

**Baylor University Faculty Senate Meeting Agenda**  
**February 11, 2025, 3:30 – 5 p.m., Foster 143**

Absent: Anzhong Wang, Rosalynn Vasquez, Brad Bolen, Adrienne Duvall, Shawn Latendresse, Sam Perry, Jessica Peck

Guests: none

- I. Call to Order: 3:30 p.m.
- II. Invocation: Eric Swan
- III. Approval of January Minutes (Senator Hunter)
- V. Reports:
  - a. VP Faculty Affairs DeAnna Toten Beard (Senate Chair) on Jan. 24
    - Syllabus policy statements – suggestion from a senator for Baylor to find a place to put all these syllabus policy statements rather than give faculty a long list to include in syllabus – DeAnna says we can pick and choose from that list what would be most appropriate for your class, if you want to include a land acknowledgement on your syllabus or canvas site though you need to use the Baylor official one
    - Post-docs – in past, all post-docs were hired as staff, but some post-docs are teaching and want to have a faculty rank – so now there will be two categories: teaching post-docs hired as temporary full-time faculty and research post-docs hired as staff
    - Issue in December where last final exam was too close to when grades were due – calendar committee and Senate EC are in discussions about what to do about that issue for this coming fall
    - Testing Center idea raised by a senator – too expensive to pursue now, but is on Wes Null’s radar to consider for future
  - b. Committee on Committees (Senate Chair) Jan. 30
    - Survey went out this week to faculty
    - Last year faculty could elect “I will serve on any committee” to help faculty who need to get on a university committee and hadn’t been assigned to one – now can select that option up to 3 different times on this year’s survey – it worked well last year
  - c. Executive Committee/Provost (Senate Chair) Feb. 3
    - Follow-up reactions to January Senate meeting with CFO and Provost –
      - If department budgets will be flat, what are some strategies for helping units to fund travel – Provost reiterated some comments from our Senate meeting, colleges are working to identify some sources of funding that might be able

to be used for travel funding and more, she also promised more transparency and flexibility for Chairs about their budget and how to spend it, she will also prioritize travel funding (she heard us in that meeting and she has mentioned it in multiple subsequent meetings with different stakeholders)

- With the large backlog of deferred building maintenance, is there interim strategies for climate control – Provost will advocate on our behalf particularly on thermostat control in older buildings
- Freezes on federal research funding – Provost wants us to know that all researchers should keep researching as you are, keep submitting grant proposals, we have lobby firms in DC and Austin and they are advocating, it will help them to advocate if we do not stop submitting and researching – Baylor will and we as individuals should lean into our Christian mission – a little premature to consider stopping tenure clocks just yet
- Update on Priority item 1 - Workload
  - DeAnna announced at Spring Faculty meeting the 9-month contract and the service percentage in the workload
  - Chair will ask for clarification about whether the summer pay cap is now 33.3% or is it still 25% for all cases except federal grant funded summer pay
- Update on Priority item 2 - Evaluation of Teaching
  - Ad hoc committee is working on recommendation three questions to add to online course evaluations, chaired by Senator Hunter
- Update on Priority item 3 – Shared Governance
  - Dean's council meeting – Chair requested that dean consider college-level guidelines that are clear and transparent to faculty – the Deans asked for categories for the types of things college-level guidelines should cover
  - Regent's meeting – Chair will discuss challenges of interdisciplinary work and anxieties about federal funding cuts and pressure on DEI

Update on Priority item 5 - Retirement

- Did some research on peer benchmark universities in Power 5 and Big 12, but couldn't find any retirement benefits Baylor does not already offer
- Update on Priority item 7 – Teaching Professor support for roll-out
  - If any issues arise with roll-out in your department, please let Senate Chair and/or EC know

f. Executive Committee Meeting (Senate Chair)

discussed options for final exams, discussed survey on student incivility

g. Staff Council (Senator Olafsen)

