

JOURNAL OF THE FACULTY SENATE
The University of Oklahoma (Norman campus)
Regular session – October 11, 2021 – 3:30 p.m. – via Zoom

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Note: The remarks of the Senators and others are summarized and not verbatim. A recording of this meeting is available by appointment in the Faculty Senate office.

The Faculty Senate was called to order at 3:30 p.m. by Professor Keri Kornelson, Chair.

PRESENT: Apanasov, Bemben, Benjamin, Bergey, Boldenow, Cuccia, Cytacki, Dee, Eaton, Fithian, Fuenzalida, Ge, Hambright, Harjo, Hougen, Jervis, Jiran, Kibbey, Kornelson, Lai, Lamothe, Larson, Lifset, Mahdi, Mayeux, McCarthy, Miller, Moore-Russo, Muller, Natale, Neeson, Nelson, Nollert, Parsons, Randall, Raymond, Rubenstein, Schmeltzer, Sikavitsas, Stalling, Steele, Steffensen, Stetson, Stock, Teodoriu, Wang, Weaver

Provost's Representative: Andre-Denis Wright Lori Snyder

Staff Senate representative(s): Sarah Connelly

SGA Representative(s): Rin Ferraro, Crispin South

Guests: Dorothy Anderson, Lee Camargo-Quinn, Colin Fonda, Stewart Berkinshaw

ABSENT: Hsieh, Pepper, Remling, Riggs

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APPROVAL OF JOURNAL

The Faculty Senate Journal for the regular session of September 13, 2021, was approved without revisions.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Chair Kornelson read the [Land Acknowledgement](#) approved at the May 2021 Faculty Senate meeting.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Faculty Senate sent out the call for proposals for the Ed Cline Faculty Development Awards on October 6, 2021. Up to \$2,500 may be awarded per proposal. In order to provide funding earlier to better support summer projects, proposals are due to the Faculty Senate by Monday, December 13, 2021. The submission link is https://ousurvey.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_br9PZau0UqsaAhn and further information is available at <http://facultysenate.ou.edu/facdev.html>.

The four policy updates discussed at the October meeting from the OU Policy Office have been deferred. They will be discussed and voted on for endorsement at the November Faculty Senate Meeting.

The Faculty Senate Executive Committee requests that all Senators, particularly those whose units have more than one Senate representative this year, volunteer to be the Senate liaison for a unit without direct representation. Please share your updates from meetings and seek their input on topics under discussion by the Senate, as you would for your own unit.

The Faculty Senate is sad to report the deaths of faculty member Jerzy Bodurka (Biomedical Engineering) on August 12, 2021, and retired faculty members Henry Tobias (History) on March 28, 2021, Kathy Latrobe (Library & Information Studies) on May 1, 2021, William “Charlie” Clay (Sociology) on August 29, 2021, and Curtis McKnight (Mathematics) on September 11, 2021.

SENATE CHAIR'S REPORT, by Prof. Keri Kornelson

The Senate Chair’s Report was distributed to all regular faculty members before this meeting along with the meeting agenda; it is attached. Chair Kornelson asked if there were questions or comments about any of the items in the report. There were no questions.

REMARKS BY ASSOCIATE VP FOR BUDGET AND FINANCE STEWART BERKINSHAW

Chair Kornelson introduced Associate Vice President for Budget and Finance Stewart Berkinshaw to talk about the funding of the strategic plan. AVP Berkinshaw said that the majority of the funding would be for faculty hiring. This is a 7-year plan and is not static, but resilient. AVP Berkinshaw said that as part of the Strategic Plan, OU plans to add 150 new faculty positions over the next six years. Additionally, staff positions will be added in critical student-facing and faculty support positions to sustain this growth. To achieve this increase in faculty count, the university has or will evaluate:

- Changing the health plan design and collapsing the tier structure from six to three – implemented in 2021.
- Moving from Delta Dental to Blue Cross Blue Shield Dental – implemented in 2021.
- Potentially revising the current Defined Contribution Plan structure for new employees.
- Changing the third-party administrator of OU’s self-funded medical insurance (currently Blue Cross/Blue Shield).
- Potentially limit Defined Contribution Plan payments from the university to base pay only. This will impact supplemental, overload, and summer pay actions.

