

Faculty Senate Business Meeting

January 29, 2024

Bell Hall 260

Members Present:

Michael Allen, Megan Atkinson, Stephen Canfield, Scott Christen, Kris Craven, Mark Creter, April Crockett, Andrew Donadio, Dennis Fennewald, Mary Lou Fornehed, Syed Hasan, Samantha Hutson, Rene Grimes for Krystal Kennedy, Matthew Langford, Richard Le Borne, Mark Loftis, Jeannette Luna, Jennifer Mabry, Twanelle Majors, Ann Manginelli, Holly Mills, Linda Null, Brian O'Connor, Mustafa Rajabali, Richard Rand, Lee Ann Shipley, Troy Smith, Amber Spears, Kyle Turner, Hannah Upole, Brenda Wilson, Kimberly Winkle

Members Absent:

Sean Alley, Teddy Burch, Melissa Comer, Yun Ding, Steve Frye, Christy Killman, Jane Liu, Lori Maxwell, Wendy Mullen, Michael Nattrass, Joseph Ojo, Hyewon Park, Christopher Reames, Steven Seiler, Scott Smith, Sandi Smith-Andrews, Leslie Suters, Lenly Weathers

Guests Present:

John Liu, Troy Perdue

Call to Order

Senate President Allen called the meeting to order at 3:36 p.m.

1. Approval of Agenda

Senator Fornehed made a motion to approve the agenda. Senator Christen seconded. The motion carried.

2. Approval of Minutes and Notes from Previous Meetings

a.) October 23, 2023 Business Meeting Minutes

Senator Donadio made a motion to approve the minutes. Senator Rajabali seconded. The motion carried.

b.) October 30, 2023 Meeting with the President Notes

Senator Donadio made a motion to approve the notes. Senator Rajabali seconded. The motion carried.

c.) November 20, 2023 Business Meeting Minutes

Senator Troy Smith made a motion to approve the minutes. Senator Langford seconded. The motion carried.

d.) November 27, 2023 Meeting with the President Notes

Senator Rajabali made a motion to approve the notes. Senator Troy Smith seconded. The motion carried.

3. Discussion on antisemitism with University Legal Counsel Troy Perdue

Counsel Perdue gave many examples of quotes and speeches from university faculty and administrators across the country after the Israel/Palestine conflict began on October 7, 2023; he

gave senators some guiding questions and philosophy to help them discern whether their speech could be misinterpreted. He explained this is a guiding principle, but any formal complaints will be held up against existing laws and policy. Any faculty with concerns or in need of more in-depth advice should contact Troy Perdue.

4. Discussion of the future of the Research and Economic Development Office with Vice President Dr. John Liu

Dr. Liu gave a historical overview of the office and its current status. He stated that research is picking up and that there is three times more external funding than a few years ago. The goal is to grow research by not only increasing the amount but also the impact, and the goal in the office is to be more responsive to the needs of researchers. The strategies Dr. Liu is employing include increasing research faculty, increasing and sustaining the length and volume of grants, increasing collaborations to generate complementary expertise, and (most urgently) breaking down barriers and limiting bureaucracy by increasing staff and using resources more effectively. The ultimate goal is to be more service-oriented and more responsive.

5. Report from the Faculty Senate President

Senate President Allen reported on the following:

- Construction on campus has only just begun.
- Tech will be using Oracle instead of Banner for some of the HR management. The ability to administer payroll twice monthly is an option, and employees can give their opinion about this in a survey coming soon. This option will not impact HR staff but will allow some who traditionally have had to wait longer for their first paycheck (adjunct) to receive it in a timelier manner. Senators have questions about how this will impact leave reports and processes.
- The President's Cabinet discussed tenure and performance reviews and the need for an ombudsman office. This office would serve under the Board of Trustees to preserve neutrality.
- The Provost has heard the complaints about the AEC and testing accommodations and has discussed those with that office.

6. Report/Highlights from November 30, 2023 Board of Trustees meeting with Trustee Luna

- Concerning THEC, our Board of Trustees is already in charge of our curriculum, so there won't be much change.
- Please participate in the Gen Ed Vision Committee survey.
- Regarding the Counseling Center: one out of 10 students have sought services.
- The budget was presented and approved at the December 4 Board of Trustees meeting. Trustee Luna is encouraged by other trustees' questions regarding the budget and is confident we are being heard.
- Please attend the upcoming Board of Trustees/Faculty Senate breakfast.
- The March meeting will have the report on the compensation study.

7. Request for questions for meeting with Provost Bruce on February 5

Provost Bruce would prefer topics instead of questions. Send topics to President Allen directly or via the anonymous form.

8. Such Other Matters

Senators discussed concerns regarding Watermark and its functionality, lack of training, and limitations regarding the timeline with upcoming tenure and promotion efforts.

Senate President Allen discussed the current practices of the Faculty Senate and the makeup of the meetings, indicating further discussion is desired. Faculty Senate may wish to broaden the channel of communication beyond the President meetings. This may require a look into and editing of the Faculty Senate procedures.

Adjournment

Senator Troy Smith moved to adjourn the meeting. Senator Christen seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 5:40 p.m.

Approved: 02/26/2024