

## Report on Spring 2019 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

This semester, the Senate continued to exercise its role as a strong and active partner in SMU's shared governance system. The Senate worked with 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, Assistant Provost Vicki Hill, 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 Spring 2019 by exploring the activities of each of these groups.

### **Activities of the Senate**

**Speakers:** The Senate hosted a number of speakers in the Spring, as they did in the Fall.

Vice President Christine Regis came to the Senate in February to present the budget and to answer Senator questions about University finances and the overall budgeting process at the university.

Provost Steve Currall along with Associate Provost Sheri Kunovich and Associate Vice President Jim Quick joined the Senate for a wide-ranging discussion of academic issues in March, including strategies for improving student success and retention and the implementation of a graduate school at SMU.

President Turner came to the Senate in April to respond to a series of direct questions sent by Senators, including questions on

Vice President Wes Waggoner addressed the Senate in April and briefed them on the planned transition to a direct admission process in the Cox School of Business (planned for implementation beginning with the class entering in Fall 2020). He presented the data on the projected consequences of this change on university enrollments, and he presented the strategy SMU will use to try to attract students to majors other than Business.

Vice President K.C. Mmeje also addressed the Senate in April, along with Cathy Soutter, SMU's Director of Counseling, and Associate Dean Randy P. Jones, Director of the Bob Smith Health Center. They shared with the Senate the results of an external review of SMU's mental health services, and the changes to those programs implemented as a result. They offered evidence to suggest that these changes have improved the quality and availability of these services to students.

### **Resolutions and Actions:**

The Senate passed several resolutions in the Spring. Following the recommendation of the Academic Policies Committee, the Senate passed a resolution supporting the limiting of post-matriculation transfer credit.

Following the recommendation of the Senate Ethics and Tenure Committee, the Senate passed two resolutions, one calling for the creation of a dual appointment policy for faculty and the second requesting that full voting rights in two departments be granted to three faculty members from the Lyle School of Engineering, who were moved from one department to another.

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

During the Spring term, the Senate Executive Committee focused on advancing Senate business. They heard preliminary versions of Senate Committee reports and made suggestions for edits or corrections to many of those reports. They worked with Michael Hites to identify business processes that might be made more efficient through conversion to an electronic format. They also responded to a request from the SMU Guildhall for representation on the Senate and determined that Senate bylaws permitted unaffiliated academic units, such as Guildhall, proportional representation on the Senate consistent with that of affiliated units. As a result, SMU Guildhall will have one representative on the SMU Faculty Senate in 2019-2020, and thereafter.

This year, the Senate Executive Committee was able to meet with Chairman of the Board of Trustees Robert Dedman. This conversation took place after the announced departure of Provost Steve Currall, who accepted a position as President of the University of South Florida. The conversation with Chairman Dedman focused on Presidential Succession (regarding President of the University), and it addressed the role of the Board of Trustees and the faculty in the succession process.

The Executive Committee also reflected on concerns raised by a group of past Presidents of the Senate concerning past Presidents of the Senate accepting full-time administrative appointments at the university. The Executive Committee had an in-depth conversation on the subject and determined to appoint an ad-hoc committee to look at this and related issues.

Finally, the Executive Committee had several meetings with Associate Provost (and designated Provost Ad-Interim) Peter Moore on the possibility of creating an Ombuds Office at SMU. There was strong support from the Executive Committee for the creation of such an office, and it was agreed that more attention would be given to this issue in Academic Year 2019-2020.

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

Senate Committees have also been busy this past Fall.

The Academic Policies Committee, chaired by Matt Lockhart, reviewed SMU's policies on post-matriculation credit and comparing them to those of peer and aspirant schools, proposed a resolution restricting SMU's post-matriculation transfer credit policy. This was passed unanimously by the Senate. The APC also reviewed the new course / instructor evaluation form proposed by the Provost's Office. APC members had some concerns about this new form, which they relayed to Associate Provost Doug Reinelt.

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 Student Policies Committee, chaired by Dennis Foster, worked with the President's Commission on the Status of Women to assess the number and visibility of lactation rooms across campus.