AVP Berkinshaw said that these changes will allow the university to plan for biennial raise programs to ensure both faculty and staff compensation is competitive. There was a question about whether OU compared our health insurance plans with the plans offered by the state. AVP Berkinshaw invited Lee Camargo-Quinn from Human Resources to address that question. She said that OU is not a part of the state plans and joining them would limit our flexibility.

AVP Berkinshaw said that the strategic plan funding strategy contemplates changes to some retiree benefits to better align with the market which include:

- Shift from traditional Medicare Supplement to Medicare Advantage Plan – implemented in 2021.
- Examine other benefits compared to active employees for potential re-balancing.
- Work with OTRS to modify a provision that inhibits the university's ability to hire back retirees. Currently, OU must pay 15.55% of a retiree's salary, even though no additional benefit accrues to the retiree.

Sen. Apanasov asked if future retirees are grandfathered into the current retiree benefits if they started employment at OU before this change. Lee Camargo-Quinn said that those employees hired before January 1, 2008, are eligible for a healthcare supplement at the time of retirement. If an employee was eligible to retire before 2016, then their healthcare subsidy is not prorated. Those employees that are eligible to retire after 2016 will receive a prorated healthcare subsidy. In the chat, Ms. Camargo-Quinn directed those interested to <https://hr.ou.edu/Retirees/Retiree-Insurance-Benefits#66711316-eligible-for-retirement-on-or-after-112016-and-hired-before-112008> for more details.

In terms of alumni and donors, AVP Berkinshaw said that the strategic plan notes need-based aid as the university's top fundraising priority and OU will seek to leverage the university's large donor and alumni base to support that priority and other strategic initiatives.

- In Spring 2020, approximately 75 Advancement employees moved from the university to the OU Foundation to fully integrate the fundraising organization and jumpstart fundraising for the university's Strategic Plan.
- Our budget contemplates the OU Foundation raising \$2 million in FY22 and growing that by \$2 million each year, such that by FY27, the university has a recurring \$12 million available to support efforts in the Strategic Plan.
- Prioritize need-based aid fundraising efforts to help ensure accessibility and affordability for all students.

AVP Berkinshaw said that with a budget of about ~\$350 million, Academic Affairs represents the largest VP area on campus and serves as the financial engine, as well as the heart of the university. He added that the Strategic Plan funding strategy seeks to responsibly grow revenue in Academic Affairs and minimize costs not directly supporting students and faculty.

- All non-grant funded areas on campus, including Academics, will be assessed a 1% charge equivalent to their actual payroll expense beginning in FY22. This charge increases to 2% in FY23 and 3% in FY24. This permanent reallocation redirects funding to priorities within the Strategic Plan and allows colleges and departments a phase-in period to respond. This percentage may need to increase if other actions to fund the Strategic Plan are not successful.
- Implementing the strategic plan requires \$76 million in new recurring money and \$108 million in one-time money. The funding strategy will realize up to \$4 million in recurring funding from Academic Affairs to offset Plan costs through entrepreneurial growth in colleges consistent with Pillar 3, Strategy 4, Tactic 3.
- There is planned growth in sponsored research; and re-investment in facilities and administration (F&A) recovery in research-focused components of the strategic plan.

In response to a question in the chat from Sen. Kibbey about how departments will pay the 1-3% tax when there is little M&O budget in most departmental budgets, AVP Berkinshaw stated that when looking at college budgets and the cash reserves, there seem to be resources in each college to fund this tax. He suggested consulting with your college dean about possible sources of funding. Sen. Muller asked in the chat about the advantage of an across-the-board payroll tax, rather than reducing department budgets by a proportional amount. AVP Berkinshaw said that this allows us to bring in auxiliary areas to share in funding the academic mission as well as simplify the process of accessing the tax.

