

## Report on Fall 2018 Activities of the Faculty Senate

Submitted By

Dayna Oscherwitz, President (2018-2019)

**President of the Senate:** Dayna Oscherwitz

**President Elect of the Senate:** Tim Rosendale

**Immediate Past-President of the Senate:** Paul Krueger

**Administrative Assistant to the Senate:** Julie Maynard

**Senate Executive Committee:** Susana Solera-Adoboe, Michael Braun, Grant Hayden, James Lee, Brian Molanphy, Abby Pruitt, Matthew Wilson

Believing that the university is best served by a cooperative and collaborative relationship among the Senate and other constituencies, the Senate has been very busy this year profiting from the shared desire of university administration, including President Turner, Vice President for Student Affairs, K.C. Mmeje, Associate Vice President for Facilities, Michael Molina, Provost Steve Currall, Associate Provosts Sheri Kunovich, Peter Moore, and Doug Reinelt and other members of the Provost's Office. The Senate has also worked with and heard from members of the Student Senate and diverse faculty. Our activities may be clustered into several categories: the activities of the full Senate, the activities of the President of the Senate, the activities of the Senate Executive Committee, and the activities of the Senate committees. I will detail activities from Fall 2018 by exploring the activities of each of these groups.

### **Activities of the Senate**

**Speakers:** The Senate has hosted a number of speakers this year. Associate Provost Peter Moore addressed the Senate in October regarding the Common Curriculum proposal. He answered questions from Senators and, at the request of Senators, organized additional town hall meetings prior to the faculty vote on the curriculum.

Dean of Students Ad Interim Dr. Evelyn Ashley and Director of Student Support Elsie Johnson spoke to the Senate in September. Elsie Johnson discussed new initiatives by the Students Affairs Office and discussed the importance of working with faculty to reach students with difficulties, through the Caring Community Connections (CCC) program, and addressing academic misconduct issues through the Faculty Disposition reporting and Referrals to the Honor Council. They informed the Senate about faculty notifications regarding pregnant and

parenting students, and the obligation (under Title IX) to provide academic adjustments for pregnant students who need and request them.

Associate Provost of General Education and Curricular Innovation Peter Moore spoke to the Senate in October. He presented the final version of the Common Curriculum proposal and outlined procedures for the faculty vote on the curriculum. He agreed to schedule, at the request of Senators, additional town hall meetings prior to the vote. He also took questions from the faculty.

Chief Information Office Michael Hites spoke to the Senate in October. He presented the OIT 2018 Progress Report and talked about the Academic Technology Council and the OIT Governance framework. He explained how faculty can navigate the services and support provided by OIT. He also discussed some projects in-progress and new tools that will be available to faculty. He also took questions from faculty.

Associate Vice President of Human Resources Sheri Starkey also spoke to the Senate in October. Ashley Mason, SMU's benefits liaison also spoke. They presented the changes to faculty benefits, and noted there would only be a modest (2%) increase in premiums. They also presented changes like the decoupling of the identity protection service from the legal services, and they took questions from the faculty.

In November, Associate Vice President for Facilities, Michael Molina spoke to the Senate. He briefed Senators on the current status of SMU facilities and facilities operations, and he outlined planned capital improvements as well as process improvements. He also answered questions from Senators.

In December, Sue Bierman, Director of the Altschuler Learning and Enhancement Center (ALEC) and Alexa Taylor, Senior Associate Director of the SMU Office Disability Accommodation and Success Strategies (DASS) briefed the Senate on DASS procedures for determining students' eligibility for services and the increasing demands for DASS services, and the limitations of their current space. They explained to faculty that one particular challenge is that DASS was never intended to function as a testing center, and that it does not have space to house all students needing testing accommodations.

### **Resolutions and Actions:**

In a special meeting in May, the Senate passed a resolution rescinding the Honorary Degree awarded to Bill Cosby by SMU in 1995. Passage of this resolution required the Senate to revise the bylaws to create a process by which and conditions under which honorary degrees may be rescinded. The revisions were passed at the same meeting as the resolution.

A resolution, sponsored by Matthew Wilson, affirming the importance of graduate students to the university's mission and of providing health insurance to all Ph.D and MFA students was passed by the Senate in October. This resolution supported a budget request, also passed by the Senate, to fund health insurance for Ph.D and MFA students.

A resolution, sponsored by the Senate Executive Committee, honoring Associate Provost Peter Moore and the members of the General Education Review Task Force was passed by the Senate at the November meeting.

A resolution, sponsored by Beth Newman, affirming the efforts of Student Affairs to increase awareness about sexual consent and to prevent sexual violence was also passed by the Senate at the November meeting.

At the December meeting, The Senate approved a recommended syllabus statement advising pregnant and parenting students of their ability to request academic adjustments through the Office of the Dean of Students. The approved statement also reminds faculty and students that pregnant students are covered under Title IX.

