

**FACULTY SENATE MEETING**

**University Union 332**

Minutes – March 9, 2022

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Anderson-Lain, Karen**  | COMMCLASS  | P | **Hutchison, Paul** | ACCT RCOB | P | **O’Toole, Erin** | LIBR | P | **Williams, Lawrence** | WLLCCLASS | P |
| **Aviles-Diz, Jorge** | SPANCLASS | P | **Joyner, William** | MUVSCOM | P | **Peak, Dan** | ITDSRCOB | P | **Yeatts, Dale** | SOCCLASS | A |
| **Baker, Rose** | LTECCOI | P | **Ketron, Seth** | NCF | P | **Perez, Jose** | PHYSCOS | A | **Zhang, Tao** | KHPRCOE | P |
| **Bednarz, Jim** | BIOLCOS | P | **Lam, Chris** | TECM CLASS | A | **Petros, Amy** | CHEMCOS | P |  |  |  |
| **Belshaw, Scott** | CJUS CHPS | P | **Lane, Jennifer** | MUVSCOM | A | **Philbrick, Jodi** | ISCOI | P |  |  |  |
| **Boesch, Miriam** | EPSYCOE | P | **Long, Chris** | TEACOE | P | **Sankofa, Nicole** | EPSYCOE | P |  |  |  |
| **Britain, Jeff** | HTM CMHT | P | **Mann, Paho** | ASTUCVAD  | P | **Sexton, Michael** | MGMTRCOB | A |  |  |  |
| **Campbell, Doug** | LIBR | P | **May, Andrew** | MUCSCOM | A | **Siller Carillo,****Hector** | MEENCENG | P |  |  |  |
| **Chamberlin, Adam** | DANCCLASS | P | **McKay, Melissa** | NCF | P | **Tixier, Scott** | COMM | P |  |  |  |
| **Cherry, William** | MATH COS | P | **Moreland, Kimberly** | ENGLCLASS | A | **Trudeau, Justin** | COMMCLASS | P |  |  |  |
| **Christian, Jack** | ENGLCLASS | P | **Morton, Sophie** | WLLCCLASS | P | **Walker, Jacqueline** | ENGL CLASS | P | **TEMPORARY SENATORS** |
| **Ginther, Jeannette** | TE&ACOE | P | **Mukherjee, Sundeep** | MSECENG | P | **Wang, Xuexia** | CSECENG | A |  |  |  |
| **Hargis, Carol** | LIBR | P | **Ojha, Divesh** | MKTG RCOB | A | **Warren, Scott** | LTECCOI | P |  |  |  |
| **Hensel, Paul** | PSCICLASS | P | **Olness, Gloria** | ASPLCHPS | P | **Watson, Wendy** | PSCICLASS | P |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | **NON-VOTING SENATORS** |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | Andrea Ortiz | GSC |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | Devon Skinner | SGA |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | **NON-VOTING SUBSTITUTES**  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

Guests: Neal Smatresk (President), Brenda Kihl (AA), Eve Shateen Bell (IDEA), Kathleen Hobson (Pride Alliance), Meredith Wright (UBSC), Angela Calcaterra (ENGL), Devin Garofalo (ENGL), Stacy Wolf (LIBR), Coby Condrey (LIBR), John Martin (LIBR), Nicoladie Tam (BIOL), John Bellon (Staff Senate), Briana Knox (LIBR), Yvonne Dooley (LIBR), Suzanne Enck (COMM), Mark Hlavacik (COMM), Brea Henson (LIBR), Teresa McKinney (IDEA), Patrice Lyke (ENGL), Chandra Carey (HPS)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| I. | Welcome and Introductions | * Senator Belshaw welcomed everyone to the meeting and announced that the new Faculty Lounge now had furniture in it.
 |
| II. | Approval of Minutes (February 9, 2022)  | **[vote]** * Senator Peak moved approval of the February minutes, and Senator Anderson-Lain seconded. The minutes were approved by unanimous vote.
 |
| III. | Faculty Discussion (President Neal Smatresk / ~~Interim Provost Mike McPherson~~) | * COVID masking update
	+ President Smatresk said that although the COVID situation was looking great, he would remain silent on masks for a while longer out of respect for those who still have concerns.
