****

**FACULTY SENATE MEETING**

**University Union 332**

Minutes – March 20, 2024, 2:00 p.m.

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| **Baker, Rose** | LTEC  COI | A | **Lemberger-Truelove, Matthew** | CHE  COE | P | **Quevedo-Torrero, Jesus Ubaldo** | CSE  CENG | P |  |  |  |
| **Bednarz, Jim** | BIOL  COS | P | **Long, Chris** | TEA COE | P | **Sankofa, Nicole** | EPSY  COE | P |  |  |  |
| **Ben Othmane, Lotfi** | CSE  CENG | P | **Lund, Brady** | IS  COI | P | **Schoolfield, Anne** | ENGL  CLASS | P |  |  |  |
| **Briggle, Adam** | PHIL  CLASS | A | **Manzo, Maurizio** | MEEN  CENG | P | **Scott Bracey, Pamela** | CACS | P |  |  |  |
| **Britain, Jeff** | HTM  CMHT | A | **Martin, Eugene** | MRTS  CLASS | P | **Sexton, Mike** | MGMT  RCOB | P |  |  |  |
| **Campbell, Doug** | LIBR | P | **May, Andrew** | MUCS  COM | P | **Sheppard, Steven** | SPAN  CLASS | P |  |  |  |
| **Catalano, Denise** | RHS  CHPS | A | **McKay, Melissa** | (ACS)  CACS | P | **Shiner, David** | PHYS  COS | P |  |  |  |
| **Chamberlin, Adam** | THEA  CLASS | P | **Moreland, Kimberly** | ENGL CLASS | P | **Siller Carrillo, Hector** | MEEN  CENG | A | **Temporary Senators (voting)** | | |
| **Chiang, Jason** | EPSY  COE | A | **Mukherjee, Sundeep** | MSE  CENG | P | **Thurman, Emily** | SPAN  CLASS | P |  |  |  |
| **Christian, Jack** | ENGL  CLASS | A | **Najour, Caroline** | WLLC  CLASS | P | **Tixier, Scott** | MUJS  COM | P |  |  |  |
| **Condrey, Coby** | LIBR | P | **Narayanan Arunachalam** | ITDS  RCOB | A | **Trudeau, Justin** | COMM  CLASS | P |  |  |  |
| **Evans, Sarah** | IS  COI | A | **Nasco, Dennis** | MGMT  RCOB | P | **Welch, Lisa** | BIOL  COS | P |  |  |  |
| **Frenzel, Ervin** | CSE  CENG | P | **Nodeland, Brooke** | DCJ  CHPS | A | **Williams, Lawrence** | WLLC  CLASS | P |  |  |  |
| **Ginther, Jeannette** | TE&A  COE | A | **Ojha, Divesh** | MLOM  RCOB | P | **Wilson, Carol** | MUVS  COM | A | **STUDENT SENATORS (non-voting)** | | |
| **Hutchison, Paul** | ACCT  RCOB | P | **Peters, John** | ENGL  CLASS | P |  |  |  | **Dorcas Bisisi** | SGA | A |
| **Iaia, Joseph** | MATH  COS | P | **Petros, Amy** | CHEM  COS | P |  |  |  | **Sri Lakshmi Thanuja Beeram** | GSC | P |
| **Joyner, William** | MUVS  COM | P | **Philpot, Denise** | ADA  TOUL | P |  |  |  |  |  |  |
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Guests: John Bellon, Staff Senate; Angie Cartwright, FPOC administrative co-chair; William Cherry, FPOC faculty co-chair; Amanda Fuller, University Brand Strategy and Communications; Courtney Glazer, Accreditation; Mike McPherson, Provost; Yolanda Mitchell, Faculty Success; Victoria Monteros, alumna; Neal Smatresk; President; Amanda Zerangue, Libraries

Abbreviations: DEI: diversity, equity, and inclusion; FPOC: Faculty Policy Oversight Committee; FS: Faculty Senate; VP: Vice President

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| I. | Welcome and Introductions | 2:00 pm. FS Vice Chair Amy Petros called the meeting to order. FS Chair Adam Chamberlin needed to be out of town and attended the meeting via Zoom. |
| II. | Approval of Minutes (February 14, 2024) **[vote]** | 2:00 pm. Senator Nicole Sankofa made a motion to accept the minutes of the February FS meeting. Senator Bill Joyner seconded. There were no corrections. The FS passed the motion to accept the minutes. |
| III. | University Update (President Neal Smatresk / Provost Mike McPherson) | 2:01 pm. President Neal Smatresk provided the following updates:   * President search. The search committee has finalized the position description and will post it next week. Headhunters are already compiling names of good candidates. The committee plans to have a short list of candidates early in May. The search should be complete with an announcement of the finalist in late June. * Listening tour. The president has completed about 30 of the listening tour meetings thus far and has about 40 more remaining. Converging comments will go into the next strategic plan. Highlights of common threads include improvements needed in staffing; allowing remote work; focusing on wellness; adjustments to the compensation plan; colleagues as connection; tuition benefits for graduate students; concerns about learning loss in students due to the COVID-19 pandemic shutdown; making information easier to find; showing better that we care. There is nothing problematic at a high level at this point. The president is asking VP for Planning and Strategy Debbie Rohwer to fix "tactical" problems on the fly, as they are reported in these meetings.   