

Faculty Senate Business Meeting

March 23, 2020

Members Present:

Douglas Airhart, Jeremy Blair, Troy Brachey, Chris Brown, Debra Bryant, Andrew Callender, Wei Tsun Chang, Kris Craven, Yun Ding, Mary Lou Fornehed, Steven Frye, Stuart Gaetjens, Mark Groundland, David Hajdik, Shelia Hurley, Barbara Jared, Brian Jones, Nancy Kolodziej, Matt Langford, David Larimore, Lori Maxwell, Mark Melichar, Allan Mills, Holly Mills, Lachelle Norris, Linda Null, Brian O'Connor, Sally Pardue, Richard Rand, Jeff Roberts, Mike Rogers, Lee Ann Shipley, Troy Smith, Sandra Smith-Andrews, Barry Stein, Holly Stretz, Zac Wilcox, Kimberly Winkle, Jeannette Wolak

Members Absent:

Michael Best, Sheikh Ghafoor, Christy Killman, Susan Laningham, Mary Matthews, Christie Miller, Joseph Ojo, Anthony Paradis, Lenly Weathers

Call to Order

Senate President Smith-Andrews called the meeting to order at 3:35 p.m.

1. Welcome and President's Comments

Senate President Smith-Andrews stated that there was a cabinet meeting last Friday (March 20) and acknowledged that all of these changes in response to the pandemic are new to us all and are changing rapidly. She encouraged senators to be patient and communicate. She also stated there was a new communication coming forward indicating the need to minimize the number of people on campus.

2. Approval of Agenda

Senator Rand made a motion to approve the agenda. Senator Smith seconded. The motion carried.

3. Approval of Minutes from February 24, 2020 Business Meeting

Senator Brown made a motion to approve the minutes. Senator Stretz seconded. The motion carried.

4. Approval of Notes from March 9, 2020 Meeting with the President

Senator Frye made a motion to approve the minutes. Senator Stretz seconded. The motion carried.

5. Reports

a. Board of Trustees Meeting: Senator and Board of Trustees Faculty Representative Pardue said that the board meeting came before the campus's response to the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. The board approved the flat-rate tuition model for freshmen and transfer students, effective this coming fall. The provisions that there be no increase in tuition and fees for ongoing students and the institution of a Tech PROMISE last-dollar scholarship were approved as well. The budget will be under discussion at the June meeting in light of Governor Lee's proposed budget and the economic impact of the virus. The

board approved a raise and bonus for President Oldham. Senator Pardue is still pursuing information or action regarding the lack of across-the-board raises or bonuses, and there has been no action thus far on the request to reinstate the task force to examine compensation, workload, and evaluations. Human Resources is doing a peer salary comparison study, but this information does not address the lack of bonuses/and raises among employees here.

b. Academic Council: There is a meeting scheduled via Zoom on March 25 to discuss several new minors, among other business.

c. Administrative Council: The next meeting is on April 8. No items to report at this time.

d. Procedures Committee Status Report: The main changes that will be up for review in the councils include the number of representatives from the colleges and departments, the election of Faculty Members-At-Large, electronic voting procedures, and general clean-up.

e. Nominating Committee: The Nominating Committee is actively seeking nominations for President-Elect and Secretary.

6. Coronavirus (COVID-19) Response/Changes

Senate President Smith-Andrew requested feedback regarding Tech's response and plans to deal with the pandemic.

a. Teaching: Faculty expressed that it would be nice to have more direct support. One senator was concerned about the loss of almost two weeks of instruction due to the tornado, Good Friday, and an extended spring break; how are faculty – especially those teaching prerequisites – to make sure the students leave the semester prepared? Senators were encouraged to tell faculty to stay in communication with faculty from those other courses to help focus on crucial learning objectives with the time left. Other senators expressed gratitude for the extra week of preparation for themselves and faculty who were not ready to move online. Senators were reminded that we all are making compromises on content, research, meetings, and other priorities due to the current crisis.

b. Advisement: no specific issues were mentioned

c. Tutoring: no specific issues were mentioned

d. Tenure/Promotion: This topic was added to the list to gauge interest in pursuing the topic later. Some universities are extending the tenure/promotion clock due to the way the virus has impacted research, conferences, deadlines, and other scholarly work. It was decided to wait and pursue the issue if it becomes an issue for faculty meeting their tenure and promotion deadlines. It was also suggested that chairs consider all that was halted when filling out future evaluations.

e. Students/Residents: Students who wish to remain on campus must apply; students remaining on campus will be housed in individual rooms with bathroom access. All other students must vacate the residence halls by Sunday, March 29.

Generally, senators feel the response is reasonable, but all would prefer faster website updating (when information changes) and a daily briefing regarding any changes or lack thereof. It would also be helpful for employees to know what students are being told because students often ask questions of faculty and staff (many senators did not know students were being asked to vacate).

7. Intellectual Property

Senate President Smith-Andrews has asked the Provost to address the proposed changes to the Intellectual Property Policy so that it can be seen by the councils before the academic year ends. Information will be disseminated when the Senate President receives the Provost's response.

8. Old Business

Senator Roberts stated there were no new updates from the Centralized Advising Center Implementation Committee due to a recent meeting cancellation. Senators feel the response to the pandemic may indicate a need to delay the implementation. Senate President Smith-Andrews will ask about the center's progress in the next cabinet meeting, and then Faculty Senate will decide if there is action to be taken.

9. Such Other Matters

- Concerns were expressed regarding Service Solutions (SSC) staff being seen meeting in small groups and not socially distancing themselves. The consensus is that there is little Tech can say or do regarding SSC staff.
- Regarding the idea of altering the tenure clock due to the pandemic, clarification was sought whether this is an adjustment on requirements or timing. Senate President Smith-Andrews will ask the President and Provost if they are considering this possibility.
- Does Cookeville Regional Medical Center need to use Tech space? Senators Jared and Fornehed of the School of Nursing responded that all PPE (personal protective equipment) was removed from on-campus labs and given to the hospital, and that staff focusing on disaster preparedness are monitoring the need for space. Tech has been offered as a possibility should the need arise. Testing for COVID-19 has been delayed but should be cleared to run in-house soon which will reduce PPE consumption and free-up space more quickly with negative tests. Senator Rand expressed appreciation and gratitude to the nursing faculty who are assisting the hospital with the crisis, and the Senate concurred.
- Will there be a Pass/Fail option for students? Senate President Smith-Andrews stated that the Provost was aware of the discussion and question, but does not yet want to offer that option due to possible negative impacts on transfer credits and GPA. Pass/fail is calculated as a "C" grade in some places, though likely not here at Tech.

Adjournment

Senator Rand moved to adjourn the meeting. The meeting adjourned at 5:28 p.m.

Approved: 04/20/2020