Chair Kornelson said that she has a concern about taxing payroll, which is not a flexible part of a department's budget and harms departments that have a large part of their budget dedicated to payroll. She said those departments with the smallest M&O are the ones that will be taxed the most proportionally. She is also concerned that departments, not deans, will have to find the funding for this tax. AVP Berkinshaw said that when he looks at the unexpended resources at the end of each year, colleges are becoming more cash-rich each year and thus should be able to afford the strategic plan tax. AVP Berkinshaw noted that as of July 1, 2021, vacant faculty and staff lines are being kept at the college-level and not swept. Sen. Jervis asked why we do not tax the colleges instead of the departments. AVP Berkinshaw said that is because the payroll expense is at the departmental level.

AVP Berkinshaw said that at OU, auxiliary activities have around a \$260 million budget and provide fee-for-service activities to students, faculty, staff, and individuals external to the university. Under this plan, all auxiliaries will be assessed a 1% charge equivalent to their payroll expense beginning in FY22 above FY21 rates. This charge increases to 2% in FY23 and 3% in FY24 and may need to increase if other actions to fund the Strategic Plan are not successful. Future savings in benefits expenses (i.e., fringe rates) will accrue centrally to fund the strategic plan, consistent with treatment for Academic Affairs and Administration & Operations. He noted the sale of Traditions Apartment Complex (~\$110 million gross) to fund one-time costs associated with new faculty start-up.

There were several more questions that focused on how this payroll tax will negatively affect departments that are payroll-intensive, that have small M&O budgets, and those that had faculty lines swept in the past that were not replaced. AVP Berkinshaw reiterated that there are resources at the college level to fund this tax and he said that departments need to address this with their respective Deans.

In terms of students, AVP Berkinshaw said that OU is planning for growth in the undergraduate class, including the current 3.5% seen in Fall 2021, and a projected 2% thereafter. AVP Berkinshaw noted that growth in tuition and fee rates should be consistent with inflation to cover fixed costs, including raising programs and deferred maintenance. OU is looking at partnerships with third parties to leverage our expertise in instruction and research and drive new revenue opportunities such as OU Online. OU will prioritize need-based aid fundraising efforts to help ensure accessibility and affordability for all students.

Sen. Kibbey asked if student fees are the main source of the growth of cash in colleges, is this going to drive further increases in fees and is that something we really want? AVP Berkinshaw said that we should have a natural growth based on the trends he is seeing, which will mean we do not need to increase fees to fund the tax, although there has not been a significant increase in fees for four years. Sen. Moore-Russo asked if the excess money that colleges have is proportionally distributed across the colleges in the same amounts as the payroll expenses that will be taxed. AVP Berkinshaw said that most of the resources are sitting at the college level, not the department level. Thus, deans will need to push resources out to the most affected departments. He added that most colleges have resources to fund this strategic plan tax, although there are a couple of smaller colleges that may not.

Due to time constraints, Chair Kornelson asked senators to send any questions they may have or may receive from their constituents to her via email and she will follow up to get the answers from AVP Berkinshaw. She thanked AVP Berkinshaw for addressing the Senate.

REMARKS BY HUMAN RESOURCES STAFF CONCERNING 2022 BENEFITS

Chair Kornelson introduced the new Chief Human Resources Officer Dorothy Anderson. Also joining us from Human Resources were Lee Camargo-Quinn, Benefits Assistant Director, and Colin Fonda, Associate Director of Human Resources. Ms. Camargo-Quinn led the presentation. She said that open enrollment will be October 25 – November 5, 2021, for the 2022 plan year. (Note that after the meeting it was extended through November 16). She said that the changes for 2022 include a medical carrier change to Cigna effective January 1, 2022 (formulary changes with no premium rate increases) and the dental basic plan will now cover preventative care at 100%.

Ms. Camargo-Quinn said that OU will have an on-site representative from Cigna, Sarah Vaughn. She said that there will be Benefits Fairs on October 19-22 at all three campuses and they will be both in-person and virtual. Ms. Camargo-Quinn said that in place of sending out her slides, HR will post this information on their website and send out a link to employees by email.

Sen. Schmeltzer asked for clarification about in-network pharmacies. Ms. Camargo-Quinn said that Cigna had many more in-network pharmacies now than they did when we were last with them. Sen. Nelson asked if there is a gym membership benefit under this plan. Ms. Camargo-Quinn she that she believes there is and will send out more information when she receives it. Prof. Muller asked about the availability of pediatric dentists under the BCBS dental plan. Ms. Camargo-Quinn said they are still working on adding providers to the dental network. There were no additional questions and Chair Kornelson thanked Human Resources for speaking to the Senate.

