

SENATE CHAIR'S REPORT, by Prof. Keri Kornelson
May 6, 2022

On April 11, the Faculty Senate met.

On April 12, I attended an all-day workshop with University Leadership and the Grant-Thornton consulting firm. They were presenting their progress to assist OU in tracking our progress along the goals outlined in the Lead On Strategic plan. They have spent several months finding data, talking with administrators, and comparing OU to our peers and aspirational peers. At this workshop, they presented some of their findings, including a list of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that track aspects of Lead On.

On April 18, Chair-Elect Hambright, Ms. Bedgood, and I met to finalize and submit the Faculty Senate budgetary request for next year.

On April 18, the Large Executive Committee of the Faculty Senate met. This committee is made up of the FSEC together with chairs of other councils and boards. Each committee/council chair summarized their activities from the year. Member-At-Large Deborah Trytten spoke for the Chair of APC, who was not able to attend. They are working on a revision of the Faculty Handbook in the section on the pre-finals week. There have been many edits to that section over the years, and APC finds that a large percentage of the courses they are asked to evaluate each year are in violation of the pre-finals week policies. They wish to clarify the policies and then disseminate them to help this ongoing problem with new course proposals. David McLeod, Chair of the Athletics Council, reported that they are seeing big changes due to NCAA rules about Name-Image-Likeness (NIL) compensation for student-athletes and also due to the increased usage of the Transfer Portal. One consequence of the extra year of eligibility due to COVID and availability of new recruits through the transfer portal mean more upperclass students, and thus there may be difficulty recruiting from high schools for a few years. An NCAA report showed that our athletes are doing well in terms of GPA. Paul Spicer reported from Budget Council. They are working to articulate the role of the Budget Council with new leadership. They were pleased with the budget workshop that Stewart Berkinshaw offered through CFE. They have some concerns about how a budget model more focused on credit hours might impact some departments. Vincent Deberry, representing the Continuing Education Committee, discussed activities around community engagement and collaboration with the rest of the university. The CEC would like more of the university to know about the work of the continuing education programs at OU. The Faculty Honors and Awards Committee was represented by Jennifer Davis. The FHAC updated its charter this year. They are also working on finding a more efficient way to manage their workload since nominations for all the awards come in at the same time and their deadline is only four weeks later. Cynthia Rogers, Chair of the Research Council, reported that they are back to near-normal numbers of applications for FIPs and JFF awards. The numbers dropped significantly during COVID. They are also hoping to either revise their charter or use it as a way to return to being more involved in all aspects of funding for scholarly and creative activities at OU. Andy Fagg reported for the IT Council. They have been involved in a number of collaborations with IT, including phishing testing over the last year and security policies. The Council members have concerns over the drive toward security that will interfere with research needs at OU. He also reminded us that students increasingly have digital OU IDs rather than physical ID cards. Instructors may check out scanners if they wish to do ID checks at exams. The IT Council is pleased that policies involving types and numbers of computers faculty can have are more flexible now. We welcomed Chad Johnson, the new OU Tulsa representative

to the Large Executive Committee. Anthony Natale reported about the new survey report on Pay Equity created by the Faculty Compensation and Benefits Committee. They look forward to discussing the report with members of the administration. They also are recommending that retirees have their own benefits council or other forms of representation when retiree benefits decisions are made. The Faculty Welfare Committee was represented by Sarah Robbins. She updated us on their work with faculty members who are not part of the "regular faculty", i.e., those who are renewable term but not ranked or are in other types of research or teaching positions. They are surveying Chairs and Directors to ask about the policies in their departments for evaluation, promotion, and participation in decision-making by these faculty members in their units.

Later that afternoon, I met with Sarah Robbins to discuss the proposal from the Scholarly Communication Working Group to form an ad hoc committee on Open Access at OU. We made plans for the discussion of this proposal at the next FSEC meeting.

On April 19, I met with the FSEC Officers, Dave Hambright and Kalenda Eaton. We detailed some issues we hope to have resolved before the end of the semester.

Later that day, I met with Vice President for Research and Partnerships Tomas Diaz de la Rubia. This meeting was to discuss a proposal by the FSEC to offer a funding opportunity for faculty members whose research momentum was derailed by COVID. We also discussed the new Honorifics committee that will work on nominating OU Faculty for prestigious external awards and honors.

On April 20, the Faculty Senate Executive Committee welcomed President Joe Harroz. Anthony Natale gave a brief synopsis of the Pay Equity report from the Compensation and Benefits Committee. President Harroz agreed that there are serious issues with regard to compensation that will need to be addressed in the coming years. He discussed the plans for regular raises, hopefully annually, but reminded us that each 1% raise costs \$4.5 million in recurring funds. The Regents have asked that, once we have a fair and meaningful evaluation system, that raises have a merit-based component. We also encouraged the University to put effort toward improving faculty retention. This means a transparent system for counteroffers, but also a deeper exploration into the reasons talented faculty members leave OU. We mentioned exit interviews. The President discussed an ongoing project to create a strategic plan for the OU Tulsa campus. The HSC campus is on track to have a strategic plan in place by summer. He updated us on some successful fundraising numbers from 2021 and said we are on track to surpass those in 2022. He also gave some updates from Athletics. The President let us know that all Deans had gone through a detailed evaluation this year, all done by Provost Wright. We greatly appreciate the addition of this to our regular practices.

On April 25, the Faculty Senate Executive Committee welcomed Yvette Connor and Doug Richter from Grant Thornton. I set up this meeting so that their team could give a summary of their progress to FSEC and could talk to us about the faculty perspective. There was a lot to talk about and we ran short on time. We arranged a follow-up meeting for a more in-depth conversation with faculty members.

