

Baylor University Faculty Senate Minutes
Virtual Meeting
16 March 2021
3:30pm-5:00pm

Present: Sara Alexander, Dwight Allman, Cassy Burleson, Gia Chevis, Gerald Cleaver, Holly Collins, Matt Cordon, Derek Dodson, Tisha Emerson, Renee Flippo, Christy Gantt, Brian Garner, Chris Hansen, Julie Holcomb, Beth Hultquist, Kristi Humphreys, Karon LeCompte, Michael Long, Elissa Madden, Horace Maxile, Joyce Nuner, Maxey Parrish, 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

Substitutions: Julia Hitchcock (for Nathan Elkins)

- I. Call to Order—Chair Senator Cordon
- II. Invocation—Senator Schubert
- III. Approval of Minutes of February 9, 2021

Senator Holcomb moved to approve Minutes of the February 9 Faculty Senate meeting; Sen Hansen seconded; motion passed.

- IV. Reports
 - a. Exec Comm meetings

EC meeting with the Provost on March 5, 2021. Main topic: Faculty Regent selection process.

- b. Provost's Office Meeting

Sen Cordon summarized his comments to Council of Deans and the Board of Regents: update to food insecurity efforts, Faculty Regent selection process—BU needs a policy in place addressing the selection process; addressed the Faculty Senate resolution supporting the LGBTQ+ student group—no questions asked from either Deans or members of the Board of Regents.

- V. Unfinished Business

- a. Senate Resolution:

Called meeting scheduled earlier was intended to inform the Faculty Senate about LGBTQ+ discussions on campus going forward. The Board of Regents meeting was postponed, therefore, no need for the called Faculty Senate meeting; Provost Brickhouse suggested meeting with leadership groups from the university, including members of the

Senate, to begin on March 30. The aim is to review policies related to BU's stance on the LGBTQ+ issue. Group: BoR Chair, Vice-Chair; President's Council, e.g. President, Provost, VP Jackson, Chris Holmes, Jason Cook; Faculty Senate—five officers, Cordon, Raines, Pittman, Long, Rodgers; five leaders in Student Government—President, two VPs. No particular agenda other than to discuss going forward. The BoR intends to address the GAU charter in May. No decisions to be made without a report to Faculty Senate first. If a special session is needed to address the outcome of the meeting of the leadership groups, then it will be decided at a later date. The meeting of the leadership groups to discuss the LGBTQ+ topic is unprecedented in Baylor's history.

Senator comment: Supports move/idea to formalize the Faculty Regent selection with an official policy.

Senator comment: Supports the convening of leadership groups to further the discussion of the LGBTQ+ issue.

b. Low-income students—Senator Strakos

PPT presentation addressing student food insecurity. Need is primarily on main Waco campus, but doesn't want to leave out the School of Nursing and the Social Work satellite in Houston. Data presented of percentage of students experiencing food insecurity. Discussed assistance programs on campus: food pantry "The Store," how students access The Store, etc. Meal cards: funded through the Faculty Senate fundraiser—180 meal cards at \$100 each; 100% of proceeds from fundraiser went directly to the meal cards.

Action item: a Faculty Senate-sponsored endowed fund. \$50K required to start, resulting in a 5% payout; Faculty Senate can act as Donor; Faculty Senate with Development Office can run a 1-year campaign to raise the minimum \$50K; can partner in subsequent years for annual campaign. Anyone would be able to contribute to the fund—faculty, staff, alums.

Resolution to be presented at April meeting, reflecting terms of contract with Development Office, including support mechanisms for the campaign, e.g. website, payroll deduction, marketing, etc.

Senator question: how would support for low income students function at the School of Nursing? Answer: staff member at School of Nursing who deals with this issue will work with the staff on main campus.

Senator comment: Staff Council would like to partner with the Faculty Senate.

Senator Strakos: the aim of the fund is to continue the meal card service—keeps it simple, donors will know exactly what the money is buying.

c. Senate Election—Senator Long

The School of Music election was invalid because resulted in the election of a third Senator from the same division/department which is contrary to the maximum of two Senators from the same division/department according to the Senate By-Laws. Resulted in new election with new nominees from the School of Music. The election will run from March 16 at 8:00am to March 17 at 11:59pm. Once the School of Music election results are tallied, the complete roster for the 2021-2022 FS will be released. All nominees from the first 2021 election have been informed of the outcome.

d. Compensation Concerns

News is that there is a 2% pool for merit raises for the new contracts, subject to BoR approval. The discussion of restoring the retirement benefit to pre-COVID level should start in the fall, ahead of January 2022 date agreed on with the Faculty Senate and the upper administration. If either the merit pay raise or the restoration of the retirement benefit does not come about, the Faculty Senate can entertain further steps. Senator Cordon rejects the idea of exerting pressure on the upper admin through a letter writing campaign. Using the endowment to cover compensation is not recommended.

