

Faculty Senate Minutes

Friday, October 21, 2022

12:15 PM – 1:30 PM

Eternal Flame Room

Attended: Brooks, Mary Liz; Brown, Trisha; Correa, Priscella; Crosman, Erik; Denton, Kenneth; Ghosh, Nabarun; Roy, Issa; Leitch, Ken; Manfredi, Guiligliemo; McCauley, Kelly; Price, Blake; Spencer, Brian; Tarpley, Troy; Pinkham, Ashley; Hoffmann, Eric; Ramos Salazar, Leslie; Yarborough, Jason; Williams, Lesilia, Vinu, Humpherys, Reardon, Matt

Absent: Whaley, Bridgette; Meljac, Eric; Ambrose, Bill

Guest(s):

The meeting was called to order at 12:17 by President Ashley Pinkham. *Minutes of the 10/7/2022 meeting were considered.*

- *Motion to approve: Humpherys, COB*
- *Second: Yarbrough, ANS*
- *Motion passed*

CURRENT BUSINESS

Reports from Faculty Senate committees

- **Handbook Committee**

Yarbrough and Bob Smith discuss the proposed revisions that the committee is working on relating to the library. Also, proposed revisions as to how incompletes are handles were discussed. Yarbrough says he will put together a proposed handbook committee so that we can vote on it online before the November 1st deadline, since we will not meet again in time to vote in-person.

Motion to submit the proposed changes to the handbook Committee: Kelly McCauley, COB

Second: Kenneth Denton, ESS

Motion passes unanimously

- **Joint Student-Faculty Committee on Academic Affairs**

Erik Crosman says that he found common ground with the student group on working on the issue of how leftover money is handled on meal plan cards is handled, as well as the lack of flexibility of such plans and whether or not funds can be transferred between individuals and other accounts, including whether or not the leftover funds can be donated. Blake Price questions whether or not buying a meal plan is something that students should be forced to do. Brian Spencer reemphasizes this point in the context of more flexible meal plans potentially being a place where overall student costs can be brought down.

- **Ad-hoc travel committee**

Kenneth mentions that there are no major updates for this committee, as they are still gathering data. He suggests that at the end of the day, the committee may be able to formulate some recommendations based on this data, or at least elicit a response administration.

Reminders

- **Piper Professorship Applications**

President Pinkham reminded everybody to upload their applications so that we could rank-order them and forward them to President Wendler.

- **Faculty Development Leave Applications**

President Pinkham reminded us that faculty members have December 1st to submit their applications, and then we will rank-order the candidates and forward our recommendations long to President Wendler.

WT Football game

President Pinkham reminded us to RSVP for the WT Football game.

NEW BUSINESS

- **Town Hall on Campus Safety**

President Pinkham floated the idea of having a Town Hall concerning Campus Safety in light of recent events on campus. The hope is to have President Wendler and UPD (among others) present to discuss what actions are being taken to improve campus safety. The new target date is sometime during the week of Halloween.

- **OER/open-access materials**

The fact that President Wendler has discussed OER materials with various colleges and the contentious nature of these discussions was brought up. Ken Leitch worries that OER may not be of high quality and raises concerns that materials that are not peer reviewed may not maintain the standards necessary for classroom use. Issa mentions that he has been told by the bookstore that

he has not been allowed to order older versions of the same textbook. Yarbrough asks whether the costs of textbooks is actually significant in the first place. Pinkham suggests that students are provided with tablets so that they could access more affordable e-book versions of the textbooks. She raises concerns that “textbook free” is interpreted as “reading free”. The question was raised as to whether the push to OER materials was “performative”, opposed to being something that will truly help more than it hurts. Leslie Williams says we should keep in mind environmental considerations, and we could possibly raise that point in recommending tablets. Bob Smith mentions that for some of the large introductory courses, there are a limited amount of copies of the textbook available on reserve at the library. He mentions that there are studies which suggest that OER may improve retention. He also mentions that there are people currently working at the library that are willing and able to help faculty locate OER materials. Kelly McCauley mentions that that in many cases, textbooks come with extra packages, such as problem sets and test questions which are tailored to that textbook which likely won’t be found with OER materials. Yarbrough mentions that lowering textbook costs seems like a reasonable suggestion, but going totally free would be problematic because the quality of available textbook materials which are free is low. Humpherys doesn’t feel like the President’s message was confrontational, suggesting that Dr. Wendler’s message was simply the vision of a leader trying to convince the rest of us of his vision. Dr. Humpherys suggests that we should be open to continual improvement on the point of reduction of costs in terms of textbooks. Bob Smith proposes that we put together our list of concerns so that we can present these concerns with library staff.

OPEN DISCUSSION/COMMENTS

Kenneth (education) mentions that some faculty have had difficulty with their insurance and dental insurance. He mentions that the cost has gradually gone up, and that merit pay has not kept up with the increase in cost of insurance. Pinkham encourages everybody to reach out to their colleagues and see if this is a common concern among faculty.

- *Motion to adjourn: Kenneth Denton, ESS*
- *Second: Eric Hoffmann, COB*
- *Meeting adjourned at: 1:35*

Respectfully,

Eric Hoffmann