

***SENATE CHAIR'S REPORT, by Prof. Keri Kornelson***  
***November 4, 2021***

On October 6, I met with Regent Anita Holloway. We discussed OU's COVID responses, the Lead On Strategic plan, and some items under discussion in the Regent committees. We talked about the items of greatest interest to the Board and to the faculty. I invited Regent Holloway to attend a future Faculty Senate meeting.

Also, on October 6, the FSEC met with President Harroz. We received updates on the searches for an OU Ombudsperson and the search for the Tribal Liaison. President Harroz also gave us an update on the equity raise program scheduled to address severe cases of below-market salaries. We discussed some of our questions about the scheduled actions to fund the Lead On Strategic Plan. We raised concerns about the equity of the formula for computing the tax issued on the payroll for each unit, given that the ratio of payroll varies dramatically across units. (It is possible that I did some math to make this point.) We asked that some further analysis be considered, and that Budget Council be included in the conversation before the tax increases to the next level. Next, we discussed the plans for next semester and beyond with regards to COVID. We have appreciated the responsiveness of President Harroz and the OU administration to our requests for action this semester, and we hope to continue that collaborative relationship. We did recommend that there be faculty inclusion ahead of time in the planning activities for spring. We discussed some of the ways that the committees and councils at OU could be used to assist the administration in making challenging decisions regarding budgets, compensation, and a vast array of other topics. President Harroz talked about the results of the survey that went to faculty and staff regarding vaccine status and masking. He updated us on some fundraising successes, including the large donation to the (Dodge Family) College of Arts and Sciences.

The October Faculty Senate meeting was held on October 11.

On October 14, I met with VP Sean Burrage. We discussed the faculty committee structure and made plans for a meeting where FSEC officers would share information about various committees with members of the executive leadership. We also discussed the ongoing searches for an OU Ombudsperson and the new Tribal Liaison. I passed along a summary of the comments and concerns raised at the Faculty Senate meeting regarding the plans to fund the Strategic Plan, particularly the concerns regarding the tax to each unit based on payroll. We revisited the plans that were begun last year to set up a system whereby faculty are involved in regular evaluations of administrators and systems. This will be a topic we continue to work on at our next meeting with President Harroz.

The FS officers collaborated with VP Sean Burrage to set up a meeting on October 19 with VP David Horton, VP Dorothy Anderson, Provost Wright, VP Higgs-Hyppolite, and AVP Stewart Berkinshaw. We discussed the structure and purpose of the OU Committees and Councils that serve these administrative units.

On October 19, I met with Chair of Staff Senate Justin Daniels. We had a conversation about the implementation of policies at OU as we move away from having Faculty and Staff Handbooks and, instead, will have policy managed by a new Office of Policy. We also discussed the councils that have both faculty and staff representation, and how we might help those bodies function more effectively. We shared ideas about the current COVID policies and practices. We are pleased to see the Norman case counts declining, but the decline is slow and there are models predicting an early spring surge. We agreed to continue to advocate for caution and continued vigilance regarding COVID dangers.

On October 26, I met with FS officers Dave Hambright and Kalenda Eaton. We outlined plans for the upcoming FSEC meeting and the agenda items for the next Senate meeting. We discussed ideas to facilitate communication between OU committees/councils and their associated administrators.

On October 27, I spoke briefly on the phone with VP Sean Burrage to request a status update on the Biden administration mandate that workers on federal contractors be vaccinated for COVID. (The announcement about OU's new vaccine policy came out the morning of October 29.)

On October 29, I met with Provost Wright. We discussed the recognition of service at OU and some possible ways that could be expanded. This led to a conversation about faculty evaluation of service. I showed him the Faculty Senate's proposal from December 2020 (coming from the Compensation and Benefits Committee) regarding sabbaticals that were interrupted during COVID in Spring 2020. I asked for him to consider some options for offering faculty who could not do their planned work in Spring 2020 some kind of redress. We also talked more about the OU sabbatical policy in general. One of the main topics of conversation was the possible impact of the vaccine mandate for OU employees that was announced earlier today. There is real concern about losing employees, and in many areas, OU is already understaffed.

The Faculty Senate Executive Committee met on November 1. Each of the standing committees reported on their recent activities. Sarah Robbins reported from the Faculty Welfare Committee on the progress of the task force addressing representation of our non-regular colleagues. I updated the group on the activities of the Teaching Evaluation Working Group, which is another FWC task force. Heather Shotton reported that the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee's current projects include addressing current (and potential) anti-Critical Race Theory legislation, recruitment and retention problems at OU, and concern for the Office of Institutional Equity. They are in communication with VP Higgs-Hyppolite and are expecting results of a climate survey issued recently. Anthony Natale updated us on the Compensation and Benefits Committee's efforts. They are preparing to send a survey to faculty about their areas of biggest concern with regards to compensation and benefits. They will use these results to guide their priorities. They have also been discussing ways that the input from retirees on benefits issues could be included in decision-making.

The FSEC welcomed Adrienne Carter-Sowell, Director of the Gateway to Belonging program, to our meeting. Dr. Carter-Sowell gave a presentation describing the context and content of the Gateway to Belonging course. She talked about some of the challenges inherent in a new director implementing a

new course with new faculty members, particularly when there are strongly diverging opinions about the course content. She told us about the various assignments given to the students and the outcomes and goals of the courses. We were all very impressed with the work of Dr. Carter-Sowell and her team. The FSEC welcomed Interim Vice Provost Lori Snyder to the meeting, representing Provost Wright who could not attend. She gave a short update on the newly-announced vaccine requirement and let us know that details are being worked out and would be available soon. We also briefly discussed the results of last year's faculty survey from the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education. (You may recall this survey from a few weeks ago.) The top priorities (indicated by the gap between importance and satisfaction) for Oklahoma faculty were faculty salaries, preparation of incoming students, and faculty workload.

The FSEC welcomed Andrew Pollock, Managing Director of the Office of Technology Commercialization (OTC). He presented an updated policy on Intellectual Property. There is a new section providing an option for upfront licensing of technology. Other changes are minor, consisting mostly of updating job titles. The Executive Committee then discussed some business items, including the agenda for our next meeting with President Harroz.

On November 2, I met with the FS officers Dave Hambright and Kalenda Eaton. We compiled questions we had received from faculty regarding the vaccine requirement in order to forward them to HR and/or the administration.

On November 3, I met with Belinda Biscoe, Senior Associate Vice President for University Outreach, to learn more about the College of Continuing Education and the role OU Outreach plays in the community.