**Faculty Senate Minutes (10/01/2020)**

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*Senators Present*: Jose Carrion, Danyelle Ackall, Sean Atkinson, Lisa Bashore, Samantha Bates, Aurthur Busbey, Layne Craig, Patricia Duncan, Jennifer Engler, Pamela Frable, Greg Friedman, Jessica Fripp, Julie Fry, Sophie Garcia, Eric Gonzales, Dustin Hahn, Omar Harvey, Jill Havens, Diane Hawley, Emily Herzig, Hayat Hokayem, Oteka Jackson-Cenales, Marlo Jeffries, Clark Jones, Katie Lauve- Moon, Andrew Ledbetter, Alex Lemon, Lydia Mackay, Thomas Moeller, Steve Palko, Michele Meitl, Santiago Pinon Jr., Twyla Robinson, Chris Sawyer, Marie Schein, Laura Singletary, Loren Spice, Greg Stephens, Amy Stewart, Daxton Stewart, Tee Tyler, Timothy Watkins, Beingyang Wei, Daniel Williams, Barbara Wood, Oinghua Yang, Kathryn Ellis, Ted Legatski, Lavonne Adams, Phil Esposito, Swami Kalapathy, Suzanne Carter, Brandy Quinn, Josh Bentley, Michael Sawey, Morgan Kiani, Santiago Pinon, Mark Wills, Joddy Murray, San-Ky Kim, Till Meyn, Sage Elwell, Hadi Hosaini, John Lovett, David Bedford, Ranga Ramasesh, Blake Hestir (substituting Kelly McCormick), Eric Simanek, James Rodriguez, Jan Quesada, Marc Neri, Guangyan Chen .

*Senators absent (Excused)*: Hanan Hammad, Laurel Lynch.

*Senators absent (Unexcused)*: Sohyun Lee, Elva Orozco Mendoza, Chip Stewart, Mary Waller, Catlin Dodd, Joanne Green, Samantha Bates.

*Guests Present*: Victor Boschini (Chancellor), Teresa Abi-Nader Dahlberg (Provost), Paige Shiring, Heath Einstein.

**Call to order:** Sean Atkinson, the Faculty Senate Chair called the meeting to order at 3:30 pm, and welcomed everyone. He then gave the floor to Chancellor Victor Boschini.

Chancellor Boschini thanked everybody for their work and opened it up for questions. No questions were there, so Sean Atkinson gave the floor to Provost Teresa Abi-Nader Dahlberg.

Provost Abi-Nader Dahlberg announced that TCU ranking went up by 17 points. She acknowledged the marketing team that did a lot to highlight faculty research, and the new hires in the medical school which she thinks helped in moving TCU’s rank up. Second she emphasized the importance of maintaining our accreditation with SACS to stay the kind of university we are. We are now being monitored, so we need to do an effort. We will form a cohort of faculty and staff to work on this, and we will have to reach out to 5 cohorts so that we have deeper learning of how to do the assessment. She then reported that health and safety protocols are working. This morning we had 17 active cases, even though we had a football game, we still we don’t’ see a spike today. Our students are in the habit of safety protocols. The SGA resolution says that they want to be fully on campus so, she urged people to teach on campus if they can. She gets sad emails from parents who have kids with some challenges. I’m also finding that students are not engaged, and I’m concerned that we would lose them if they don’t feel engaged. I’m making an appeal for faculty to teach on campus if they can. When talking with the Deans earlier today, she explained the four teaching modalities (on campus only, online only, on campus some time and on campus other times, hybrid where someone can be engaging those online while teaching on campus). She urged faculty to consider classes where one lecture is on campus and one online. She’s willing to pay for the expenses for this.

After that, there were few questions, Sean mentioned that in an online session with faculty who taught on campus, Curby Alexander suggested that some have more advanced masks where it can be kept away from the mouth and nose to make it easier to breathe. Someone was concerned about cheating in online teaching and asked if there is availability for big rooms. Katherine Cavins answered yes, and the Provost said that we can open the big rooms but about 10% of students don’t live in Fort Worth, so for those 10% we cannot expect them to drive to Fort Worth. She encouraged faculty to think of ways to split their classes.

Sean then said that the budget cuts will be discussed in the next faculty senate meeting, and gave the floor to Paige Shiring.

Paige Shiring thanked everyone for their hard work. She then mentioned that while 92% of the students are in Fort Worth, there are 80% of courses are online. The students want the in person experience. I want to encourage each one of you to consider teaching one of your classes in person. She said: I have 2 online classes and one in person. It’s been frustrating to move in terms of my class times. I’ve been accustomed to show up in a class, but 75% of my classmates stay in their room and so I can’t see them. The quality of education is far below what I received with in person instruction, and it’s not related to the faculty, but to the fact that one is not physically present. The Provost then said that some faculty thought they have to do one active assignment every week, but that is not true. It is important to be considerate of the situation. Then a question to Paige was if the fact the she’s not feeling great is due to the pandemic situation as a whole, and not just the result of online teaching. Paige answered that having more in person options helps because it gets someone to walk between classes, and to see others. The problem of online is the lack of connection and if you are online you don’t feel that the faculty really cares about your success because of the nature of online. I’m at my computer 12 hours a day so this is a lot to handle, and some of the challenging courses I got through was due to professor’s help to pull me aside and ask how he can help me.