FACULTY SENATE PRIORITIES FOR THE COMING YEAR

At our September meeting, Chair Kornelson asked senators to send the Faculty Senate Executive Committee (FSEC) input on priorities for the Faculty Senate for 2021-22. She noted that the Faculty Compensation and Benefits Committee (FCBC) and the FSEC are already looking at issues related to compensation and benefits.

Sen. Hougren said that there are issues related to a lack of resources for recruiting and onboarding of post-doctoral fellows. He is also noticing language in job postings about physical requirements that are not qualifications for those jobs and is concerned that this may indicate a bias towards those with disabilities. Sen. Nollert said that in recent years, the administration seemed to be more open to consulting the faculty until the advent of Covid which allowed them to leave out the voice of faculty. He is concerned that this lack of a faculty voice will become the norm post-Covid.

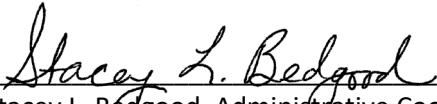
Sen. Nelson asked that there be a conversation about ethics and integrity both with faculty and administrators. Sen. Weaver is concerned about the policies coming from OU IT about computer standardization. Sen. Weaver feels that as a Computer Science professor, these policies could affect his ability to conduct research. He would like for the OU IT administration to speak to the Faculty Senate this year. Sen. Parsons agreed that a visit from OU IT would be very helpful.

NEW BUSINESS


Chair Kornelson said she would entertain any new business. There was none.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 5:29 p.m. The next regular session of the Faculty Senate will be held at 3:30 p.m. on Monday, November 8, 2021, via Zoom.



Stacey L. Bedgood, Administrative Coordinator



Kalenda Eaton, Faculty Senate Secretary

SENATE CHAIR'S REPORT, by Prof. Keri Kornelson
October 5, 2021

On September 10, I spoke on the phone with VP Burrage regarding what could be a changing legal situation in Oklahoma regarding mask mandates. He let me know about the conversations happening in the COVID committees and in the administration regarding the decision not to mandate masks. I expressed a concern from faculty members that, even though case counts are dropping, we are still not out of danger.

On September 10, I spoke on the phone with Provost Wright about the masking policies in place and asked how classes are coping. We discussed a plan to collect data regarding mask usage in classrooms to see if support may be needed for certain populations of instructors or certain types of classes. He will work with his team to send out a survey. He also agreed to offer additional funds to the incentives in the OU Employee Vaccine Drive.

On September 13, the Faculty Senate met.

On September 14, the FS Officers met. We discussed action items from the previous week and made plans for the next FS Executive Committee meeting.

On September 16, I had a short phone call with VP Burrage, as he had an update on the Ombudsperson search. The ad has been posted and the search committee will be convening soon.

On September 20, I attended the meeting of the Board of Regents on the OU Health Sciences Center campus. There were reports from Regents' committees that address various aspects of OU health and operations, but sadly, the committee meetings were not open to the public this year. Regent Shirley reported from the Committee on Property, Staffing, and Maintenance. They have been giving a critical eye to the property owned by OU and giving a lot of attention to the extensive deferred maintenance needs of the campus. Regent Holloway reported from the Audit, Risk, and Finance Committee. OU hired a new CFO, Matt Rockwell, who will begin in December. She reports that the cash position of OU remains strong, our enrollments look good, and that an external audit should be completed in October. Regent Stephenson reported on OU Operations. One area of concentration has been cybersecurity, so they have been meeting with CIO David Horton. Centralized policies and procedures for IT were discussed. He also reported on the athletics budgetary consequences of COVID (in short, not as bad as it could have been). Also, strangely, the Presidents of Cameron University and Rogers State University had not had contracts, but now they do. At the end of the scheduled public meeting, OU Norman Campus faculty member Julie Ward asked to address the Board. She spoke eloquently about her concerns regarding the COVID mitigation policies on the Norman campus, and then read an open letter that many members of the OU community - students, faculty, and staff - have signed since August. A few other members of the audience also made brief remarks. A parent of an OU student expressed her concern about online instruction.