On April 26, I was honored to bring best wishes and congratulations from the Faculty Senate to the Staff Awards Ceremony.

On April 26, I met with Provost Wright. We discussed some questions related to the wide variety of course "buyout" practices across the university and resumed a previous conversation about long-term

faculty retention plans. I also shared some of the highlights of the FSEC's conversation with Grant Thornton representatives.

On May 2, I met with Provost Wright. He updated me on the new undergraduate summer research awards being given out by his office, with a stipend for the students and some funds for the faculty research sponsor for expenses. I brought up a question about whether different units could offer very similar courses, and the implications of that if we move toward a system where credit hour production is a metric whereby Colleges or Departments/Programs get increased funds. We also discussed the process whereby Presidential appointments are made to various committees. (These are generally handled by the Provost's Office.) I asked if the appointments could be made by early August so that the committees could get their first meetings scheduled earlier in the semester. I also talked to him about the importance of the grading platform Gradescope for many faculty members, as it is up for renewal and does not have a designated budget line.

On May 2, the Faculty Senate Executive Committee met. The meeting began with reports from the committees. Sarah Robbins reported that Faculty Welfare Committee had held listening sessions with Renewable Term faculty members in First Year Mathematics and First Year Composition. More sessions are planned for the fall. They also completed the survey of department chairs regarding their policies for contingent faculty and are using the results to inform a survey, planned for next fall, to the full list of faculty members who are not represented by the Faculty Senate. I updated the group from the Teaching Evaluation Working Group on the Student Experience Survey (SES), which many units are using for the first time. It is unfortunate that the broader survey called SERU was sent to students at the same time. I worked with the Provost's office and Marketing/Communication to ensure that students received messages that clarified the scope of the two surveys and asked them to complete both. Chair-Elect Dave Hambright presented nominations from the Committee on Committees to serve on the new Honorifics Committee organized by the VPRP and to serve on the ad hoc Open Access Committee. The nominations were approved by FSEC. We paused here to also discuss the Open Access committee's charge. The description and charge suggested by the Scholarly Communication Task Force, chaired by Karen Rupp-Serrano in OU Libraries, will be used with minor modifications.

The FSEC welcomed Vice President for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Belinda Higgs-Hyppolite to our meeting. She reported that there was good participation in the listening sessions for students, staff, and faculty last month, with around 400 participants total. They will follow up with more sessions in the fall. She also let us know that the suite of TRIO programs now is housed in the Division of DEI. She told us a bit about the Project Threshold and Upward Bound programs at OU. We asked some questions about how the Division of DEI will support faculty members. This is an evolving conversation she said she is having with Provost Wright and looks forward to having with the new Vice Provost for Faculty, Sarah Ellis. Dr. Hyppolite also reported that results of the 2020 HERI survey of faculty had recently been reported by the Office of Assessment to Deans and Associate Deans. Members of FSEC reported that the data had also gone to Chairs and Directors.

The FSEC next welcomed Provost André-Denis Wright to the meeting. He also discussed the report of HERI data from the 2020 survey but did not have anything to share with us yet. He shared that he had met with student government leaders to go over the expenses and priorities that will be involved if tuition increases by 3% next year, and also to explain the corresponding increases in need-based financial aid that will help students afford the increase. He reported that OU Admissions is on track for our target incoming class size since the deposits were due on May 1. The number of applications from out of state has grown. An FSEC member recommended that one priority should be to create more

large lecture halls and modernize the existing ones. As the number of students goes up, we will need these spaces, and they are already in high demand.

Next, the FSEC welcomed Christine Taylor, the OU Institutional Equity Officer and Title IX Coordinator. When she began her job, the office was understaffed, but she reported being fully staffed with investigators and other personnel. She said the main way that faculty can be of service is to encourage everyone to contact their office when they have a concern when they hear something from a student, faculty, or staff member, or if they just have a question. She emphasized that nothing happens without the affected person's knowledge and that their office respects their wishes in how it moves forward. She let us know that there is a short new training that we will all be asked to complete, and then there will be a new one for students later in the summer. She also said that they are happy to meet with departments or other groups to do a more targeted training.

The FSEC then had a conversation about the very short time (96 hours) between the last final exams and the time that final grades are due, particularly since all the ceremonies happen during that time as well. It puts a strain on faculty teaching large classes to finish grading, and also causes problems for the Integrity Office when reports of academic misconduct come in after final grades are issued, but may be necessary given that summer classes start up right away. We agreed this could be a good topic to pick up next fall. At the end of the meeting, we thanked the members of FSEC who have finished their terms of service: Ralph Beliveau, Kalenda Eaton, Heather Shotton, and Deborah Trytten. Let me also thank Sarah Ellis and Megan Elwood Madden for their terms as past Chairs that are now ending.

On May 4, I met with Amy Noah, Vice President and Chief Advancement Officer of the OU Foundation. We had not been able to get her scheduled to meet with the Senate this spring, but she let me know she is very willing to talk with us next fall. She explained some of the ins and outs of advancement work, and the level of donations she hopes we will be receiving in the coming years. Although a lot of money comes in to support undergraduate need-based scholarships, there is also fundraising around areas that benefit faculty. The OU Foundation will be working with colleges and the Provost's Office to design uses for money raised.

Let me just say that it has been an honor serving the Faculty Senate this year. I wish you all a restful, productive, safe, focused, fun, and/or exciting summer.