

Minutes of the Faculty Senate Meeting 2/21/19

Called to order with a quorum at 3:10 PM

Senator Kilbourne thanked Senator de Casal for taking minutes from previous meeting. I asked the Senators to provide me with a single copy of corrected minutes. Correction on page two, asked for all changes on a single copy.

- Motion: Senator Dennis moves to accept minutes, Senator Jackson as amended.
- Senator Boadi seconded
- Passed unanimously of those voting

News and announcements

Senator Sekman – Attended Board Meetings and summarized his analysis. Most of the conversation was handled in the morning meeting. He highlighted faculty concerns, specifically faculty layoffs. He asked the President and the Board about assuring no faculty lay-offs.

- Enrollment issues – Many member of the TSU faculty analyzed the enrollment trends and expressed concerns to me. Senator Sekman perSteady declines in head count enrollment. TSU head count enrollment deceased from 9,167 in Fall 2015 to 8,816 Fall 2018 over three years 15.30% decline over. MTSU head count decreased 3.92% from Fall 2015-2018. TSU head count enrollment decrease from 8,415 Spring 2015 to 6,537 in Spring 2019 TSU declined 22.32% from Spring 2015-2019 in 4 year . MTSU head count enrollment decrease 7.44% from Spring 2015-2019.

Why Comparing with MTSU – percentages and trends because they are not of comparable size.

- The fall to spring decline has accelerated. 4.49% in Fall 2012-Spring 2013 six years ago, in the following year 4.72%, 6.78%, 11.84%, 13.31%, 14.96%, to 15.98% to Fall 2018- Spring 2019. The decline is accelerating from fall to spring. The issue is not the freshman admissions. The issue is students from the fall is not returning. This is not due to higher admission standards. TSU denied only a total of 382 students in Fall 2018 and 99 students in Spring 2019. We accept 90% of all applicants with complete applications. The maximum number of students not enrolled due to acceptance issues is a minor factor.
- Graduate enrollments decline continuously in six years 2,043 in spring 2013 to 1,477 in spring 2019 declined by 27.7% in enrollment decline. The issue is not with tuition free community college. Faculty has reasonable concerns about their job security. We may have continued enrollment reductions. This could potentially results in faculty reductions. President Glover is committed to not reducing faculty. Is it reasonable that there will not be faculty lay-offs with enrollment declines? Due to decreased enrollments there will be budgetary cuts.

Senator Sekman – We need to be aware that the hiring calendar for faculty is different from other labor markets. It's important the President that faculty knows they are protected.

The faculty expects 15.3 million dollars in budget cuts in September 2018. The new budget should further clarify these issues. Are there more cuts? Is the modified budget produced in November going to be further modified?

- President Glover confirmed there will not be any lay-offs of tenured and tenure track faculty in the next academic years.

Senator Jackson – There is an anonymous letter circulating addressing concerns. Further, the President does not have the legal justification to make that promise.

Senator Burks – The Board will not pursue lay-offs in the immediate future, but will closely monitor the situation in the future.

Senator Jackson – The Board is backing President Glover's position.

Senator Burks - The Board is making promises for this year, but makes no promises for future academic year. There is a commitment from the Board to keep faculty during the coming academic years. The adjuncts and full-time temps are not protected.

Senator Young Siegler – I challenge the Faculty Senate to be vigilant about protecting jobs. We need to define the immediate future.

Senator Sekman - It is the shared understanding that this is the 2019-2020 academic year.

Senator Boadi – How might lay-offs of temporary faculty affect retention? How are we going to cover the classes that are currently covered by adjuncts and full-time temporary faculty? We need to balance teaching needs with use of adjuncts full-time temps. It's not that simple.

Senator Boadi expressed concern about faculty workloads if we do not use adjuncts. Many clas

Senator Jackson suggests that fewer students may result in less need for adjuncts. However, it is cheaper to keep adjuncts than use tenure line faculty. Full-time temporary faculty has historically faced an unfair situation.

Senator Jackson – The assumption is that if we have fewer students, we will need fewer temporary faculty. Each College will need to measure their situation. We need to balance the need for faculty relative to the cost of full-time temps and adjuncts. Human resources have never given full time temps any permanent status or protection. But, this is an existing inequality.

How much of the budget covers the current deficit? How much is anticipated by Mr. Chase?

Senator Sekman says they are on track with the budget considering the 15.3 million dollar deficit. However, does this cover future enrollment decreases? Do we need further budget adjustments?

Senator Burks explained how they made class-size larger to accommodate budgetary needs. Various senators expressed concerns about increased class size. A Senator asked about Teaching Assts. Most departments do not have teaching assistants.

Senator Lee said that increased class size may impact student success. This actually hurt retention.

