

MSU Faculty Senate

February 2020 Minutes

The 2020-2021 MSU Faculty Senate met at 3:00 PM on February 11, 2020 via Zoom.

Senators present:

Chuck Bultena	Timothy Hinchman	Karen Moriarty
Dave Carlston	Tina Johnson	Kimberly Onstott
Sarah Cobb	Tammy Kurzewski	Morgan Page
Vicki Dillard (proxy for Lynette Watts)	Adam Lei	John Schulze
Mary Draper	Marcos Lopez	Beverly Stiles
Catherine Gaharan	Matthew Luttrell	Christopher Vivio
Terry Griffin	Janise McIntyre	Tiffany Ziegler
	Kelly Medellin	

Guests:

Melissa Nivens (Writing Program Administrator)

Ruby Garrett (Staff Senate Representative)

Call to order: 3:05 PM

Housekeeping:

Senator McIntyre moved to accept the minutes. The motion carried.

Senator Cobb moved to accept the agenda. The motion passes.

Current Business:

1. Writing Intensive Courses—Dr. Melissa Nivens

Dr. Nivens presented the proposal to establish writing-intensive courses as an option for students to fulfill the Writing Proficiency Requirement towards graduation. The proposal has been sent to the Provost and Deans.

In addition to passing the Writing Proficiency Exam or taking ENGL 2113, students will be able fulfill the writing proficiency requirement by passing two courses designated writing-intensive. In a pilot program in the College of Health Sciences and Human Services, passing rates and quality of writing were comparable to the results of the writing proficiency exam.

Professional development opportunities will be offered for faculty who want more information on how to assign and assess writing.

The proposal will also move the Writing Proficiency Exam to online administration.

A senator asked whether courses that had previously considered were now designated as writing-intensive. Dr. Nivens stated that those courses would need to be submitted for formal approval and that the process for doing so was now available.

A senator asked about the rubric that would be required to assess student writing in writing-intensive courses. Dr. Nivens stated that the rubric would be flexible, but would be needed in order to collect data to assess the success of the program.

2. Budget Oversight Committee Report—Dr. Sarah Cobb

Senator Cobb reported on the requests the Budget Oversight Committee had received for strategic budget investments.

Senator Cobb stated that many of the requests were for things that had been part of pre-covid budgets, such as travel, scholarship money, or authorization to fill vacant positions. Many of the deans emphasized the need for specialized recruiting support in their colleges, as well as website and social media support. Several deans also stated that compensation for department chairs should be increased.

The Provost discussed the increase in spending on adjunct and lecturer contracts over the last several years.

Several presentations emphasized the importance of keeping what was beneficial from the transition to pandemic operations.

3. Tenure and Promotion Review Committee

Senator Carlston stated that the Tenure and Promotion Policy Review Committee is now meeting every other week and has been circulating drafts of the policy to some faculty for comment.

Senator Carlston encouraged senators to discuss the policy with their college representatives.

4. Course Evaluations Follow-up

The faculty senate has discussed ideas several times recently about ways to improve the utility of course evaluations. Senator Carlston moved that the senate ask the Provost to create a committee to review the current evaluation practices. The motion carried.

Senators Page, McIntyre, and Moriarty expressed interest in serving on the committee.

5. Policy Review Process and Volunteer Recruitment

Senator Carlston stated that as the process of aligning policies with Texas Tech continues, there will be a large number of policies that need to be reviewed. He asked for

volunteers to review and offer feedback on those policies. Senators Kurszewski, Medellin, Moriarty, Onstott, and Watts stated that they were willing to work on this process.

6. Office Hours Policies

Senator Carlston stated that the latest draft of the office hours policy from the Deans requires only five hours per week occurring on three different weekdays. The requirement for residence hours has been dropped.

Senator Cobb moved to approve this draft.

Several senators expressed concern about the required three days each week, especially as it applies to online faculty and others whose schedule does not require campus presence for teaching. A senator moved to amend the proposed policy to require that the schedule requirements be determined “in conjunction with faculty.”

The motion to amend passed. The amended motion passed.

7. Faculty Workload Followup

Senator Carlston moved to create a subcommittee to review the recommendations of the workload committee and make recommendations at the March meeting. The motion passed. Senators Carlston, Griffin, Hinchman, and Luttrell volunteered to serve on the subcommittee.

Committee and Other Reports:

1. Administrative Council (Dr. Carlston):

No report

2. Board of Regents (Dr. Carlston):

Dr. Carlston directed the attention of the senate to the enrollment report in the board book, which included a breakdown of how students were admitted and what the retention rate was. Dr. Carlston also commented on a shift in culture during the board meeting towards an advisory function in light of MSU’s intention to join the Texas Tech University System.

3. Academic Council (Dr. Lopez)

No report

4. Financial Report (Dr. Stiles):

Dr. Stiles commented that the senate account has adequate funds for appreciation gifts for staff who have made exceptional contributions in the university’s transition to pandemic operations.

5. Other Active Committees:

None.

Old Business:

New Business:

The motion to adjourn passed unanimously.

Submitted,
Sarah Cobb,
Faculty Senate Secretary

Dave Carlston,
Faculty Senate Chair

Next Meetings:

The next **Executive Committee meeting** will be at 3:00 PM on Friday, March 5 via Zoom.

The next **Faculty Senate meeting** will be at 3:00 PM on Thursday, March 11 via Zoom.