

MSU Faculty Senate

January 2021 Minutes (Draft for Approval)

The 2020-2021 MSU Faculty Senate met at 3:00 PM on January 14, 2021 via Zoom.

Senators present:

Chuck Bultena	Tina Johnson	Karen Moriarty
Dave Carlston	Erica Judie	Michael Olson
Sarah Cobb	Attapol Kuanliang	Morgan Page
Eduardo Colmenares	Tammy Kurzewski	Beverly Stiles
Mary Draper	Adam Lei	Christopher Vivio
Catherine Gaharan	Marcos Lopez	Lynette Watts
Terry Griffin	Janise McIntyre	Tiffany Ziegler
Timothy Hinchman	Kelly Medellin	

Guests:

Tony Vidmar (Vice President for University Advancement and Public Affairs)

Barry Macha (University General Counsel)

Angie Reay (Director, Redwine Wellness Center)

Ruby Garrett (Staff Senate Representative)

Call to order: 3:00 PM

Housekeeping:

Senator Watts moved to accept the minutes and agenda. The motion passed.

Current Business:

1. Youth Protection Policy (Angie Reay)

Ms. Reay stated that this policy is an update to the Minors on Campus policy prompted by an audit of the procedures. The policy is based on a handbook developed by the University of Texas, with training based on the training used by the Texas A&M University System.

An important part of the policy is the required youth protection training. The training is good for two years and includes a background check. The cost of the background check will be covered by the university for employees, but must be paid by individual departments for non-employee volunteers.

A senator expressed concern that the logistics of releasing minors only to parents and legal guardians would be difficult for most one-time programs. Ms. Reay responded that forms have been created to facilitate this and that the purpose is to make sure that minors are properly supervised until they depart an event.

A senator asked whether this applied to off-campus events, and Ms. Reay responded that it does, and that this is a change from the previous policy.

Senator Griffin moved to accept the proposed policy and the motion carried.

2. Honorific and Gift-Related Namings Policy (Tony Vidmar)

Mr. Vidmar stated that the updated policy is part of a scheduled review of policy and contains few major changes.

Senator Lopez moved to accept the proposed policy and the motion carried.

3. Tenure and Promotion Review Committee Update

The Tenure and Promotion Policy Review Committee has begun to meet. The senate will ask the committee to provide regular updates on its progress and plans.

Senator Carlston remarked that it will be very important for the committee to keep stakeholders informed as the policy takes shape.

4. Review of Initiatives (Carlston)

Senator Carlston reminded the senate of the various initiatives in which the senate is currently involved.

- a) Faculty Workload: The Faculty Workload Committee completed work in May 2020. It is not yet clear how this will impact policy or the Tenure and Promotion revision process. The committee's recommendation was to move to a more flexible distribution of workload for faculty members. The senate will revisit the topic at its February meeting.
- b) Tenure and Promotion Review: The review is in process. We will ask the committee to keep us informed about their progress.
- c) Office Hours: Provost Johnston has our latest proposal and will bring it to the deans.
- d) Faculty Expectations: The Faculty Senate has expressed willingness to discuss expectations of faculty separate from the office hours policy. It is not clear how this will be connected to workload and Tenure and Promotion Policy revision.
- e) Faculty Ombudsperson: Provost Johnston is working on creating the faculty ombudsperson position.
- f) Electronic Forms/Paperwork Processing: The Faculty Senate has been asking for a transition to paperless forms for several years now. Progress has occurred, but has been slow. The Senate will continue to push for increased use of paperless forms.
- g) Course Evaluations: Faculty have not yet received feedback from their Fall semester course evaluations, and that feedback is now too late to be useful in

planning classes for this semester. Several senators mentioned other frustrations with the course evaluation process.

- h) College Teaching/Research Awards: The awards requested by the Faculty Senate have been established and were awarded last year by each college. A senator suggested that senators should check in on the process in their respective colleges.
- i) IT Support in Colleges: The Faculty Senate has asked for an IT person to be assigned to each college to be readily available for issues with classroom technology. Progress on this has been slow.
- j) Policy on Policies: This has not been discussed much in the last year and may wait until the possible merger with the Texas Tech University System is complete.
- k) Shared Governance Policy: This also has not been discussed much in the last year and may wait until the possible merger with the Texas Tech University System is complete.
- l) Transition Appreciation: The executive committee is continuing to work on expressing appreciation to staff for exceptional work during the transition to Covid-19 operations.
- m) Miscellaneous:
 - A senator expressed concern about international students whose visa status prevented them from being present on campus. No clear guidance has been given on accommodating those students in fully or partly face-to-face classes. Another senator commented that this is also the case for absence from class for other reasons, including vulnerability to or fear of Covid-19.
 - A senator stated that communicating with students about course modality remains challenging.
 - A senator commented that communication between faculty and the administration, while it has improved recently, is still often unclear or unfocused.

Committee and Other Reports:

1. Administrative Council (Dr. Carlston):

No meeting.

2. Board of Regents (Dr. Carlston):

No meeting.

3. Academic Council (Dr. Lopez):

The Academic Council did not make any major changes.

4. Other active committees:

None.

5. Financial Report (Dr. Stiles):

No Report

Old Business:

None

New Business:

The senators from West College of Education will present the faculty award to Dr. Blacklock.

A senator stated that students should report any Covid-19 cases or exposure to the university, and that faculty should make sure that students know how to do this.

A senator asked whether the directory system for uploading syllabi could be improved. Senator Griffin stated that he would investigate this.

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 Thursday, February 4 via Zoom.

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