

Baylor University Faculty Senate Minutes
VIRTUAL MEETING
17 March 2020
3:30pm-5:00pm

- I. Call to Order—Chair Brian Raines: 3:30pm
- II. Invocation—Denyse Rodgers
- III. Discussion of university’s response to COVID-19—President Livingstone, Provost Brickhouse, Robyn Driskell, Chris Holmes.

All Baylor University faculty were invited to attend this meeting hosted via WebEx. Senators Raines, Cordon, Elkins, Long, and Rodgers, as well as members of Senior Administration listed above, and technical support staff, assembled in Pat Neff 300. All other faculty attended the meeting virtually.

- **President Livingstone:** Expressed appreciation to faculty and staff for work transitioning to the online format. Hears only positive reports. Overview of structuring for the near term: COVID-19 Task Force, or Emergency Response Task Force, assembled about 1 month ago; group has reps from all areas of campus, including student life, academics, etc. Beginning last Wednesday, President’s Council has been meeting daily in order to respond to new situations—responses to reports by CDC and other health entities. Also weekly calls with Board of Regents (BoR) to keep BoR informed, field questions, etc.
- **Provost Brickhouse:** Reiterates President Livingstone’s expression of appreciation to faculty and staff, response to transition. Thursday, additional changes to the calendar to be released. Research activities have not stopped, most research spaces comply with conditions expressed by CDC. Concerned about summer. Summer is still unknown. While study abroad programs cancelled, university still needs to keep students engaged; needs students to stay on track. The longer pandemic continues, financial considerations will emerge.
- **President Livingstone:** 3 priorities: 1) what is in best interest of our community; 2) academic continuity; 3) ensure business continuity of the university, which is closely tied to (2) above. Will continue to make plans for these considerations.

Following these introductory remarks, floor opened to Q & A with questions collected from faculty read by Chair Brian Raines. Senator Elkins stood by fielding new questions submitted by attending faculty via text. What follows is an imperfect summary of issues raised and responses from President **Livingstone**, Provost **Brickhouse**, Robyn **Driskell**, and Chris **Holmes**:

Q1: Has the administration considered moving tenure-clocks by one year? **Brickhouse:** university willing to be generous and will be taken into consideration.

Q2: Any chance of moving grading to pass/fail for the semester? **Brickhouse:** expressed concern, especially for pre-med students; would need compelling evidence with justification for moving that direction.

Q3: Study abroad directors—compensation. Is consideration being given to lost pay?

Brickhouse: faculty and directors should consider opportunities to teach those courses online. Other opportunities for summer teaching also may be available.

Q3a: Online Courses in summer? **Brickhouse:** Can't make that decision right now. **Livingstone:** decision to cancel study abroad, took into consideration the lost compensation to faculty; but not prepared to make a final decision at this time.

Q4: How can university assist students who are without academic materials who cannot travel back to campus? **Driskell:** students are being sent emails, asking them to respond with requests for materials; items will be boxed and UPSed to the student. Later on, students may be allowed to enter dorms to retrieve other items. Faculty will be allowed to distribute information to students online, libraries helping. Information on the Baylor KeepTeaching web link, also information about "fair use."

Q5: Will implementation of R1/Illuminate be affected by this situation? **Brickhouse:** implementation depends on funds; considers this situation a "bump in the road."

Q6: Will normal student evals take place? **Brickhouse:** yes; will not implement new student course evaluation.

Q7: Is compliance with CDC regulations applicable to labs? **Brickhouse:** where possible, comply with guidelines, or make alternate plans.

Q8: What is the fate of summer internships/ research opportunities? **Brickhouse:** go ahead and screen applicants, be prepared for moving forward. Campus schedule for summer—decision on hold. Don't want to cancel before necessary.

Q9: Will faculty searches and dean searches be affected by current situation? **Brickhouse:** most dean searches wrapping up, only one pending; currently evaluating faculty searches; will be reaching out to deans in next few days, determine which have to be completed by this semester;

Q10: Can students participate in research this summer? **Brickhouse:** yes.

Q11: CANVAS space limited. Will there be support for online storage for materials for online courses? **Brickhouse:** looking campus wide at licensing regulations, determine how to expand capacity.

Q12: Will contracts and raises still be released by April? **Livingstone:** that discussion happening at this moment. Will release info in the near term.

Q13: Grant proposals—shall we move forward with internal grant proposals? **Brickhouse:** yes.

Q14: Where do things stand with mini-mester and summer semester? **Livingstone:** no decisions have been made about either mini-mester or summer classes.