* Construction update
	+ President Smatresk gave an update on campus construction:
	+ Frisco will open fall. On a clear day, one can see TWU and maybe Apogee from the new Frisco campus. We will have a great big open house come fall.
	+ A tuition revenue bond [now called a “capital construction assistance project”] in the amount of $113 million for a new science/technology/engineering building was approved. It will have a flexible design. We formed a committee today looking at the programing for it. It will be for science/engineering and also Kinesiology faculty doing wet lab research. Because of rapid inflation in construction costs, the size will probably be a little smaller than we had initially hoped.
	+ We will renovate the SRB (Science Research Building) and re-assess our use of Hickory Hall.
	+ The Multicultural center is substantially through the design stage. We are ready to begin once we complete the site selection
	+ The CVAD annex is about ready to open
	+ Senator Hutchison asked about construction related to athletics.
	+ President Smatresk said that the diving well in PEB is not in good shape. Either we’ll build our own or partner with the city on a new natatorium. There could be a possible land acquisition south of town, but President Smatresk will not comment until we sign an agreement. A donor is involved.
	+ President Smatresk said that we pay a lot of money to advertise on billboards. We’ll put up two billboards on our own. One near I35. Another in the Fouts Field parking lot. This will both generate revenue and create marquee opportunities for us.
		- Senator Peak asked if they would be electronic.
		- President Smatresk said yes. They would have16 flips and be two sided.
* Dance program
	+ President Smatresk said that the dance major will be winding down.
	+ Dance will continue to be embedded within the theater program.
	+ The plan to wind down the dance major has been going on for several years.
	+ We need to have a good discussion about how we will run our theater program.
	+ We are trying to understand how to give our students good experiences, especially those interested in theater.
	+ Senator Chamberlin said that dance and theater lost their MFAs. He continued that they had just put in a new curriculum in for dance. He wanted to know where does that leave us in theater.
	+ President Smatresk said that he did not know. A new Provost is coming, and he would like to hear the dialog.
* Status of Provost and VP for Advancement searches
	+ President Smatresk said that both searches have started. We are still shooting for June in both searches. In the meantime, we’ve got Mike McPherson who has been really great to work with and hasn’t missed a beat. We’ve also got Christy Crutsinger returning to her role
* Senator Baker reported that the Committee on Evaluation of University Administrators has seen concerns expressed in the administrator evaluations about whether programs that are not STEM are valued.
	+ President Smatresk said that he likes who we are and our diversity. He does not know where people get that idea. We need to be sure we have strong STEM, but we need strong music, arts, humanities, and social sciences. He said that in our Carnegie ranking, we moved to 86 (highest in North Texas) and that we didn’t get there by science & engineering. We got there by strong Ph.D. production in humanities and social sciences. We’ve been described as the liberal arts college of Texas, and President Smatresk likes that characterization. He knows people get skittish with Provost changes, but he emphasized that he likes the kind of institution that we are.
* Academic Freedom
	+ President Smatresk said that the UT faculty decided to defend teaching critical race theory in K12 and that the Lieutenant Governor responded in a political season. He said that getting rid of tenure won’t happen. It is being talked about in other places, but it would have a negative impact on Texas. President Smatresk supports tenure utterly and completely, and he will defend it anyway he needs to and can. President Smatresk said he was a bit more worried about the CRT discussion because it’s been a hot button issue, and legislatures like to get involved with hot button issues. Defending academic freedom involves defending what needs to be taught. President Smatresk advised the faculty to teach what they need to teach, and he said he will defend it. President Smatresk said he did not think he could be more clear. He said to keep doing what we are doing.
	+ A guest thanked the President for confirming this and asked if he was willing to go public and publish in an e-mail or in a campus newspaper.
	+ President Smatresk asked what would that accomplish.
	+ The guest said that if President Smatresk does not say these things, then others will not know his stand on these issues.