Provost Mike McPherson provided the following updates:   * Academic freedom relative to Librarians. Yes, librarians have academic freedom as faculty, per policy; however, the new law limits this freedom to coursework and research. Dean of Libraries Diane Bruxvoort recently had a productive and helpful meeting with the UNT Office of General Counsel. Dean Bruxvoort will share the information with the librarians at a meeting next week. Q: As librarians don't teach coursework but instead engage in outreach and programming, do librarians have academic freedom to decide how to do outreach and programming when it might address a matter that is DEI-related as defined in the new law? A: This is a topic that Dean Bruxvoort was to discuss with the Office of General Counsel; the provost is not aware of the exact content of that conversation.   Q: What is the update on construction? A (from President Smatresk): Administration has interrupted all new construction planning to compile all the requests, then decide how to prioritize in August, and proceed from there. The STEM building is proceeding well. Regarding the Center for Belonging and Engagement, the problems with the previous contractor resulted in a cessation of work that triggered new pricing that was much higher than originally planned. The Board of Regents now wants to review three different proposals: to make it part of the Union, to build it adjacent to the Union, or to build it as a standalone building elsewhere. The Board of Regents will review the three options at its August meeting. Residence hall construction is tentatively a go, but the capacity is still being decided. As FS is aware, there are major renovation needs for existing buildings. There may be a large request for renovations across campus. The president also noted that in his 10 years in office, there have been about 18 new buildings or major renovations already. Q: Regarding graduate student compensation, will there be further improvements over the latest adjustment? A (from Provost McPherson): Yes, the fall adjustment is just a first step. We need better stipends, insurance, and other improvements. The provost cannot commit to improvements every year or every two years but acknowledges that we are not as competitive as we would like to be, and administration will continue to work at finding better compensation for graduate students.  Q: Regarding the UNT System salary study, what is the purpose of that? A (from President Smatresk): The conversation on this topic is continuing. This salary study is not for faculty; instead, it addresses staff compensation. Faculty salaries are more closely aligned to other institutions of higher education, whereas our staff salaries are way off target. There may be adjustment to the salary bands to reduce the number of bands but expand the range to allow salary growth for long-term employees. The study itself has been completed, and the administration is now looking at what to do and how to do it. |
| IV. | Department of Public Safety update (Chief Ramona Washington) | 2:21 pm. Chief Washington was unable to attend today's meeting. We will reschedule her update for a future meeting. |
| V. | Faculty Policy Oversight Committee (William Cherry / Angie Cartwright) | 2:21 pm. FPOC co-chairs William Cherry and Angie Cartwright presented the following policies for approval by FS:  **First Read**   * 06.027 Academic Workload. Most of the changes presented here were made in coordination with the Office for Faculty Success. FPOC decided that it was not appropriate to specify in policy the impact of large class sizes or service tasks so that each unit has maximum flexibility in making workload assignments. Instead, the policy emphasizes that unit workloads should be transparent and equitable. * 06.XXX Faculty Recruitment. This is a new policy. SACS and Texas Workforce Commission require UNT to have one. Academic Resources within the Provost's Office drafted this policy; FPOC made small changing in wording, related to the role of unit level bylaws and how search committees are created.   **Second Read [vote]**   * 06.011 Faculty Leaves of Absence Without Pay. This policy is up for its cyclical six-year review. FPOC received no feedback about this policy and recommended no changes to it.  