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

**Minutes of the Online Faculty Senate Meeting of May 3, 2022**

Meeting was held via Zoom:

**1. Call to Order**. Núñez-Mchiri called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.

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

**3. Consent Agenda**. Fleck moved (Flores seconded) that the minutes of the April meeting be accepted. They were approved unanimously.

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

**5. Announcements**

A. Senate Appreciation Luncheon: Núñez-Mchiri announced that the Senate will sponsor a luncheon on May 6, 2022 at the Hilton Garden Inn from 11:00 to 1:00 to express appreciation for the service of our senators and to recognize faculty who are retiring or have recently done so.

B. Faculty Advisory Council Report: Núñez-Mchiri announced that the FAC is working on a statement in support of academic tenure in the state of Texas in response to recent political statements calling tenure’s value into question.

C. Provost’s Office: Provost Wiebe provided an institutional-level overview of a number of initiatives regarding curricular revision and innovation. The Provost’s Office has recruited faculty and applied for grants in an effort to support these revisions and innovations. He stated that these could be understood on three tracks. First, there is an effort to increase access and success in large classes. Recent discussions of Open Educational Resources (OER) fit here. An NSF grant for improving the STEM experience is part of this effort. Second, there is an effort to remove unintentional barriers. Some required classes have prerequisites that haven’t been examined in a long time or have accreted over time; these could be reconsidered. Some required classes cause “bottlenecks” and these could be addressed with better attention to scheduling and sequencing. A Title V grant to make use of “Curricular Analytics” is allowing the university to locate these unintentional barriers and provide this information to faculty curriculum committees. A third effort relates to making “Marketable Skills” more apparent. The university is exploring possible certificates and micro-credentials, such as “Data Analytics,” “Health Care Administration,” and credentials that are offered with the use of Coursera as possibilities for innovation. Wiebe noted that it has been many years, about a decade, since a holistic review of the core curriculum has taken place. One area that really needs attention is the category of “Institutional Component Option,” a nebulous category that needs some clearer language to describe its purpose. Núñez-Mchiri commented that faculty should take an interest in these processes, to make sure the curriculum does what the faculty experts want it to do. Kreinovich noted that some revision occurs in response to legislation. Wiebe added that some of the review will be bottom-up, with faculty in those areas proposing changes, and some will be institutional, with leadership identifying areas that need attention and providing resources to support faculty work in those areas.

D. UT System Endowment: President Wilson reported that the UT Regents have recently allocated several hundred million dollars of endowment to address student need. UTEP received about $55 million of this allocation, creating about $2.5 million dollars annually for new scholarships. These will be directed to students with annual family incomes under approximately $75,000 for their tuition and fees. Núñez-Mchiri asked whether UTEP could work toward creating scholarships for the children of UTEP faculty. Bajpeyj asked whether the new scholarships can go to international students; Wilson replied that they can only go to Texas residents, but that students who receive these scholarships may release other scholarships that could go to international students.

E. Graduation: The Senate is urged to attend commencement exercises and remind their colleagues to attend these events. Students appreciate seeing faculty at graduation.

**6. Committee Reports**

A. Undergraduate Curriculum Committee: Fleck presented eleven curriculum change proposals. These included creating CHIC 2311 as a course in the Social/Behavioral Sciences core; revising MUSL 3325’s description and adding MUSL 3335 (Regional Mexican Music); revising course descriptions of POLS 2310 and 2311; deactivating POLS 4326 and 4327 and revising POLS 3323 (Comparative Courts) to include some of the material from the deactivated courses; creating a Fast-Track from the B.S. in Industrial/Systems Engineering into the MBA to replace the previous joint program; changing BIOL 3357 to remove the forensic aspect of DNA analysis; modifying the prerequisites of BIOL 4319; creating BIOL 4300 (Bioinformatics); creating BIOL 4385 and 4185 (Waterfowl Ecology and Evolution and a Lab); changing ZOOL 4384’s name to Cellular Neuroscience; and transforming CHEM 2261 (Periodic Table) into a 3 unit version, CHEM 2361. These proposals received unanimous approval.

**7. Reports**

None

**8. Faculty Acknowledgements**

Several accomplishments were acknowledged.

**9. Old or Unfinished Business**

None

**10. New Business**

None

**11.Adjournment**

Kreinovich moved and Fleck seconded. The meeting adjourned at 2:13 p.m.