***Report to the Faculty Senate Executive Committee* Date:**  December 9, 2021

**“x” or circle: X**  **Mid-year report**   **Year-end report**

**Committee Name**: Committee on the Status of Faculty with Disabilities (CSFD)

**Chair or Co-Chairs: Brea Henson**

**Meetings for the term/year:** Electronic meetings held on September 8, October 7, and November 11 2021

**Membership and Attendance** (year-to-date attendance record):

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Group Represented, committee office, if applicable** | **Name** | **Department or administrative unit affiliation** | **Term End**  **(if applicable)** | **Meetings Attended** | **Meetings Absent / # Excused** |
| Chair | Brea Henson (re-elected October 7, 2021) | LIBR | 2023 | 3 | 0 |
| Co-chair | Nicoladie Tam (stepped down October 7, 2021) | BIOL | 2023 | 2 | 1 absent |
| Secretary | Paula Garland (effective November 11, 2021) | RHS | 2023 | 2 | 1 excused |
| Group I | Jorge Aviles-Diz | SPAN | 2023 | 3 | 0 |
| Group II | Brea Henson | LIBR | 2023 | 3 | 0 |
| Group III | Shuping Wang | EE | 2022 | 1 | 2 excused |
| Group IV | Eric Fritsch (effective November 11, 2021) | DCJ | 2024 | 0 | 1 excused |
| Group V | Mike Sexton (stepped down October 7, 2021) | Jae Webb (effective November 11, 2021) | MGMT | 2024 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Group VI | Miriam Boesch (effective November 11, 2021) | EPSY | 2024 | 1 | 0 |
| Group VII | Nicoladie Tam | BIOL | 2023 | 2 | 1 absent |
| Group VIII | James Martin (Jennifer Lane resigned on May 12th, 2021) | MART | 2021 | 2 | 1 absent |
| At-large | Paula Garland | RHS | 2023 | 2 | 1 excused |
| At-large | Dalia Chowdhury | RHS, | 2022 | 1 | 2 excused |
| At-large | Peter Mondelli | MUCE | 2021 | 2 | 1 excused |
| IDEA Rep | Eraina Perrin | IDEA | n/a | 2 | 1 excused |
| Ex-Officio | Jennifer Lane | MUVS | n/a | 1 | 1 excused | 1 absent |

**The Executive Committee establishes charges for each standing committee and may amend them as needed; alternatively, the standing committee may propose amended charges, composition, etc., by making a written proposal and sending to the Faculty Senate office** [**facultysenate@unt.edu**](mailto:facultysenate@unt.edu)**.) Do your committee charges remain relevant? If not, what changes to the charges do you propose?**

Committee charge is relevant. No changes to charge needed at this time.

**Accomplishments (including items submitted for review or approval to the Executive Committee or Faculty Senate)**

At the first committee meeting, the Committee reviewed goals and objectives from the previous semester.

During this first meeting, members discussed the lack of adherence to HR protocols for accommodation requests through the “habitual exclusion of standard HR protocols in handling faculty requests for reasonable accommodations, as well as the concomitant pressure to disclose medical information directly to supervisors (chairs, deans, etc.) rather than to those trained in dealing with medical privacy” in some departments. Related to this concern is “pressure” in policies:

1. the [stop-the-clock clauses in 06.004](https://policy.unt.edu/sites/default/files/06.004Pub_0.pdf), and
2. the [Return to Learn](https://vpaa.unt.edu/return) policies in which “any medically-grounded requests for accommodations (along with supporting documents) go exclusively through the chair-dean-provost line, and not through HR.”

Membership expressed desire that requests should go through a neutral party and to someone who has training in ADA. The Committee agreed that the current process was not clear to all members.

Membership investigated current ADA policy and discovered UNT Policy 05.011 “Employment of Individuals with Disabilities/Workplace Accommodations.” The Committee agreed updates needed to be made and decided to investigate the policy update process.

Additionally, membership discussed the

1. need for the current process to be more transparent and equitable for employee needs in a manner that is like the student ADA process through ODA;
2. need for ADA process training for all chairs and deans supervising faculty;
3. need for accommodation funding to come from the university level as these resources can be shared and more equitably distributed. Departments should not be responsible for finding funding no included in their budgets;
4. ability for faculty to contest accommodation denials or alternative accommodation decisions made by HR;
5. need to define what “reasonable accommodation” means and set timelines to complete tasks outlined in ADA Accommodation Letters.

Between the first and second meeting in October, the Committee reelected Brea Henson as Chair and Co-Chair Nicoladie Tam stepped down from her Co-Chair role. The Committee voted on a Secretary. Additionally, Chair Henson, former Co-Chair Tam, and leadership of the Neurodiversity Professional Network (NPN) met with HR to address ADA Accommodation concerns. During this meeting, HR outlined the current ADA Accommodation Process and explained certain processes. They expressed interest in making the ADA website easier to locate, revising the process and current policy (which is under review by UNT System Legal Team), and developing training for supervisors, chairs, deans, and administration at CSFD and NPN’s request. HR recently hired an ADA Accommodation Specialist.

Due to a scheduling issue, the second meeting in October was come-and-go. Henson and Tam reviewed their meeting with HR and asked membership to bring any concerns to the following November meeting. Because the scheduling issue was an error on Henson’s part, members received an excused absence if they did not attend. Email follow-ups were sent to the Committee with a summary of the all the discussions Henson and Tam had with membership.

At the third meeting in November, Henson reviewed outcomes of the meeting with HR and welcomed new members. Committee posed questions about how student employees should receive ADA Accommodation for their jobs and agreed additional follow-up with HR was needed. Membership decided not to hold a meeting in December and instead reached out to HR with questions and offered to review the ADA Accommodation information provided at faculty orientations. The Committee has invited HR Representatives to attend their January meeting to begin collaborations on ADA Accommodation process and policy revisions as well as training developments.

Chair Henson attended the Faculty Senate Meeting on December 8, 2021 to outline the current ADA Accommodation Process and committee plans for next semester.

All seats on the Committee on the Status of Faculty with Disabilities are currently filled.

**Ongoing/future projects:**

1. Collaborate with Human Resources (HR) and the Neurodiversity Professional Network (NPN) as needed;
2. Invite guests of various communities to speak about their experiences and how we can support their needs in Faculty Senate;
3. Increase visibility of committee through collaborations, education programs, and advocacy;
4. Identify resources available through insurance and EAP;
5. Advocate to create change and identify barriers of access and equity;
6. Review Climate Survey Data Review and develop “strategic” planning to address faculty needs; and,
7. Survey what other universities are doing to make their ADA Accommodation process equitable and how other universities ensure their faculty with disabilities are supported.