Q: Is there a limit on the length of leave without pay. A: Yes. The usual maximum is two years, and the policy addresses those cases. There is a third year option that is the decision of the Board of Regents; the policy does not address those cases. The FS vice chair called the vote to approve policy 06.011 without changes. The FS passed the motion to approve the policy and refer it for administrative review. * 06.039 Student Attendance and Authorized Absences. Senator Jim Bednarz made a motion to untable the policy for further action. Senator Paul Hutchison seconded. There was no discussion. The FS passed the motion to untable policy 06.039. There was a question about student organization events being excused absences; Dr. Cherry pointed out that there is a process for these types of events to be excused, and that process involves approval of a department chair and an academic dean. There was extensive discussion of the circumstances for excused absences being mandatory versus optional. Senator Joe Iaia made a motion to amend the policy by distinguishing between "may be excused" and "will be excused" in section IV.D with two numbered points, adding a cross reference at the end to policy 07.003 Medical Excuses, and clarifying at IV.D.5 that the excused absence is one excused by the university. Senator Joyner seconded. Senator Ervin Frenzel made a motion to amend further by moving at IV.D "participation in an official university function" to the proposed earlier section regarding absences that may be excused. Senate Anne Schoolfield seconded. Further discussion ensued regarding the definition of religious holidays and their status for being excused. The current policy settles that on the student and the instructor first, with the matter going to the Dean of Students if there is disagreement; there is no change in the current version of the policy under discussion. The FS approved Senator Frenzel's motion to rearrange the position of "participation in an official university function". The FS then reverted to Senator Iaia's motion to amend. Further discussion ensued regarding the definition of religious holidays and their status for being excused, but no additional amendments emerged. The FS approved Senator Iaia's motion to amend. The FS returned to the approval of the policy as amended. There was further discussion of religious holidays for religions with a large number of them; the policy places the first responsibility on the student to request excused absences from the instructor and then to go to the Dean of Students if the student is not satisfied. Angie Cartwright noted that to her knowledge this issue had not yet been a problem. A senator noted that some faculty state in their syllabuses that the excused religious holidays are those approved by the State of Texas, as UNT is a state institution. Another senator mentioned some discrepancy regarding canceling online classes when the university is closed; the official stance is that online classes must be canceled when the university is closed. Another faculty asked about substituting the student's grade on the final as the grade for a missed exam. This is not an issue for an instructor excusing an absence for sickness which is at the instructor's discretion, but it could impact the instructor having to provide a make-up exam in cases where the absence must be excused under the policy. The earlier amendment to the policy that stated make-up exams would be given "when practicable" mitigates this issue, but it is almost a certainty that a situation will arise where the faculty may not have any other option other than to provide a make-up exam regardless of the inconvenience. Discussion continued regarding notifications to faculty regarding athlete students, but no additional amendments were proposed. The FS passed the motion to approve the policy as amended and refer it for administrative review. |
| VI. | Committee on Committees (Melissa McKay McKay) **[vote]** | 2:52 pm. Senator Melissa McKay reported.   * Standing Committee Vacancies **[vote]**. Senator McKay solicited new nominations for vacancies on standing committees. There being none, she noted that there are two nominations, one each for University Elections (Mark Saber, Group IV) and University Library Committee (Seare Berhe, Group VII). Senator Kimberly Moreland made a motion to approve the nominations as a slate. Senator Sundeep Mukherjee seconded. There was no discussion. The FS approved the motion to approve as a slate. Senator McKay made a motion to appoint the standing committee nominees. As the motion came from committee no second was needed. The FS approved the appointment of the two standing committee nominees. * New look for vacancies list. Senator McKay pointed out that there are a few current vacancies, highlighted in yellow. She requested the senators solicit nominations to fill these vacancies; send nominations to her for further action. She also noted that the committee vacancies spreadsheet now has tabs to track *upcoming* vacancies for the next year. The FS wants to have all committees fully appointed and ready to start work in the fall semester, so it is important to solicit nominations for these vacancies now. The new tabs should make it easier to identify the positions that need to be filled. |