- A lot of anxiety about federal and state changes and cuts, discussion about difference between spring faculty meeting and spring staff meeting (how meetings

were not pitched properly to the constituencies, some items were covered in faculty meetings only and staff were asked to watch but recording was taken down quickly, also staff meeting is led by HR department and faculty meeting is led by the Provost office), voted on changes to its bylaws and both provisions passed, report from their elections committee and their number of seats will be increasing this year due to staff growth, some concern about spring break and staff required to work over spring break, discussion about transition from staff awards process to Baylor Plus Salute which are more incidental recognitions than yearly awards

- Questions for Senator Olafsen:
  - Senator comment – Annual staff self-evaluations are due within a 2-week window, one window includes spring break when many staff take paid time off so difficult to complete self-evaluations in that timeframe
  - Senator question – do you get a sense that the staff are not in a good mood? I think its somewhere between concerned and upset and insulted, concerns about financial well-being of the university. Could faculty senate create a priority in future to help staff feel they are rewarded and as strong contributing members of our university?
  - Senator question – some of frustration of staff in our meetings is that staff meetings are seen as “fun” but faculty are getting more information and transparency about what’s going on about the business of the university, also a feeling that staff are being “talked at” in the semester staff meetings
  - Senator comment – staff want more information about what’s going on at the university, rather than fun and giveaways
  - Senator question – why don’t we have one Baylor meeting where all are invited? That desire was expressed by Staff Council and has been advocating for 3 years
  - Senator question – do we know why the recording of the meeting was taken down? Because of the report given by Chris Holmes, they didn’t want that to be public – and so they are going to clip that part out and put it back up for faculty/staff to watch
  
- Questions for Chair:
  - Senator question – other instances of information removed online (statistics about intimate partner violence were taken down) – but we are teaching the next generation and our information is being filtered, particularly related to healthcare (another example, information from the CDC is being taken down and is not available too) – we will bring that up to the Provost at the next EC/Provost meeting
    - Senator comment – AAUP would say you should discuss it in class – state law on DEI exempts research and classroom discussion – and Baylor will back our faculty – AAUP does have an ongoing national suit about attacks on DEI at the federal level
  - Senator question – student internships have also been affected, such as internships at US AID

- Senator question – about retirement, some retirees are still involved in classes and department activities but they lose access to Box and to Zoom, maybe only retirees who continued to be involved should get access
- Senator question – we have a few retired faculty who have been asked to teach a class and they have to go through a provost interview and submit CV and materials, and do background check
- Senator question – we have a retired faculty member who wrote a textbook that is used in multiple sections, but she no longer has access to the software that is being used in the textbook once she retired
- Senator question – around shared governance, what did the deans ask us for? some colleges have some guidelines but there are questions, so they asked for categories of all the things college-level guidelines should cover
- Senator question – do we know when we will see the next iteration of the workload policy – approved at university level policy committee, and now at president’s council
- For a possible clinical workload policy - they said it is still in the works, it is very complicated

#### VI. New Business: 4:30 p.m.



##### a. Items from the floor

- Senator comment – I have had an endowed professorship for research for last 10 years, it gives me funding for 2 months in the summer for research, I have been asked repeatedly to sign a document from provost office stating that I have an administrative assignment as an endowed chair doing research (which is not correct), I have talked with multiple administrators at provost office and dean’s level, I will not sign a contract that says my endowed chair is an administrative assignment, OGC crafted this document, there should not be one template used for all administrators and endowed chairs but customized templates for each, I am fearful from the standpoint that if I sign it now and it says administrative assignment then what keeps them from asking me to do some administrative responsibilities within that 5 year appointment? (new pilot for contracts for endowed chairs when 5 year term review comes up)
- Senator comment – about global engagement, when I was in St. Andrews last semester students have to take a GBL 1 credit hour course (GBL 1102) that every student who goes abroad has to take, it has a text faculty don’t choose and assignments we don’t choose and faculty don’t grade anything for it (CGE runs the course), but a faculty member gets evaluated on the 1 hour course – needs to be removed from courses that are evaluated
- Senator comment – about benefits committee, last time there were questions about enrollment, our retirement benefits were lowered or paused, ask benefits committee when those decisions were made and if Senate was asked during that process?

