

Approved Minutes - Faculty Senate
October 7, 2016

Present: Alex, , Bartlett, Commissiong, Craig, DeButte, DeOtte, Dursun- Kilic, Hartin, Hindman, King, Klaehn, Lust, Meredith, Nam, Osei-Hwere, Ottoson, Revett, Seward, Shao, Tao, Stuntz

Absent: Blodgett, Lee

Guest: Lance Hadley for Marrietta Branson; Jean Stuntz for Brian Ingrassia,

- 1. Call to order – 12:15 by Meredith**
- 2. Minutes from last meeting unanimously approved**
- 3. Provost, Dr. Wade Shaffer**

a. *RFID attendance data*

Senators asked about expectations with the attendance system. Dr. Shaffer doesn't believe the administration has the right to ask faculty to take attendance but it is a great idea to take attendance because research shows it is an effective way for students to succeed. Dr. Shaffer stated that the system should be used to contact students at risk to find out why they are not attending classes. Admit-hub will help contact students to get them back on track. Students will get a text from chat-box notifying them they missed class. Talking to students at the end of the semester is too late to try to help struggling students. He said that it will be better to contact students early during their struggles to help them avoid failing rather than addressing issues at the end of the semester. Faculty should be receiving weekly attendance reports and have an over-ride ability to make corrections. Senators told Dr. Shaffer they don't receive attendance reports, Dr. Shaffer said he would follow-up on it. He said how faculty use attendance system is up to them but the administration will be appreciative if faculty use the attendance system consistently. Dr. Shaffer said students leaving the university leave for a variety of reasons but research shows that taking attendance is an important component to student success. He reminded senators that it is a lot easier to retain students then recruit them. He also understands that the system is a work in progress and has improved significantly and anticipates that it will get better and easy to use.

Commissiong asked how IT plans to address issues we are having with the system. His understanding from meeting with James Webb was faculty are not consistent in reporting issues. He asked senators to encourage faculty to report issues with the system because IT cannot resolve issues if faculty don't report them. Dr. Shaffer proposed that faculty report issues independently the first time, copy department heads the second time and copy the provost the third time on attendance issues.

Lust asked about how the data from the attendance system is. Dr. Shaffer said data is used by the administration and also goes to deans and department heads. The registrar's office is not getting or using the data. He mentioned that the plan is to integrate Civitas into blackboard so that advisors can have access during advising meetings which would facilitate effective conversations with students. Lust stated that the new system is much better but faculty are hesitant to trust the data because of past experiences with the system. Senators reported that most faculty maintain their own attendance systems which the provost said he appreciated. He emphasized that the most important thing is to ensure faculty are monitoring attendance. Blanton asked if all students including graduate students are expected to "swipe" in, Dr. Shaffer responded no stating the focus was on core curriculum classes.

b. *H1B visa process*

Dr. Shaffer informed the senate there is a change in how the process works as a result of significant increases in the number of international faculty across campus. The HR department worked on this along with a dedicated office at College Station. However, with the increases in international faculty it has become impossible for HR to continue the process the way it used to be, which is why the change was proposed requiring department heads to work with College Stations to process H1Bs. The burden shifts from HR to department heads but they are essentially doing the same thing they did before through HR. Dr. Shaffer stated that Dr. Terry in the College of Business has significant experience with the H1B process and says the form can be completed within an hour once department heads have gone through the process once or twice. He also told the senate HR is planning training for department heads to help ease the transition into the new role.

DeButte asked if the new process will impact green cards, Dr. Shaffer said he didn't know. Shao stated it didn't matter who completes the process for H1Bs, the most important thing is H1Bs need to be handled correctly and in a timely manner, she added. Dr. Shaffer said in the future the university may need to move to a model where there is a dedicated person responsible for helping international faculty immigration processes. Dursun-Kilic said she would like to see the person working on H1Bs be independent from the administration to avoid potential conflicts of interest. Lust asked if hiring decisions could be potentially impacted negatively if a department head was uncomfortable with the H1B/immigration processes. Shaffer agreed that could be a concern and something that the administration will monitor.

c. *Promotion for levels of instructor*

Dr. Shaffer addressed the senate's questions about establishing promotion levels for instructors and explained that there are faculty on fixed term appointments and are categorized differently from Instructors who are not on fixed term appointments. Fixed term instructors can apply to go up for promotion. Randy Ray in the Department of Communication was the first person to go through the process. Instructors who are not in fixed term appointments don't have an opportunity to go up for promotion. The difference is fixed term appointments are for instructors with unique talents and abilities hired to serve specific areas and purpose at the university. Fixed term appointees receive 3 – 5 year appointments verses 1 year annual appointments for instructors not on fixed term. Instructors can be moved into a fixed term appointment but must meet required specifications. Dr. Shaffer is open to a process for instructors to apply to move into fixed term appointments. Commissioning advocated for a system where instructors can move into fixed term appointments. Stuntz gave a background into how fixed term appointments came about and addressed the idea that the university was following national trends. Dr. Shaffer said fixed term appointments still have to go through P & T reviews and are reviewed based on what they were hired for. He also said he was open to a conversation about how to incentivize instructor positions. He added that it could be an option rather than a required process and added that having a system in place could motivate instructors to pursue promotion. Dr. Shaffer asked for a proposal with numbers and standards to take to dean's council and to the president as a starting point.

