

**Faculty Senate Minutes Meeting #377**  
**[This meeting was held online as a Skype meeting]**  
**September 9, 2020**

**Senators present:** Barnes, Cox, Meyers, Sharma, Buelinckx, Perl, Held, Kleinhans, Nathan, Walter, Wang, Bishop, Brittsan, Collopy, Grair, Ladeira, Novotny, Pihlaja, Faris, Griffith, Hope-Weeks, Ibraguimov, Klein, Maccarone, Taraban, Zellinger, Cook, Ritchey, Jones, Louis, Hawley, Bayne, Darwish, He, Parameswaran, Sheng, Niehuis, Shumway, Huston, Blum, Murphy, Cassidy, Heinz, Gottlieb, Eko, Decker, Calamoneri, Arnall, Borshuk, Donahue, Ramkumar, Callender, Langford, Weiner, Litsey and Lyford.

**Senators not present:** Boal, Baker, Bradatan, Watts, Forrest, Farmer and Garner.

**Guests:** Mark Dame-HSC Senate, Michael Galyean and Rob Stewart-Provost office, Sean Childers-Operations, Tara Stevens-Ombuds, CassiDe Street-IRB liaison, TTU President-Lawrence Schovanec, Professor Kevin Wass for Forrest, Richard Meek-Parliamentarian.

**Call to order:** At 3:19PM, President Seshadri Ramkumar (Ram) called the Faculty Senate Meeting #377 to order. This meeting was conducted online over Skype and a quorum was met. President Ram welcomed the guests and expressed his appreciation to all faculty colleagues, staff, students, and administration for working together to make the start of the year a safe and successful beginning to the term.

**Approval of minutes:** A motion to approve the minutes from May's meeting, #376, was made by Senator Litsey and seconded by Senator Sharma. The minutes were accepted as presented.

**Guest Speaker**

**Sean Childers, Assistant Vice President for Operations:** In this discussion on campus safety, AVP Childers began by thanking the faculty for working with the Operations Division throughout the COVID period. Each team member in Operations Division is screened before their shift (either drive thru or walk thru). Starting in about June, one of the main things Operations Division started working on were to ensure that HVAC units were running as well as possible, changing air filters to optimize air flow and air exchange. In some high-density areas, they added anti-microbial coverings to help catch additional particles. They also increased outside air flow into buildings to about 30%, to optimize air freshness. On the custodial side: they re-trained custodians on cleaning touch points such as desks, tables, chairs. They clean classrooms and main public areas every night. They use a hospital-grade cleaning agent that is proven to kill Covid virus and run an electro-static machine through the buildings. For a cleaning request: you can turn in a work order so the team can go in, disinfect, and run the electro-static machine; in about 30-45 minutes the space can be put back into service. They are averaging about a one- to two-hour response rate from this system. The President's office has rolled out over 100 wellness stations equipped with hand sanitizers, masks, and wipes donated by the Texas Department of Emergency Management. Use the stations to refill your own hand sanitizer for your office and use the wipes in the classroom so students can clean their desks. A QR codes on the wellness stations can be used to get them replenished. Majority of wellness stations are in high traffic congregation areas (elevators, near entrances).

**Senator Litsey:** Regarding additional air filtration, was that added to Library?

**Sean Childers:** No to the anti-microbial covers, but they did increase the amount of outside air.

**Senator Calamoneri:** if we've already run out of supplies at the wellness station and were told the QR code wasn't the email to use, how do we get them replenished?

**Sean Childers:** Operations Division will clarify that messaging. The University ID office is also distributing student kits (door opener, wipes, mask).

**Senator Bayne:** Some custodians aren't wearing masks or keeping them on.

**Sean Childers:** We will remind custodian staff on the proper protocols.

**Senator Darwish:** I saw grounds crew working in the engineering key, they had no masks and were working shoulder-to-shoulder.

**Sean Childers:** I will make sure that grounds staff know that they should be wearing masks.

### **Reports and Updates:**

**Faculty Update on the Fall Semester:** Representatives from each college (two from Arts and Sciences) were provided three minutes to state comments about things that went well, did not go well, and could be improved upon in regard to the re-opening of the campus and the semester so far.

**Senator Meyers (Ag Sciences):** Signage is working, excellent; students not always wearing masks correctly or congregating outside without. Recognizing flexibility in working, students are adapting well in differing modalities. Zoom and Blackboard support are good. Experiential learning for online classes is struggling. Reporting process is confusing for students and there is confusion on what role the faculty has. Sanitizing between classes is burdening. Major suggestions: improve communicating on contingency planning. Major concerns: it is unclear to faculty why restricting classroom capacity is happening for the Spring if not all data from this semester is gathered.

