

Baylor University Faculty Senate Minutes
Virtual Meeting
9 February 2021
3:30pm-5:00pm

Present: Dwight Allman, Cassy Burleson, Gia Chevis, Gerald Cleaver, Holly Collins, Matt Cordon, Derek Dodson, Nathan Elkins, Tisha Emerson, Christy Gantt, Brian Garner, Chris Hansen, Julie Holcomb, Beth Hultquist, Kristi Humphreys, Karon LeCompte, Michael Long, Elissa Madden, Horace Maxile, 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, Lynn Tatum, Mark Taylor, Ann Theriot, Anzhong Wang.

Absent: Renee Flippo, Joyce Nuner
Substitutes: Ann McGlashan (Sara Alexander)

- I. Call to Order: 3:30PM
- II. Invocation—Josh Strakos
- III. Guest Speakers—Student Leaders Emma Fraley, Veronica Penales, and Addison Knight
Student leaders from Student Government and Gamma Alpha Upsilon addressed the Senate. Students shared their personal stories and talked about the benefits of having a chartered LGBTQ organization.

Q&A: Senators asked if students could relate incidents that had made them feel threatened or unsafe; how having the GAU charter will help students; could students describe activities of the group. Student leaders stated clearly that the GAU student group does not have an “advocacy” agenda, the goal of changing anyone’s views or beliefs, but more to provide a safe place for students who are feeling hurt or marginalized. Senators expressed thanks to the students for having the courage to address the Senate.

- IV. Approval of Minutes—Senator Long
Senator Rodgers moved to approve Minutes of Jan 12 meeting; Senator LeCompte seconded; motion carried.
- V. Reports:
 - a. Executive Committee Meetings—Senator Cordon

Discussion of Senate resolution on Gamma LGBTQ+ charter.
 - b. Provost’s Office Meeting—Senator Cordon
Provost’s Office focused on the COACHE Survey and response; Senator Cordon chairing sub-committee on Decision-Making across all levels of campus. Budget planning is another big item involving Deans and Assoc. Deans. Deans appear pleased about budget planning meetings. Sen Cordon will continue to raise issue of restoring the retirement benefit to pre-COVID levels. Time to review merit raises will be next Jan/Feb with revisiting of the retirement benefit.
- VI. Unfinished Business

a. Low-Income Students—Senator Cordon

Fundraising: Original \$3000 goal reached \$18,273 with 187 donors. Next item is to address concern about textbook costs.

b. Faculty Evaluations and Course Evaluations—Senator Cordon

Senator question: what does “normal” mean for Fall 2021? No precise answer forthcoming immediately.

Senator question: if there is no merit pay increase, then why is faculty performance review necessary? Senator Cordon: to provide leverage for restoration of retirement benefit.

c. Senate Election Commission Update—Senator Long

There are 17 nominations for 11 positions. There is at least one nominee for every opening except Academic Affairs. All nominees have been contacted to determine their willingness to run; all but 1 have accepted. Nominations close tomorrow, Wednesday, February 10, at 5:00PM

d. Communications regarding Dependent Benefits Audit

Senators Cordon, Pittman, Elkins met with HR team on the Dependent Benefits Audit; came away convinced that it was not a witch-hunt to deny benefits to anyone, but only poor communication. Faculty Governance doesn't reach HR; FS leverage is slight. Senator Cordon doesn't agree with the decision-making process followed in setting up the audit.

Senator comment: HR's communication didn't give any information about how international faculty could provide the requested documentation, or whether translations of documents are required.

e. Executive Committee Resolution—Senator Cordon

Senator Pittman moved to go into Executive Session; Senator Long seconded; motion passed.

No Minutes of Executive Session.

Senators voted to return to regular session. Comments may appear in the Minutes without attribution. Senators agreed to following rules, in order to facilitate civil discussion and provide opportunities for variant perspectives to be presented.

Senators agreed:

- to indicate in chat whether speaking 'for', 'on', or 'against' the resolution;
- to speak no more than 3 minutes;
- to address comments to the Chair, not to other Senators;
- to speak directly to the resolution, not LGBTQ+ issues in general.

Senator Tatum moved that the Senate adopt a policy of non-attribution outside of the meeting as well; Senator Raines seconded; motion carried.

For: BU accepts students of all faiths or no faith; takes tuition monies, therefore LGBTQ+ students should have the same rights as all other students; resolution does not ask for any special rights; as there is no consensus among Christian churches nor among Baptist churches; GAU seeks to be support group, educational group; BU sexual conduct policy only states that “physical intimacy is expressed within the confines of marriage.”

On: question was raised about advocacy piece by colleagues; what are the rights of an official organization?

Against: Being opposed to the student group doesn't mean that one is a “mean or unloving” person; one can care for the students but still be opposed to the organization. Worries that there will be retaliation against faculty who might have an opposing view. Passing resolution is “first crack in the wall.”

For: Many folks are coming at this issue from a position of Christian belief. Struggles with the idea that the right reaction is to exclude; believes the right approach is to welcome and affirm. Strongly in favor of moving Baylor further into a better reflection of faith. Described un-Baylor/ un-Christian behavior of fraternity members on an off-campus trip observed as a sponsor of the organization; reported the activities and basically nothing happened.

On: wording of resolution; reedited

Against: disagree that we can address the club issue without addressing or affirming broader issue. Assurances that opposing views would not be silenced are not reassuring. Asked Senators to vote no.

For: endorses what has been said ‘for’ by other Senators. Students should have full rights as other students.

For: we have the obligation to treat all students equally and fairly; other organizations advocate for themselves routinely, even advocacy on ideological positions; concerned that there might be retaliation during tenure decisions or promotion due to support for this organization.

Senator question: is there a reason why this topic is coming up now. Senator Cordon: because the Board of Regents meets later this month.

Against: the “conversations” on the topic engaged a small sample of faculty; no real boundary on what we might be supporting by endorsing the GAU charter, because charters can be amended in the future; believes endorsing the charter signals a fundamental shift in Baylor's values.

For: support for previous comments ‘for’; in essence if students are accepted to BU, we should respond in the ethos of Jesus, who asks us to love one another “as I have loved you.”

For: students are really asking us to understand their need for belonging and community; the organization can provide that sense of belonging and community.

Senator Cordon created a Qualtrics poll for the vote ‘for’, ‘against’, or ‘abstain’ for the resolution.

Student Support Resolution

Whereas, for 10 years, Gamma Alpha Upsilon submitted charters to the Department of Student Activities requesting recognition as a student organization guaranteed all the rights and privileges afforded to other student organizations on campus but received denials or no responses;

Resolved, That the Faculty Senate endorses Gamma Alpha Upsilon’s request that their current status as an unofficial organization be revised to be officially recognized as a student group on campus with all the rights and privileges afforded to other student groups on campus.

Final Vote:

- Yes, in favor: 26 (66.67%)
- No, opposed: 9 (23.08%)
- Abstain: 4 (10.26%)

The resolution passed.

VII. New Business

- a. New Contract Language for Faculty-Senator Cordon
No concerns voiced.
- b. Senator question: students have brought concerns brought by student group about certain facilities lacking dispensers for feminine products.

Senator comment: support for Senate Chair for work and management of the discussion.

VIII. Adjourn: Senator LeCompte moved to adjourn; Senator Raines seconded.