d. *Post tenure review*

Dr. Shaffer addressed the senate's questions about Post Tenure Review stating that there was no specific script or template for post tenure review and added that the process begins 6 years after the faculty member goes up for tenure. He explained that administrators classified as staff do not go through the process but those classified as faculty have to go through post tenure review. Associate professors going up for promotion to full professors on the post tenure review list will be removed from PTR process. DeOtte said both Dr. Shaffer and Dr. O'Brien worked closely with the faculty handbook committee to ensure the process was not burdensome. Dr. Shaffer would like to streamline the process and make it electronic at some point. Meredith proposed Shaffer an informational meeting similar to the P&T meeting to answer questions from people going up for post tenure review. The objective of the process is to keep the university in compliance not to weed out people we don't like, Dr. Shaffer added. He also said that faculty who get negative reviews two years in a row will be put on an improvement plan for 1 – 2 years after the review. A faculty member going through PTR might request a fixed term at the end of which he or she may leave the university. A failed PTR in two successive years results in an Improvement Plan for the faculty member. The IP can be in place for up to two years. If the faculty member passes after year one, PTR is complete and faculty member is good until the next review. If the faculty member does not pass PR in first year, he or she remains on PTR for a second year. Failure at that point is cause for dismissal from the university.

4. *Approve minutes from last meeting – approved unanimously.*

a. Welcome new senator Debra Blanton from Communication Disorders. She will be finishing Howard Wilson's remaining term.

b. Admit Hub steering group/committee - Lee Stitzel was nominated by Meredith and voted by the senate to serve.

c. *Shuttle bus issues update*

Meredith reported that a shuttle bus costs \$80,000 and the university is looking into getting an additional bus. He also explained to the senate that broken down buses can only be repaired in Amarillo and too expensive to fix on campus and leads to delays in getting them back.

d. *Parking issues update*

Meredith reported there is a sub-committee coming up with parking recommendations for next year. Meredith and DeButte met with Randy Rikel and Ken Leitch chair of committee and had a good conversation about the current parking system and the fact that legitimate needs are not being met. Parking committee representatives agreed there were issues and needs to be addressed and explained that an open parking system was not ideal for the campus. Meredith recommended using parking zone maps to issue parking according to zone numbers and added that faculty will have priority to purchase parking. Senators expressed concerns about continuing violations, Meredith will follow-up with the police chief about parking violations and enforcement issues. Campus is becoming more residential and pedestrian friendly which means parking will continue to move away from campus. Meredith and DeButte felt good about the meeting and added that Randy Rikel and Ken Leitch were looking into improving the system for faculty and staff. Lust asked how the tiered system for parking came about. The response was it was proposed and implemented by Dr. O'Brien. Shao recommended that residential students be required to move vehicles off campus at designated times and recommended the use of the FUB and parking at Kimbrough stadium. Senators were encouraged to send recommendations to the parking committee. New system should be better but not perfect. Committee plans to come up with preliminary recommendation and solicit feedback from faculty, staff, student, and administrators. Lot near Mary Moody and Fine Arts should be completed soon. Approximately 120 spots could be added to the new Agriculture Science Complex.

5. New Business

- a.** Faculty handbook revision call was sent out by Dr. Anderson. Dursan-Kilic asked if the senate could make some revisions to the handbook. Ambrose explained that if faculty want to make changes to the handbook that process needs to be initiated by the senate. DeOtte explained that the handbook committee answers to the President but three of four faculty are appointed by the Faculty Senate. The President appoints the three administrators and the six members appoint the fourth faculty member. Faculty interested in making changes should bring a proposal to senate. As president, Dr. O'Brien proposed hiring an editor to clean up language issues and confusions in the faculty handbook perhaps we can ask Dr. Wendler if this can still be done.
- b.** Lust asked if freshmen convocation has run its course especially since we have a new quality enhancement process. Commissioning will talk to the convocation committee and report back to the senate.

6. Announcements

- Post tenure review process will be carried out this year, names for committee members will be drawn randomly at the senate meeting on 11/18. Meredith and officers will figure out a system.
- Dean of the College of Business will attend the senate meeting on 10/21
- Dean of the College of Fine Arts and Humanities will attend Faculty Senate meeting on 11/4
- Common questions for the Deans
- What role do you believe the Faculty Senate should play in the shared governance of the university as it pertains to your college/independent school?
- In academic areas you oversee, what, if any, are some faculty issues you would like the Senate to consider?
- What is unique about the budgetary process and resource allocation for your college/independent school in comparison to others? What are your thoughts on course fees and where HEAF funds should go?
- Faculty Athletics Representative will attend Faculty Senate meeting on 11/18
- Faculty Development Leave application process open, applications due 12/1
- New Professionals Group (4 years experience or less in higher education), contact mwhitten@wtamu.edu, next meeting on 10/18 at 10AM in JBK 103

Meeting adjourned at 2:04pm.