

## Faculty Senate Chair's Report

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March 9, 2021 – April 12, 2021

On **March 9**, FSEC met with President Harroz. Topics discussed included the OU Health Physicians merger, and how it relates to ongoing negotiations between OU Physicians and Blue Cross Blue Shield. We noted an online petition signed by many OU community members requesting that if an agreement with BCBS could not be reached, that OU cut ties with BCBS and find an alternative insurance provider. President Harroz said they were working on a way to ensure OU employees continue to be able to access OU Physicians in-network, regardless of the outcome of the negotiations with BCBS, and we discussed ways to ensure that news is clearly communicated to the OU community. We also discussed retiree health insurance concerns, and we requested President Harroz or other appropriate administrators meet directly with the retiree group, to ensure their concerns are heard and understood. He agreed and said they would follow up with us about who that would be. (I note here that a meeting was subsequently scheduled between HR, the Retirees, and the Compensation and Benefits Committee for Tuesday, April 13.) President Harroz discussed replacing the Towers (student housing) as part of the strategic plan, and indicated that although Cross housing is a separate matter, the two might become interrelated. President Harroz said work on a Tulsa campus strategic plan has started in earnest, and that OU has moved forward on the 360-evaluation process for senior administrators. He updated FSEC on the progress of high-level searches, the Gateway course, and vaccine availability. At the end of our scheduled time together, I mentioned faculty concern about the move of all Advancement activities to the OU Foundation. President Harroz suggested this be on the agenda for our next meeting, but noted that part of the agreement is that OU has the right to reject any gifts if we do not like the conditions.

On **March 11**, I met with Interim Vice Provost Lori Snyder for an update on the Academic Analytics Appropriate Use policy, following the extensive feedback FSEC had earlier provided ([that now-published policy is available here](#)). Later that day I met with Keri Kornelson and Dave Hambright for our weekly FS Officers meeting.

On **March 25**, I attended the March meeting of the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education Faculty Advisory Committee meeting, and later that day I met with FS Chair-Elect Keri Kornelson and FS Secretary Dave Hambright for our weekly FS Officers meeting.

On **April 1**, I met with FS Chair-Elect Keri Kornelson and FS Secretary Dave Hambright for our weekly FS Officers meeting.

On **April 5**, available FSEC members and I met with Provost Candidate 1. Later that day, FSEC met for our monthly meeting. Vice President of DEI & Chief Diversity Officer Belinda Hyppolite joined the group and provided updates on several issues and activities her office has been working on, including Spring DEI Week, and the Pathways to Belonging Report, and other topics she will share with the Faculty Senate on April 12. She noted concerns related to diversity and retention of faculty, staff, and students over the past five years, and that they are working to address them. Compensation and Benefits Committee Chair, Anthony Natale, updated the group on continuing efforts of that committee's collaboration with the Budget Council around issues of current employee benefits, retiree insurance concerns, and salary equity issues. They have been working with upper administration to obtain de-identified data related to these issues, which is needed for the committees to do their work. Faculty Welfare Committee Chair Sarah Robbins updated the group on that committee's activities, including working with the Provosts office to update the faculty handbook, getting the (ad hoc) Non-Regular

Faculty Committee populated and active, and developments related to the Student Experience Survey. Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Committee Chair Heather Shotton said that committee is putting together a list of recommendations (both prior and new) including where OU stands in terms of acting on those recommendations. She said her committee is getting many inquiries about the Tribal Liaison position, which been vacant for six months. Committee on Committees Chair and FS Chair-Elect Keri Kornelson updated the group regarding FS election slates. She also mentioned beginning efforts to reactivate the Vice President for Research and Partnerships Advisory Committee. She presented a slate of names recommended by the Committee on Committee for the new ad hoc committee on non-regular faculty, which FSEC then approved. She also updated FSEC on progress by the Teaching Evaluation Working Group (TEWG) on the Student Experience Survey, [the website for which is now live and available here](#).

FSEC then finalized our recommended revisions to a job announcement for an Ombudsperson position, which I later forwarded to Chief of Staff Sean Burrage, along with FSEC's recommendations for faculty to serve on that search committee. Interim Vice Provost Lori Snyder joined the FSEC meeting and we continued our ongoing discussions regarding salary equity. We discussed the tension between addressing the most severe salary inequities quickly, and developing an approach to data availability that will be accurate and useful going forward. While acknowledging the importance of developing an accurate and manageable process going forward, FSEC stressed that addressing the most extreme salary inequities is a matter of high urgency that should not wait.

On **April 7**, available FSEC members and I met with Provost Candidate 2.

On **April 8**, available FSEC members and I met with Provost Candidate 3. That afternoon, I met with Keri Kornelson and Dave Hambright for our weekly FS Officers meeting

On **April 9**, available FSEC members and I met with Provost Candidate 4. That same day I spoke with Compensation and Benefits Committee Chair Anthony Natale about retiree health benefits, salary equity, and current employee benefits tiers. Later that day I spoke with Budget Council member Mashhad Fahes about the same issues, and we continued the conversation on April 11.

On **April 12**, available FSEC members and I met with Provost Candidate 5. Later the same day we met with Gateway Course Director Candidate 1.