

Faculty Senate Minutes

August 31, 2018

Senators Present: Babb, Bartlett, Burnett, Castillo, Clewett, Clifton, Davis, Clifton, Franken, Garcia, Ingrassia, Karaganis, King, Kwan, Leitch, Lewis, Li, Macdonald, Meljac, Revett, Seth, Seward, Wang, Williams, and Woodyard.

Ad-hoc member present: Ambrose (Past-president)

Senators Absent: None

Substitutes: None

Call to Order: Davis called the meeting to order at 12:17 pm in the Eternal Flame Room of the JBK.

Approval of Minutes: Meljac made a motion to approve the Faculty Senate minutes of May 3, 2018; Williams seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Introductions and Welcome – Davis welcomed senators. Each senator then introduced him/herself along with department name.

Current and Pending (Old) Business

Senate Vacancies

Davis announced that Louise Wade from the Department of Nursing has stepped down from the Senate.

At the end of the Spring 2018 term College of Education and Social Sciences (ESS) had three vacancies. These three vacancies were filled by electronic election earlier this week. The new senators are:

Dr. Elizabeth Garcia (Education)

Dr. Mun Yee Kwan (Psychology and Social Work)

Dr. Yvette Castillo (At-large Representative)

Davis accidentally listed Dr. Castillo's department on the agenda, instead of her correct status as an at-large representative from ESS. This note corrects the agenda.

This leaves two vacancies from the College of Nursing and Health Sciences (NHS). Dean Nelson is working on both vacancies.

Pending (Old) Business

IT Committee (2017-18 Faculty Senate) – Babb, committee chair, said that the IT Committee made sense in the Fall of 2017 due to the introduction of two-factor authorization. By the Spring of 2018 the two-factor was a non-issue. The IT Committee then primarily conveyed concerns from Faculty Senate. Babb felt that concerns are better addressed by having CIO James Webb come visit and answer Senator's questions.

Babb made a motion to disband the IT Committee and instead invite CIO Webb to address IT concerns; King seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Merit raise

Davis received questions from a faculty member about the last capital improvement fund-raising campaign having some funds earmarked for merit raises. The faculty member asked where the money went. Another senator agreed that his department was under the impression that part of the money raised was for faculty development and merit raises.

In last year's Faculty Senate a committee was formed to investigate how merit raises were awarded for both faculty and administration. The committee asked for specific data but never received any of the requested data.

The discussion moved to the announcement of no merit raises this year. Some senators heard that the lack of raises was due to a lack of enrollment increases. President Wendler has previously announced his intention to flatline freshman enrollment. If merit raises are tied to enrollment, flatlining freshman enrollment could have long-term consequences. Davis will discuss with President Wendler at next meeting.

Contract letters are getting later and later. One senator did not receive until school started.

Instructor Tenure and promotion

In the 2017-18 Faculty Senate a resolution was passed on instructor tenure and promotion. Davis asked if anyone had a copy of the resolution so Provost Shaffer could take it to Dean's Council. Two of the committee members that drafted the resolution, Ingrassia and Seward, said they had copies and would get them to Davis.

Alumni Evaluations

For a while now Jarvis Hampton has complained that the alumni evaluations cost too much and nobody uses them. The 2017-18 Faculty Senate felt that the alumni evaluations were valuable and suggested a revised procedure to lower costs (i.e., email instead of snail mail). Mr. Hampton's office has recently undergone some structural changes, which could have an impact on who does the alumni evaluations.

Babb made a motion that he follow up with Mr. Hampton on the alumni evaluations. Subsequently Babb withdrew the first motion and made a second motion to form a committee called the Alumni Evaluation's Committee; King seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

The purpose of the committee is to follow up with Mr. Hampton and explore ways to make the alumni evaluation process more efficient. The following senators volunteered for the committee:

Lewis, Clewett, Leitch, and Ingrassia

New Business

Electronic Elections

Davis and Ambrose noted that sometimes it is necessary to have electronic elections (i.e., someone has to step down in the middle of the semester). Both stressed their preference for in-person elections as written in the bylaws. Recently a college's elections were done electronically because the dean wouldn't call a meeting to hold elections in person.

Since electronic election of senators is sometimes necessary, should the bylaws include procedures for electronic elections?

Senators were concerned that electronic elections threatened transparency and might become the norm. Also opportunities might exist for deans to manipulate the election of senators. Senators felt that the bylaws should stress that electronic elections only be held in emergency situations. A suggestion was made that the Provost would have to approve using the electronic election procedures to keep them from becoming the norm.

Macdonald made a motion to form a committee to draft bylaws for electronic elections; Meljac seconded. The motion passed with one senator abstaining. The following senators volunteered for the committee:

Leitch, Davis and Burnett

Cost of Living Increase

A faculty member asked Davis about the possibility of cost of living increases. In the 2017-18 Senate, President Wendler told us the A&M System does not allow cost-of-living-adjustments.

President Wendler Musings (PWM)

“Common” Common Core – When Davis talked to President Wendler recently, he mentioned the desire to streamline the Common Core to make it more “Common”. (Note: As president of Faculty Senate Davis has regular meetings with President Wendler.)

Davis thought we might need to take an interest in this streamlining. Many senators felt we needed to investigate further; we need to know what he is thinking in more depth. A senator noted that some of the core requirements are from the A&M System and the TX Legislature.

Babb suggested that we invite Dean Mallard, Chair of Core Curriculum Committee, since changes originate there. At some time during the semester, Davis plans to invite President Wendler and Provost Shaffer also.

The Faculty Senate meeting adjourned at 1:25 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon Burnett, Secretary

Minutes amended and approved at September 14, 2018 Faculty Senate meeting.