

Faculty Senate President's Meeting Notes

April 4, 2022

Submitted by K. Craven

Members Present:

Dan Allcott, Michael Allen, Sean Alley, Troy Brachey, Chris Brown, Debra Bryant, Steve Canfield, Melissa Comer, April Crocket, Kris Craven, Dennis Duncan, Mary Lou Fornehed, Steven Garner, Scott Hagarty, David Hajdik, Syed Rafay Hasan, Katherine Hermann-Turner, Tammy Howard, Janet Isbell, Christy Killman, Matt Langford, Emily Lee, Jane Liu, Mark Loftis, Jeanette Luna, Lori Maxwell, Jennifer Meadows, Holly Mills, Linda Null, Joseph Ojo, Kristin Pickering, Elizabeth Ramsey, Richard Rand, Christopher Reames, Lee Ann Shipley, Drew Sisk, Scott Smith, Troy Smith, Sandi Smith-Andrews, Holly Stretz, Dan Swartling, Lenly Weathers, Robert Wilbanks, Kimberly Winkle, Russ Witcher, Laith Zuraikat

Members Absent:

Stephanie Adams, Douglas Airhart, Yun Ding, Samantha Hutson, Ann Manginelli, Brian

Guests Present: Lee Wray Chief of Staff

Call to Order

Call to order 3:35 p.m.

Updates from President Luna

1. Council voting complete for each College
2. Council voting ongoing for at-large members
3. Nominations being accepted for Senate President-Elect (ad hoc nominating committee Smith-Andrews, Hajdik, Null)

Policy 780 Misconduct in Research The special called meeting was canceled at the request of Dr. Taylor, VP of Research and Economic Development. She has convened a committee of faculty to continue reviewing the policy and provide additional updates. This will be revisited next year.

Remarks from President Oldham

control. The administration is still looking at reallocating funds to cover the 4% raises without being able to increase tuition.

As of now, the enrollment for next year looks good. Applications are approximately 10% above the historic high value. Unfortunately, Brandon Johnson, Vice President of Enrollment Management, is leaving and a search is planned for the fall. Karen Lykins, Chief Communications Officer, has been appointed to serve until a search can be completed. Senate President Luna expressed the sentiment that the Senate will miss the work of Dr. Johnson. He has been valuable for the university. She praised the work on Preview Day and the success that those events have had.

President Oldham then presented the Senate with the Personal Campaign program by Karen Lykins. This encourages faculty to send personal notes (postcards) to incoming freshman and other prospective students. This has been very well received and there has been feedback from current students of its success in influencing their decision to attend Tech. All Tech faculty are encouraged to participate.

Board Representative Allcott agreed that these are all very impressive and provide hope for the future. They generate a great energy on campus and make it easier for the entire campus to work harder.

Question: You mentioned overruns on the Engineering Building. Where is the money coming from?

Response: The project was looking to be \$10M over the original bid. The architects and construction company have been working together to rearrange some of the budget allocations and contingency funds. This has been trimmed down to approximately \$3M and they feel that we will be able to raise the additional funds.

2021 Salary Pool and Adjustments

it seems that some units had mean salary increases lower than 4% and some higher than 4%.

Why are some units getting raises greater than 4%?

2. There are rumors of very large raises (some greater than \$15k or \$20k). How many of these raises occurred, and what is the justification?

President Oldham assured the Senate that he is looking into these concerns. The information was premature as the data was not vetted. From his cursory look, there are a number of omissions and errors in the data causing it to be misleading. He cautions the Senators from making conclusions based on this data. It is true that the mean raise was 4% and based on his spot check so far, that is what he found. He has requested a full formal review and will be receiving a report as soon as it is complete. In addition to the moneys received from the raises, there are additional salary adjustments for some individuals including promotion, equity, reclassification, etc. It is his belief that the raises followed the allowable guidelines of 1% to 7% individually to not exceed an average of 4% for each unit. There are adjustments every year. The equity adjustments are not from the raise pool. HR calculates equity but the primary driver is protected classes like race and gender. There have been some recent hirings that stimulated a need for raising salaries in individual units. To attract talented candidates in some areas there is a need to deviate from the normal salary range, then we must look at everyone else in that unit. Faculty are generally not a part of the equity considerations. However, this occurred in the past in departments like marketing. There was a recent situation in nursing. With faculty, there is more frequent hiring which keeps the salaries tighter to the market average.

Comment: A Senator from the College of Nursing clarified that the equity raises given in that

Question: Were the AVP for HR, the CFO, and the President the signatories to the 2021 raises?

Response

fair market wages according to CUPA data. What source is the administration using to determine the market value for salaries in various positions? The individual amounts some personnel received last year are far beyond the 7% cap set of the Board of Trustees. President Oldham again stated that he cannot verify the numbers and believes there are other factors beyond the actual raise amount in the data.

Senate President Luna clarified that the data was originally

Response: The budget office anticipates costs and builds them into the budget. When there are new buildings being opened, the utility costs start in advance to build. We are in good shape.

Question: The issue of morale is being discussed in the chat. Are there plans to address this concern?

Response: This is a tricky one. Some are planning to leave because of personal r control. The attrition in faculty is currently at about 3%, which is relatively low. The staff is higher and closer to 9%. Again, this is a different market with different needs and concerns. Each department has a unique culture and environment. Many factors affect morale like resources, salaries, etc. It is not always possible to determine the factors causing the low morale.

Question (from Chat)
misleading?

Response: Half the drop is through enrollment decreasing, half is through faculty hires.

Comment: There are morale and finance issues with hiring and keeping faculty. I hope this gets your attention. We need you to advocate for us. In the Board of Trustees meetings, the state laws are sometimes misquoted. Our requests about the strategy with raises go ignored. It is important to call out these miscommunications. When all of the raise considerations are on merit, it is detrimental to morale.

Question (from Chat): What about campus police? They are short staffed and officers are leaving because of the low pay. With campus spreading out, what about comparable pay for the people that we totally need but cannot seem to get or keep?

Response: This is an area of focus for that reason. Not all the reasons are based on salary. There is a unique person who can do that job. We must be selective with the candidates that we choose. We are doing an analysis to become more competitive in the market. It is hard to find a good fit. The younger candidates say our campus is too quiet, they want a more energetic scene.

Response

for the full report.

Update on Tennessee Senate Bill 2290

1. Now that this bill has passed, what impact(s) can we expect on campus?
2. Other questions from Senators

Senate President Luna said there was an update in Cabinet today. University Counsel Perdue has again offered to have a session with any department about the implications of this bill. The original bill had a provision for a disciplinary committee, but that was removed before it went to the vote.

Comment: Yes, that is true. However, there was an

Comment: We need to watch the legislature. The first challenge in the House was to a K-12 version where they did not want them to discuss Martin Luther King, Jr.

Comment: Yes. This could then extend to Rosa Parks. It is a solution looking for a problem. College students are adults, so why are we trying to protect them from ideas?

Adjourned at 5:27 p.m.

Approved: April 18, 2022