**Senator Calamoneri (VPA):** Our activities and “touchpoints” include more than traditional areas, could use more support on that. Wellness stations are running out in dance and theater buildings and the QR code does not work, that needs attention. Quality of wipes is terrible. Faculty are bringing in their own supplies but they need university support. Contact tracing is non-existent aside from students themselves letting us know. No coordination among faculty on what modality to offer and confusing for students. Some classrooms are taping off chairs, some aren't, so more coordination would be helpful.

**Senator Heinz (Library):** The Libraries were well positioned to move online because of our existing online resources and services. Virtual reference assistance has been going up. Social distancing is going well, students mostly honoring that. Some students aren't wearing masks properly, more signage has been suggested, and we have started public announcements.

**Senator Buelinckx (Architecture):** Provided an update of the steps Architecture has taken during the pandemic to move classes online, help ensure social distancing in the building, and facilitate faculty changing modalities. Blackboard seems difficult for some faculty to use for online classes, some having trouble granting access to TAs and GAs.

**Senator Louis (Honors):** Issues in terms of entrance/exit doesn't always work well for classrooms. Some classrooms are too small for the number of students and can't apply social distancing. On a positive note: Honors faculty have created classroom maps so students know where to sit, this helps plan social distancing. Congregating in halls at end of classes can cause issues with crowding. A positive note is some classes are being held outside. There were some comments about concerns with contact tracing and that there were communication issues.

**Senator Murphy (Law):** About a quarter of students have opted to do classes online only. General impression is that things are going well. Hybrid classes are going well, excellent IT support and Covid compliance is good. Suggestions for improvement: difficult to keep community and student organizations going with a sense of community. Some faculty want to look at an LMS other than Blackboard.

**Senator Cook (Business Administration):** Things that are working well: supporting staff who want or need to work from home; social distancing; creating areas for students to use and reorganizing existing spaces. Things that are not working well: not having a program for contact tracing and not knowing what the Covid infection rate in Lubbock will mean for classes at large is not great. Suggestions: implementing contact tracing program, higher flexibility regarding class modality.

**Senator Blume** (Human Sciences): 77 responses to a survey sent out. Only 15% of respondents said they felt “very safe” working on campus from a survey. 30% said the Covid response was NOT working well. 90% felt that the campus would be going back to phase 3 or 4. Question: what is the threshold for cases for admin to decide “that’s enough?” Suggested that students not come back after Thanksgiving. There are concerns about the Spring.

**Senator Hawley** (Education): Ran a survey, almost half responded. Submitted report to Senate. Masks, cleaning, IT support working well. Many appreciated good communication from administration down the line. Not proper: respondents were displeased at requiring in-person returns, inadequate social distancing due to classroom size. Improvement: more consultation for faculty/staff and improved communication procedures.

**Senator Faris** (Arts & Sciences): Wants to recognize the good administrative work. Excellent work by the TLPDC creating online classes. Good to see free Covid testing available. Suggested a random testing model. Graduate instructors are improperly carrying weight of teaching load and don’t have insurance. There is confusion as to what happens to a class when a faculty member gets Covid. Concerned that classrooms aren’t large enough for social distancing. Requesting more transparency in Covid dashboard by faculty.

**Senator Gottlieb** (Media & Comm): Overall positive experience from department meeting and townhall with dean. Felt well-prepared from chairs and dean meetings. The faculty appreciated having been given funds for purchasing webcams and flexibility on teaching modality. Design and Production was a bit trickier because they need specialty hardware/software. Students are abiding by seating charts and mask rules for the most part.

**Senator Held** (Arts & Sciences): Representation on Covid taskforce: why is there no senate representation? Request to have a liaison from the Senate on that committee. Tenure clock: burnout is a possibility and how do we balance those untenured faculty on the clock when we evaluate? Delaying the clock for a year may not be sufficient. Notification issue: faculty concerned that it is not clear if a student has symptoms or been exposed. Faculty also need directives on giving incompletes. Labs matter, face-to-face is important, asking that labs receive “micro-openings” even if campus closes. Thanked the president and provost for their communication, it helped build morale.

