

**Baylor University Faculty Senate Minutes**  
**Virtual Meeting**  
**10 November 2020**  
**3:30-5:30pm**

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

Guests: Provost Brickhouse, Vice Provost Lori Baker

- I. Call to Order: 3:30pm
- II. Invocation—Senator Theriot
- III. Guest Speaker—Provost Nancy Brickhouse

Return to campus in Spring 2021: Anticipate pre-arrival testing. Not using Everlywell kits, students and faculty asked to test in their home location, then retest within 48 hours of returning to campus. First couple of weeks likely to be the most challenging. We have and are prepared to handle quarantine capacity. More F2F classes in Spring than in fall; about the same number of online classes. Students requesting fully online schedules given priority. Pfizer vaccine has been cleared for emergency use. BU has team set up for quick response when vaccine becomes available; has to be stored with refrigeration. Best guess: made available to universities in the summer.

Expressed appreciation to Faculty for everything they have done to make the fall semester successful; call out staff who have assisted in making fall successful. The university is in a good position to finish the fall semester strongly. However, the virus is spreading rapidly throughout McLennan County. BU is scrutinizing any kind of travel due to concern about spread through the state and the county; BU not insulated from the surrounding community; need to be particularly diligent between now and Thanksgiving.

Senator asked: would BU ever mandate the use of the vaccine? **Brickhouse:** upper administration is discussing that now; hope to gather data on who has had vaccine; accommodations will be made for “conscientious objectors”; hope is that the vast majority will get the vaccine.

Senator asked: should surge occur in McLennan County, is there a hospitalization rate that would/could delay the start of Spring 2021? **Brickhouse:** BU has not set a benchmark at this time.

Promotion to Full Professor: Brickhouse found that numbers of Full professor faculty were relatively small, and homogeneous; found that many departments had no guidelines for promotion. Found it concerning. Plays into retention. The Provost's Office is reviewing guidelines; guidelines should walk the balance between giving enough specificity without it becoming a "tick the box" situation; wants guidelines to align with the university's aspirations overall. Guidelines are under review in the departments. Brickhouse has seen some but not all of new departmental guidelines; many are being revised in departments. Looking for incentives in the guidelines for rewarding interdisciplinary work—as response to the COACHE Survey. Faculty evaluation period should be the time for a conversation about progress toward and timeline for promotion to rank of Professor. Once policies approved at the departmental and Dean level, the Provost's Office will review and approve; provide space on Provost's Office website where all relative documents will be made available everyone.

Q: Is BU eager to increase the percentage of full Professors on campus? Brickhouse: absolutely. BU will support efforts to increase research opportunities, etc., in support of promotion.

Q: How would guidelines increase diversity? **Brickhouse:** if guidelines are not articulated, then the process relies on a network that "knows what's going on"; BU can improve diversity by clarifying the process and expectations for promotion, increasing transparency of the process.

Q: In the School of Music, a faculty member asked if there was a specific timeline for promotion. The answer received was 'no'. Is that a university position or only relative to the SOM? Having some understanding of the timeline would be useful. **Brickhouse:** typically, 6 years in rank at the Associate level is expected; will try to make timeline clear. If one misses the 6 year mark, doesn't mean that one will never be eligible.

Senator comment: It seems that BU lags in providing a framework for receiving sabbaticals; in department X, faculty have been allowed to adjust the 2/2 load to 3/1, to provide space at a given time to make a push. **Brickhouse:** full-time sabbatical leave is important; full-semester sabbaticals are extremely important; Provost's Office has placed funds used for summer sabbaticals in the colleges, charged deans with finding ways to distribute the money; encouraging the deans to find ways of using resources to more effectively help faculty meet expectations. Provost has not mandated that summer sabbaticals go completely away; hopes there is a shift to more full-semester sabbaticals.

Q: Consistency of teaching loads across campus; teaching loads are not even across campus which challenges faculty with promotion. **Brickhouse:** in discussions of guidelines, time for discussion of teaching loads.

Senator comment: Summer sabbaticals are most useful, especially in the sciences when awarded in tandem with a full-semester sabbatical.

Use of student evaluations in the evaluation of Faculty: Provost Brickhouse looks for evidence that faculty member makes use of information from student and peer evaluations to improve teaching; discourages evaluating faculty teaching with reliance on

numbers in student evaluations. Plans to provide a document or statement on how best to use student evaluations; plans to have a portion of the winter academic leadership seminar devoted to best practices for using student evaluations in evaluating faculty teaching.

Senator comment: Not a big fan of student evaluations; they are of little value for informing faculty; peer evaluation is much more fruitful; within the senator's department, the consensus is that peer observation is much more useful than student evaluations.

**Brickhouse:** the process is complicated by the fact that we know student evaluations are subject to certain biases; for example, required courses are evaluated by students more harshly than other courses.

Q: can the ATL help with the evaluation process, perhaps provide a focus group?

Comment: yes, ATL will assist, if asked.

Q: has the student evaluation form been changed? Answer: yes, as result of a task force on the evaluations; new instrument for student evaluations was implemented in Spring 2020.

Senator comment: the new evaluation form seemed to evoke more thoughtful responses from students.

