

Baylor University Faculty Senate Minutes
8 September 2020
Baylor Law 239 ♦ 3:30pm-5:00pm

Present: Sara Alexander, Dwight Allman, Cassy Burleson, Gia Chevis, Gerald Cleaver, Holly Collins, Matt Cordon, Nathan Elkins, Tisha Emerson, Christy Gantt, Brian Garner, Chris Hansen, Julie Holcomb, Beth Hultquist, Kristi Humphries, Karon LeCompte, Michael Long, Elissa Madden, Horace Maxile, Joyce Nuner, Maxey Parrish, Lourenco Paz, Sam Perry, Coretta Pittman, Tom Potts, Nicci Price, Barbara Purdum-Cassidy, Brian Raines, Angela Reed, Denyse Rodgers, Keith Schubert, Carol Schuetz, Jennings Sheffield, Ann Shoemaker, Kathryn Steely, Josh Strakos, Mark Taylor, Lynn Tatum, Ann Theriot, Doug Weaver, Anzhong Wang,

- I. Call to Order—Chair Matt Cordon, 3:30pm
- II. Invocation—Senator Rodgers
- III. In Memoriam for Dr. Bob Baldrige—Senator Tatum

For over a decade, Professor Bob Baldrige was a stalwart and valued member of the Baylor Faculty Senate. Elected by his colleagues to multiple terms on the Senate, Bob was viewed as wise, thoughtful, and, sometimes, delightfully irreverent. He was a consistent and tenacious champion of academic freedom. He almost always sat on the back row, and his booming voice was a wonderful fixture of Senate meetings. Whenever issues of academic freedom arose, Senator Baldrige was always at the forefront of its defense. His reputation for intellectual integrity was an inspiration to those of us who had the honor to be his colleagues.

The Baylor Faculty Senate wishes to express its condolences to Senator Baldrige's family. It also wishes to express its profound appreciation for an academic life of service that has left Baylor University a better place. We stand on the shoulders of giants—and Senator Baldrige was one of those giants.

Senator Rodgers moved to approve the resolution honoring Bob Baldrige; Senator Elkins second. Motion passed.

- IV. Approval of Minutes: May 5, June 18, 2020—Senator Long

Senator Raines moved to approve Minutes of 5 May and 18 June, 2020; Senator LeCompte second. Motion passed.

- V. Reports: 3:40 p.m.
 - a. Executive Committee Meetings—Senator Cordon

b. Provost's Office Meeting—Senator Cordon

Report on Provost's Office meeting. Included discussion of back to campus, faculty anxieties about flow of information; expressed faculty concerns over BU's response to the Supreme Court's decision on Title VII, The Civil Rights Act and BU response to LGBTQ+ issues on campus, both for student groups and for faculty and staff.

Sen. Pittman related her experience to Provost Brickhouse about job candidates for faculty positions at Baylor either withdrawing their candidacy or turning down offers because of BU's stance on LGBTQ+ student organizations. Most of the conversation was about "practices" related to hiring, in which candidates were discriminated against for unsubstantiated beliefs that the candidate might be gay. Sen. Cordon asked Provost Brickhouse when the results of the COACHE survey would be made known. Provost Brickhouse answered that she is in the process of reviewing the results.

Full Executive Committee will continue to meet each month through the year.

VI. Unfinished Business: 3:55 p.m.

a. Motions Approved in Special Meeting 18 June 2020

- i. Ban on Symbols of Hate: BU statement on Civil Rights revised in August 2020 to reflect the motion passed by the Faculty Senate on June 18. The administration responded, incorporated the Faculty Senate's suggestions in the revised policy.
- ii. Formation of a Multi-Year Task Force on Racism and Diversity;
Consideration of Revision of Scope of Campus Diversity Committee

The original Senate motion called for a multi-year Task Force. It has been determined that BU already has a Diversity Committee; the charge to the university Diversity Committee is already broad enough to address issues related to racism and diversity. Establishing another TF would be redundant, if the campus Diversity Committee works according to its complete charge.

Sen Cordon presented a motion to amend a previously approved motion. Motion passed. Sens. Cordon and Pittman will meet with the Diversity Committee to discuss the charge, form a partnership with the committee to facilitate the dialog, and allow the Faculty Senate to consider Diversity Committee proposals for endorsement.

b. Return to Campus

Former Chair Raines and current Chair Cordon are meeting regularly with the 8/24 TF; noted concerns about distancing in the classroom, notification when student tests positive for COVID, etc. Cordon sees his role as facilitating

communication between various groups responding to COVID and the Faculty Senate as well as the faculty at large.

