

Faculty Senate Minutes

September 24, 2021

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

The meeting was called to order at 12:15 by President Anne Medlock. Minutes of the September 10, 2021, meeting were reviewed and corrected (Bell, Ramos Salazar).

- Motion to approve as corrected: Farren
- Second: Bell
- Motion passed

CURRENT BUSINESS

President-Elect System

Several issues were brought to the attention of Senators by their constituents concerning the president-elect system including 1) expiring terms, 2) no-vote by new Senators, 3) nature of position guarantees the next president, 4) only the president-elect and secretary would be elected each year, 5) possibility the president-elect could not serve when the new Senate convenes. No objections to the actual process were brought forth.

Edits to the original document were made based on Senate recommendations resulting in the following document phrasing:

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 the president-elect and the secretary to represent them in the upcoming academic year. It is understood that the elected president-elect would preside as president the following academic year. There are advantages of the president-elect system for both the president-elect and the senators of Faculty Senate. The president-elect 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. (Butler, Clark, Crossman, Denton, Farren, Medlock, Pinkham, Tyrer)

- Motion to accept edits to verbiage and send to Senators to forward to their constituents for a simple majority vote (yes or no) with a deadline of 10/4/21: Pinkham
- Second: Ramos Salazar
- Motion passed.

Butler to email the corrected Qualtrics survey to faculty for distribution.

Committee Reports:

University Handbook Committee

Brooks reported the committee has met and is committed to reading the handbook and making any changes approved by the Senate. The following changes are to be made:

- Revision to include: Executive Council of the Academic Senate must be tenured faculty members.
- President-elect verbiage will be included once approved by the voting faculty.

Joint Student/Faculty Committee on Academic Affairs

Clark reported the committee has not yet met, but she has met with the Student Committee President Paige Holbrooks who reports that students are concerned about the changes, specifically losing meeting times on the new class schedule and losing lunch times and have created a student survey to assess students' reactions to the schedule change and how many organizations might be harmed by the change; a portion was concerned with students agreeing to take 8:00 am classes in lieu of the proposed changes. Paige Holbrooks has met with the Provost and was told it was not in students' purview to change the class times. Student concerns are 1) internships that begin at 1:00 pm; 2) lack of lunch time; 3) problems for working students. Students expressed an interest in more 8:00 am classes in lieu of mid-day classes. The student president also suggested the student committee is interested in discussing textbooks and costs.

A general discussion ensued with Senators mentioning additional issues of concern 1) athletes training times, 2) lack of university-sponsored meeting time, 3) employed students. (Clark, Farren, McCauley, Medlock, Pinkham, Ramos Salazar) Medlock presented a revised schedule under consideration by the Deans' Council:

Possible Revision MW and TTh time slots:

- 8:00 a.m. to 9:15 a.m.
- 9:30 a.m. to 10:45 a.m.
- 11:00 a.m. to 12:15 p.m.
- **12:45 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.**
- Student Organization Meeting time – 2:00 to 3:00 p.m.
- 3:00 p.m. to 4:15 p.m.

Proposed Friday only time slots (full classes, does not include labs):

- 8:00 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.
- 9:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. (not the normal time, but might be an option as 9 is preferred to 8, and we need Friday classes)
- 11:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

Clark will arrange for the joint committee to meet and discuss the issues brought forth by both faculty and students.

Employee/Dependent Waiver Draft

Medlock explained that the Provost is asking for Senate support in order to increase student numbers and to offer employees and dependents opportunities to enroll in classes.

- Motion for the Faculty Senate to support Employee/Dependent Waivers: Farren
- Second: Bell
- Motion: Passed

NEW BUSINESS

Executive Council of Academic Senate

After a short discussion, it was suggested that the Executive Council of the Academic Senate should be tenured faculty members.

- Motion to require those elected to the Executive Council of Faculty Senate be tenured faculty members: Clark
- Second: Farren
- Motion: Passed

Faculty Ombud's Officer

Medlock reminded Senators that the Senate must forward three names to the President and Provost for the next Ombud's Officer. The handbook lists the following characteristics for this position:

- 3.3 Characteristics of nominees shall include:
 - 3.3.1 Tenured faculty member
 - 3.3.2 Knowledge of university rules, procedures, and resources
 - 3.3.3 Extensive cross-campus experience
 - 3.3.4 Strong communication skills
 - 3.3.5 Ability to be objective and neutral
 - 3.3.6 Strong conflict resolution skills

3.3.7 Commitment to promote ethical conduct in the performance of the Faculty Ombuds officer role

3.3.8 Understanding of cross-cultural values and commitment to diversity

Senators were asked to bring a potential nominee to the October 8th meeting.

Hiring Graders and Student Workers

The issue of delayed hiring processes was discussed with concerns raised regarding the delay in weeks of processing paperwork, unavailable staff to process hires due to changes in personnel, changes to the software system used to hire, and delayed access to WTClass. Students were previously hired in late summer for fall, but that seems to be changed. Additionally part-time and temporary faculty and student hires required a restart of paperwork, waivers, etc. Since the processes required the input of IT, the Provost's office, and Human Resources delays have been increased for this academic hiring period. Medlock agreed to follow up on the process with Human Resources to ascertain whether this is a change in policy/procedure or a temporary delay in the processing. (Butler, Clark, Farren, Medlock, Pinkham, Tarpley)

- Motion to adjourn: Farren
- Second: Butler
- Meeting adjourned at 1:30 pm

Respectfully,
Pat Tyrer