

## Faculty Senate Minutes

August 27, 2021

Attended: Ambrose, Bell, Brooks, Brown, Butler, Clark, Crosman, Denton,  
Fairweather-Leitch, Farren, Gill, Hoffmann, Holland, Humpherys,  
Medlock, McCauley, Pinkham, Spencer, Tarpley, Tyrer, Whaley, Yarbrough

Absent:

Guest: Jeff Babb, Past President, Academic Senate

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The meeting was called to order at 12:16 by President Anne Medlock. Minutes of the April 29, 2021 meeting were reviewed.

- Motion to approve as corrected: Pinkham
- Second: Butler
- Motion passed

### CURRENT BUSINESS

Medlock welcome self-introductions of Senators.

Committee assignments were established as follows:

- Handbook Committee: Fairweather-Leitch, Ambrose, Holland, Brown, Bell, Brooks, McCauley
- Student-Faculty Committee on Academic Affairs – Whaley, Humphreys, Clark, Gill, Spencer, Crosman, Fairweather-Leitch
- Faculty Grievance Committee – Tyrer
- Parking - Hoffman

Committees were encouraged to convene, elect a chair, and establish a meeting schedule.

### OLD BUSINESS

#### Exam Proctoring and Privacy

A discussion ensued related to cost and restrictiveness of testing software; an incident of sexual harassment by a proctor from an outside company made it difficult for the student to report the issue. Both Respondus and Examity are being used with various success. (Butler, Clark, Farren, Humphreys, Pinkham)

- Motion to leave the issue of exam proctoring to the colleges: Humpherys
- Second: Holland
- Motion passed

## Covid Policies

Several Senators reported being notified by administration and by students. At least one student came to class after being notified, stating he didn't understand he was to isolate. Students don't seem to be reading email and those who are exposed but test negative are encouraged to go to class. It was noted that email is not the preferred method of communication for students and a suggestion made for the administration to consider text notifications. Medlock will bring the issue up when meeting with the Provost.

Additionally, there seems to be less clarity on the covid policies and response this semester; materials distributed before the beginning of the semester were vague. It was noted that testing can be done by appointment by registering. (Bell, Pinkham, Tyrer)

<https://tamus.curativeinc.com/welcome>

## Low-cost Course Materials and Open Educational Resources (OER)

It was noted that President Wendler promotes lowering costs by reducing or removing the costs of textbooks. Discussion ensued on making clear the distinction between OER and no cost/low-cost alternatives. The committee formed last year was interrupted in their work by the pandemic.

Fairweather-Leitch explained the difference between the two programs offering suggestions on lowering costs through expanded use of the library and its electronic and reserve services. She suggested that library services would be available to WT students as opposed to OER which is available to anyone.

A general discussion ensued on the definition of low-cost books with Senators noting the use of books from \$20 to \$50 as low cost. Fairweather-Leitch noted other institutions have considered \$50 to be low cost. It was noted that the legitimacy of some textbooks overrode the cost, especially in the sciences. Additionally, students don't have access to funds until days before the semester begins, limiting their options. A survey of students might prove to be value in assessing whether textbook costs are an issue that should be taken up by the Senate. If costs are low, textbook costs might be an additional marketing tool for recruitment. It was suggested that Senators on the Student-Faculty Committee on Academic Affairs members consult with the student committee members on this subject. (McCauley, Crossman, Pinkham, Butler, Clark, Humpherys)

Fairweather-Leitch requested the Low Cost/No Cost OED Committee be reconstituted with action items. The following **Action Items** were suggested:

- Survey students on the costs of texts
- Request positive stories of faculty sharing
- Promote the effort with direction to faculty (emails, video, successes)

- Collect videos of students discussing textbook costs and usefulness

#### Equity in Faculty Travel Funds across campus

Medlock reported that Dr. Terri has expressed concern about equity in travel funds across the university. Last year's committee was not able to get an accurate assessment of funding due to lack of travel. The committee was reconstituted with a charge of gathering information from departments on the amount of funding allotted to faculty. Grants, endowments, and other funding should not be included.

Travel Equity Committee: Farren (Chair), Tyrer, Pinkham, Hoffman, Butler, Yarbrough, Fairweather-Leitch

#### President Elect System

Medlock explained that for an easier transition from year-to-year, a new President will take over having served the previous year as Vice President/President Elect. This will allow better planning and a smoother transition. A university faculty-wide vote will be planned via Qualtrics as soon as the survey can be submitted to the Senate for approval. Butler will present a draft next meeting.

- Motion to adjourn: Pinkham
- Second: McCauley
- Meeting adjourned at 1:32 pm

Respectfully,  
Pat Tyrer