Cordon asked what the Senate or Executive Committee or the upper admin could be doing.

Sen. LeCompte suggested that the Faculty Senate send a letter of support to the administration, the 8/24 TF, and others for their work in addressing “back to campus” during the COVID pandemic.

Sen. Perry brought up two issues, concerns from faculty: 1) autonomy of faculty to identify as high risk for whatever reason and switch from in person classes to online; mentioned one case in which a faculty member made the request to switch but was met with push-back; 2) how will Faculty Performance Evaluations be handled in light of various delivery modes, e.g. online, Face2Face, hybrid.

Sen. Cordon responded that faculty autonomy varies by unit based on specific circumstances. Sen Raines responded that switching is problematic because students registered for F2F classes, wanting that experience; issue will arise when the Spring 2021 schedule is designed, wherein faculty currently teaching F2F may want to teach online due to the uncertainties of distancing, cleaning, quarantining of students, etc.

Sen. Cordon noted that the Faculty Senate can organize another Faculty Forum to address these issues, now that the data show low positivity rate after random testing began and in light of faculty safety concerns and questions of autonomy to switch from F2F to online. Cordon continued, that he had not heard information about Faculty Evaluations. Questions were raised concerning how student course evaluations would be utilized and how unit chairs will review student evaluations considering the various modes of delivery. Senator asked if there were plans or discussions about giving faculty latitude in the case that they have children who are not in school due to local school districts changing their schedules.

Sen asked what the legal position of BU would be if a faculty member was required to teach F2F and became ill and/or died. Sen. asked whether BU can increase the frequency of random testing for faculty and staff because fac/staff have higher morbidity. Sen. Cordon has replied that most of the concern was about off-campus students rather than faculty, positivity among faculty and staff is very low.

Senator commented that there is at least one case where a tenure-track Asst. Prof. was assigned an extra class without any consultation or supplemental pay, so that there is a concern about research expectations and evaluations for these faculty.

Senator asked if there were a plan in case a COVID vaccine is available by the end of the calendar year, and how BU could avail itself for administering a

potential vaccine. Sens. Raines and Cordon responded that there is no discussion of this topic on campus as far as they know.

Staff Council Rep. Price remarked that the Registrar's Office is awaiting a decision from the upper administration about the roll-out of the Spring 2021 schedule; noted that the lead time will be short.

Sen. Cordon will follow up with Provost Brickhouse about Faculty Performance Evaluations and about testing for Spring 2021.

VII. New Business: 4:30 p.m.

a. Fall Semester Replacement for Senator Derek Dodson (Dr. Doug Weaver)

Derek Dodson has a schedule conflict with Tuesday Faculty Senate meetings; has nominated Doug Weaver as a replacement for Fall 2020. Motion passes.

b. Baylor University's LGBTQ-Related Policies

Sen. Cordon has conveyed faculty concerns to the Provost's Office: there is considerable interest in a progressive policy; in the meantime there are employment issues related to LGBTQ policy.

Senator Cordon opened the floor to discussion. Asks that we do not present a motion at this time.

- Sen. remarked that a good place to start would be acting on the results of the conversations moderated by Helen Harris and Jeremy Counsellor
- Sen. commented that about 100 faculty participated in the conversation
- Sen. Cordon reported Provost Brickhouse's comment that she knows there are LGBTQ faculty and staff on campus now and that they are entitled to the same academic freedom as all other faculty and staff.
- Sen. commented that Student Life ultimately makes the decision about the approval of student groups; should be brought to the table
- Sen. Cordon replied that ultimately, no president or provost is going to make a decision of this nature without the Board of Regents' (BoR) approval;
- Sen. Cordon suggested that the Faculty Senate invite VP Kevin Jackson to a Faculty Senate meeting to report on the process and history of the LGBTQ+ student group's attempts to receive a charter
- Consensus that the issue of approval of a charter for an LGBTQ+ student group needs to be separated from faculty/staff hiring practices
- Sen. suggested that a motion from the Faculty Senate to allow the LGBTQ+ student group would put the issue in front of the BoR
- Sen. suggested that we invite BoR President Rountree, as well as General Counsel Chris Holmes to hear his perspective on the legal issues

Sen. LeCompte moved that the Faculty Senate invite speakers to the Faculty Senate to address certain issues related to the charter for an LGBTQ+ student organization; Sam Perry seconded. Motion passed.

Discussion: who to invite; Sen. suggested that the Executive Committee can discuss and select speakers on this topic.

VIII. Adjourn: Sen. Taylor moved to adjourn. Sen. Collins second. Motion passed.