	+ President Smatresk said that most other universities are not willing to provoke the Lieutenant Governor in the middle of a political season. He said that there are circles of legislators that he works with and they have all indicated that they do not have plans to end tenure. On the CRT question, if the UT faculty had not said anything, there wouldn’t be talk now about its place in higher-ed. This isn’t simple. He said it is important to balance between what’s productive. President Smatresk explained how he has been asked to make a high profile public statement against Russia’s invasion of Ukraine. Instead, he e-mailed the nine Ukrainian students we have at UNT to let them know we are here to provide any needed help. He said that there are many ways to handle these kind of things. He said he understands that people love extravagant stands and public statements. He said though that he is not sure it is worth making us a public target. He said that If it becomes a real threat, he is open to it [a more public stance] at the time.
	+ President Smatresk then asked for an informal straw poll from the room. Some indicated support for a public statement now, but a majority of hands indicated it isn’t necessary at this point.
	+ President Smatresk said that he said the same things he just said to the Senate in an interview with NTTV.
	+ Senator Watson said she appreciates not wanting to poke the bear. As a non-tenured person who teaches jurisprudence, she said that this is not just a hypothetical. She asked if she would be re-hired next year.
	+ President Smatresk said that he does not control who gets renewed each year and who doesn’t. He said his instruction to a Provost or Dean or Chair is that this is an activity that he supports, and participation in that is not a reason for someone to be renewed or not.
	+ Senator Walker said that we have one of the most liberal policies on academic freedoms that protects us. It includes language provided by the Black Faculty Network.
	+ President Smatresk said we should do what we have to do in the classroom. That policy would have to be changed or a law passed to remove the protections of that policy.
	+ John Martin, a guest from the library, said that what we do is study issues, talk about them, teach about them, do research on them, and so we also should take public stands. He said that there would be some resolutions coming before the Senate to do precisely that on some of these issues.
	+ President Smatresk said that there are millions of moral issues that we could take stands on. He said that he was not going to take a stand on every issue that arises, especially if taking the stand makes it more likely that something will happen. He said that when we get to the legislative session next January, he will be actively engaged in the way that makes the most sense. He emphasized that there is nothing to act on here now. He said that it is better, in his view, to work quietly with legislators who are sensible. He said he prefers to be effective for now. He said that there might come a time when he might take extravagant stances. But because he leads an institution, he said that comes with risk to the institution.
	+ Senator Peak said that from a classroom perspective, a grey cloud on the horizon is student preferences for what faculty discuss in class.
	+ President Smatresk said that he encourages us to continue to teach what out students need.
	+ Senator Peak said that students can retaliate in evaluations.
	+ President Smatresk said, sure, that’s why we call that opinion.
	+ Senator Bednarz said that this is a really scary issue for faculty in a broad range of disciplines. He said that he is an ecologist and teaches evolution and climate change.
	+ President Smatresk said that universities have managed to make themselves soft targets for politicians for years. He said that he wouldn’t walk up to Dan Patrick and ask what he thinks about teaching climate change. Of course, it is real, but do we purposely make ourselves a target?
	+ Professor Garofalo, a guest from English asked to come back to the SPOT issue. She teaches the history of empire and the history of race. Students are sometimes angry but she is really scared by the SPOT issue. It really affects women, faculty of color, and non-tenure-track faculty.
	+ President Smatresk said that he is aware. He explained that he has been a chair, a dean, a provost, and a president. As a provost, he was very engaged in perceptions of teaching. He said he has stayed out of it here because he thinks it is in the Provost’s domain. He does not think anyone he’s ever known in any institution thinks that student surveys at the end of the semester are the only indicator of quality teaching. He said that what he has asked Vice Provost Hutchins is that we work to create a stronger more robust faculty evaluation metric around quality of instruction.
	+ Senator Anderson-Lain said if academic freedom is going to extend to lecturers, then the person making the decision can’t be the one reviewing a grievance. That’s why lecturers are especially nervous. She emphasized that we need to fix the grievance policy.
	+ A guest commented that the bear might already be poked. A number of politicians have run on CRT and succeeded. They may understand it may not be the best thing for the state, but they also have political calculations to make.
	+ President Smatresk said that it is highly probably it will be introduced. Many bills die. He does not think the public statement piece is useful right now to help manage this issue.
