

DOCUMENTS OF THE GENERAL FACULTY

REPORT ON FACULTY COUNCIL PRIORITIES

Faculty Council Chair Domino Perez (Associate Professor, English) has filed with the Secretary of the Faculty Council the report set forth below.



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REPORT ON FACULTY COUNCIL PRIORITIES

Summary: Faculty Council members were asked to identify challenges they felt were of a high priority through a series of meetings (Zoom break out rooms during Faculty Council meetings) and through invited feedback via surveys. The Faculty Council Executive Committee (FCEC) collected and organized the list of challenges, allocating topics to standing committees, as appropriate. A few topics were outside the specific purview of a standing committee, and the FCEC recommends these topics be considered at the level of the Provost's Office or Deans Council.

Feedback for the Administration

- **Low Morale**
 - Faculty communicated they are
 - feeling that the university is being run like a business is bad for faculty morale (e.g. Upward and downward morale around cultural issues)
 - feeling that the university no longer prioritizes research and teaching the arts and the humanities, as reflected in flat budgets for the graduate students upon which the teaching and research mission of the university depends as well as over a decade of flat funding for UT libraries.
 - feeling disrespected (poor communication around campus issues; lack of respect for and clear support of professorial rights)
- **Request for proactive recognition of challenges:**
 - There's a sense on the part of faculty that the university tends to react in a haphazard, ad hoc, seat-of-the-pants way to challenges that seem entirely predictable, including surges in the pandemic, icy weather, the ever-rising cost of living in Austin, wage competition from industry for faculty and staff, the need to adjust governance and reward structures at the university to accommodate and enfranchise the increasing numbers of professional-track faculty, etc.
 - Faculty are interested in more proactive recognition of and compensation for the extra work that faculty have invested over the past two years

Feedback for Provost/Deans Council

- **Faculty overburdened**
 - Overburden of service and lack of local departmental administrative support
- **Uncertainty about NTT Faculty roles**

- Clearer understanding of the role of NTT faculty and the obligations to them—regarding salary, promotion, merit increases, retention, contracts, “naming” policies, etc.
- NTT work environment (access to work laptops, short contracts, job search, travel grants)
- **Lack of clarity around tenure preparation and decisions, and salary**
 - Clearer promotion guidelines at the unit and university levels, so we don’t have a repeat of last year, when 20% of the associate professors who went up for promotion were denied
 - TT Salary transparency (identify disparity between departments); pay comparison to industry is “abysmal”
 - Escalating expectations for P & T and the “price” of publishing in certain fields, as well as the lag in publishing under supply-chain issues faced under COVID
 - Addressing structural issues in promotion and compensation
- **Communication breakdown**
 - A large disconnect between faculty, department chair, and deans. This affects wellness because often faculty satisfaction (or any satisfaction within a job) has to deal with the support that is given to the worker for them to present their best work, support students, etc.
 - Blurred lines. Nothing is planned: we make reactive decisions in the absence of policy, and there needs to be a reset to ensure that we’re all on the same page, and that faculty are being treated equitably, and that we are all following more or less the same rules of the road across units re: what are rights and responsibilities are, and how our workload and performance relates to our compensation, etc.
 - Better communication between faculty council and departments, perhaps with chairs as intermediaries
 - College policies that are “in harmony” with other colleges, e.g. with regard to pay rates, etc.), good communication and transparency around all the faculty programs that currently exist (EAP, wellness programs—we need a better sense of what UT already offers)

Topics that are appropriate for a Task Force/Working Groups/University Initiative

Regarding Faculty Welfare

- **Texas One Stop for Faculty (SSD, LAITS, SES, etc)**
 - Someone mentioned that anything we do as a university just adds another layer of stress (for example, conflict of interest requirements are meant to keep us legally sound, but concern about following all the myriad rules can be really time consuming and stressful.
 - creating a “Requirement Oversight Committee” to manage all the expectations across the university to ensure the current requirements (just in general) are not overwhelming and that the policies don’t conflict across colleges.
- **SES-integration with faculty workflow**
 - a. Help in dealing with mental health issues of students

Regarding NTT/Professional Track Faculty Concerns

- NTT are being asked and able to fill more service and professional roles on campus, but without commensurate obligations of salary, retention, etc.
- fairness, equity, humanity in workload, in responsibilities, in pay, including renewing or not renewing professional-track and adjunct faculty contracts BEFORE the end of the spring semester, so people know whether to renew their leases or not and can plan their lives.
- greater job security for clinical and instructional staff (non-TT)
- living wages for instructional faculty
- NTT work environment (access to work laptops, short contracts, job search, travel grants)

Faculty council members asked for a status update about the following resolutions:

Status Update?	Standing Committee/Other
Paid family medical leave/what is status of FC resolution by A5 in 2020?	A5 (Faculty Welfare) Refers to previous FC resolution; "FACULTY WELFARE COMMITTEE RESOLUTION ON FACULTY AND STAFF PAID MEDICAL LEAVE D 18162-18163 " Current status: <i>On May 22, 2020, the Provost's office transmitted the resolution to Associate Vice President for Human Resources Adrienne Howarth-Moore for consideration given federal and state laws. Update for April 2022?</i>
Value of faculty service (best practices for equity)/what is status of FC resolution	A5 (Faculty Welfare) + taskforce DSA + Provost's Office? Refers to FC resolution on Faculty Service by A5 "Resolution of Faculty Service Duties to Department, Schools, Colleges, and the University D 18164-18165)" Current status: Transmitted to Provost (McInnis) for her information April 14, 2020.

Topics assigned to General Faculty Council Standing Committees

A-1 Committee of Counsel on Academic Freedom and Responsibility

- academic freedom (erosion, lack of support)
- right to decide how best to teach our classes (content and modality)
- harassment over controversial statements

A-2 Faculty Advisory Committee on Budgets

- living wages for instructional faculty
- faculty salaries (affordability, Austin cost of living)
- cost-of-living increases

A-5 Faculty Welfare Committee

- normalize (and make transparent) workload
- affordable, convenient, available childcare
- a higher degree of administrative support/staff (accounting and OSP) support in agencies that work with faculty
- isolation and lack of connection among faculty, students, staff, everybody.
- address the needs of faculty or staff care-giving to kids and elder-care, and other family members in need
- cost-of-living in Austin salaries
- housing assistance/benefits programs for existing faculty
- developing a sabbatical policy (TT and NTT)
- paid family medical leave
- sabbaticals for faculty

- greater resources and communication around mental health issues

A-6 General Faculty Rules and Governance Committee

- existing faculty governance is ineffective or has limited impact

B-2 Recreational Sports Committee

- encourage faculty to participation in fitness/waive fees

B-3 Student Life Committee

- Identify and implement concrete ways to support student mental health
 - grading
 - different types of assessments that reduce time stress
 - flexibility
- isolation and lack of connection among faculty, students, staff, everybody

C-13 Information Technology Committee

- classroom technology (ability to record lectures)
- access to work laptops for faculty

C-14 Technology-Enhanced Education Oversight Committee

- working conditions around technology