### **Guest Speakers**

**Michael Galyean, Provost:** Dr. Galyean thanked the faculty and asked the senators to thank their colleagues for the work that has gone into this semester. He spoke about Covid-19 and an update on the response to it for the fall and spring semesters. For the spring semester, the Provost’s office has given some targets on modalities with as much face-to-face teaching as possible while being safe. Some of those targets have already been modified, with classes switching to online and social distancing measures will still be in effect as much as possible. The Provost recognizes that this will also impact class size, but they want to respect the health concerns of students and faculty. He mentioned that they are exploring all options, more hybrid classes, and even possible “off peak” sections such as Saturday classes. Class capacity is at the forefront of their thoughts for planning in the spring. The administration is operating on an individual bases about moving classes from face-to-face to online if absences become a concern. Faculty should not expect an all-or-nothing approach to closing at this time, it will operate more within targeted closing possibilities. Tenure clock concerns are also being heard by the Provost’s Office, as the burdens of juggling transitioning classes is largely felt on untenured faculty, so those considerations are being made. This is not the year to “toe the line” regarding annual evaluations and guidelines, leeway must be given due to the extra work that everyone has had to do to take classes online and adjust. The Provost’s Office has said that expectations of faculty going up for tenure should be given consideration and room because of the burdens presented by Covid-19.

**Lawrence Schovanec, TTU President:** Dr. Schovanec began by thanking the faculty for all their hard work and quick response to the challenges of the semester. Dr. Schovanec talked about Covid testing,

hearing requests that campus testing should be perpetual and free, but that there was no mandatory testing for numerous reasons. He talked about testing rates and positive cases and that out of 980 tests, there were only 4 positive cases (.05%). So how does that reconcile with the increase in Covid numbers on the dashboard? He posited that there might be self-reporting bias, no written confirmation is required, and that daily reporting will continue. Also: the "Employees" number does include student employees. Off-campus isolation space for students is at about 44%, so they feel like they have more than enough room for now. From looking at contact tracing data: those positive cases are largely originating from off campus. So, how do we address that? The administration is convinced infection is originating outside the classroom. They have had parents ask his office not to send kids home for break, and that's something to consider. Dorms are being closely monitored; Stengall Hall has the most cases (39). They are looking at hotspots and keeping micro-closures in mind. The President's Office believes we can carry on without faculty or staff cuts. Since March, Covid-19 has cost the campus over \$92 million, and in consideration after CARES funds, about \$80 million.

**FS President Ram:** This message was given to me to ask: what about open positions that were posted?

**President Schovanec:** Critical hiring committee made decisions about those types of openings; the money is still there. In consultation with the deans, the administration looked at the amount of money that carries forward every year and a lot of money was sitting out in reserves (chairs may not be aware of this money, but deans are), a decision was made to return 80% and keep the remaining 20% on reserve. The administration wants those positions filled, but with some oversight. This has given deans the opportunity to look at necessary points of need for hires. Those funds will be available, we just must be critical in looking at the best points of hire.

**Provost Galyean:** The intent was to allow departments some flexibility moving forward with hires but prioritizing the needs. The cuts from last legislative session and the probable future legislative cuts could put us in a position of over-committing on these positions if we are not cautious, so we are proceeding carefully. Instructional needs will be met.

**President Schovanec:** This has also given new deans a chance to look at their areas and see where new lines should be allocated. Our student faculty ratio this year went from 20:1 to 21:1, that is not good. We really want to get to 18:1 and we won't get there by hoarding money, we just need to be strategic.

**Senator Callender:** There was a question about what percentage of Covid cases would be needed before the decision is made to go back online.

**President Schovanec:** The administration's view is that a 10% positive cases number would be far too high. We are currently at 1.5% positive cases of student population. We have to look at number in dorms, total number, and if we can provide a safe isolation place in dorms. 10% is too much. Hot-spot evaluating is important.

**Provost Galyean:** if we get to 10%, that would be serious. Considering where we are right now, it's manageable and we can do a class-level basis for taking a class online.

**Old Business:** No old business discussed.

**New Business:**

**Committee on Committees:** Senator Perl presenting the 2020-2021 Committee Assignments. No issue with report, document was accepted (with correction to years in title) by the Senate.

**OP 32.09 Selection of Paul Whitfield Horn Distinguished Professorships:** Lewis Held presenting very minor revisions in verbiage to the OP. Only substantive change was in section 3C, setting a threshold for the number of years of service at Texas Tech. The revised OP was passed and accepted as presented.

**Announcements:** Two documents were attached to agenda as announcements.

1. Ram sent attachment with liaison lists and contacts.
2. Available WIFI spots from Campus IT.

**Adjournment:** Motion to adjourn by Senator Cox and seconded by Senator Huston. The meeting was adjourned at 4:55PM.