* Campus climate for the LGBTQ community
	+ President Smatresk said the recent protests between student groups present a complex situation. He said it was challenging to take a single side.
	+ President Smatresk explained that we have a group on campus called the Young Conservatives of Texas. It exists not just here but on many campuses around the state. There are individuals here who use it as a platform to build a social media presence and for self-promotion. They try to be provocative. One or two people have been really effective at offending a large number of our community members. There is nothing that they’ve said that he supports. He feels there is no place for bullying on our campus. As far as he can tell, we have never stopped a student group from speaking. Also, as far as he can tell, we haven’t had a violent protest. He said that he was involved in many protests as a student himself and even got tear gassed. But abridging the right of a speaker invited by a student group also hasn’t happened before. He finds it ironic that we would like to curtail the First Amendment rights of YCT while defending CRT. He emphasized that he absolutely supports our trans community. He would like to schedule some meetings about how we can work to make them feel safe. He said that we do have extremists, but we cannot muzzle everyone who says something hateful. He said that we will look into specific charges To date, it hasn’t risen to that level, but he has asked Joann Woodward and Elizabeth With to look at these issues very carefully. President Smatresk also said he finds it ironic that groups that want to be tolerated and accepted can be intolerant of others.
	+ President Smatresk said that last Wednesday, we had a group of students protesting a speaker. He said he supports peaceful protest. He said he wished they’d had done a silent protest instead of making themselves a social media target. But he emphasized that he supports their choice of protest. Part of the crowd decided to violently attack the speaker. As the police tried to protect these individuals, a crowd of protestors (not necessarily students) attacked our police officers. They attempted to block an emergency vehicle. What happened Wednesday night was not OK, and any of you who think it was do not understand what happened. Now we are a target for both the right and the left in ways that do not reflect well on us as a campus.
	+ President Smatresk said that he does not support the views of these groups, but that he cannot block their First Amendment rights to say them.
	+ President Smatresk said that he is happy to answer questions, but there are some topics under active investigation that he cannot comment on right now.
	+ Professor Enck, a guest and the Chair of Communications Studies objected to President Smatresk saying that the trans community made themselves targets. She explained that the trans community was already a target.
	+ President Smatresk said that he appreciates that comment and thanked Professor Enck.
	+ A guest from English said that he supports free speech, but pointed out that there are already restrictions and limits to ensure that campus is not a hostile working environment.
	+ President Smatresk said that the answer to that isn’t easy. There are policies and federal statutes that we need to follow if we want to prosecute someone for Title IX. We have no jurisdiction over outside entities. He pointed out that if he opines first and investigates later, then it compromises the investigation. We have rules and policies that we work with. We just revised our harassment policy. I encourage you to read them. We get office of civil rights complaints all the time (from both sides) on some of the strangest things. President Smatresk said that he has been on campuses that have attempted to create civility rules, but they cross the line on academic freedom and freedom of speech. On some campuses, civility codes result in a horrific number of lawsuits.
	+ Senator Watson said that she is also a pretty avowed civil libertarian. She enumerated a number of ways the trans community has been attacked and explained why they are rational to think that their existence is being threatened. She expressed concern that many of the actions against them have not been publicly condemned.
	+ President Smatresk said that he appreciates how she feels. He said that he appreciates that there was hatred and violence on both sides. He said that there is unequivocal evidence of violence and hatred on both sides.
	+ Senator Watson also raised concerns about attacks on the trans community in social media.
	+ President Smatresk said that we don’t control anything in the social media sphere. He emphasized that he does not tolerate or condone anything that the speaker said or stands for. He does not tolerate any of the belligerent actions. We need a broader conversation with the community.
	+ Senator Anderson-Lain observed that the police got their coverage, the student group got their coverage, but the trans community did not get their side in President Smatresk’s remarks. She was concerned that President Smatresk’s official remarks did not match what he was saying here today, and that this was an ethical concern She advocated for a listening session.
	+ President Smatresk said that his statement was meant to be a recitation of facts, not a position statement.
	+ Professor Tam, a guest from Biology, said that he thinks there is a neutral way by stating the university values. People have a right to say what they want but they have to follow Title VII and IX.
