

***SENATE CHAIR'S REPORT, by Prof. Keri Kornelson
December 10, 2021***

On November 5, I had a short phone conversation with VP Burrage to discuss the vacancy in the Office of Institutional Equity. A new Director/Title IX Officer, Christine Taylor, has already been selected for that office, pending Regents' approval at the December 2 meeting. The administration deemed it prudent to offer the position quickly to a finalist from the last search.

Later in the day, I met with Justin Daniels, Chair of Staff Senate. We compared notes on the responses to the new vaccine requirement. The announcement today that the deadline to be fully vaccinated was moved back to January 4 was a relief to us both.

The Faculty Senate met on November 8, 2021.

On November 9, I met with VP Dorothy Anderson from Human Resources. We discussed the vaccine requirement and the plans for enacting it. We also discussed the idea of HR collaborating with the Senate committees on issues like compensation, evaluation of systems and administrators, and training opportunities for faculty. Later, I met with officers Dave Hambright and Kalenda Eaton. We discussed the vaccine requirement.

On November 16, I met with officers Dave Hambright and Kalenda Eaton. We discussed topics for the meeting with President Harroz.

On November 17, the Faculty Senate Executive Committee (FSEC) met with President Harroz in person for the first time in nearly two years. The President reported that we are having a banner year for fundraising, that Matthew Brockwell, the new CFO, starts on December 3, and that the student recruitment cycle is off to a promising start. We expressed our appreciation for last month's meeting with some of his executive team members to discuss the role of the faculty committees in communication and shared governance, and asked that that openness and access continue.

We were excited to hear that the plans are underway for administrators to receive regular 360 evaluations, including input from faculty members as appropriate. This led to a conversation about the kinds of professional development and leadership training available at OU. Topics that came up included building a leadership pipeline and offering a range of training opportunities for new leaders, including new Chairs and Committee A members. This is something we have not had on a regular basis at OU. The FSEC will work with VP Burrage to follow up on this idea.

The next topic we discussed was faculty retention. We had a productive conversation about what the next steps might be to identify reasons faculty leave OU and then work to improve our retention. We asked questions about whether some of the funding in the *Lead On* Strategic Plan could go toward initiatives that promote scholarly and creative activities for a broader range of faculty members. We proposed a few ways that could be done and agreed to collaborate on this idea with VP Burrage.

On November 22, I met with OU Regent Anita Holloway over lunch. We discussed the work of the Finance, Audit, and Risk Committee that she chairs. This was a very helpful conversation to learn about the priorities of the Board of Regents and to share the perspective of the faculty in university affairs.

On November 29, I met with VP Sean Burrage. We discussed the next steps on some initiatives that were brought up in the FSEC meeting with Pres. Harroz.

On November 30, I met with FS Officers Dave Hambright and Kalenda Eaton. We finalized the agenda for the December 6 FSEC meeting.

On November 30, I met briefly with Provost Wright to discuss the Faculty Senate's budget looking ahead for the next few years.

On December 1, I met with the FS' Ad hoc Committee on Reapportionment. This committee meets once every three years to look at the number of regular faculty in each college and rebalance the 50 Senate seats as warranted, according to the guidelines set out in the Faculty Senate Charter and Bylaws. This year is one of those years, so the Senate will receive their report and vote on the new distribution of Senators in the spring.

On December 2, I attended the Regent's Meeting at OU-HSC.

On December 3, I met with Provost Wright. We continued a conversation about faculty salaries and how the raises described in the *Lead On* Strategic Plan will be determined. There were not any updates yet on the numbers of OU employees who had uploaded their vaccine status and/or requested exemption to the vaccine requirement. (We learned on December 8 that the vaccine requirement will not stay in force given the latest action in federal court.) We also discussed some ways that faculty are still struggling from COVID setbacks in their research and creative activities and some potential actions. Other topics we discussed were faculty retention at OU and exploring different models of professional development and leadership training that could be offered at OU.

The Faculty Senate Executive Committee met on December 6. We began with briefings from the FS standing committees. The Compensation and Benefits Committee is preparing a survey to ask faculty about their impressions about salary equity at OU. The Welfare Committee is working on plans with Budget Council and Center for Faculty Excellence (CFE) to hold workshops to help those in the OU community understand university finance and budgets.

Anna Reser from the Humanities Forum joined the FSEC meeting briefly to answer questions about the changes to eligibility language for the Arts and Humanities Faculty Fellowships (AHFF). The new language makes it clear that all Regular Faculty, i.e., Tenured/Tenure track and Ranked Renewable Term faculty members from those disciplines are eligible to apply for the AHFF.

I gave the FSEC a quick summary of the work of the Teaching Evaluation Working Group (TEWG) this semester. We are nearing the end of a year-long pilot of a new end-of-course survey called the Student Experience Survey (SES). The SES will be the official survey used in all courses beginning in Spring 2022. The CFE is hosting some information sessions about the SES for those who want to learn more. (On Dec 7, all instructors received an email from the Provost with the SES questions attached.)

VP of Research and Partnerships Tomas de la Rubia was welcomed to the FSEC meeting. He presented data showing the growth in research expenditures across the Norman campus. While COVID did have an impact on awards, we are seeing an increase this year. He is interested in forming initiatives that will give faculty time to develop and write large-scale proposals; two such programs are the Significant Impact Research Grant Program which gives a PI a course release to develop a grant proposal and the Match Program that will match 25% of a funded postdoc salary on an external grant. We suggested some obstacles to research that are still ongoing. He was very receptive to a suggestion from Member-at-Large Trytten to look closely at the available research software at OU, and in particular, that qualitative researchers do not have tools like NVivo available with a site license.

The FSEC welcomed Provost Wright to our meeting. There was some discussion about the vaccine requirement and the impact it could have on Academic Affairs. We also asked what the plan would be if some faculty members do not comply with the vaccination requirement. (As noted above, this is now moot.) We also discussed various ways that the Provost's office might support faculty in their research and creative activities and ways that exceptional work could be recognized. It was a productive conversation that we hope will continue after the holidays.

VP and Chief Information Officer David Horton was welcomed to the FSEC meeting, as was Nicholas Key from OU IT. They presented some very interesting slides about new policies and initiatives happening in OU IT, including updates to the computer standardization policy and the campaign to help OU students, faculty, and staff spot malicious/phishing emails. They also talked about the growing security challenges from external attacks, and the measures OU IT is taking to stay ahead of that. We asked questions about the latest security measures and the impact of the global shortage of computer chips. VP Horton also described the IT Policy Program review system that allows users to see and comment on proposed policy language before it becomes official. The FSEC agreed that this is a very transparent and helpful way of bringing forth new policies, asked for them to think about ways to publicize more when a new policy is up to view on that system.

On December 7, Kalenda Eaton and I met for our weekly officers' meeting. We discussed the agenda for the next FSEC meeting with President Harroz, which has been rescheduled for January.