****

**FACULTY SENATE MEETING**

**University Union 332**

Minutes – September 13, 2023, 2:00 p.m.

|  |
| --- |
| **Attendance**: P = Present A = Absent L = Leave |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Baker, Rose** | LTEC  COI | P | **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 |  |  |  |
| **Britain, Jeff** | HTM  CMHT | P | **Lund, Brady** | IS  COI | P | **Schoolfield, Anne** | ENGL  CLASS | A |  |  |  |
| **Campbell, Doug** | LIBR | P | **Manzo, Maurizio** | MEEN  CENG | P | **Scott Bracey, Pamela** | CACS | P |  |  |  |
| **Catalano, Denise** | RHS  CHPS | P | **May, Andrew** | MUCS  COM | A | **Shiner, David** | PHYS  COS | P | **Temporary Senators (voting)** | | |
| **Chamberlin, Adam** | THEA  CLASS | P | **McKay, Melissa** | (ACS)  CACS | P | **Siller Carrillo, Hector** | MEEN  CENG | P | Hlavacik, Mark | COMM  CLASS | P |
| **Chiang, Jason** | EPSY  COE | P | **Moreland, Kimberly** | ENGL CLASS | P | **Tixier, Scott** | MUIS  COM | A | Sexton, Mike | MGMT  RCOB | P |
| **Christian, Jack** | ENGL  CLASS | P | **Mukherjee, Sundeep** | MSE  CENG | P | **Trudeau, Justin** | COMM  CLASS | P | Welch, Lisa | BIOL  COS | P |
| **Condrey, Coby** | LIBR | P | **Najour, Caroline** | WLLC  CLASS | P | **Williams, Lawrence** | WLLC  CLASS | P |  |  |  |
| **Evans, Sarah** | IS  COI | P | **Narayanan Arunachalam** | ITDS  RCOB | P | **Shiner, David** | PHYS  COS | P |  |  |  |
| **Ginther, Jeannette** | TE&A  COE | P | **Nasco, Dennis** | MGMT  RCOB | P | **Wilson, Carol** | MUVS | P |  |  |  |
| **Hutchison, Paul** | ACCT  RCOB | P | **Nodeland, Brooke** | DCJ  CHPS | P |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Iaia, Joseph** | MATH  COS | P | **Ojha, Divesh** | MLOM  RCOB | P |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Joyner, William** | MUVS  COM | P | **Peters, John** | ENGL  CLASS | P |  |  |  | **STUDENT SENATORS (non-voting)** | | |
|  |  |  | **Petros, Amy** | CHEM  COS | P |  |  |  | Dorcas Bisisi | SGA | P |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | Sri Lakshmi Thanuja Beeram | GSC | A |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

Abbreviations: AVP = Assistant Vice Provost. CLEAR = Center for Learning Experimentation, Application and Research. CUPA = College and University Professional Association, an organization that compiles compensation information for faculty nationwide. DEI = Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion as practices within UNT. FPOC = Faculty Policy Oversite Committee. FS = Faculty Senate. GSA = Graduate Services Assistant. MC = Multicultural Center. ODA = Office of Disability Access, Division of Student Affairs. OGC = UNT System Office of General Counsel. TUF = Texas University Fund. VP = Vice President.

Guests: AVP Angie Cartwright, Dr. William Cherry, Dr. Natalie Ellis, Ms. Courtney Glazer, AVP Lisa Maxwell, Provost Mike McPherson, Assistant VP Rudi Thompson, VP Joanne Woodard.

