

## Faculty Senate Minutes

November 18, 2022

**Attended:** Ambrose, Bill; Brooks, Mary Liz; Correa, Priscella; Crosman, Erik; Denton, Kenneth; Ghosh, Nabarun; Issa, Roy; Leitch, Ken, Humpherys, Sean; 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:** Brown, Trisha; Manfredi, Guglielmo; Hoffman, Eric; Williams, Leslie

**Guest(s):**

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

### **CURRENT AND PENDING BUSINESS**

#### **Reports from Faculty Senate Committees**

*Faculty Handbook Committee:*

There was nothing new to report.

*Joint Student-Faculty Committee on Academic Affairs:*

Crosman said that the committee had met with their student senate counterparts twice and have established a good relationship with them. The students appreciate the support of the faculty senate. The committee is working together on meal plans, OER, and the student medical situation. Crosman said that students are concerned about not having more options with the meal plans, the quality of food, and not being able to share their meal plans with other students. Students support the OER effort and of incentivizing faculty to adopt OER. The biggest issue with student medical is with mental health. They also don't like that the Student Success Coordinator position was eliminated; they believe this position is important and want the position revived. The committee is looking into what students at other universities are doing to have their voices heard.

*Ad-hoc Travel Committee:* Denton provided a summary of the draft the committee is working on. Travel is an important component for tenure and promotion at the University. There are between 4 and 24 mentions of travel in the tenure and promotion standards across colleges, and almost all of the colleges mention travel in all three categories evaluated for tenure and promotion. The amount that colleges and departments provide faculty for travel ranges from

\$200 to \$5,000. Denton said there is no correlation between requirements/expectations of travel for tenure and promotion and the amount of funding that is provided.

### **Update on OER / Open-access materials**

Pinkham reported on a meeting she had with Dr. Wendler on Wednesday. Dr. Wendler wants to eliminate textbooks at WT and for faculty to use primary material in their place. Pinkham expressed concern to Dr. Wendler that faculty are hard pressed to have the time to find and review appropriate primary material for each of their classes and that other universities provide financial support during the summer for faculty to develop such material. Dr. Wendler said that faculty could be compensated for doing this. Pinkham said she would send a survey to faculty senators on the compensation they think is appropriate for developing OER materials.

A number of senators pointed out various issues and problems with eliminating textbooks. For some classes it doesn't seem possible to jettison textbooks and a question was raised on how this might affect accreditation for some programs. It is unclear the incentive for faculty to create OER resources if it negatively affects their ability to do research and get tenure and promotion. This also seems to mark a shift by the University to deemphasize research and contradicts the goals in WT 125 of making WT a regional research institution. Faculty can't spend months gathering material or developing OER material for each of their classes and keep everything updated while also maintaining the same research and publishing expectations. Another question was what will happen after Dr. Wendler retires and a new president comes in who has a different emphasis and wants faculty to focus on research. Primary sources such as journal articles are also well beyond the capabilities of freshman and sophomore level students (and many junior and senior level students as well), and faculty fear this will result in more students having a difficult time with the material, failing their classes, and ultimately dropping out of the University. The feedback in some departments is that students want books.

Pinkham brought up that Dr. Wendler also said that he would like to replace reading with videos. Ideally the videos would be done by faculty from other universities and then WT faculty would be able to discuss the videos with their students. This also led to a number of critical remarks from senators. It seems WT faculty are not qualified to teach and thus need videos produced by faculty from other universities, but yet are qualified enough to guide students in their use of primary sources in introductory courses. There was concern that moving away from reading would lead to WT not preparing students for graduate school and careers. Dr. Wendler's efforts to insert himself into the classroom shows the lack of respect he has for faculty. Senators are also confused by the differing messages that Dr. Wendler provides at various times.

Meeting adjourned at 1:25

Respectfully,

Reed Welch