

## **Faculty Senate Minutes**

October 7, 2022

**Attended:** Ambrose, Bill; Brooks, Mary Liz; Brown, Trisha; Correa, Priscella; Crosman, Erik; Denton, Kenneth; Ghosh, Nabarun; Issa, Roy; Leitch, Ken, Humpherys, Sean; Manfredi, Guglielmo; McCauley, Kelly; Pinkham, Ashley; Price, Blake; Ramos Salazar, Leslie; Reardon, Matt; Smith, Bob; Tarpley; Troy, Unnikrishnan, Vina; Meljac, Eric, Welch, Reed; Whaley, Brigitte; Yarbrough, Jason;

**Absent:** Hoffman, Eric; Williams, Leslie

**Guest(s):**

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The meeting was called to order at 12:15 by President Ashley Pinkham.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

Shawn Burns, Police Chief for the University Police Department (UPD), addressed the Senate about the alleged active shooter situation on September 28 in the JBK. The Faculty Senate wanted Burns to explain what happened, what the University learned from the situation, and how things would be different going forward. Burns said the communication was horrible. First, the UPD did not adequately communicate with the University community, so the only information people were getting was coming from social media. An emergency plan is in place in which information is sent to the University community, but the plan was not followed. Employees of the UPD did not meet expectations and did not perform their responsibilities the way they should have. If UPD had immediately communicated with the University community, much of the misinformation, confusion, and fear could have been avoided.

Another communication problem was between UPD and the Canyon Police Department (CPD) and the Randall County Sheriff's office. Because the CPD and the Sheriff's office were using a different radio frequency than the UPD, UPD was not receiving the information that the other two agencies were working with. As a result, these two outside agencies responded to an active shooter threat in the JBK, even though there was not a threat. UPD had more information than the other agencies had and knew that the threatening student was in Tulia and was in the process of being apprehended. Because the UPD was not aware of the information and perceived threat that CPD and the Sheriff's office were working with, they were surprised when they arrived at the JBK and saw both entities carrying rifles and prepared for an active shooter. This was not the fault of either outside agency; their response was textbook. Burns has met with both the CPD and the Sheriff's office, and they have rectified the communication problem between them and the UPD. The UPD is also working to ensure that communication with the University community is improved.

In response to Meljac's comments, Chief Burns said that the email to the University community explaining the situation was not intended to blame students and social media.

Humpherys and other senators complained about the lack of communication and the slowness of getting the word out. Burns reiterated that UPD knows what to do to communicate to the University community, but the plan was not followed. Several suggestions were made in how to better communicate to the University.

Burns said WT is moving away from Buff Alert to SafeZone. SafeZone is a more effective means of communication. Through SafeZone alerts come across via text, emails, and devices and communication tools across campus. SafeZone is also not limited to 140 characters like Buff Alert is. The challenge is to vet information on whether or not it poses a legitimate threat. The UPD should always err on the side of taking a risk seriously.

There were also questions about training meetings for departments and faculty. Burns welcomes opportunities to do training and is willing to come whenever and wherever a department would like.

Pinkham asked about what role students with guns should play in an active shooter situation. Burns said students with guns offer protection to a particular class. They are encouraged to stay in place and protect the room they are in.

Yarborough asked about locking doors in classrooms. Burns said there are many kinds of doors and locks in buildings across campus; some classrooms can be locked from the inside and some cannot. Although locked doors are ideal in an active shooter situation, having doors that are able to lock also conflicts with fire safety regulations.

Correa asked about placing Stop the Bleed kits on campus. Burns said that in the past there hasn't been the funding for them. Burns said the University should have Stop the Bleed kits and should encourage CRAZE training.

Smith commented that students have lost trust in the UPD. To restore trust he suggested that UPD hold town hall meetings to allow faculty, staff, and students to ask questions. Burns said 25 came to the one town hall meeting they had for students.

## **CURRENT BUSINESS**

Minutes to the 9/23 meeting were considered. A few corrections were noted.

Motion to approve: Yarborough

Second: Humpherys

*Faculty Handbook Committee:*

Pinkham asked Faculty Senate before the next meeting to look at the proposed revision of the Faculty Handbook regarding the library.

*Faculty Development Leave*

Dr. Terry reviewed the Faculty Development form that the Faculty Senate had approved. He suggested that it be tried as a pilot program this year and then included in the Faculty Handbook next year if everything works well. The deadline to submit the application this year is December 1.

**Open Discussion/Comments**

Pinkham said that all senators now have access to the Senate webpage.

Pinkham said that the Faculty Senate and Staff Council are co-sponsoring the Mental Health First Aid Training. The training will take place October 21 from 9:00 to 3:00.

Motion to Adjourn: Meljac

Second: Everyone

Meeting adjourned at 1:35

Respectfully,

Reed Welch