| VII. | Executive Committee (Amy Petros) | 3:00 pm. FS Vice Chair and Executive Committee Chair Petros reported.   * Accepted standing committee mid-year reports **[vote]**   + Faculty Policy Oversight   + University Faculty Grievance   Vice Chair Petros made a motion to accept the mid-year standing committee reports from FPOC and UFGC. As the motion came from committee no second was needed. There was no discussion. The FS approved acceptance of the two mid-year standing committee reports.   * UNT Giving Day participation (April 3, 7 am to 10:30 am). FS will participate by having a table. See below in the Comments for the Good of the Order for further details. Volunteers at the table are welcome. Please consider donating to the fund to name the Faculty Lounge in the Union after Bertina Combes, and if you are at the event solicit others to give as well. * Mental Health First Aid training on March 29. Some members of Executive Committee will take the MHFA training and provide feedback regarding the experience to FS at a future meeting. |
| VIII. | Elections Committee | 3:02 pm. Vice Chair Petros reported on behalf of FS Chair Adam Chamberlin.   * Senate and elected standing committees elections status. Ballots should go out early next week. There are numerous at-large positions: six senators, four University Faculty Grievance Committee tenured professors, one University Faculty Grievance Committee professional faculty. * Officer elections procedures **[vote]**. Vice Chair Petros made a motion on behalf of the Elections Committee to approve the officer election procedures as distributed. The procedures call for self-nominations submitted in April and a vote by FS in May for the following academic year's officers. As the motion came from committee no second was needed. There was no discussion. The FS approved the motion to adopt the election procedures as distributed. * Vice Chair Petros reviewed the self-nomination form, noting that one form suffices to run for any or all offices, the roles of the officers, and a prompt for a candidate statement including leadership experience. She encouraged senator to run for office. |
| IX. | Other Standing Committees Updates **[vote]** | 3:05 pm. Vice Chair Petros invited representatives to present updates.   * UUCC Report/Minutes. Natalie Ellis presented the University Undergraduate Curriculum Committee's March 2024 minutes for acceptance by FS. As the motion came from committee no second was needed. There was no discussion. The FS approved acceptance of the UUCC March 2024 minutes. * Graduate Council Minutes. Senator Lawrence Williams, substituting for committee chair Jennifer Lane, presented the Graduate Council January 2024 minutes for acceptance by FS. As the motion came from committee no second was needed. There was no discussion. The FS approved acceptance of the Graduate Council January 2024 minutes. |
| X. | New Business | 3:07 pm. Vice Chair Petros called for new business. No senators presented new business. |
| XI. | Old Business | 3:07 pm. Vice Chair Petros called for old business. No senators presented old business. |
| XII. | Comments for the Good of the Order | 3:07 pm. Vice Chair Petros noted again the UNT Day of Giving event, pointed out a new updated brochure about FS that senators are welcome to use to advertise vacancies or solicit donations for the faculty lounge naming, and drew attention to the following comments:   * UNT Day of Giving event – University Union room 333 on Wednesday, April 3rd from 7:00am – 10:30am; complimentary breakfast for all faculty and staff. * The Faculty Senate office will accept candidacy statements for the positions of Faculty Senate Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary from **Monday, April 1 through noon on Friday, April 26.** Statements should be sent to [facultysenateelections@unt.edu](mailto:facultysenateelections@unt.edu). * Remaining in-person meetings of the Faculty Senate: **April 10, May 8**; June meeting business will be addressed via Qualtrics and/or videoconference. |
| XIII. | Adjournment | 3:08 pm. Vice Chair Petros adjourned the meeting. |