Q: is there an allowance for having truly hurtful comments stricken from evaluations, or treated differently, especially for tenure-track faculty? **Brickhouse:** when tenure dossiers come to her, she is not looking at student comments; more concerned with the candidate's own response and reflection on teaching.

Faculty hiring: All depts will use Interfolio, so that the pool of candidates is available to more people; will increase the diversity of the pool.; three candidates will have Provost Office interviews and campus interviews. **Baker:** Interfolio will make searches paperless; make the process faster; demographic data collection is easier with Interfolio. Shared draft of work-flow. Search training will be moved up in the timeline, the fall semester is too late for searches that have already launched. Planning online search training.

Senator comment: would be helpful if BU would provide list of default advertising outlets to which ads are sent; each department wouldn't have to search those outlets for every search; why not make ad releases automatic from the university for certain outlets?

Q: how useful are Provost's Office interviews in vetting candidates? **Baker:** maybe 4 or 5 times/year does the Provost's Office reject a candidate.

#### IV. Approval of Minutes of 8 September and 13 October—Senator Long

Senator Hansen moved to approve September and October Minutes as revised; Senator LeCompte seconded. Motion passed.

#### V. Reports

a. Executive Committee Meetings—Senator Cordon

Met with Provost Brickhouse last week, discussed the items the Provost addressed today.

b. Report to Board of Regents—Senator Chair Cordon

Summarized the three topics the Senate has discussed: return to campus, racial justice, and LGBTQ+ issues. In question about how to increase faculty morale, Senator Cordon reminded the BoR to consider changes to retirement contributions, merit raises; mentioned that faculty consider the LGBTQ+ issue extremely important. Report to BoR lasted 14 minutes.

VI. Unfinished Business

a. LGBTQ+ Related Policies

Student Senate passed a bill, asked the Faculty Senate to pass a supporting resolution; Senator Cordon wants to continue talking with the students; doesn't believe that a resolution at this time will have the desired effect; need more conversation with Chris Holmes in regard to Title VII in response to the Supreme Court decision in summer 2020; the court left open space for religious exemption. Office of General Counsel and the President's Office response was that BU needed to wait for results from the Nov. 3 presidential election.

Senator Cordon also shared with the BoR that this issue is difficult to address, but LGBTQ+ students express that they do not feel safe, do not feel welcome, and statements that BU provides loving caring Christian environment ring false, because they do not feel safe.

Q: at which point would a Faculty Senate resolution become useful? Senator Cordon: students want the FS to take action now, but does not think the timing is correct for a resolution now, based on conversations with the BoR chair, Mark Rountree.

Q: what was the BoR response to statements about students feeling safe? Senator Cordon: the meeting was on Zoom, so was difficult to gauge any response.

Senator comment: disturbed by the Values page on BU website; taken from BGCT statements and talking points contrary to supporting diversity; troubling also in relation to academic freedom. Senator Cordon: agrees that the statement seems odd, doesn't know who the author is or who initiated the page.

Q: do we know the origin of questions addressed in the Values statements? Senator Cordon: No.

Senator comment: it can be very powerful for the FS to issue a statement of support for LGBTQ+ issues, would rather actions be taken that show support. Expresses support for the way Senate Chair has handled the issue in response to upper administration and the BoR.

Q: what is the student response rate from on the LGBTQ survey? Senator Cordon: we don't know.

Q: are findings from faculty focus groups public? Senator Cordon: not public, but we have access to the data.

Senator comment: wonders if students know the results from faculty focus groups; could give students more confidence that there is faculty support. Senator Cordon: can suggest to Profs. Harris and Counseller that they give a report to the Student Senate.

Comment: Supports inviting students to address the FS. Student Congress Representatives reported on issues to the Staff Council; Staff Council wants to stay informed on the process; would love to build more bridges between the Staff Council and the FS. Senator Cordon: we have a Senate liaison with the Staff Council and is happy to work on increasing dialogue between the FS and Staff Council.

Q: would be a nice gesture if the Faculty Senate passed a resolution in support of the staff.

Senator LeCompte moved to express support of the Faculty Senate for the staff and their extraordinary efforts during this global pandemic; Senator Tatum seconded. Motion passed unanimously. Senator Cordon: asked the Staff Council Representative to “to recognize and commend the staff for their extraordinary work during this time of pandemic.”

b. Faculty Dialogue about Overcoming Challenges in Multimodal Teaching

Takes place on Nov. 19. Senator Cordon is working with the ATL; appreciates the ATL's support; Senate is sponsoring, Senator Cordon is serving as moderator.

VII. New Business

a. Low-Income Students

The Faculty Senate Executive Committee met with Sinda Vanderpool, Lynn Wisely, and Christopher Richmann about the growing concern for low-income students. BU has a higher percentage of low-income students than most are aware of. Senator Cordon will invite the three named to attend a Senate meeting for the report; discuss barriers to low-income students. 19% of BU students are eligible for Pell grants. The average of the comparison group to BU is 3-4%.

VIII. Adjourn. Senator Parrish moved to adjourn; Senator Collins seconded. Senate adjourned at 5:05pm.