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Minutes

Faculty Senate

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11-30-2021

### November 30, 2021

Faculty Senate

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Agenda and Minutes  
Faculty Senate 2021-2022  
November 30, 2021

Members Present: Teshome Abebe, Todd Bruns, Brad Decker, Stephen Kozlowski, Nichole Mulvey, Alicia Neal, Jeanne Okrasinski, Andrew Parrish, Will Porter, Steve Scher, Jeff Stowell, Larry White, Prabin Karki

Guests: Coryn E Brock (DEN), Jay Gatrell (Provost), Linda Holloway (Office of Human Resources), Robert Le Cates (DEN), Kim Turner (CLAS, Staff Senate),

- I. Approval of minutes from 11/09; Motion by Senator Decker, Second by Senator Karki; approved unanimously and will be posted on Faculty Senate website.
- II. Committee reports
  - a. Exec (Bruns/Stowell/Mulvey)
    - i. Senator Bruns attended BOT meeting on November 12<sup>th</sup> and provided a few highlights of information shared.
      1. New Chief of Police was hired and will be starting on January 4
      2. Fall semester COVID numbers: 76% of students fully vaccinated, 78% of faculty/staff fully vaccinated; 1.3% positivity rate for semester, with a slight increase after Homecoming
      3. Ken Wetstein, Office of Advancement, gave a report on financial information; though there has been a decline in number of donors giving under \$1,000, overall donations have increased over previous years, with over \$1.2 million total.
      4. Alumni Association increased membership fee, with the membership increase difference to be used for student scholarships.
      5. Commencement is planned and will take place as intended on December 18<sup>th</sup> with great speaker, Lawrence Tucker.
    - ii. Senator Bruns will be holding a faculty meet-up for FDIC next week, focusing on service. This is a new program introduced by FDIC this year.
    - iii. SURS actuarial tables are changing on July 1. This could impact Tier I employees and if faculty are considering retiring, they are encouraged to speak with SURS.
    - iv. Plans for the new Science Building continue. This building is intended to be a south gateway to campus and tentative plans include a possible 3-4 story building south of Tarble.
    - v. CENCERE project is underway and working to develop more teaching spaces and will look to collaborate use with Lakeland College as well.
    - vi. Senator Stowell reported the textbook rental e-book/open educational resource pilot will involve about 13 courses in the spring. Data are collected from students at the end of the semester about using these resources.

1. Senate discussed asking FDIC to sponsor a workshop or more information about where faculty can find OER. Faculty are encouraged to reach out to library staff, who can assist faculty in finding specific resources.
  - vii. President Glassman asked for an appointment of a faculty member to upcoming Chief/Senior Diversity Officer search committee. Please contact Senator Bruns if you are interested in participating.
  - viii. Eric Davidson is looking to form a search committee for the hiring of counselor and requested a member from faculty senate who is interested in student mental health. Contact Senator Bruns if interested.
  - ix. FS discussed an email from a student in the environmental health and sustainability class regarding reducing plastic waste on campus. The student discussed a possible project of providing all of the EIU community with a reusable bottle to incentivize students to not use as much single use plastics. It was noted that, because of the pandemic, recyclable waste bins for plastic have been removed around campus. The student stated that they hoped to further incentivize students to use these types of bottles by talking to food services on campus to see if people could bring their bottles in and receive a discount of some kind for using them. The email asked for FS support/additional ideas related to this concern, as this would include a possible student fee for purchase of reusable bottles.
    1. FS discussed the feasibility of reusable water bottles actually decreasing the use of plastic water bottles based on convenience.
    2. Additional discussion occurred regarding if this is about water bottles or about availability of water fountains that would allow refilling of water bottles. Would installation of water refilling stations be more feasible?
    3. Senator Bruns will respond to the student with our discussion points and ideas.
  - b. Elections & Nominations (Stowell)
    - i. Senator Stowell sent an email to CLAS today looking to fill one open spot on Faculty Senate for Spring 2022.
  - c. Student & Staff Relations (Karki/Davis/Bruns)
    - i. Senator Karki provided an update of student senate activities. The last meeting was cancelled due to Wellness Days and they will meet later this week, so no report was provided.
  - d. Faculty Forum (Mulvey)
    - i. No report.
  - e. Awards (Bruns)
    - i. Senator Bruns is awaiting appointments from a couple of offices for specific campus awards and then planning can move forward.
- III. Provost's Report

