

## Faculty Senate Minutes

September 10, 2021

**Attended:** Ambrose, Bell, Brooks, Brown, Butler, Clark, Crosman, Denton, Fairweather-Leitch, Farren, Gill, Hoffmann, Medlock, McCauley, Pinkham, Ramos Salazar, Spencer, Tarpley, Tyrer, Whaley, Yarbrough  
**Absent:** Holland, Humpherys  
**Guest:** Neil Terry, Executive Vice President and Provost

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The meeting was called to order at 12:15 by President Anne Medlock. Minutes of the September 10, 2021 meeting were reviewed.

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

### CURRENT BUSINESS

#### Covid-19

Dr. Terry attended Faculty Senate to address issues surrounding Covid-19 beginning with a general discussion by Senators.

Issues include evidence of students not isolating and attending class having tested positive; low mask use, close confines in labs; students are not actively testing and isolating. Additional problems for students include those who don't have computer access when isolating. Campus concerns remain with slow testing and lack of specific cleaning protocols. Anecdotal evidence suggests that students may be testing privately and not adequately reporting infections. (Bell, Clark, Crosman, Denton, Medlock, Pinkham, Salazar, Tyrer).

Dr. Terry addressed the Senate sharing information from a recent system meeting. Currently infection rates are approximately 10% higher than previously with the Governor reaffirming the current policy which is less proactive than many would like. WT will continue to follow the state-wide guidelines but may include additional proactive steps by individual faculty. Dr. Terry encouraged faculty to monitor their own classes for size, infection levels, and personal tolerance and in collaboration with department heads and deans to decide on appropriate courses of action. Terry noted that he sends out notifications and tracks incidents and would not hesitate to alert administrators should it become prudent to do so. Although exact numbers are not available, currently athletes are being monitored in accordance with NCAA requirements and are showing a 25% vaccination rate. As a proxy for the general student body, this would indicate approximately the same vaccination rate of 25% across the university with most positive cases occurring among lower-division students in dormitories and among those attending university-wide events such as Buff Branding and New Student Orientation. Currently

we are seeing approximately 50-60 cases per week. Infections are disproportionately affecting freshman classes. Terry noted that vaccines have been offered at NSOs and Buff Branding and there were no takers.

Terry assured the Senators that cleaning of buildings is continuing and that should a room be identified as having had an infected individual, faculty can contact their department head for immediate cleaning of the space. Additionally, laptops were purchased for the use of students in isolation and any student needing a laptop should be referred to Lora Haasl.

Covid concerns can be addressed to [covid@wtamu.edu](mailto:covid@wtamu.edu); testing can be scheduled through: <https://tamus.curativeinc.com/welcome>

## **Curriculum Committee**

New members added to the University Curriculum committee are: Jason Yarbrough (ANS), Yafei Zhang (BUS), Bradley Behrmann (FAH), Lorna Strong (NHS)

## **OLD BUSINESS**

### **President-Elect System**

In order to confirm the president-elect system for the Faculty Senate, Butler presented an overview of the system to be sent to university faculty for comment:

A Vote to Permanently Adopt the President-Elect System in the Faculty Senate at West Texas A&M University

#### *Background*

During the 2020-21 school year the Faculty Senate at West Texas A&M University instituted the president-elect system on a trial basis. In this system, newly appointed and returning senators meet in May to nominate and vote for executive officers, including the senator president and vice president to represent them in the upcoming academic year. It is understood that the elected president would preside as president for the upcoming academic year, while the vice president would preside as president the following academic year (provided the vice president is nominated and elected as president during the officer election meeting the following May). There are advantages of the president-elect system for both the vice president and the senators of Faculty Senate. The vice president has one academic year to shadow the president and learn the roles and responsibilities of the president role. Senators in Faculty Senate the following school year benefit by having certainty in knowing the president has a sense of those responsibilities. Overall, this provides a more seamless transition for Faculty Senate from one academic year to the next.

As a faculty member of West Texas A&M University, it is important to solicit your thoughts on the permanent adoption of the president-elect system within Faculty Senate. Your vote will have an impact on the constructs of how Faculty Senate selects leadership going forward. Please note that if you agree that this system should be adopted, you are also agreeing for this change to be reflected with appropriate verbiage in the Faculty Senate Handbook.

- Motion for Senators to notify their constituents of the seven-day open period (beginning 9/13/21) for comments relating to the Faculty Senate's president-elect system: Pinkham
- Second: Bell
- Motion: Passed

### **Committee Chair Elections:**

University Handbook Committee – Fairweather-Leitch, Ambrose, Holland, Brown, Bell, **Brooks** (Chair), McCauley has not met

Joint Student/Faculty Committee on Academic Affairs – Whaley, Humphreys, **Clark** (Chair), Gill, Spencer, Crosman, Fairweather-Leitch has not met

Faculty Senate Representative to Wellness Council – Gene Farren

### **Proposed Change to Class Schedule**

Discussion tabled.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

#### **Piper Professor**

Part A of the nomination form will be completed by the President's Office and Part B is to be completed by the nominee. The comprehensive nominee's application packet is due by November 1<sup>st</sup> via the Academic Senate folders on WTClass. Senators will review the applications and forward recommendations to the President's Office by the November 19, 2021 deadline.

<https://comptroller.texas.gov/programs/education/msp/funding/programs/piperprofessors.php>

#### **Faculty Development Leave**

Applications for faculty development leave are due to each department's Faculty Senator by December 1, 2021. Applications are ranked and forwarded to the Provost in January 2022. Guidelines are available at:

- [https://www.wtamu.edu/webres/File/About/Administration/Rules/Procedure%2012%2099%2001%20W3AA\\_Faculty%20Development%20Leave%20-%2008%2011%2014\\_FINAL%20SIGNED.pdf](https://www.wtamu.edu/webres/File/About/Administration/Rules/Procedure%2012%2099%2001%20W3AA_Faculty%20Development%20Leave%20-%2008%2011%2014_FINAL%20SIGNED.pdf)

Application forms are available at:

- [https://wtamu0my.sharepoint.com/:b:/g/personal/amedlock\\_wtamu\\_edu/EUrFIncqYShHpsGWx8gS4-QB8ZszmqVkJP\\_zcR-adhle3rw?e=H0gzjj](https://wtamu0my.sharepoint.com/:b:/g/personal/amedlock_wtamu_edu/EUrFIncqYShHpsGWx8gS4-QB8ZszmqVkJP_zcR-adhle3rw?e=H0gzjj)
- <https://wtaccess.wtamu.edu/forms/>

### **Employee/Dependent Waiver Draft**

Discussion tabled.

- Motion to adjourn: Farren
- Second: Denton
- Meeting adjourned at 1:26 pm

Respectfully,  
Pat Tyrer