

# SOUTHERN METHODIST UNIVERSITY

## Faculty Senate Meeting

May 1, 2024, at 3:10 p.m.

**Present:** Adriana Aceves; Stephanie Amstell; Sondra Barringer; \*Gauri Bhat; Neil Bhattacharya; Amy Brewster; Wei Cai; \*Ted Campbell; Darryl Dickson Carr; Brian “Squirrel” Eiserloh; Maxime Foerster; \*Robert Frank; Harsha Gangammanavar; Lane Harder; \*Michael Harris, presiding; James Hart; Christine Hurt; Constantin Icleanu; Lynne Jacobs; Marta Krogh; Ethan Lascity; Orly Mazur; Barbara Minsker; Brian Molanphy; \*Lourdes Molina; Sid Muralidharan; Jennifer O’Brien; Eli Olinick; John Potter; \*Carla Reyes; Dan Reynolds; Meredith Richards; Sara Romersberger; Edita Ruzgyte; \*David Sedman; Susana Solera Adoboe; Herve Tchumkam; Theo Walker; Matthew Wilson;

**Absent:** Vishal Ahuja; Brandi Coleman; \*Xin Lin Gao; Daniel Heitjan; Mohammad Khodayer; Alicia Meuret; Jennifer Matey; Robin Pinkley; Harold Recinos; Feng Zhang; Jia Zhang

**Ex officio:** Paige Ware, Elizabeth Lobo

**Visitors:** Caroline Jeter; Brett Story, Pavel Nadolsky, Maribeth Kuenzi

1. The meeting was called to order at 3:10 p.m.
2. The agenda and April 17 meeting minutes were approved.
3. Passed Jeter Resolution to recognize and thank Carolyn Jeter for her 38 years of service to SMU.
4. Academic Policies Committee Report, Brett Story
  - a. Reviewed the Committee’s standing charges and stated the committee’s work is principally reactive. This year, the APC discussed the following: potential changes to major advising, which involved collaboration with SMU in Four to assess the state of advising for majors and consider the possibility of shifting advising responsibilities from department faculty to staff/professional personnel across the university (ECON currently follows this model); support for the adoption of a class disruption policy similar to Iowa State University’s policy as, recently, there have been few disturbances and the current Student Code of Conduct does not explicitly address how to handle these—this appears to be especially urgent in the current political climate; adopting a final exam policy that would allow students scheduled to take 3+ exams in a single day to reschedule the last exam scheduled that day—only approx. 5% of students are affected, and data reveals that students in FINA, DANC, ECON, and PYSC are disproportionately affected; the transfer credit policy, about which the APC agrees that SMU promises to incoming students should be honored regarding pre-matriculation credits should transfer as long as they don’t conflict with pre-established (non)equivalences and Admissions and departments should establish acceptable (non)equivalencies before offering transfer credits; evaluating the textbook adoption process, which involves a new digital system that will make the adoption process smoother, and the bookstore will work with the registrar to identify courses that do not typically carry textbooks to remove them from the system and also courses that use open-access resources; finally, the APC reviewed the syllabus statement on the use of generative AI and agreed with the proposed statement and recognized that individual faculty may want to establish course-specific guidelines.
    - i. FS concerns: a recommendation that the libraries assist faculty with open-source materials, etc. There was also a request to elaborate on the classroom disruption incidents that prompted the discussion to amend the current Student Code of Conduct and suggestions if the disruption happens outside the classroom (during office hours, etc.); faculty always have the authority to ask the student to leave the classroom/office, ask them not to return, and call SMU PD if safety is a concern.

