

Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes

April 27, 2022

1:30-3:30pm

UC 243 (zoom option available)

Invitees: Dr. Emily Cutrer, Dr. Melinda Arnold, Dr. Angie Parmentier-Sikorski, Dr. Corrine Hinton, Dr. Kevin Williams, Dr. Rebeca Cooper, Dr. Doug Julien, Dr. Kelly Cordray, Dr. Sheila Moore, Dr. Drew Morton, Dr. Michael Perri, Dr. Sean Bailey, Dr. Vikram Bhaduria, Dr. Nelson Irizarry, Dr. Brian Matthews, Dr. Faycal Znidi, Ms. Jana Boatright

Attendees: Dr. Emily Cutrer, Dr. Melinda Arnold, Dr. Angie Parmentier-Sikorski, Dr. Corrine Hinton, Dr. Rebeca Cooper, Dr. Doug Julien, Dr. Kelly Cordray, Dr. Drew Morton, Dr. Michael Perri, Dr. Sean Bailey, Dr. Vikram Bhaduria, Dr. Nelson Irizarry, Dr. Brian Matthews, Dr. Faycal Znidi,

Absent: Dr. Sheila Moore

Guests: Dr. Brian Billings, Dr. Jaime Cantrell, Dr. W.Y. Chan, Dr. Larry Davis, Dr. Del Doughty, Dr. Kathy Lease, Dr. Tom Jordan, Dr. Kimberly Murray, Dr. Lisa Myers, Dr. Craig Nakashian, Mrs. Holly Scroggins, Dr. Mary Beth Womack, Dr. Trisha Ray, Dr. Tom Wagy

Meeting called to order at 1:34 pm

President's Report

- Dr. Cutrer
 - Reminded Senate of TAMUT birthday celebration on Friday, April 27th, from 6pm-9pm

Provost and VPAA's Report

- Dr. Arnold
 - Concedes time

Faculty Welfare Discussion

- Drew begins discussion with recap of the process and goals of the Faculty Welfare Committee.

Faculty Senate President Sits on President's Advisory Council (PAC)

- Dr. Cutrer
 - PAC is not a decision-making body but a group of direct reports who advise the President related to "high level" issues
 - Spoke with existing PAC about including the Faculty Senate president and they would prefer to "find a way to communicate differently" so as to "not leave anyone out"
 - Suggests an alternative group, a Leadership Council of sorts, instead of PAC as a more appropriate place for these discussions
 - Does not want to waste FS President's time sitting in a useless meeting
 - Wants to maintain a private meeting space with her direct reports (sometimes confidential issues are being discussed)
- Dr. Arnold
 - States the need to communicate better

- Suggests a split meeting structure
- Faculty Responses/Questions
 - Shouldn't the faculty decide what would be a waste of time?
 - Overcommunicating is essential. PAC may be a waste of time but essential in a trust-building exercise
 - Trust and communication have been an issue for a long time
 - Faculty Senate president might have something to add to the conversation (not just take something away from it)
 - Communications do not always filter down from VPAA to Deans to Department Chairs and then to Faculty
 - Could we try it first to see if it works before we create a whole new structure, at the very least, at an exercise toward trust building?
 - The reasons Dr. Cutrer has provided for keeping the Faculty Senate President off PAC do not seem to provide ample reasoning enough.

Transition Taskforces back to Senate

- Dr. Arnold
 - Does not understand the concern about the task forces, as outcomes are presented to Faculty Senate and task force bodies include representatives from Faculty Senate
 - Is it not ok for me to pull faculty together to work through an issue?
 - Is there not trust in the Provost to pick members of committees from among the faculty?
- Faculty Responses/Questions
 - Engage Faculty Senate at the beginning/origin point of a concern, problem, or opportunity not at the middle or end
 - Summer task force was not kept "open" to the faculty public at the request of the chair; this may not have occurred with Senate oversight
 - Faculty want a truly collaborative process