Senator Burks – The desperation of the short term or the economics of desperation. It may not be best for long term survival.

Senator – A pay me now or pay me later approach.

Senator Chaires- How does the faculty senate make suggestions?

Dr. Burks – Go to the Budget committee.

– It the job of the budget committee to make suggests to about how to manage the budget. They are the committee to that advises administration about how to best allocate university resources.

Senator - What was the Board’s reaction to your (Senator Sekman) analysis?

Senator Sekman - The plan focused on recruitment. It’s a sensible plan typical of most college. However, this may not be the primary issue. It’s retention to a greater extent than recruitment that is driving decreased enrollments.

Senator Sekman highlighted the attrition between semesters, so that is as important at least relative to recruitment. Thus, a plan that focuses on recruitment may not be the best step forward.

Senator Brown – Questions about graduate school about Dr. Melton’s leaving the graduate school. Faculty expressed concerns about her leaving.

Senator Burks – What are the concerns? Is the issue wrongdoing or lack of transparency?

Senator Dennis stated the Dr. Melton expressed to the President that she will be retiring. She wants to be the transitional Dean. She planned to stay until the end of this year, rather than until 2020. What’s the plan after Dr. Melton leaves? Senator Kilbourne confirms she has been consistent about leaving in 2020.

Senator – Dr. Melton was clear that her position was temporary. She originally intended to stay to 2020, but she may leave earlier. This is all speculation.

Senator de Casal commented on her motivation for leaving.

Senator Jackson, we are getting into some fuzzy HR issues. We need to ask her about her plans. She never agreed to a specific timeline and was clear she was transitional. She will give notice.

Senators (several voices) – Is there any indication of what comes next?

Senator Jackson assures the Senate that she will give notice.

Senator Dennis - We are surprised that there is not a process in the works to replace her.

Senator Burks stated that job stress can aggravate health conditions.

Senator Sekman – Affirmed that Dr. Melton made significant improvements in the graduate school. It is one of the best appointments that have been made in a really long time. Her work with the graduate school is impressive. He hopes any replacement will be as excellent as this Vice President.

Senator Jane Jackson expressed her concerns about our lack of retention. We lose so many students, 20% between first and second semester, then 40% between Freshman and Sophomore year. Our students are not comparable to other students. Our students come in with higher needs. It's becoming a higher cost process to work with our students toward retention. They come from complicated environments. We have tried to add many tracking programs and initiative to support students toward retention. We added Degree Works, Sage, other software for student tracking. The coaching staff works outside of the Academic Advisors have had very good success with retention.

Academic advisement is best done in the department. More advising is back in the department. Senator Jackson talking about the difficulty of getting faculty did not use the alert system. At mid-term there were 5000 D's, F.s and W's. Faculty did not report in alert. The D, F or U would electronically put those into alert. The university tracked students who used tutoring. Only 270 students used tutoring, but we need a minimum of 1500 students to use tutoring. Dr. Guthrie provided empirical evidence that it took 8 tutoring sessions to pass English, and 10 sessions to pass math. We need to build a structure to address remediation after the state removed remediation as part of our mission. Why do we lose students? We wanted to automatically monitor the students. We are doing early assessment at three weeks, so students can get started before mid-term so they have sufficient time to improve their grade. AT mid-term it is too late to turn things around.

The coaches appeared to be a good investment. A coach can tell you everything about one of their students. This with early assessment will positively affect retention.

Senator Young-Seigler – Faculty didn't understand why we wanted the early assessment. We need to get them into the sessions as early as possible

Senator Kilbourne lauded the EAB system that was implemented. It allows us to see information about students across all their courses and their academic history.

Senator Jackson described the EAB system and explained the rationale for a slow roll out.

Senator Burks – Biggest issue. Prevoc – Show up and turn it in. Most students that fail don't show up or turn in their work. None of his students that showed up and turned in their work failed his class.

Senator Jackson - Senator Guthrie did a lot of work to revamp UNIV 1000. TBR recognized her contribution in this area.

What is the update on sick leave bank? Senator Burks will talk about this next time.

Anonymous letter

Why are we talking about the letter again? The President would like to be present when we discuss the letter. We have it on our agenda today. There is similarity with the letter and our discussions at the January 21st senate meeting. Senator Hayes concerns with the letter. The Board Chair did affirm that we are not going to lay off tenured or tenure track faculty in the next academic year.

Senator Triplett – We are discussing it because it’s on the agenda. Someone gave the President a copy of the letter. The Board Chair reiterated that there will not be lay-offs of tenure line faculty.

Senator Sekman confirmed that the Board assured us that there will not be lay-offs of tenure line faculty.