On September 21, I met with the FSEC officers. We discussed plans for the upcoming FSEC meeting in 2 weeks and visitors for the October and November meetings.

On September 23, I met with the Chair of the Faculty Senate at the OU Health Sciences Center, Dr. Fernando Esteban-Florez. We discussed ideas for promoting research collaborations across our campuses, compared notes about the biggest issues that faculty are interested in right now, and outlined some of our common challenges. The OU Health merger has been a source of a great deal of turmoil for their faculty members. We also floated the idea of having a joint meeting of our executive committees, possibly with visitors like our Provosts and/or VPRPs. We will continue talking and will meet again later in the semester.

On September 27, the Faculty Senate Large Executive Committee met held our fall meeting. This committee is made up of the FSEC together with chairs the university-wide councils. Each committee/council chair presented their plans and priorities for the year. Heather Shotton from the Faculty Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee (FDEIC) reminded us of the passing of the Land Acknowledgement resolution for Faculty Senate events and outlined priorities including recruitment and retention of faculty for the coming year. Anthony Natale reported from the Faculty Compensation and Benefits Committee (FCBC) that their goals include finding ways to learn what is happening with regards to salary inequity at the college and unit level to better guide their actions. This was agreed to be an innovative idea that we all supported. Andy Fagg reported that IT Council was happy to see a better policy in place for faculty to receive permission to purchase second computers with external funding or with demonstrated need using startup or other internal funds. He also let us know about changes to the password requirements, so everyone will be prompted in the next few months to change their password. The ITC is eager to be more involved in some policy decisions. Paul Spicer from the Budget Council discussed the joint plan with the Faculty Welfare Committee (FWC) to create workshops that educate faculty about university budgets in general, and the OU budget in particular. There was a discussion that came up where we found several councils did not yet have their student representatives assigned. Stacey Bedgood agreed to check into this for us.

Vincent Deberry from the Continuing Education Council gave us some interesting insight into non-degree certificate programs. David McLeod from the Athletics Council gave some updates on the financial implications of COVID on athletics, the motives for the SEC move, and the turmoil around recent court rulings that will profoundly alter how the NCAA operates. He let us know that Athletic Director Joe Castiglione is eager to come give a presentation to the Faculty Senate, so we will get that booked very soon. Karen Hayes-Thumann from the Academic Programs Council said that they are just inundated with programs that do not follow the pre-finals week rules, and also mentioned that these rules are a bit unclear and sometimes contradictory. We agreed that APC and FWC would collaborate to start from scratch and write a fresh version of the pre-finals week policies for consideration of Faculty Senate and other stakeholders. Cindy Rogers from Research Council reported that there were far fewer applicants last year for the RC awards, particularly FIPs. They are still looking into ways to solve the perpetual issue that faculty in the arts and humanities tend not to apply for RC funding. One recent change is allowing RC funds to be used for salary or course buyouts. There was some discussion about

whether the Research Council should be more involved in the larger research dollar awards given out by the VPRP office. This is something we will continue talking about and consulting with both the RC and the newly-formed VPRP Advisory Committee. Sarah Robbins from the FWC updated us on the Task Force for "non-regular" faculty members. This group was formed near the end of last semester and is discussing the ways that this group of colleagues would like to gain representation in OU governance. She also gave a quick update on the Teaching Evaluation Working Group (TEWG) and other ongoing projects.

On September 28, the FS Officers met. We finalized the agenda for our FSEC meeting with Provost Wright. We discussed ways that faculty representatives might be able to have a voice in the COVID policy and response plans for the spring semester and moving forward into the future.

On September 29, I met with Provost Wright. We discussed the idea of faculty involvement in COVID planning for spring. He agreed to find a venue for this, possibly with an FSEC (ex-officio) seat on the COVID response committees. We discussed the hiring that will be happening from the strategic plan, and how this will be designed to grow faculty diversity. He let me know that the SFRA scoring rubric did include the strength of the hiring plan toward proactively seeking out diverse applicants. Provost Wright shared his plans to set aside funds for spousal accommodations. I showed the Provost last spring's *Recognition and Rewarding of Faculty Service* Resolution from the Senate, explaining the background and motivation for the resolution and that the administration's response was to work with the new Provost. This will be an ongoing conversation. I asked Provost Wright for any updates on the salary equity program, but he did not know the status of this yet. We briefly discussed how decisions will be made for the next round of faculty raises, planned for January 2023.