Sean then moved on to present a PPT about shared governance. He explained how Covid-19 revealed the cracks in the system. I have created a committee to discuss this issue, to define shared governance, and to create a charter for shared governance accepted by governing groups and by the Chancellor’s cabinet. The committee will consist of one member from the 4 governing bodies (SGA, GSS, SA, FS), and 2 members from the Chancellor’s cabinet (one member from academic affairs, and one member from student affairs). This committee will meet once a month and each member will bring the discussion to their respective groups which will provide input. The goal is to create a document to define shared governance and have all groups on campus commit to upholding whatever is in it. We will use AAUP, “shared governance: a charter of understanding,” and historical precedents, to guide those discussions. After Sean finished his presentation there was a question of why we are reinventing the wheel if such work was done at FS before to which Sean answered that this needs to be supported by all groups on campus. Another Senator agreed and said that the senate resolution about shared governance was passed by the senate but not endorsed by other groups. Sean added that all groups are looking forward to this kind of work. Another Senator said that this work has two levels: a) a conceptual agreement, and b) what does that mean operationally how does it play in practice? and different groups will look at it and think differently to interpret what it means. Sean agreed that the more specific this work is, the better it is to achieve results. He asked those with ideas to send them his way.

Then Sean passed the floor to Ed McNertny who updated everyone on core curriculum. He said that when we set the core curriculum for 2004/2004, we thought there will be a review in 8 years, and we did that in 2013/2014. Now we are up for the next review. I met with the academic excellence committee and it is up to the committee to set up this process and bring it to the senate for approval; I’m happy to help, but it is the committee’s responsibility to bring it forward. No actual core assessment will happen this year, but the next year.

 Then Sean passed the floor to the Dean of admission Heath Einstein who updated everyone on test optional admissions. In the spring when Covid-19 happened, standardized exams in high schools were canceled, so we had to move quickly on how to proceed. In early summer I initiated a discussion with Sean and 3 other faculty members, and and we wanted our data to inform our decisions. Test optional has been around for a long time and it started with small liberal art colleges and it grew with time. Research shows those who do well on SAT are those who are trained for such kinds of tests. If our goal is to bring wealthy families, then SAT is good and we can then give scholarships based on tests. However, standardized scores are not good predictors of freshmen grades, and on their own do not predict college success. The time taken to prepare for the test takes the time from other learning. We did a survey with other 40 universities and they will proceed with the test optional policy. Right now there is a lot of movement inside higher ed for test optional, and 79% of private universities plan to keep it test optional. The university of California system passed a resolution to have test optional for 3 years. We have 50% of our out of state students come from California, and this will affect us. OU announced that they will be test optional for 5 years. Having the test optional policy has the potential to increase diversity at TCU. Test optional is not the goal, but it is the first step to removing barriers to enter the university. We need to eliminate the deficit model that we think of for students of color. If we remove an impediment, it doesn’t mean we lower the standards. In 2020 we have a cohort of 30% students of color. If we decide that we will formally propose to have test optional, we will do that in Spring 2021. Sean opened it up for questions. One senator asked, if not test scores, what are we looking at. Heath answered: we will weigh more heavily on the academic record of students mainly the daily achievement of students. If you combine high GPA and test scores, the test scores don’t add much. Another question was about homeschooled students and Heath answered that those who are homeschools we look at their test scores more, but keep in mind that those students do really well at TCU. Another senator asked that most students take SAT and GRE because they apply to other schools, will this change now that other schools don’t require them? Heath answered that 50% of students have opted for test optional, so it’s reasonable to say that more universities are opting for it. Sean asked, if you look at a student with a score and one without, how do you make a judgment? Heath answered that we follow holistic admission. We will have a formula for academic score and we have one with the score and one without, so we don’t want those who don’t have the score to be penalized for scholarships. Sean then asked: for international students, how do you evaluate a program that is not domestic. Heath answered: We have an international admissions team who is experienced in evaluating different programs and have international connections. International students will still be required to take the English proficiency exam. Another question was if going test optional will decrease our prestige, and Heath answered no, and because there is a move in the country that many are doing it so it wouldn’t’ be perceived that way. Then someone asked: what is the perception we want to give parents who want their children to join TCU. Heath answered: work hard at school, we want students who are enthusiastic to be here, and demonstrate commitment to community (community service). We have a family feel of a small school who will also have a quality education.

Sean then announced that committee chairs can pick their meetings in any of coming two weeks, either on Oct 8 or Oct 15. Then he started a motion to adjourn the meeting which was seconded, and the meeting was adjourned.