

Faculty Senate Executive Council
Convened via Zoom
March 22, 2021
MINUTES

Present: Joel Anderson, Ernest Bernard, Monica Black, Amy Broemmel, Tamah Fridman, Millie Gimmel, Martin Griffin, Julia Jaekel, Cheryl Kojima, Anne Langendorfer, Beauvais Lyons, Stephanie Madison, Audris Mockus, Bonnie Ownley, David Patterson, Gary Skolits, Robert Spirko, Shawn Spurgeon, Mark Stanley, John Zomchick

Guests: Tim Cross, Diane Kelly, Dixie Thompson

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 3:32 p.m.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of February 15, 2021, were presented for approval. B. Lyons moved to accept, M. Black seconded. The minutes were approved.

III. ANNOUNCEMENTS AND REPORTS

President's Report (S. Spurgeon)

S. Spurgeon reminded the FSEC that we are still looking for a senate parliamentarian. Anyone interested should contact him. Replacing the president-elect who has resigned is a problematic process, especially given the time it takes to onboard a new president. S. Spurgeon is willing to stay on for another year. He will be working remotely next year while still a UT employee but is familiar with the position and can continue another year if necessary. The upper administration is aware of the challenges facing Senate Presidents and the many roles that they play as individuals and faculty members. The Chancellor will be doubling the stipend for Senate President (to \$10,000/year) and will have a dedicated support staff person who only works for the Senate. This person will report to the Provost. The president appreciates the Chancellor and Provost's efforts to make this job more workable. B. Lyons requested a written account of the commitments to support the senate president. The presence of the GRA and S. Winston have been vital to the success of the senate and he would like to make sure they are considered in these changes.

Several asked if S. Spurgeon is planning to be president. He is willing. Another asked that with him being out of state will we be having Zoom senate meetings. We will be on Zoom for the fall and then in the Spring we will transition to face to face. Would more be willing to serve as president if they bought out of 4 classes instead of 2? Another commented that the issue is really about not having enough faculty at rank who can fill these positions. We have fewer faculty than other comparable universities and our faculty are really stretched with service.

UTK Chancellor's Report (D. Plowman)

The Chancellor was unable to attend today and had no report.

Provost's Report (J. Zomchick)

The Provost will work on a written document detailing the new supports for the Senate President. The Governor announced that on April 1 anyone over 16 can get a vaccine and the UT Health Clinic will be working to help with the process.

The implementation teams for the Strategic Vision Plan are hard at work and will present plans to the Chancellor by April 15. The Budget Allocation Committee is also at work and has asked the Provost to work with the senate and curriculum committees so that they will receive information in a timely fashion about curriculum changes that could impact the budgets of colleges. The head of UTSI has usually reported to the Chancellor but that has not always worked well. It may be better for them to report to the dean of Tickle College of Engineering since most UTSI faculty hold positions in that college.

The new ORI head has been named and she will come to a Senate meeting at a later date.

B. Lyons asked how many students are at UTSI. The Provost did not have that information at hand. All students are graduate students.

UTIA Report (T. Cross)

Dr. Cross shared that Dr. Stokes has begun as Dean of the UT Extension. UTIA is working on how to transition back to work on campus and in classrooms. They will work with the university as a whole to make the transition safe both on and off campus. Dr. Beyl is organizing a by-laws review meeting for April or early May. Craig Pickett is joining as the Director of the Office of Diversity at UTIA. There are a number of legislative bills on food, forestry and 4H and Dr. Cross felt that his meetings in Nashville were positive all around.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

2021 Faculty Senate Elections Update (S. Spurgeon)

We will be using the same numbers (FTEs) this year as last year to determine the number of senators needed in each caucus. The Caucus Chairs have been working on this already and it should be a smooth process. For president-elect, please share the names of interested parties with S. Spurgeon. We are still taking nominations for Faculty Senate. There will be an email to Caucus Chairs to submit all names by a certain date. That has not happened yet. Architecture and Design are close to needing another senator. When will FTEs be reassessed? S. Spurgeon clarified that we don't have access to the current FTE numbers so no determination can be made. Hopefully they will be able to be processed by next year. B. Lyons stated that with next year's audit any changes in representation will be quickly adjusted. Every caucus should work to balance the numbers across the three-year terms so that not everyone rotates off at the same time. B. Lyons clarified that Caucus Chairs can create two-year terms for some seats to help balance the representation.

Update on Committee Progress by Chairs

T. Fridman presented for the Budget and Planning Committee. They met with the new Athletic Director and challenged him to bring more revenue to the university. They are doing a salary analysis around date of degree and date of hire and the impact of inflation. The university is doing better than expected in private donations.