On October 1, I attended the Faculty Appeals Board (FAB) Rights Assurance Committee meeting. This committee consists of the FAB Chair, the Faculty Senate Chair, the OU Legal Counsel, the Provost, and a representative from the Institutional Equity Office. Every year, this committee is supposed to hold a Policy Maintenance Meeting where the caseload from the past year is discussed from the perspective of assessing the existing FAB policies. This meeting, while mandated by the *Faculty Handbook*, and not been held for many years. Outgoing FAB Chair Anthony Natale and Senate Administrative Coordinator Stacey Bedgood arranged for this long-overdue meeting. Last year was an unusually busy year on the FAB, and the stress exposed some weaknesses in existing policies and procedures that were discussed in the meeting. It is likely that some proposed changes to the FAB policies will be coming to the Senate this year.

On October 4, the FSEC met. Dr. Alisa Fryar from Political Science met with the committee as a consultant on aspects of the university budget. She provided some information about different budget models used in higher education. Associate Vice President for Budget and Finance Stewart Berkinshaw met with the committee to present the current plans and projections to fund the strategic plan. This plan includes benefits changes, fundraising through the OU Foundation, budget reductions via a tax, sale of some property, tuition increases and growth in the size of incoming classes, as well as income from OU Online. We asked questions about the likely regressive impact to departmental budgets from the

tax, given that some units have large payroll but small discretionary budgets. We asked to see the data used to develop this system. We also asked for clarification about the proposed change to the Defined Contribution Plan payments on supplemental pay. AVP Berkinshaw explained that payments into OTRS are mandated to be paid on all compensation, so this would not change OTRS benefits at retirement. But he said that there is not a consistent policy about which supplemental pay is counted for the DCP contributions from OU, and which is not counted. He suggests a consistent policy.

The committee welcomed Provost Wright to the meeting. He discussed the survey sent by his office to track vaccination rates among faculty and staff and rates of masking in classrooms. He announced that there were 8 SFRA (strategic hires) approved for searches this year. He discussed his plans for building a fund for spousal accommodation requests coming from both the strategic and regular hiring plans, which we applauded. He also discussed retention funds. We mentioned that we were interested in the development of other retention efforts beyond salary increases to match outside job offers. We asked some questions about the projected impact of the new tax on academic units, and whether the Deans had been given guidance or boundaries on how they make cuts. Provost Wright will have more discussions with Deans and will report back to us as these plans are made. He also indicated that he intends to modify some budgetary policies so that Colleges have ways to increase revenue. We showed Provost Wright the Faculty Senate *Recognition and Rewarding of Faculty Service* Resolution from May 2021. Action was deferred on this resolution until he took office, but we asked that his office now develop a plan to respond.

The FSEC also welcomed HR representatives VP Dorothy Anderson, Lee Camargo-Quinn, and Colin Fonda. Ms. Camargo-Quinn presented the information about the new healthcare plans for 2022 with Cigna as the provider. She reminded us that very soon, Cigna will have a representative available to us in person to answer questions or help with the transition. She encouraged everyone to check the network status of our current providers and to let HR know if you have a provider who is not in the network. Cigna will reach out and ask these providers to join the network.

The Executive Committee then discussed an issue of how legal names vs. preferred names are displayed in various systems across campus. We began by agreeing to offer support to Kevin Buck and the Canvas team in an initiative to get “preferred” names and pronouns always displayed in Canvas. The committee then discussed a broader desire that would impact all university systems. We will work on a plan on how to best advocate for this. We briefly discussed the agenda for our monthly meeting with President Harroz.

On October 5, I met with Secretary Kalenda Eaton. We finalized the agenda for our monthly meeting with President Harroz and identified visitors to the Senate for November and December. We also discussed some priorities for the Executive Committee for the rest of the semester.