Untether Faculty Raises from Enrollment

- Dr. Cutrer
 - When we say "enrollment," we ought to say "revenue" (state formula funding + tuition from students)
 - Across the system, merit raises are always included with the "contingent upon enrollment" language
 - Cannot offer raises if the revenue does not support it unless we are willing to cut back on expenses or cut personnel
 - TAMUT got approval for higher merit raise percentages than other system institutions
- Faculty Responses/Questions
 - These rules/guidelines do not seem to apply when it comes to reclassifying staff/administrative positions resulting in large raises
 - These rules/guidelines do not seem to apply when making initial hiring or salary decisions whereby we take on new personnel or in salary determinations for new hires that do not match current comparable personnel

- For example, the Dean of the Library posting is offering substantially more for an unnecessary elevation from the previous University Librarian position. Why wasn't that additional money (about \$30,000) divided amongst current library personnel for raises/COLA?
- Dr. Cutrer/Dr. Arnold
 - In many cases, the person reclassified has been working in that role "for months"
 - When we reclassify, we must adjust salary to match
 - Reclassifications in the staff divisions are "not as transparent as, perhaps, they might be"
 - In the case of the Dean of the Library, the extra salary would not have provided enough for raises/COLA to be of value, so the choice was made to invest in a Dean position instead
- Faculty Responses/Questions
 - If current faculty want to negotiate their salaries, there does not seem to be an opportunity for that, but new faculty can come in making more. Is this handled through the Deans?
- Dr. Arnold
 - Faculty salary negotiations happen at the provost level

Address Salary Disparities

- Dr. Arnold
 - As promised to Senate, we have purchased the newest CUPA data (in March)
 - Working with Charlotte (HR) over the summer to analyze that data along with System and state salary data
 - Will have report to faculty this fall, and, assuming there are disparities to remedy, we may need to strategically respond to them as we will not be able to take care of all of them in a single budget year
 - TAMUT has not previously participated in providing CUPA data before, but it will now
- Dr. Cutrer
 - Equity adjustments to salaries need to be officially requested to and approved by the Board of Regents
 - TAMUT will put in for an equity adjustment allotment for this budget year from the BoR
- Faculty Responses/Questions
 - Other than the single budget personnel on our campus, is there a system or process in place to review the operations part of the budget in order to examine areas of need?
- Dr. Cutrer
 - A few years ago, we conducted a base budget review to get at similar aims: to see what people are spending their money on and identifying areas of need
 - We have decentralized the budget to make VPs more accountable
 - One department spent \$25,000 on swag because they didn't want to return their unspent money (seeing it as "theirs")
 - We need to work toward greater transparency in both allocations and expenses
- Dr. Arnold

- Academic Affairs, as a division, is going to attempt to do just that
- Faculty Responses
 - Budget management and sharing expenses/needs is the ticket to a seat at the table of fiscal representation at the university
 - Faculty should be invited into that conversation because we might be of help
 - Another example of a culture of mistrust at the university is the “use it before you lose it” because we don’t know where the unspent money is going or how they’re going to use it

Parting Thoughts

- Dr. Cutrer/Dr. Arnold
 - Can we do this [having conversations] more often, so we can generate common ground and move forward?
- Faculty Response
 - We intend to continue revisiting these items and these discussions next year

Approval of Minutes from 03/30/2022

- Minutes approved as presented

Committee Reports

- Faculty Welfare
- Budget
 - Corrine will ask to have full access to CUPA data
 - Vikram stated that the data could be useful for research purposes. Will ask Dr. Arnold.
- FRED
 - Dr. Cantrell’s proposal was approved
 - Will have one last slate of FRED proposals
- Rules and Procedures
 - Had meeting on Tuesday about the workload document with Dr. Arnold
 - An editable form is needed
- Ed Tech
 - No report
- Curriculum Committee
 - Discussion consisted of information talked about during the meeting
 - BSW vote passed by 5-4-1
- Academic Standards
 - No report
- Ad Hoc Committee Reports
 - DEI
 - No report
 - OTAFA
 - No report

Other Business

- No new business

Meeting adjourned at 3:30 pm