	+ President Smatresk said that if he could de-escalate with such a statement, he would be happy to do so, but he thinks people want more.
	+ President Smatresk said that he will be convening a group to help and advise him.
	+ A guest from English re-iterated the concern that the only one of these issues that did get a public statement on Presidential letter-head was in support of free speech by a hate group.
	+ Dr. Teresa McKinney, a guest and new Assistant VP for Diversity introduced herself and said that she is looking forward to working with everyone as we work to heal our campus.
	+ President Smatresk welcomed Dr. McKinney back to UNT.
	+ Senator Belshaw said that he wants to go on record to condemn what YCT has done to our community.
 |
| IV. | Charter and Bylaws Committee update (Sophie Morton) | * Senator Morton reviewed what has been happening with the Charter revisions since the fall and reported that the University Elections Committee is preparing for the ratification vote of the Senate Charter revisions
 |
| V. | University Elections Committee update (Adam Chamberlin) | * Senator Chamberlin asked the Senators to vote in the upcoming charter elections.
* Senator Chamberlin also said that we are in the nomination period for new Senators, and that a bunch of second calls for nominations are going out now.
* Senator Chamberlin said that Senate Officer elections will take place in May.
 |
| VI. | Committee on Committees (Chris Lam) | * Standing Committee Vacancies **[vote]**
	+ Douglas Campbell and Hyunju Kim were both nominated for an at-large vacancy on the Committee for the Evaluation of Administrators. The Senate voted 15 to 9 to elect Douglas Campbell to fill the vacancy.
	+ Senator Anderson-Lain moved to approve the remaining uncontested standing committee nominations, and Senator Chamberlin seconded. The remaining nominations were approved by a unanimous vote in favor.
* Administrative Committee Vacancies
	+ There were none.
 |
| VII. | Confirmation of Executive Committee Actions / Report (Jackie Walker) | * Accepted mid-year report of the Faculty Budget Committee **[vote]**
	+ A majority voted in favor of accepting the report.
* Senator Walker also advised the Senate that the Faculty Policy Oversight Committee had had difficulty reaching consensus on revisions to the Continuous Enrollment Policy, and that the Executive Committee would be discussing that at its next meeting.
 |
| VIII. | Other standing committee updates | * UUCC Report/Minutes [March 2022] (April Prince / Brenda Kihl) **[vote]**
	+ The March UUCC minutes were unanimously approved.
* Graduate Council Minutes [December 2021] (Lawrence Williams / Dale Yeatts) [ **vote]**
* Graduate Council Minutes [February 2022] (Lawrence Williams / Dale Yeatts) [ **vote]**
	+ The December and February Graduate Council Minutes were approved together as a group by unanimous vote.
 |
| IX. | New business | * Senator Belshaw said that he will create an ad-hoc committee on the Status of the Transgender Community at UNT which Senator Ketron will chair.
* Senator Belshaw also said that Senator Peak is doing a research study on SPOT.
	+ Senator Peak explained that he was chair of the committee that got rid of SPOT’s predecessor, and of the committee that selected SPOT. He said that he is doing a research study on administrative issues associated to SPOT.
 |
| X. | Old business | * Administrative Titles addition to Procedures Manual [vote]
	+ This item was tabled for time.
 |
| XI. | Comments for the Good of the Order | * Administrator evaluations surveys have been released for completion by faculty; look for Qualtrics email to evaluate the President and senior administrators - due by Friday, March 18.
* The registration deadline for the 2022 Equity & Diversity Conference presented by Fidelity Investments is today (March 9th). Access the link for registration at the IDEA website.
* Next executive committee meeting is Wednesday, March 30 – IN-PERSON in Hurley 204
* Next Faculty Senate meeting is Wednesday, April 13 – IN-PERSON in Union 332
* Senator Belshaw wished everyone a good spring break
* Senator Baker reported Qualtrics survey technical issues affecting the administrator evaluations. She also reported that chairs & deans are being surveyed this year in the evaluations for the upper administrators.
 |
| XII. | Adjournment | The meeting adjourned at 3:53 p.m. |