5. Student Policies Committee Report, Adriana Aceves

a. Reviewed standing charges and additional charges, including monitoring availability and access to mental health resources (SMU appears to be below the national average for anxiety and depression and higher for ADD/ADHD), identifying best practices for promoting retention and graduation rates for underrepresented groups, and proactively working with the Provost's Office, DASS, etc., to improve the disability testing/evaluation process. Regarding mental health resources, some of the challenges include the lack of awareness about SMU services and the negative perception of Counseling Services—some of the solutions include Counseling Services being fully staffed by the fall semester, the intake process being streamlined, the 8-session limit was removed in August 2023. Update: The Office of Wellbeing website is now operational; they now have a WEST Team (undergrads charged with empowering peers to make informed wellness decisions) undergoing the process of having SMU become a JED Campus (a collaborative program that aims to protect mental health and prevent suicide equitably) and reviewing the Strategic Plan (focusing on diversity and inclusion, including HR practices). SPC would like to invite Dr. March-Bell, Director of Counseling Services) to speak to FS about available student services. The committee also assessed the new on-campus transportation service for persons with mobility issues; approximately ten students use the service regularly, there are few complaints about the service, and the most pressing complaint is a shortage of handicapped parking. Regarding retention, 70% are final, and 60% happen by the end of the first year; MATH and CHEM are working with SAES, Academic Advising, and the Registrar to require all students taking a variety of courses to take a placement exam to ensure they are prepared. Tobacco Policy Taskforce: the Office of Wellbeing Education has secured a grant in partnership with the Truth Initiative to change the campus tobacco policy. The Committee followed up on the possible disparity for lower-income students who seek care at the SMU Health Center because the Center does not provide notes stating that they were seen, should be excused from class, and when it is safe to return to class. The Committee compiled a list of aspirational institutions that provide the documentation the Committee recommended; they crafted a resolution asking the Health Center to provide the requested documentation, and plan to bring it to the Senate floor in the fall. The Committee's general recommendations include more visibility of Counseling Services and the Office of Wellbeing; inviting Dr. March-Bell to speak to FS; promoting Counseling Center outreach events and considering inviting the WEST Team to class; and working with the appropriate stakeholders to address the shortage of handicapped parking; proactively work with the Provost's office, DASS, and relevant offices to improve the process of disability testing/evaluation.

i. FS concerns: there were questions regarding student insurance mental health coverage and the effectiveness of CCC forms. Michael Harris mentioned the Board of Trustees has discussed student mental health, which hopefully will help address the faculty/SPC's concerns.

6. Athletic Policies Committee report, Matthew Wilson

a. Highlighted important dates/information and the significance of SMU's transition to the ACC, including the financial impact/budget implications of the transition (donors will cover the \$125M of transition costs; SMU will continue to cover approximately \$18M/year for Athletics—a figure that has remained steady in recent history). Overall, SMU student-athletes do well academically (though football and both Men and Women's basketball athletes' GPAs tend to be lower than athletes of other sports).

i. FS concerns included speculating that SMU teams would lose badly when playing ACC teams, but this may depend on the sport. There were also concerns about being prepared for how this will impact the classroom; there is an effort to reduce the clustering of

student-athletes and to work more closely with the coaches, especially regarding students who may need to be academically well-prepared.

7. Faculty Ethics and Tenure Committee Report, Pavel Nadolsky

a. The committee analyzed promotion trends from associate professor to full professor for 2000-2023 by school, gender, and ethnicity and found that it takes slightly longer for women to become full professors. Still, there is no suggestion of differences based on race. It takes 6-8 years to be promoted to full professor, though Dedman I shows the most extended and Dedman Law the shortest. Approximately 64% of associate professors have been tenured for ten years or fewer. The Committee recommends the following: collecting benchmark data about promotion to tenure at aspirational/peer institutions; following up with Cox regarding the promotion of female faculty; correcting the data for 30 faculty whose promotion dates are incorrect in the system; examining the five professors who were promoted to full after 20 years in the rank of associate; following up with the tenured faculty who have been associate for 10-20 years and offer guidance.

b. Subcommittee on the Economic Status of Faculty, Maribeth Kuenzi

i. Reviewed standing and additional charges for 2023-24, including working with the task force on faculty salaries, identifying areas where the university lacks market competitiveness/making recommendations, monitoring the implementation of the creation of a fund to ensure promotion raises for NTT faculty and monitor/work with the Provost's Office to provide the committee has the necessary data to complete necessary tasks. Reviewed the details of faculty raises by school and inflation/consumer price index for the past ten years. Compared to administrators, faculty raises were 4.58% while administrators were 6.22%, a difference of 30.37% this year (last year it was 11.5%)—the Committee would like to examine this further. Reviewed wage compression by the school, which continues to be a problem, and recommended that the Committee/faculty better understand how departments differ on best practices, that deans should assess compression/salaries based on the norms of the industry and collect data from peer/aspirant institutions based on departments (CUPA-HR data is now available to deans and chairs). Additionally, reviewed 1% Merit Pool distributions by college and recommended posting the general guidelines within each school of how to earn money from the 1% pool, encourage new deans to post changes to these guidelines after their first year if these have changed, continue to monitor for inadvertent patterns toward various groups, and encourage the administration to examine that the award amounts are consistent with the guidelines provided by the Deans and finally, shared the mean, median, 25<sup>th</sup>, and 75<sup>th</sup> percentile for each rank at every school.

8. Senate leadership transition: Michael Harris passed the gavel to David Sedman

9. Adjourned at 4:58 pm

Submitted by Lourdes Molina