Total voting members: 42; required for quorum: 22. Quorum present.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| I. | Welcome and Introductions | * 2:00 pm. Welcome new senators  Chair Chamberlin welcomed new senators, reminded them to pick up orientation packets. Reminder for all: use a microphone when speaking to the group, be sure to turn it on. * 2:02 pm. Approval of temporary senators **[vote]** Motion to approve new temporary senators by Senator Joyner, second by Senator Campbell. The FS approved the motion unanimously. |
| II. | Approval of Minutes (May 10 and June 14, 2023) **[vote]** | * 2:03 pm. Approval of Minutes (May 10 and June 14, 2023) Motion to approve minutes as received by Senator Hutchison, second by Senator Narayanan. The FS approved the motion with 1 abstention and all others in favor. |
| III. | University Update (President Neal Smatresk / Provost Mike McPherson) | 2:05 pm. Provost McPherson offered President Smatresk's apologies as the president is unable to attend today.   * DEI update Regarding Senate Bill 17, effective January 1, 2024: UNT must comply, consequences for non-compliance are dire. UNT also has an obligation to support our diverse students, faculty, & staff. IDEA office dissolves October 1. UNT has NOT been the first in the state to dismantle DEI-related offices; the timing is coincidental to Joanne Woodard's retirement on October 1, with no need to bring in an interim VP for just a few months. The President has been very concerned to ensure that people in that division know about their future. All will have a job, some a different one. Organizational changes: OEO & Title IX moved to the Division of Finance & Administration; they are required to exist by law and operate semi-independently. Pride Alliance and the Multicultural Center are moving to the Division of Student Affairs. Aside on MC: we *are* building a new MC. However, there is a hiccup in the process with the construction vendor due to bond coverage glitches. This will delay construction; but it is not the case that we are stopping creation of it. SB 17 does not affect teaching, instruction, or curriculum; SB exempts instruction, as well as student activities; students may do what they wish. Guest speakers and performers are exempt as well. Administration is seeking guidance from OGC on various other matters, especially, college advisory committees (DEI committees), faculty resource groups and/or employee resource groups. These groups will have to be inclusive, and all groups must have a fair chance to receive financial support. These groups will now be organized under the Provost in the Office of Faculty Success; the provost expects them to continue doing their work as in the past. Per SB 17, UNT cannot have DEI statements required for applications, no rubrics to evaluate statements, no mandatory DEI training, nor can UNT pay anyone to provide DEI training. The Provost opened the floor for questions. Q: If we have DEI committees now, what should we do?  A: We are seeking clarity from OGC. The committees can continue for now as the law doesn't come into effect until January. Q: Will departments recognizing DEI in bylaws have to change them?  A: Probably not, but send copies to the provost for review. Q: For a hiring committee, can we ask applicants to address how to meet needs of diverse student body? A: We do have a diverse community, so it is fine to ask an applicant about how to interact and engage with a diverse student body. Q: Can we use a rubric to score applicant responses to the diverse student body question?  A: The rubric cannot refer to DEI; tread carefully here.  Final comment on DEI: Administration will continue to communicate about developments. The provost has submitted a list of non-curriculum DEI-related topics for review by OGC; we are waiting for OGC to weigh in. * Compensation – merit, COLA, compression President Smatresk has said there will be a pay raise this academic year. The size is unknown at this point, because it depends on passing a constitutional amendment authorizing the Texas University Fund. [Explanation of the Permanent University Fund that goes only to University of Texas at Austin and Texas A&M University, and the work of persuading the Texas Legislature to create TUF.] UNT will get additional revenue, about $20 million annually, with a potential that we will be eligible for $40 million annually. The big IF is getting the Texas voters to approve it in November. We can encourage people to vote. This could be a game-changer for us. We expect there will be a "market" and a merit component to the compensation increase. Every 3 years the provost conducts a faculty salary study, to examine equity and other issues. This study will happen in the spring of 2024; the provost expects that study will also address some compression issues. The Provost opened the floor for questions. Q: What is the status of the library faculty study scheduled for the spring of 2023? A: The library faculty study is still a month or two away from completion. Q: The budget last year seemed like we had to pay debts that were one-time, unplanned expenses. Presumably this year the debt would be gone so we should be in better shape, even outside the TUF fund. What if the TUF doesn't pass?  A: If it doesn't pass then our budget will be flat. Factors like inflation are affecting us, plus our exponential growth has created new costs.  Q: What about the lawsuit [regarding charging out of state tuition]?  