Senator comment: believes the administration should communicate more about the expenses of COVID preparation; also improve the messaging to the faculty about the costs related to COVID.

Senator comment: suggested that we invite Brett Dalton to a Faculty Senate meeting to discuss the costs.

Senator Pittman, Senate Chair-Elect: is already planning to invite Brett Dalton to speak to Faculty Senate at the August retreat.

Senator comment: supports the plan to invite Dalton; when the plan to reduce the retirement contribution was discussed, the true costs of the COVID pandemic were not known. But by August, the administration will have a better idea of the true costs.

Senators asked questions about situation at peer institutions; did BU receive any federal help?

Senator question: has the question been raised about a one-time bonus to faculty. Answer: yes, has been raised, but there is not support in the administration.

VI. New Business

a. Proposed revision to the Honor Code.

Revision essentially provides for expansion of the number of members on the Honor Council; spreads the work of the meetings of the HC among more people.

Senator Strakos moved to endorse the revised Honor Code policy; Sen Rodgers seconded; motion passed.

Senator question: is there a way for the Faculty Senate to address the need for the revision to the HC; why is there more cheating or other HC violations. Senator Cordon: will direct the question to Linda Cates.

b. Exam Concerns:

Senator comment: Certain professors are scheduling exams outside of regular class time; overlapping with other classes, causing students to have to reschedule exams.

Senator comment: there is a policy.

Sen comment: every time BU adjusts the calendar, a study day is taken away from the students; students need appropriate time to prepare for exams. There is now no study day for final exams for this semester. New calendar proposal for Spring 2022 removed one study day.

c. Faculty Regent Selection

Voting Faculty Regents instituted in 2017. Faculty Regent does not represent the Faculty, does not report to the Faculty; owes fiduciary duties to the university. The Board of Regents always selects its own members. The original plan was that the Provost would present the slate of candidates. In Fall 2019, the Faculty Senate followed the previous process, e.g. solicit nominations, hold election, send the names to Provost; Provost sends names to the BoR. Each time in the past, the process has been redesigned, reformed. One question is the matter of confidentiality: many nominees do not want results of the election of FR made known to full faculty or the Senate.

Sen Cordon has had meetings with the Provost and with BoR Professional about the process:

- wants to proceed with process as we have before;
- wants the Senate vote to have meaning;
- Provost has agreed to meet with the EC to present the results of the vote to her
- April meeting: Chair-Elect Pittman will present the slate of candidates; Provost is invited to the meeting
- Election planned for May 4 meeting

Senator question: what will remain confidential? Answer: results will not be made known to the full Senate.

Senator comment: expressed position that in the current plan, the Provost has all of the weight in the process; making the vote public, will show whether the Faculty Senate selection had an impact.

Senator Cordon and Raines respond that as it stands with the BoR, the FR selection is within the purview of the Provost; too many demands of the Faculty Senate in the process could result in the FS being excluded in the process completely. Provost has concerns the FS might not consider, the FS has concerns that the Provost might not consider.

Senator comment: expressed discomfort with participating in a process in which we don't learn the results of the process. Supports release of vote tally—one who agrees to be a nominee, should agree to the results being shared. Feels like the FS is being coopted.

Senator Cordon: agrees that the Faculty Senate should know the results, but a very realistic possibility is that the BoR could cut either the FS or the Provost out of the process completely. Hopes for a policy either as a BUPP or an addendum to the BoR By-Laws.

Senator question: what does Faculty Senate need to do in terms of creating a policy?
Answer: nothing at this point. FS on its own cannot do anything; requires a conversation between FS, Provost, and the BoR. Senate Chair Cordon is asking that the FS participate in the process we've agreed to in the meantime. The current process is not ideal, but the Faculty Senate has input.

Senator comment: ask Chair-Elect to include this topic on the August retreat agenda; discuss what questions need to be asked, what are the preferred outcomes.

Senator Cordon: questions could be asked of the Provost at the April 13 meeting; asks Senators to participate in the process and vote one's conscience.

d. Proposed resolution in support of shared governance at Collin College (TX)—Senator Tatum

Senator comment: suggests sharing what kind of resolutions other schools are passing, e.g. SMU and TCU.

Senator Tatum: can share links for news coverage in *Inside Higher Ed*, other sources.

Senator Cordon: will place on the Agenda for the April 13 meeting.

VII. Adjournment. Sen Hansen moved; Sen Strakos seconded.