- a. Provost Gatrell discussed a document about new, consolidated, and closed program updates since fall 2015 that was shared at the recent BOT meeting. There are 11 new or Reasonable and Moderate Extension programs, which comprises about 25% of our total enrollment for the university now. Changes in modality clearly had an impact in enrollment (offering more online program options) as well as flexibility and realignment in programming to meet student and societal needs. Senators asked questions about and discussed specific programming and consideration about future new programs. Senate also discussed specializations within programs and related growth in those areas as well as the APEER report.
  - b. Provost Gatrell provided context for recent mental health days considering anticipated Faculty Senate discussion. Given the strain on campus this semester for students, athletes, faculty, and staff and feedback from campus and community health care providers, the university determined to use mental health days to allow campus to pause and reflect on ways to improve as a community. The placement of the days in the middle of the week was intentional so that the EIU community could come together and participate in programming available. The communication about the mental health days occurred when it did because administration didn't want to provide information to the campus community without having programming in place available on those days. Provost Gatrell commended the Student Affairs office for their quick and responsive work in preparing for the programming and making services available. Faculty and students utilized the time available, with examples including faculty providing guided hikes around Lake Charleston, classes having brunch together, students participating in games and comradery on the quads, and craft activities in Union so well attended that they ran out of materials and supplies. Provost Gatrell noted that this is important, difficult work and thanked the faculty for providing space and grace to participate in those days.
- IV. Update: Naming Commission (Scher)
- a. Senator Scher provided a planned timeline for the naming committee's role. All of the potential names were reported in the DEN on Monday, November 30<sup>th</sup>. Members are researching the history of the 8 nominated name finalists and their relation and significance to the university and will provide feedback to President Glassman, who will then provide 3-4 of these names to the BOT for consideration at the January meeting. The intent is to have the BOT make a decision on a new name at their April meeting. Any faculty who wish to discuss the name finalists are encouraged to reach out to Senator Scher.
- V. Guest Speakers: HR Director Linda Holloway from the Benefits Office
- a. Linda Holloway shared information about the employee assistance program with a brand new provider, GuidanceResources Program. Some benefits include:
    - i. Five free counseling session per incident (e.g., divorce, financial stress) per year. At end of free visits, will help you find a provider within your insurance plan to find local providers.
    - ii. Financial counseling and legal guidance

- iii. Many other resources are available and the document with ways to find and utilize this resource will be shared via the faculty and chair listserv.
  - b. Linda Holloway also discussed mental health difficulties and that FMLA can be used by most faculty and employees. If you have worked 1250 hours and been employed for last 12 months, you are eligible for FMLA leave for more severe mental health concerns. Please contact her office with questions.
  - c. Senator Abebe mentioned a very positive interaction with payroll he hopes Linda will mention to her employees and asked Linda for taking the time to attend the meeting and share resources.
  - d. Senator Stowell suggested of offering a yearly or semester-based review of benefits for faculty. Linda Holloway will return to Faculty Senate in April with updates prior to the enrollment cycle starting in May.
- VI. Discussion: Follow-up to the pre-Thanksgiving mental health days (Bruns)
  - a. Senator White brought up the impact on evening classes, which was actually Monday at 5:00 instead of just Tuesday and Wednesday; Provost Gatrell noted that communication could be better, and this will be taken into consideration, if needed, in the future.
  - b. Senator Bruns attended many mental health events and discussed the positive observations on student mental health at these events.
  - c. Senator Scher discussed observed effects of the mental health days on faculty and staff and how this was not the same break that students received. Faculty and staff were given short notice of the change and were still expected to be present in office hours, during class times, report to jobs as scheduled, etc., while also determining how to move forward with a cancelled class. Provost Gatrell acknowledged this concern and reality and will be considered, if needed, in the future as well.
- VII. Other discussion items:
  - a. Senator White asked about communication about MOU with UPI when preparing for Spring; Chairs received information around October 27th; MOU was placed on HR website by Melissa Gordon at the end of October; Linda Holloway discussed that there will be increased focus on communication from HR office.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:37 p.m.