A: Beginning in the spring semester, we resume can charging out of state tuition to domestic students. That will help UNT's finances. Q: I want to see the compensation data for my department from the last two cycles but my chair won't provide it. Who can see the data? How can there be more transparency?  A: CUPA data is purchased, and the licensing agreement is that we cannot give widespread access to the dataset. The salary study committee can look at it but must comply with non-disclosure requirements. * UNT sustainability planning President Smatresk intends to take another look at this matter and then decide how to proceed. He is favorable to making plans to raise awareness at first. * ODA testing accommodations ODA cannot serve all the requests, and faculty are struggling to respond to students. ODA will be moving out of Sage Hall into Chestnut Hall. Currently we have 16 testing spaces in Sage. In Chestnut there will be at least 26, possibly 31. Help is coming, but it will be in the spring semester. Dr. With, VP of Student Affairs, is asking ODA what they can do now. * Graduate student compensation and benefitsSome improvement is coming, but probably it will be a small step forward. Again, TUF passing will decide how much the provost can do. On the list of options are: a better tuition benefit program; health insurance for grad students; better, more competitive stipends. Nothing has been decided regarding what to do first, but a stipend increase is most likely. Regarding a question about allowing GSAs to work outside the university, international students are forbidden by their student visa rules to do so. For domestic students, there is nothing at UNT that prevents them, although some departments may discourage outside work, even though it is understandable why economics may press graduate students to pursue additional income. * Faculty recruitment and retention The administration is concerned about this issue. There have been colleagues who have left because they don't feel safe or appreciated. There may have been candidates who rejected offers from us for similar reasons. There are still good things about UNT to recommend us. We are not cutting programs. Our community is good, and we have good colleagues. It is easy to get upset about what happens in Austin [i.e. the actions of the Legislature], but we can still focus on our original mission, and use our power to change lives and keep working on what we can do make things happen here. The Provost opened the floor for questions. Q: Colleagues have asked about a statement from former Provost Cowley that fulltime UNT faculty needed to live in the Dallas / Fort Worth (DFW) area, but in the virtual world that is not needed, and faculty working online could live out of state. What is Provost McPherson's opinion?  A: Let's avoid absolute statements, but it builds a stronger community when people are present on campus, though there can be exceptions.  Q: Are there a lot of faculty living outside DFW?  A: No, only one or two a year get approved. Q: How did we do with formula funding, putting aside the TUF issue?  A: Yes, UNT received more funding, mainly due to the increase in students. The exact amounts are not readily in memory. Q: When will we hear about compensation?  A: The constitutional amendment referendum is in early November. After that we must figure out when the funding will arrive and how to distribute it. Probably early 2024, but no promises at this point.  Q: Will graduate students get funding retroactively?  A: Probably not, but we will distribute it as soon as we get it. We likely can't go back to September, but we expect we could backdate it to start in January, the current semester. |
| IV. | Special recognition for service – Ms. Joanne Woodard, Vice President for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion | 2:44 pm. Senator Chamberlin as chair of FS postponed this item to later in the agenda. |
| V. | Catalog change request - student load (Lisa Maxwell / Lisa McIntyre) **[vote]** | * 2:44 pm. Lisa Maxwell, AVP for Student Success made a motion to add to the undergraduate catalog a cap on student hours in 8-week sessions. The cap is 9 hours per 8-week session. This cap exists in the graduate catalog but not in the undergraduate.  As the measure comes from committee, no second was needed. No discussion.  The FS approved the motion unanimously. |
| VI. | Faculty Policy Oversight Committee (William Cherry / Angie Cartwright) | * **Second Read [vote]** * 06.030 Review and Approval of Online and Hybrid Courses and Programs 2:45 pm. FPOC co-chairs AVP Angie Cartwright and Dr. William Cherry presented. This policy is being returned to FS after additional work from CLEAR, the Provost's Office, and the FPOC. Dr. Cherry reviewed the process of faculty involvement in UNT policy development. This policy is before the FS again due to additional administrative concerns. FS now needs to pass a motion to discuss the revisions. Senator Hutchison moved to consider the policy as substituted by the Administration and distributed to the FS prior to today's meeting. Senator Joyner seconded.  Discussion: Dr. Cherry noted that not every problem at UNT should be solved via policy revisions; FS should consider carefully whether a policy change is needed. Then he recapped the recent history of this policy:  There have been some concerns about whether CLEAR was overstepping its role and trampling academic freedom. When are CLEAR's directions really suggestions versus requirements?  