<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1nP1FKkUnuyDQ_ahRam83EDk9YrKUWybi>

**Faculty Advisory Council Meeting – Day 1**

Via Zoom – January 27, 2022

Meeting called to order at 9:01

Faculty Advisory Committee Chair Dr. Nikos Vasilakis welcomes the attending FAC members. He reminds the members that is the next meeting is scheduled for April 28-29 in a format yet unknown.

**Medical Campus reports - Part 1**

9:04am U Southwestern School of Health reports

9:06am UTMB – postpones report to later in the meeting

9:07am Health Science Center Houston – no representative present

9:07am UT Health Center San Antonio reports

9:10am UT Southwestern reports.

**Open floor discussion**

9:12am Chair Dr. Nikos Vasiliakis opens the floor to any other issues.

Dr. Sarah Sass asks what academic campuses are doing with respect to covid response.

AVC Dr. Patrick Francis responds that from the UTS view the return to office is delayed until Mid-February. Dr. Emma Gelsinger from UT System adds that some campuses are delaying the return to in-person meetings and instruction while others have started regular face to face operation. Others add that UT Austin is open and in F2F mode already.

Dr. Domino Perez points out that this is correct, but the decision was made by a leadership committee with one faculty member on that committee. The guidance includes no mask requirement, but strongly suggests it. There is no social distancing requirement. In general, faculty are concerned.

Other campuses report similar arrangements and concerns.

Dr. Caroline Park brings up the question if any of the campuses has a plan or is working on one to counter inflation. Dr. Bonner expands and asks the group if faculty are being involved in a meaningful way to develop these guidelines/policies on any campus?

A lively discussion ensues, but it appears that no such plans are pursued.

Dr. Nikos Vasilakis thanks the group for the discussion and opens the floor to the next presenter.

**Cybersecurity, challenges and steps taken to ensure prevention of cyberattacks etc**

9:29am Helen Mohrmann, Chief Information Security Officer introduces herself and presents about cybersecurity. She provides an example of the digital evolution from a phone on the wall to cell phones. In the beginning academia was an early adopter of digital advancements, but cyberthreats were not an issue. Now significant threads are exposed: Ransomware, encryption, stealing and corruption of research data. She provides an example that involves patient data in hospitals. She points out that Nation-states are active in stealing research information and that crypto currency mining takes away computational power from universities and research projects. Dr. Mohrmann lays out the impact on the mission of the universities and provides further examples.

She also reports that when a cyberthreat is detected, universities take down the internet connectivity effecting everyone, possibly causing harm and provides an animal research related example. The federal government and funding agencies have started to set requirements, she points to Controlled Unclassified Information (CUI) and upcoming DOD CMMC requirements. She concludes with showing possible intrusion mechanisms. Countermeasures are: Prevent, detect, respond and recover. She presents examples of the different categories.

A Q&A session about cybersecurity ensues.

Dr. Nikos Vasilakis thanks the speaker and emphasizes that information and communication is needed and the response to threads needs to be balanced.

10:12am Short break.

**Dr. Archie Holmes, EVC Academic Affairs**

10:15am Dr. Archie Holmes, EVC Academic Affairs present three emerging initiatives of UT System. He reports about the equitable student pathways grant from Lumina. ($500k) that looks at student data for marginalized groups and how to help them. The plan is to form an analytics consortium to further analyze this data.

The second initiative is to diversify faculty, particularly in the STEM area. He reports that a consortium has been formed across several systems to look into converting postdocs into faculty positions to increase diversity. Questions are raised about implementation and funding and Dr. Holmes states the plan is for a 5 year NSF grant, but that details are still to be worked out.

The third initiative is related to HSIs. With UTEP, UTSA, UTA and UTRGV being HSIs UT System is effectively a Hispanic serving system. The new HIS commonness initiative will investigate meaning and implications of this.

Dr. Nunez-Mchiri asks about results from the survey of UT campuses about the COVID impact? Dr. Holmes responds that the survey indicates that mental health and wellbeing is the most important aspect, but that the particular effects depend on the activities, disciplines and points in the careers with different impacts ranging from graduate student to faculty.

Dr. Nunez-Mchiri reminds everyone that the FAC AA committee is currently working on a COVID legacy paper. Problems range from postponed conferences, labs being closed, missing childcare to travel being impossible. Dr. Holmes states he is looking forward to see that document.

Some members point out that publications (books) are on hold because of a paper shortage. This holds up promotions and advancements. The question is asked if there is a plan to address this?

It is pointed out that this is not a particular good policy, but still happening is some departments and should be addressed on the departmental level.

Dr. Nikos Vasilakis states that a lot of issues are being worked on, and that he hopes to bring them in up in the upcoming FAC EC meetings with Dr. Holmes.

Dr. Holmes notifies the group that he has unfortunate news that the Chancelor will not join the FAC meeting on Friday at 9:00am.

He also reports about the Texas credentials for the future task force that aims at addressing record high unemployment for students with unfinished degrees. The group looks at degrees where micro credentials or certificates can help or training and development is needed.

Dr. Nikos Vasilakis closes the discussion, thanks Dr. Holmes and asks for the breakout rooms to be opened.

**Committee Meetings (virtual breakout rooms)**

10:55am Committee meetings start

**Closing discussion**

11:45am Closing discussion starts.

Dr. Nikos Vasilakis opens the floor for discussion.

Dr. Catsam (AA): Committee will work on COVID legacy a brief statement on shared governance.

Dr. Jacqueline Fay: Governance is also working on a statement.

