

Faculty Senate Minutes

March 25, 2022

Attended: Ambrose, Babb, Bell, Brooks, Brown, Butler, Clark, Correa, Crosman, Denton, Fairweather-Leitch, Farren, Gill, Holland, Humphreys, Issa, Manfredi, Medlock, McCauley, Pinkham, Salazar, Spencer, Tarpley, Tyrer, Whaley, Yarbrough

Absent: Hoffman

The meeting was called to order at 12:15 pm by President Anne Medlock.

Minutes of the March 11, 2022 meeting were approved.

- Motion to approve: Denton
- Second: Holland
- Motion passed.

CURRENT BUSINESS

Joint Student/Faculty Committee on Academic Affairs

No committee report. It was noted that an article from the *Prairie reported* “On March 7 in the Senate Chamber of the Jack B. Kelley Student Center, Bryan Garcia became the first Student Body President at West Texas A&M University to be impeached.” No further information is known at this time.

Championing Student Retention

Faculty Senate executive committee will meet with Staff Council executive committee for the second time on March 30th to continue the discussion on ways to improve students’ university experience. Input from students is sought and those Senators serving on the Joint Student/Faculty Committee on Academic Affairs agreed to stay after Senate to offer input. Any Senator with additional ideas should send them to Medlock via email. A suggestion was made to reinstate bus transportation to Walmart or United for students needing to find cheaper alternatives to on-campus goods. (Clark, Crossman, Medlock, Pinkham, Tyrer)

Handbook Committee

The committee presented their changes prior to the meeting and again during Senate for review. It has been confirmed by Wade Shaffer that updates go into effect in August. The committee responded to changes based on Dr. Terry’s initial discussion of sections that needed revision. The committee has created a list of further potential changes to be taken up by the new Senate in Fall 2022. Pinkham continues to work with Wade Shaffer on verbiage to ensure a majority of tenured faculty serve on Senate. (Brooks, Medlock)

- Motion to approve the committee's changes: Farren
- Second: Humphrey
- Motion passed

Outside Sources for Tenure and Promotions

Discussion of external reviews resumed from the March 11, 2022 Senate meeting. After much discussion concerning potential changes to include all faculty, it was suggested that the original request was for faculty in disciplines in which the faculty member was the sole expert in the field. Further changes would need to be made to the Faculty Handbook. It was confirmed that the Provost would require all faculty to follow the guidelines in the Faculty Handbook. To that end, additional verbiage would be provided to the Faculty Handbook Committee for revision. (Babb, Brooks, Clark, Holland, Humpherys, Medlock, Pinkham, Tyrer)

- Motion for Humpherys and Holland to write language addressing external reviewers: Humpherys
- Second: Holland
- Motion passed

Regents Professor

- Motion to Rank Gary Bingham first and submit his name to the Provost: Whaley
- Second: Clark
- Motion passed.

Magister Optimus

Medlock reminded Senators that applications are due by March 30, 2022 and will be voted on April 8, 2022.

University Committee elections

Senators were encouraged to submit nominees for committees to Medlock by April 8, 2022. The elections will take place April 22, 2022. Verification of the existence of the Freshman Convocation Committee will be completed by the election. Information on committees is available on WTAcess.

NEW BUSINESS

Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick Tenure statement

A recent public statement by Patrick included banning tenure and making the teaching of critical race theory a firing offence. It was noted that the President of UT Austin had issued a statement opposed to the Patrick announcement. Since the legislature is currently considering establishing a committee to discuss tenure and teaching practices, the Senate felt it necessary to seek a joint

statement from the Senate and Academic Affairs outlining the University and faculty commitment to intellectual freedom. A link to the UT, Austin statement was provided as an example. Medlock agreed to confer with Dr. Terry. (Babb, Bell, Clark, Holland Medlock, Pinkham, Tyrer)

- Motion (1) to create verbiage reinforcing support of intellectual freedom, and (2) to confer with Dr. Terry for support of such statement by the University administration: Holland
- Second: Tyrer
- Motion passed

Encouraging Mentorship

Drs. Wendler and Terry have recently discussed the importance of mentorship in regard to retention, noting that students who connect with just one faculty member are more likely to remain at the university. Examples of mentorship such as student checklists for tracking progress toward professionalism, first-generation student events, and one-on-one student faculty mentors was discussed as supporting retention. Other ideas to encourage mentorship should be emailed to Medlock.

New University Committee

Medlock introduced a new committee formed to revise the APS form and bring it more into alignment with T&P processes. The Faculty Senate Executive committee met to nominate twelve potential members to include tenure-track faculty who are past 3rd year review, tenured faculty, deans, and department heads. The committee will be reviewed and appointed by Dr. Terry and begin work in the next academic year. Medlock will chair. (Medlock, Pinkham, Tyrer)

Senate Elections

Medlock asked to be notified when colleges are holding their end-of-the-year meetings in order to hold elections for 2022-23. Terms are ending this year for Medlock, Clark, Farren, Gill, and Holland. Voluntary resignations from Bell and Tyrer. Although the requirement for majority tenured faculty members won't be in place until August, Medlock encouraged Senators to pursue tenured replacements where possible. In Fall 2023 the Faculty Senate will return to face-to-face meetings.

University Communication for Events

Faculty have noticed increased use of university facilities and request notification be more forthcoming when a department holds a large group of non-university visitors. Senators are requested to inform the Senate for better communication across the university. (Bell, Medlock)

Other New Business

There being no further business,

- Motion to Adjourn: Holland
- Second: Denton
- Motion: passed

The meeting was adjourned at 1:23 pm.

Respectfully Submitted by Pat Tyrer

DRAFT