DSI CLEAR reviews online courses for compliance; directives related to accessibility are not discretionary. But CLEAR is not deciding what should be included in the curriculum or how it should be taught. There are two changes in the policy to consider now: (1) language clarifying the CLEAR reviews online courses for compliance with requirements related to accessibility and copyright, and recommendations related to these matters are non-discretionary; and (2) striking language that belabored the distinctions between recommendations and requirements as well as language that described processes that should not appear in the policy. Discussion from the FS members: Concern: a senator liked the former language using the terms "non-binding" and "sole discretion."  AVP Cartwright: This language is not agreeable to the Provost; UNT legal won't let "sole discretion" language be in policy. Academic freedom does apply to course content, but instructional design is different. Concern: a senator stated that there is still a great deal of confusion over whether a CLEAR recommendation is a requirement or a recommendation. Dr. Rudi Thompson, Associate VP for Digital Strategy & Innovation, Executive Director for CLEAR: The policy already says that CLEAR only makes recommendations. Yes, some chairs or some faculty can interpret recommendation as requirement. CLEAR does not have any right to tell you what you put in your course and does not want to.  Concern: a senator stated that it is unclear to those teaching online courses between what CLEAR can mandate and what recommendations the faculty can decide to implement or not. Maybe this should go back to FPOC to be clear about these different issues, especially the definition of instructional design. Concern: a senator asked what is the issue with "sole discretion"? This has to be clarified. Chairs are not interpreting the policy the same as the instructional faculty. I agree with the other senators that we need clarity, and only accessibility & copyright issues are mandatory changes. FS Chair Senator Chamberlin: Perhaps a definition of instructional design would help the faculty. "Sole discretion" is problematic when there are two collaborators creating the course, and when the course is handed off to a successor. We also need a procedure to deal with situations where the policy is not being followed. Senator Peters proposed that the deleted language stay out, and the language be amended to indicate that CLEAR "makes *non-binding* recommendations related to instructional design." Senator Narayanan seconded. Discussion on motion to amend. Some senators indicated that the additional word seemed redundant or unnecessary, or that some recommendations are binding when they are actually suggestions. A senator noted that his online classes were improved by working through the process with CLEAR. Yes, it can be frustrating, but working with CLEAR does improve the courses. Content doesn't have to change; the process can be improved so CLEAR indicates where there is a required change vs a recommendation for improvement. Let's look at the spirit of the policy and fix the process side rather than a policy issue.  FPOC co-chair Dr. Cherry: again, changing the policy may not be the best solution; if recommendation means non-binding, then we could have CLEAR improve their communication and forms to make it evident what's required or just a suggestion. A senator expressed concern that there isn't a way to check changes once a course is approved, especially if the person is inheriting the course. FPOC co-chair Dr. Cherry: VP Thompson acknowledges this is a concern, and the FPOC is not proposing anything to address that. A senator asked if we could add a definition of recommendation as meaning non-binding and of instructional design. AVP Cartwright: I will add a definition of "instructional design" but not "recommendation". A senator reiterated that many faculty bring speak of these issues. FPOC co-chair Dr. Cherry: There is a motion on the floor is to insert the word non-binding. We have heard arguments in favor and against. Are we ready to vote on the motion to amend?  The FS failed to approve the motion to amend. Now back to the original motion to substitute the administration's document for the policy that was approved in May.  Senator Chamberlin moved to amend by adding a definition of instructional design. Senator Long seconded.  Discussion: A senator asked for clarification of who will add the definition. Senator Chamberlin: We will decide that separately, if the FS approved adding it. The FS passed the motion to add the definition. Senator Bednarz moved to table further action on this policy, pending AVP Cartwright in consultation with CLEAR adding the definition and bringing back to FS in October. Senator Hutchison seconded.  Discussion: none. The FS passed the motion to table. |
| IV. (revisited) | Special recognition for service – Ms. Joanne Woodard, Vice President for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion | * 3:23 pm. Recognition of VP Joanne Woodard Senator Chamberlin expressed thanks on behalf of FS to VP Woodard and presented a certificate of appreciation. The FS applauded VP Woodard. VP Woodard thanked FS and expressed hope that UNT will continue the work of DEI. VP Woodard is retiring "for keeps" this time and moving to North Carolina. |
| VII. | Committee on Committees (Melissa McKay) **[vote]** | 3:24 pm. The FS caucused by voting groups for senator-only committees and temporary senators. Senator McKay provided each group with packets of printed lists of needed positions for each voting group to complete.   * Standing Committee Vacancies * Administrative Committee Vacancies   The results of the caucuses will be compiled and announced in the Old Business agenda item for this meeting. |
