**Faculty Senate of the University of Texas at El Paso**

**Minutes of the Online Faculty Senate Meeting of February 8, 2022**

Meeting was held via Zoom: https://utep-edu.zoom.us/j/89322071871?pwd=U0lpQWk5VytDdjRsU3ErbWU4UktwZz09

Meeting ID: 893 2207 1871

Passcode: 396519

**1. Call to Order**. Núñez-Mchiri called the meeting to order at 1:32 p.m. (the new meeting time)

**2. Determination of a Quorum and Seating of Alternates**. A quorum being present, the alternates were seated.

**3. Consent Agenda**. Fleck moved that the minutes of the November meeting be accepted.

**4. Acceptance of the Agenda**. No amendments offered.

**5. Announcements**

A. Faculty Advisory Council Report: Núñez-Mchiri reported that the Faculty Advisory Council (FAC) comprise of UT faculty leasers is preparing a “Covid-19 Legacy Project.” This would document the impact Covid-19 has had on individuals in UT higher education. Some specifics that it would include are the need for “Covid Impact Statements” to be included in annual evaluations of faculty, extra time given to junior faculty on their tenure timelines, advocating that peer teaching evaluations be contextualized for spring 2020 and the 2020-21 and 2021-22 academic years, and given greater allowance to editorial delays in the acceptance of work for publication of research. UTEP faculty who would like to add to the draft statement are invited to do so. The FAC also had another presentation on the risks associated with Foreign Influence, a policy promulgated through the UT System. Faculty are urged to remain vigilant about the subtle effects foreign influence can have on their work and to report such contacts as required by law and policy.

B. Provost’s Office: Provost Wiebe and Vice-Provost Gates reported on a variety of topics. Wiebe reported that Environmental Health may not be contacting some individuals who would expect notification of Covid-positive individuals. This occurs when a student was not likely to have been shedding the virus or could not have been infected when they last attended a class, e. g. Testing efforts remain robust on campus and the campus positivity rate remains very low compared to our community and to the state. As the recent surge continues to abate, we can all be optimistic about campus health and safety. Also, Wiebe reported that there are new efforts to promote Open-Educational Resources (OER), at the state level (HB1027) and UTEP is working to comply with these mandates. Some faculty are already using free or low-cost materials and texts in their classes and the provost’s office is working to comply with the complex reporting requirements of the law (such as how publishers use the data gathered when students make use of OER materials). Toni Blum in the Provost’s office is coordinating this compliance reporting. The Library has a librarian whose main responsibility is with OER materials.

Gates reported on several matters. As the university responds to the results of the COACHE survey and listening sessions conducted recently, three main areas are the present focus. One is focused on Research and Creative Productivity and how to promote these, including the recent implementation of Faculty Development leave. A second has to do with Tenure and Promotion and how best to facilitate these, including associate professors’ seeking promotion to full professor, predictable employment for NTT faculty, and responding to the impact of Covid on T and P. A third area involves supporting and promoting interdisciplinary work on campus. Gates also reported on efforts to promote Inclusive Excellence at UTEP. DEI language is being developed for faculty annual review and efforts to retain an Ombudsperson are underway. Finally, the Center for Faculty Leadership and Development is undergoing a reorganization. With new help from Azuri Gonzalez as a co-Director, Creative Studios are being incorporated into this revamped CFLD, CFLD will have a new website and will be included in university efforts to build on the results of the COACHE survey, and, after UTEP received a large NSF grant, a new CFLD leader will be recruited. Workshop series will continue to be offered and the CFLD will consult on the university’s efforts around Reimagining the Core Curriculum. Warak asked how to find out more about the Inclusive Excellence Frameworks and Gates replied that she will forward that information.​

7B. Title IX Presentation: Gabriel Ramirez made a presentation about Title IX policy and compliance with SB 212 reporting requirements. The theme of this presentation was that everyone at UTEP should report any sexual misconduct that comes to their attention, even by accident, to the leaders of the Title IX office. Reporting is better than ignoring such information. It is possible for faculty who are aware of sexual misconduct and fail to report it to the Title IX office to have their employment terminated. UTEP’s Title IX office’s website has a portal for reporting information and there is a link in my.utep.edu for making reports as well.

5C. Faculty Forum: Olivarez reported on the results of the survey sent to faculty in early January and on the Faculty Forum held virtually on January 25, 2022. Faculty were definitely concerned, to greater or lesser extents, about the Covid-19 wave affecting the region late in 2021 and early in 2022 and offered a number of specific hopes and concerns in the face of that surge. These included requests for flexibility as the impact of the surge affected the faculty and hopes for clear messaging about use and availability of masks and vaccines. The forum, planned in early December before the recent surge of Covid infections, allowed faculty to speak about their ability to teach in this stressful time. The theme of the forum seemed to be our ability to “roll with the punches.”

**6. Committee Reports**

A. Undergraduate Curriculum Committee: Fleck reported on five sets of proposals from the College of Engineering that had received approval in the UGCC, including a minor in Robotics proposed by the Electrical and Computer Engineering department. Fleck moved that these be accepted and Contreras seconded. The motion passed unanimously. Fleck reported on four proposals from the College of Liberal Arts that had been approved in the UGCC. These included a significant revision and clarification of courses from Military Science and minor in Native American and Indigenous Studies. Fleck moved that these be accepted; Flores seconded the motion. It passed unanimously. Fleck also reported that the UGCC had approved a policy to streamline curricular changes, some of which would not need to go through the UGCC and Senate approval process. This proposed policy will be posted to the Senate website for review so that it can be voted on at the March meeting.

B. Academic Policy Committee: Badreldin reported on a policy concerning scheduling of classrooms that the APC had approved. It would try to account for more convenient location of classrooms so that, among other things, a faculty member would not be teaching back-to-back in classrooms located at different corners of the campus. Langford asked if the policy was feasible. Kreinovich pointed out that the policy only used language of “whenever feasible,” so if it were not feasible it would not apply in some cases. Wiebe added that the Registrar thinks the policy is feasible. One problem has been when a course is entered in the schedule with only a place-holder as the professor or if the professor teaching a course changes, it can create the problem the policy tries to address. Núñez-Mchiri added that it is important to try to give faculty the opportunity to request classrooms and their technology needs. Morales mentioned that weekend classes can create even more difficulties: small classrooms, not enough outlets for laptops, not enough space for luggage. The policy was approved unanimously.

**7. Reports**

B. Technology Update: Luis Hernandez and Francisco Poblano reported on how lectures can be recorded and uploaded. Just about every classroom on campus has the technology to record a lecture; faculty can go to academic technology’s office in the library to get a portable USB microphone for better audio. Cohen asked about the problem of Zoom taking a long time to download after a lecture, when there is only a ten-minute window between classes. Lectures can be recorded on Zoom, using the cloud or the computer being used. Hernandez encouraged faculty to use Yuja to upload Zoom lectures to then share them with students at a future date.

**8.      Faculty Acknowledgements**

Some quick acknowledgments were made.

**9.     Old or Unfinished Business**

None

**10.    New Business**

None

**11.     Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 3:07 p.m.

**Next Faculty Senate Meeting will be via Zoom on March 8th 1:30 pm**