Dr. Chris Messenger: Health Affairs committee would like to look at what health information UT System or individual universities collect about their employees this and work on suggesting improvements. First the committee would like to know what is collected and by whom.

12:05pm Dr. Nikos Vasilakis adjourns the meeting.

**Faculty Advisory Council Meeting – Day 2**

Via Zoom – January 28, 2022

Meeting opened for free discussion at 9:03am

Several medical campus representatives confirm that their campuses follow the supreme court ruling that medical institutions need to be in compliance and that their universites enforces that.

Representatives from academic campuses have no coherent approach at this.

Dr. Nikos Vasilakis reports that various invitees had to cancel and that a deviation from the agenda will occur.

He also states that foreign affiliations in research collaboration is an important point and that overzealous prosecution could be a problem. FAC will attempt to invite someone a UT System representative to clarify.

Dr. Derek Catsam reminds the group that before working on a COVID impact statement and best practices to look at and reaffirm the shared governance document that FAC previously wrote.

Dr. Nunez-Mchiri emphasized that all administrative levels should be reminded of existing policies.

Several members bring up the topic of recognition for authorship for tenure, promotion and evaluation purposes. Collaborations and large research projects need to be critically assessed. Research fields and criteria are changing.

Dr. Caroline Park states a critical look at retention is needed. Because hiring is expensive, retention is important. A data driven approach is needed.

Dr. Catherine Ross points out that UT’s Academy of Distinguished Teachers could be a source and ally.

**Committee Meetings (virtual breakout rooms)**

9:27am Group breaks out into committees

**Updates on the status of student benefits and safety net**

10:00am Laura Chambers (Employee benefit program) and Sarah Pekar (Sr. benefits analyst) present about student insurance and the state of the student benefits.

FAC members point out that students are considered half-time, so that benefits coverage is prohibited and question what the stand on that from UT system is. Dr. Chambers points out that students must enroll in the employee plan (for working student that work 30 or more hours.). This concerns the hours actually worked not that are paid for. There are 5k federal fees per employee should this not be honored by the institution.

Concerns are voiced that students are usually not hired for more than 19 hours independent of work expectations. Dr. Chambers will talk to general council.

A question is asked with respect to traineeship vs. work and if that is making a difference? Dr. Chambers will ask the general council.

The group charges FAC secretary Dr. Quetschke to send a summary of the questions, talking points and concerns about student insurance and benefits to Dr. Chambers.

A question is raised if Dr, Chambers team can produce a video with the information about benefit options and insurance options. Dr. Chambers confirms that her team can do that.

Dr. Nikos Vasilakis reminds the group to be careful about semantics and that there might be unexpected consequences or costs for graduate students. Dr. Chambers confirms that her team is aware of this. She confirms that her team will contact the advisory council.

Members of the group ask who will pay if a student moves into the 30h category, especially because PI’s are not flexible in their budgets to fund graduate students. There is no answer provided.

**Committee Reports**

10:36am **Governance**: Dr. Harrison Ndetan reports that the committee is working on the parental leave policy and to identify areas of success or concern on shared governance. The action items are: identify liaison, assessment of current status of the document and assess the best practices.

He mentions that the committee struggles to find information and how to enhance continuation between meetings.

10:41am **Academic Affairs**. Dr. Derek Catsam reports that the committee is working on the COVID legacy project and makes a motion that FAC reaffirms the document: “Shared Governance at the University of Texas System Institutions: A White Paper, Prepared by the University of Texas System Faculty Advisory Council, Spring 2016”
<https://www.uttyler.edu/faculty-senate/files/sharedgov2016.pdf>

Motion: “The Faculty Advisory Council reaffirms its commitment to the principles laid out in “Shared Governance at the University of Texas System Institutions: A White Paper,” which was prepared by the University of Texas System Faculty Advisory Council in Spring 2016 and subsequently endorsed by the Chancellor of the University of Texas System.”

Dr. Catherine Ross points to UTA’s “Academy of Distinguished Service Leaders Policy”
<https://policy.uta.edu/doctract/documentportal/08D8C3F67E654437896F9272E7511371>
and suggest to ask UT System for buy-in. Members chime in and state that shared governance is different on the individual campuses, but the importance is high. It is also said that shared governance is also shared responsibility! Transparency comes with assistance in the work. Members say that reaffirmation sends the message that FAC stands by it and it will act as a reminder.

The question is called, and the discussion is ended.

The motion passes and FAC reaffirms the document.

**Health Affairs**. Reports the committee will continue working on health professions related topics, especially COVID related implications and Burnout.

**Research Committee**: The reminds and encourages FAC members to help in getting the research support information from various campuses.

**Academic Campus Reports**

11:04am UTRGV reports.

11:06am UT Austin reports.

11:12am UTPB reports.

11:17am UTA reports.

11:24am UTD reports.

11:29am UTEP reports.

11:32am UTSA reports.

11:38am UT Tyler reports.

**Closing Discussions**

11:41am Dr. Nikos Vasilakis states that FAC will hear about burnout initiatives at the next FAC meeting. He thanks the group for the productive discussion and reminds the group that all members face different issues, but that FAC members need to be the best advocates for their stakeholders. He says: “We do a good job, but we need to do better.”

The group emphasizes that better communication is needed, and that communication needs to go upward and downward, to UT System and administrators as well as to faculty on the campuses.

Dr. Nikos Vasilakis closes by saying that FAC will meet again in April, likely in person.

11:54am Meeting adjourned