| VIII. | Executive Committee Update (Amy Petros) | 3:27 pm. Senator Petros provided some EC updates.   * Proposal to amend Procedures Manual concerning composition of Oversight Committee on the Core Curriculum, removing the requirement that a majority of the committee members be tenured faculty **[vote]** The motion to amend came from committee, so no second was required. The FS passed the motion to amend. * Recommending Mariya Gavrilova Aguilar to serve as an at-large Graduate Council member. The motion to appoint came from committee, so no second was required. The FS passed the motion to appoint. * Senator Petros moved that FS consider the following committee end-of-year reports as a bloc. As the motion came from committee no second was required. Discussion: none. The FS approved the motion.   + Academic Affairs Committee   + Faculty Senate Budget Committee   + Faculty Mentor Committee   + Graduate Council   + Charter and Bylaws Committee   Senator Petros moved that FS accept the bloc of committee reports. As the motion came from committee no second was required. Discussion: none. The FS approved the motion. |
| IX. | Other Standing Committees Updates **[vote]** | * UUCC Report/Minutes (September 2023) 3:40 pm. Committee co-chairs Natalie Ellis & Courtney Glazer moved acceptance of the minutes of the September University Undergraduate Curriculum Committee. Discussion. A senator asked about how UUCC handles changes that don't go through the appropriate process prior to reaching the committee. Answer: The committee has had only once instance where a faculty member came to the committee and said a change had not gone through the proper channels. The committee sent the proposal back to the originator and asked that person to follow the appropriate process. However, as far as UUCC is concerned, the committee's focus is on the curriculum change itself rather than checking that all the prior steps have been followed.  Senator Chamberlin reminded the FS that one of the jobs of a senator is to check with constituents on these kinds of matters; share UUCC minutes with colleagues and ask specifically about proposed changes. As the motion to accept the minutes came from committee, no second was required. The FS passed the motion to accept the September 2023 UUCC minutes as submitted. |
| X. | New Business | 3:44 pm. FS Chair Senator Chamberlin invited new business for FS consideration.   * A senator expressed opposition to the UNT System plan to centralizing IT. The IT people currently assigned to specific colleges are experts in the needs of their faculty. Disassociating these people from their colleges' environments will lead to service failures. IT staff in colleges are on edge about this; there is little information about the impact on people's jobs and on department IT needs. Provost McPherson: I am deeply concerned about this prospect as well. I will be in discussion with the UNT System about this. Senator Britain moved that the FS formally express concern about the IT consolidation. Senator Peters seconded.  Discussion:  A senator noted that the motion should include language about the impact of the loss of IT people who are dedicated to specific units of the University. A senator noted that the UNT System Chancellor sent out a message a few months ago about decentralizing processes, so this initiative seems contrary to that. FS Chair Senator Chamberlin noted a need for clarity on the plan for this IT transformation. Senator Chamberlin asked Senator Britain to restate the motion. Senator Britain revised the motion: that the FS believes that it is not a good idea to centralize all the IT operations at UNT as the faculty and IT staff are concerned that the IT staff will not be able to support their faculty sufficiently.  Discussion: A senator with experience in a former position as an IT helpdesk manager stated that FS needs more information about the plan. It is impossible to know whether the transformation has to potential to be positive or negative. Senator McKay moved to amend the language of the motion to state that FS is concerned that IT centralization will have a negative impact on the efficiency and effectiveness of IT's support of faculty, and then how the faculty will be able to respond to students needs. Senator Catalano seconded.  Discussion on the amendment: none. The FS approved the motion to amend. Returning to the original motion to express concern as amended, the FS approved the motion to express concern. |
| XI. | Old Business | |  | | --- | | * 3:52 pm. Review of caucus results (from item VII above).   + Senator Mukherjee moved appointment of all Standing Committee vacancy nominees as a slate. Senator Campbell seconded. Discussion: none. The FS approved appointment of the nominees as a slate.   + Senator Joyner moved appointment of all Administrative Committee vacancy nominees as a slate. Senator Bednarz seconded. Discussion: none. The FS approved appointment of the nominees as a slate. | |
| XII. | Comments for the Good of the Order | 3:55 pm. FS Chair Senator Chamberlin noted the following:   * There is a faculty welcome reception immediately after the meeting – Union 249 Faculty Lounge 4:00 p.m. to 5:15 p.m. Senators are welcome! * Minnie Stevens Piper Award materials are available on FS website; deadline for nomination packets to be submitted is Monday, October 16 by 5:00 pm * The coming election is on November 7; deadline for voter registration is Tuesday, October 10. Plan to vote! * All senators are invited to pick up a Faculty Senate pin. |
| XIII. | Adjournment | 3:56 pm. FS Chair Senator Chamberlin adjourned the meeting. |