. **Other Items of Note:**

- A. Commencement is scheduled for Saturday, December 17<sup>th</sup> with ceremonies at 9:00am and 11:30am. Faculty who plan to attend should ensure they have regalia (rentals can be obtained through the Eagle Bookstore) and RSVP to Shannon Gustafson. If you have faculty that did not receive their invitations, please ask them to RSVP directly to Shannon with the ceremony/ceremonies they plan to attend.
- B. Reminder to faculty that fall 2022 grades must be submitted no later than 8am on Monday December 19<sup>th</sup> to ensure the Registrar and Financial Aid have enough time to complete end-of-term processing ahead of the Christmas holiday

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