The Faculty Benefits Subcommittee, Chaired by Joanna Grossman, worked with Associate Provost Doug Reinelt and members of the President's Commission on the Status of Women to revise SMU's maternity leave policy. The new policy proposed by this collaboration is comprehensive family leave policy available to parents of any gender. The new policy also clarifies some areas of ambiguity in the current policy, such as the number of leaves that may be taken by a faculty member on the tenure-track. This new policy is pending approval by the President's Executive Council.

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. This committee assessed both the planned change to direct admissions for the Cox School of Business, and also did a comparison of the academic performance of FAAS athletes and the performance of test-optionally admitted students in Meadows.

The Subcommittee on the Economic Status of the Faculty, Chaired by Maribeth Kuenzi, has worked with the Provost's Salary Task Force to analyze equity in faculty salaries at the university and to complete a full comparison of SMU faculty salaries and those of peer and aspirant schools. The overall analysis showed that SMU remained, for the most part, competitive with peer and aspirant schools, but the report suggested that the 2% raise pool left SMU vulnerable to falling behind other schools of similar or stronger reputations. The subcommittee on the Economic Status of the Faculty recommends continued and close attention to this issue.

The Faculty Ethics and Tenure Committee, chaired by Lynne Stokes, reviewed a case of departmental restructuring in the Lyle School of Engineering, wherein the departmental affiliation of three faculty members was changed, without their full consent. The Ethics and Tenure committee interviewed all involved parties, including Dean Marc Christensen, and they recommended that the three affected faculty be granted full voting rights and membership in both affected departments. They presented two resolutions to the Senate, both of which passed with strong support.

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

As President of the Senate, I continued to meet monthly with President Turner and Provost Currall. I have, in those meetings, actively conveyed requests, concerns, and topics of interest of the faculty. I continued to ask for an evaluation of the role and status of non-tenure line faculty at SMU and to offer ways to optimize that role within the university. I made a similar request to the Academic Affairs Committee of the Board of Trustees. I met regularly with Associate Provost Doug Reinelt, where I continued to lobby for training for department Chairs. To that end, training on faculty misconduct was offered to Chairs and Deans in the Spring of 2019 by the SMU Office of Legal Affairs, and expanded training will be offered to Department Chairs through an expanded Provost's Office Faculty retreat program, starting in Fall 2019. I also reviewed proposed changes to the faculty leave policy drafted by Associate Provost Reinelt in conjunction with the Subcommittee on Faculty Benefits and the President's Commission on the Status of Women.

I, along with Past President of the Senate, Paul Krueger, have also, along with members of the Student Senate, continued to meet monthly with Associate Vice President Michael Molina to identify areas of need and possible improvement under SMU Facilities. These conversations have contributed to the ongoing improvements to Clements Hall and the Hughes-Trigg Student Center as well as other projects on campus.

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 finalize and administer a comprehensive survey of the faculty. I asked Provost Currall to appoint a joint faculty task force to analyze the survey results, compare results with those from the survey administered in 2013, and to communicate relevant findings to the faculty. That joint task force was announced by Provost Currall in March and preliminary results, in the form of demographic data, was released to the faculty late in the Spring. More comprehensive findings will be released late in the Fall of 2019 or in early 2020.

In addition, I spoke extensively with President Turner, Provost Currall, Associate Provost Peter Moore, and with the Academic Affairs Committee of the Board of Trustees about the need to do more to promote globally-focused research and teaching at SMU and to find a way to unite faculty who teach and research on global topics, in order to give visibility to those efforts and to encourage collaboration. I noted that many peer and aspirant schools have a school, department,

or center for Global Studies, and I highlighted the Keogh School for Global Studies at Notre Dame as an example.

I also continued to meet regularly with the University Athletics Council, the Academic Technology Committee, and the Incident Planning Committee and to serve on the Board of Trustees, the SMU Libraries Executive Board, the Academic Affairs Committee of the Board of Trustees, and the Legal Affairs Committee of the Board of Trustees.

### **Conclusion**

The Spring, like the Fall, was both busy and productive with all facets of the Senate actively engaged in shared governance activities. I expect the tone and pace of activities to continue this year, under current President Tim Rosendale, and under President-Elect Aurelie Thiele, and beyond. 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 a much more active and engaged body than exists at most other institutions, but it can only remain so with the committed efforts of dedicated faculty members.