Senator Williams thought it might not appropriate to present an anon letter. However, Senator Burks name was on the letter. Senator Burks defended passing the letter out on the basis of transparency. This letter was slipped under Senator Triplett and Senator Burks door. The letter writer asked for it to be shared.

Senator Triplett - She is all for transparency. We did not sit around a table and write this letter. We decided to discuss this during the Faculty Meeting. What should the next move be with regard to this letter?

Senator Young-Sigler – We should consider it as faculty concerns. This is our job a faculty senators to address the concerns of faculty. We don’t need to consider this as a letter, but consider the concerns expressed in the letter. Obviously, someone had issues and concerns they wanted addressed.

Senator Jackson – What is the bottom line? People were concerned with the fundamental fairness about notice if we are going to have faculty cuts. Could we get notice if we need to look for employment? In the interests of fundamental fairness we need to allow people enough time to find jobs in the employment cycle for their discipline. Perhaps the concern was not about the promise of a job, but the understanding that there will be sufficient notice to find alternative employment. Dr. Burks

Senator Burks– Was the letter addressed?

Dr. Boadi – Problems with four day academic week. This hurts student achievement. The current schedule gives students a three day week-end. These students have needs, Friday no one come to tutoring. Can we look at four versus five days retention?

Senator Kilbourne – There are so many confounds. This would be a difficult analysis.

Senator Young-Sigler – Faculty complained that they were having activities when students were in class. Friday was designated for activities and meetings.

Senator Kilbourne – They are not restricting activities. Having all classes an hour and twenty minutes is difficult for our students.

- Discussion. Student success might be better rather than retention. Ask institutional effectiveness to see if there was an impact of the four day schedule.

How should we proceed to find out how faculty feels about all this?

Senator Dennis – In Agriculture they do not honor the four day schedule.

Various voices advocate for a future study.

Non instructional assignment. It's frozen for next academic year. Should we push for it next year? Senator Burks reviewed the policy? What was the cost? The cost may have been minimal because of decline in enrollments. Adjuncts may actually lower costs.

Senator De Causal – Adjuncts do not do all the work that faculty does, so are they really less expected? It may not be cost effective.

Senator Jackson – We need to have a certain ratio of adjuncts to faculty for accreditation.

Senator De Causal says that adjuncts may not be able to document

This was an initiative brought to the President by the Faculty Senate. The work done during non-instructional leave must be shown to benefit the university.

Put off until next year. The faculty senate needs to decide if this is something we want to push.

Senator Kilbourne says that it benefits us by allowing us the space to stay current to bring enthusiasm to their teaching and research.

Senator Boadi – Expressed his feelings about the importance of non-instructional leave.

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Concerns about Sponsored Research

Senator Kilbourne received concerns about sponsored research. These concerns are to be referred to Senator Williams.

We need to see what is going on? Are researchers getting appropriate support from sponsored research?

Senator Kilbourne stated that the faculty felt their projects were not adequately supported. She referred these concerns to Senator Williams

Senator Burk - Board Election rules – We made changes so Attorney Pendelton needs to approve. The We have to hold a special election. A quorum for the meeting is whoever shows up.

Dr. Burks – He will try to get a consensus.

Senator Burks The consulting company – objectives 1. Figure out ways to improve efficiency. 2. Improve customer service. 3. To find ways to buy outs for faculty.

Various Senator voices – We have dealt with some of these issues before?

Senator Jackson – Was this a financial initiative?

Senator Burks – It was all aimed toward financial issues.

Senator Boadi-Who did they talk to. How did they get the respondents?

Senator Kilbourne – How did they get the sample of who they interviews?

Senators expressed concerns about who they talked to.

Dr. Burks – good news there may be retirement incentives. We have more faculty over 69 than other institutions in the state. Many TSU faculty don't retire.

Senator Dennis argues that TSU don't retire because of our relatively low pay

Senator Brown – How long is the consulting going on. Senator Burks, it's over. He thinks they used McKenzie consulting.

Senator Brown – Revisited adequate notice. Perhaps an adhoc committee that would look at adequate notice. Senator Burks said it might be in the best interest that the Faculty Benefit Committee gets some wording about adequate notice in their holster.

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Senator Williams – What is the status of the faculty handbook?

Senator Kilbourne – A draft is nearly complete. I have had some questions. Several faculty have provided feedback. I am unclear about some administrative issues and have been talking to Dr.

Robinson, but need further results. Senator Young-Sigler is on the committee but has not received a draft. Kilbourne will get it to her this evening..

Dr. Burks will send out notice next week for nominations for the faculty Trustee. We will go over the criterion. Executive committee will meet to make decisions.

Two committee reports on the website. Twitter and blogspot.

Adjourned at 4:45 PM CST.