Q15: Will there be enhanced cleaning? **Driskell:** there is already "intense cleaning" of high touch points going on; using special, safe, more expensive anti-viral chemical, cleaning dining halls, consolidating dining halls; grab and go, no longer buffets; in this mode for last 3 weeks.

Q16: What are some strategies for employing student workers remotely? **Brickhouse:** student workers are being treated like other university employees; looking for ways for student "teleworking" not only for students but all employees—who can work at home, etc. Federal government has issued guidelines about Federal Work Study. HR sent communication to student employees, advising about constraints and communication with managers. **Livingstone:** several bills moving through Congress now concerning students, e.g. student loan forgiveness, for example, payments applied to principal not interest for a period of time.

Q17: Faculty with cancelled conferences, etc, how will it affect tenure? **Brickhouse:** fact that presentation accepted is already positive, should count.

Q18: Can dorm students who live locally and in Texas return? **Driskell:** BU discouraging students to return because it will defeat the purpose of social distancing; there will be a time for students to return. **Brickhouse:** projecting for the future, that if/when domestic travel may be curtailed, that students are where they need to be; **Holmes:** goal is to limit high traffic, do not want dorms to become high traffic areas; want to discourage a “move out” at this time, want constituents to stay where they are safe. **Livingstone:** encouraging students to remain at permanent residence if they can; especially concerned for international students who have no other residence; BU has a procedure for students to request permission to remain on campus. Email from Student Life to students by this afternoon with instructions to students concerning issues of retrieving items, gathering academic materials, with extensive FAQ;

Q19: Counterpoint to not going pass/fail, might we be leading to inflating or deflating grades? **Brickhouse:** not enough data to answer; **Livingstone:** a great research project. **Driskell:** Success Center has reached out to students about how to be successful with online courses. **Brickhouse:** volunteered to investigate the grade inflation question. **Livingstone:** communication in preparation for faculty and students regarding resources for dealing with mental health support services and dealing with stress induced by current situation.

Q20: Who will make decision about final exams? **Brickhouse:** final exams should proceed as planned.

Q21: Can we adjust percentages to take into account online instruction? **Brickhouse:** absolutely. **Livingstone** concurred.

Q22: What is status of Business School dean search? **Brickhouse:** interviews have concluded, more information coming this week.

Q23: Faculty confused about student evaluations; will evals count? **Brickhouse:** not introducing anything new, will use same instrument.

Q24: Will libraries remain open and staffed? **Brickhouse:** right now open and staffed; will make other decisions depending on how situation develops; Libraries are major support for online instruction, but university will monitor the situation in consideration of health and safety of library staff;

Q25: Will students be able to retrieve items from art studios? **Driskell:** university will treat those students the same way as other students; **Livingstone:** administration will work with art faculty to consider requests.

Q26: Will departments be able to hire new student workers? **Brickhouse:** will take requests under consideration.

Q27: Why isn't Baylor encouraging more faculty and staff to stay home? **Brickhouse:** making that transition at this moment; training for online teaching largely online; academic and business operations have to be considered as well. **Driskell:** last week information was released to chairs and supervisors about allowing personnel to work at home; assessing which work can be done from home, etc.

Q28: How should departmental or timed exams be addressed? **Brickhouse:** something that requires further thought, do not want to address now.

Q29: Is the closing of research labs a possibility? **Brickhouse:** yes, it is possible.

Q30: Can faculty who have experienced huge hits to retirement accounts but who have signed retirement contracts, reassess? **Holmes:** persons in this situation should consult with HR.

Q31: Will SLC and health center remain open? **Driskell:** SLC open for services but not for recreation; **Livingstone:** Health Center has established HOTLINE for students in case they feel they need to be tested; students can receive info about testing, designated location for testing; university has set up apartments for students to isolate themselves while waiting for test results.

Q32: Can faculty be tested at the SLC? **Livingstone:** Faculty should call their health care provider.

Q33: Advice for faculty regarding service? **Brickhouse:** stay in touch with colleagues; a lot of service commitments simply wont take place. **Livingstone:** Sponsors of student orgs should reach out to groups, group leadership to keep students engaged.

Q34: Are you willing to say which options are being considered for contracts? **Livingstone:** it's really a matter of what we determine about long-term financial issues. Contracts separate from raises.

Q35: Can emails to students be copied to dept chairs? **Brickhouse/Livingstone/Driskell:** yes; appreciate everyone's attempts to communicate with students.

Feed concluded at 4:37pm.

IV. New Business—remained unaddressed.
a. Nominating Committee—Chair Brian Raines

V. Adjournment: with conclusion of live feed.

Submitted by Senator Michael Long, Secretary