B. Lyons reported on the Faculty Affairs Committee. They met with the ombudsman about changes to the *Handbook*. R. Caldwell has created a report on open access research and the committee will be looking on how this impacts evaluation of tenure and promotion.

M. Griffin reported on the Appeals Committee. It has been a quiet year but there is an active appeal they will be discussing soon. Next year may be a busier year for appeals arising from issues created by the pandemic. There are gray areas in the governing documents and they don't always line up. The committee hopes to look at these and make proposals for clarification in the next year.

M. Stanley of the Non-Tenure Track Issues Committee (with A. Langendorfer) have a resolution on expanding faculty choice on end of course evaluations and they are in support of the diversity initiatives in the hiring of NTTF. They are working with Diane Kelly on a number of issues concerning NTTF. There is a lot of work to be done but they are feeling optimistic. In April there will be an all NTTF meeting.

A. Mockus presented for the Teaching and Learning Council. They are documenting the procedure for giving awards in teaching and advising. A lot of time and effort goes in to the review of candidates for awards, more so than on the teaching/learning mission of the committee. We may need to rethink the mission/structure of the committee.

J. Anderson of the Diversity and Inclusion Committee shared that they have used the Chancellor's letter after the murder of George Floyd to guide their work and they have met with numerous personnel on how to achieve the goals therein. They have studied invisible labor during the double pandemic and were happy to co-sponsor the resolution last month on the use of end of course evaluations.

J. Jaekel reported on the Research Council. They hoped for a lively discussion at each of their meetings and have achieved that goal. They have worked with One Health, as well as on graduate student research, mentoring, communication structures within and across colleges, and on research indicators. They have been tracking data on the impact of covid on research at UT which will need to be tracked for several years. They are working with awards committees on research awards and SARIF funding.

D. Patterson reported on the UFC. President Boyd was out of the country and did not attend. The Martin Methodist transition is underway. The 20 tenured faculty members are being reviewed and SACS will do site visit. They discussed if there can be a normalization of Banner across campuses rather than choosing a new platform.

The Systems Relations Committee has not met yet this AY but will meet April 12. They will be looking at the resolution on presidential searches. This has been passed by every campus except the Health Sciences Center. There is also the issue around changing the titles of chancellors and presidents to standardize titles across the campuses but this has not passed yet. D. Patterson will give an update on OIT.

J. Williams shared that the Athletics Committee started the year looking at the health and safety of student athletes during the double pandemic. They looked at the impact of learning modalities and constant covid testing/awareness. They discussed the impact of the election and

protecting student rights and the financial impact of the pandemic. They want to continue highlighting the connection between faculty and athletes. They will be meeting next week to finalize new goals. The NIL (Name Image and Likeness) lawsuit won't be settled for some time. NCAA wants to make sure this is not a pay for play proposition. If this passes faculty will have to be ready for potential conflicts as some students may prioritize (or be obliged to prioritize) activities other than academics.

S. Madison of the Benefits and Professional Development Committee reported that they began looking at faculty concerns about potential illness and to connect faculty and staff to childcare options. This happened in the fall and is accessible via Handshake in which faculty and staff can be matched with students willing to work as childcare providers. They are looking at how stimulus money will affect leftover FSA funds. They are also working on developing faculty professional development on how to manage and help students having mental health crises, perhaps as a K@TE training module.

The president asks committee chairs to send 5-6 sentence summaries of their activities to S. Winston for inclusion in the full senate agenda later this month.

V. COMMITTEE REPORTS

Graduate Council Minutes of February 18, 2021

A. Broemmel summarized that the student code of conduct is being revamped by the legislature and the biggest issue is separating the consequences of academic misconduct from the grade appeal process. The idea now is that academic misconduct will be handled in the same way but the Undergraduate and Graduate Appeals Committees will handle the grade appeal process.

There is a wording change that all official transcripts must be provided for the graduate admissions process. There will be a clear option for requesting a waiver.

There are a large number of curriculum changes.

B. Ownley moved to accept, C. Kojima seconded. The minutes were accepted.

Undergraduate Council Minutes of February 23, 2021

C. Kojima summarized that the only voting item was from the general education committee that had approved more courses. There is a lot of activity in the sub-committees but no other proposals were brought forward. Committees will meet one more time and the entire council meets in April. VolCore is moving along well, no courses have been approved for CIS (Contemporary Issues and Solutions) at this point.

T. Fridman moved to approve, A. Langendorfer second. The minutes were accepted.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 4:55 p.m.