- Senator comment – I’ve had bad experiences with the bookstore, students don’t have books because the bookstore doesn’t have enough books for my students, and some other concerns with the bookstore and students, bookstore does not seem to be serving our students in my opinion
- Senator comment – I believe in the current crisis we need an ad hoc committee on the impact upon faculty of changing federal and state policies, concerns coming out of DC and we would be well-served to appoint a committee looking at research and teaching issues and impact of state legislation
  - Discussion – Faculty senate EC is engaged in this discussion and sharing press releases and articles, could even start an EC Box folder of these articles – What would the goal be for this ad hoc committee? To preserve shared governance and academic freedom, could issue a report at end of semester, could gather information on which schools or which courses are being most impacted, all faculty and staff should be informed if ICE shows up at your office then there should be a university contact and guidelines on what to do in that scenario
    - I would appreciate my school administration saying something about the impact of federal/state changes on my course/students and providing guidance and direction, so can I say something to my students? I’m unsure
    - These are serious concerns but I suggest we allow our Senate leadership (EC) to speak to our administrators first before we form a committee, feels like it is too early for this approach – we have to be patient and see how things go
    - Similar analogy is what happened during COVID and a committee was formed to gather more info for the faculty
    - Our students are also nervous, in addition to faculty and staff having anxiety, so something at the university level could be useful for students as well, can we all come together on this?
    - Motion from the floor – Faculty Senate forms a faculty committee on the impact on faculty of changing government policies – votes in favor: 19, opposed: 18, abstain: 7 – so the motion passes by simple vote according to our bylaws
      - *Amendment to minutes – it was originally stated during the meeting that this motion did not pass, but it was amended to state that the motion did pass because only a simple majority vote was needed according to Senate bylaws*
- Senator comment – concern about dining halls no longer providing to-go cups with to-go meals to students or faculty – the answer someone was given is that Baylor is going green and moving away from non-reusable cups, so was told we can bring our own reusable cup to fill up

- Senator comment – I would like to propose that Senate respond formally to CFO’s stated intention to cut department operating budgets – may be a way to avoid cuts to staff positions?
- Senator comment – we need to address the issue of financial transparency, based on what we heard from the CFO last meeting
  - Senator comment – faculty should be a part of the budgeting process according to shared governance, could faculty be more involved in budgeting process – this could be an amendment to the motion – I have heard that the deans “count” as faculty representation
  - Motion is for the Senate to proactively and formally in writing respond to the CFO’s stated intention of cutting department operating budgets and include in response a recommendation for regular faculty members to be involved in the budgeting process (EC craft a statement consulting senators as necessary) – motion passes with strong majority

VII. Announcements: 4:55 p.m.

- a. Dates of FS Elections (March 4-5) (Senator Hunter)
  - a. Faculty Senate election will be held March 4-5<sup>th</sup> just before spring break. Have enough nominations for all open seats except for Academic Affairs. Nominations window closed Feb 11 at 5pm.
- b. Survey on Student Incivility (Senator Klausmeyer)
  - 92 responses, please forward the survey to more people to get higher response rate, survey will be in next newsletter as well
    - Senator question – is this survey for classroom interaction? Yes but you can take it to describe non classroom interactions with students too

Women’s Colloquium event: 2 follow-up sessions for senior lecturers getting their documents ready for promotion to teaching professor: Monday, March 17 3-5pm in Shoemaker Flex Commons and 10-12pm in Moody 104 (it is aimed at women faculty but we welcome all faculty to attend)

- c. March and April speakers
  - March – Joanie Pustejovsky, General Counsel and Paul Fox, Senior Director of Risk Management (Note: faculty are not looking closely at alternative lodging policy when they submit expense reports, so some are being rejected – better for faculty to talk preemptively about their alternative lodging needs before they travel)
  - April – Linda Livingstone, President; Nancy Brickhouse, Provost; William E. Mearse, Chair, Board of Regents

VIII. Adjourn: 5:00 p.m.