The Senate also approved a draft of the AY 2020-2021 academic Calendar at the December meeting and voted on Honorary Degree nominations made by the Senate Honorary Degrees Committee and approved by the Senate Executive Committee.

### **Activities of the Senate Executive Committee**

The Senate Executive Committee has also hosted a number of speakers. They have hosted Peter Moore, Michael Molina and Michael Hites for more detailed discussions about the Common Curriculum proposal and vote, SMU Facilities and OIT. They have also hosted Vice President of Student Affairs, K.C. Mmeje for discussions about the strategic direction of Student Affairs as well as efforts to implement theme-based housing for students in the SMU Honors program. Both President Turner and Provost Currall have also met with the Senate Executive Committee to discuss the future of the university and issues ranging from funding of the libraries, to the role and status of non-tenure line faculty. The Executive Committee has also heard Senate reports from the Chairs of the Honorary Degrees Committee, the Calendar Committee (Ian Harris), and the Admissions and Financial Aid Committee (Eli Olinick).

In addition to speakers, the Senate Executive Committee visited the Innovation Gymnasium, in the Lyle School of Engineering, at the invitation of Provost Currall, Associate Provost Kunovich, and Director of Engaged Learning Jen Ebinger. Following that visit, we had a productive discussion about innovation and community engagement at SMU.

The Senate Executive Committee has had also had a number of discussions on matters ranging from the tenure process at SMU to the mandatory reporting requirement under SMU's Title IX policy.

### **Activities of the Senate Committees**

Senate Committees have also been busy this past Fall. Dennis Foster, Chair of the Student Policies Committee, has had regular meetings with Vice President of Student Affairs, K.C. Mmeje. Members of the Senate Student Policies Committee worked closely with Vice President Mmeje to participate in a search for a new Associate Vice President and Dean of Students.

The Academic Policies Committee, chaired by Matt Lockhart, has worked closely with Assistant Provost Vicki Hill and others to review and propose revisions to SMU's post-matriculation transfer credit policy.

The Senate Athletics Committee, chaired by Luigi Manzetti, has worked closely with Rick Hart, the SMU Athletics Council, and the Athletics staff and with Associate Provost Sheri Kunovich, to make sure that university policies governing student athletes are consistent and fair.

The Calendar Subcommittee, Chaired by Ian Harris, recommended a calendar for AY 2020.

The Faculty Benefits Subcommittee, Chaired by Joanna Grossman, worked with Associate Vice President of Human Resources, Sheri Starkey, to coordinate faculty benefits for 2019.

The Subcommittee on Admissions and Financial Aid, Chaired by Eli Olinick, has worked with Vice President of Admissions, Wes Waggoner, to ensure another successful recruiting and admissions cycle.

The Subcommittee on the Economic Status of the Faculty has worked with the Provost's Salary Task Force to analyze equity in faculty salaries at the university.

### **Activities of the President of the Senate**

As President of the Senate, I have met monthly with President Turner and Provost Currall. I have, in those meetings, actively conveyed requests, concerns, and topics of interest of the faculty. Following from the recommendations of the Senate Ad Hoc Committee on the status of non-tenure line faculty, I have requested the formation of a task force to evaluate the role and status of non-tenure line faculty and to offer ways to optimize that role within the university. I have conveyed a request from the faculty that Deans whose contracts have reached their term be formally reviewed, and that such reviews solicit and consider input from the faculty. I have also met regularly with Associate Provost Doug Reinelt. We have discussed such topics as training for Department Chairs.

I, along with Past President of the Senate, Paul Krueger, have also, along with members of the Student Senate, met monthly with Associate Vice President Michael Molina to identify areas of need and possible improvement under SMU Facilities. Improvements to some of the older buildings on campus, most notably Clements Hall, have resulted from these meetings.

Past-President Krueger and I have also worked with Associate Provost Reinelt, Assistant Provost Daniel Eady, and Director of Institutional Research, Michael Tumeo, along with representatives from the other Colonial Group Universities, to create a faculty survey that will be administered in the Spring of 2019. The survey will be analyzed by a joint task force and the results communicated to faculty and used to determine areas of strength and opportunity. I have also met regularly with the University Athletics Council, the Academic Technology Committee, and the Incident Planning Committee.

## **Conclusion**

As the summary of activities should indicate, the Senate has had a busy and productive Fall Semester. We look forward to continuing our work in the Spring. I encourage all members of the faculty to communicate regularly with their Senators and with the Senate Committees, should they have questions or concerns regarding matters that fall under the jurisdiction of the Senate. The Senate is the voice of the faculty at SMU, and it is our privilege and pleasure to represent all of you in the shared governance model at the university.