**Faculty Advisory Council Meeting**

**UTS Administration Building, 210 West 7th Street, Austin, TX  
2nd Floor Kuhn Family Conference Room**

**January 26, 2023 – Day 1**

Pre-meeting starts at 10:12am

Chair Dr. D. Coursey provides a short general overview to new members. He introduces Dr. Brian Evans (UT) who is visiting. Dr. Evans briefly presents the tasks and duties of the AAUP.

**10:15 – 11:00am Chair’s Welcome/Remarks/Q&A**

10:18am D. Coursey starts meeting and confirms a quorum.

In the meantime, UTS staff work on solving technical issues with the presentation system in the room.

D. Coursey lays out the agenda for the meeting and reminds the attending members that the legislative session in full swing in the capitol in Austin. He mentions that an update will be provided by Stacey Napier later during the meeting. He points out a few legislative issues, like treatment of DEI for hiring faculty and staff.

He reports that campus visits have happened and reminds the members that campus visits from the FAC president, and the executive team can be requested. This is done by contacting the UTS FAC executive committee and the local faculty senate of the institution that wants to schedule a visit.

He reminds the attending members to fill out a questionnaire about senate and officer support at the local campuses. He asks the members to do it during the campus reports.

He brings up the topic of the free speech resolution that has been passed by the UTS Board of Regents. He suggests that it needs to be discussed and that FAC could possibly vote on endorsing the resolution. He reminds the members that the UTS Chancellor had asked FAC before and he lays out the history and possible political implications.

The presentation system is still impaired, and he postpones his prepared slide presentation to later. Instead, campus reports are going to be presented. Let’s do campus reports.

**11:00 – 12:00pm Campus reports**

10:26am UT Arlington reports

Additional discussion ensues about salaries– faculty and research staff and CUPA data. After that campus reports continue.

10:31am UT Southwest (medical) reports

**10:45am Chair’s Welcome/Remarks/Q&A part II**

D. Coursey returns to the originally planned presentation after the technical issues are fixed.

He says he expects the chancellor to talk about the budget development and that UTS will be asking for more formula funding in exchange for no tuition raises for two years. He provides an overview on formula funding and that the institutions are never funded 100% of the formula. The actual funding level is more like 60%. He talks about imacts of SCH changes and special line-item funding. He points out that the Texas PUF is the larges endowment in the nation.

C. Messenger asks for some clarifications with respect to the historical background of formula funding.

D. Coursey mentions the topics from the chancellor for FAC:

* Faculty mental health. Student mental health is already taken seriously, faculty needs help too.
* ACUE training and the inclusion of graduate students. Recommendations were requested.
* Diversity – and now expanded to DEI.
* Board of Regents free speech statement support.

He is planning to ask the Chancellor about Stephen F Austin joining the UTS and asks for further questions from the group.

C. Paccacerqua: Suggests systemwide push to increase funding.

J. Fay: Postdoc benefits and salaries. D. Coursey suggests bringing this up with Dr. Holmes first.

N.v.Oers: Suggests to look at family leave and D. Coursey suggests to check the implementation.

C. Packham asks if there will be a joint UTS approach again to attack problems. D. Coursey says that this will not be likely except for issues involving economies of scale efficiencies where UTS can save by talking for all member institutions.

D. Coursey gives the floor to C. Packham to formalize the FAC Research Committee.

C. Packham repeats the charge as laid out at the previous October 6, 2022 FAC meeting:

“The Research Committee makes recommendations on the research enterprise of institutions supporting research across the UT system.”

and asks for a vote to confirm the committee as a standing committee.

D. Coursey calls for a vote. The vote passes unanimously.

General discussion ensues about freedom of speech, and possible pitfalls of supporting the resolution. Counter arguments are made why supporting the resolution is politically important and that positive reinforcement is very important. A lively discussion on supporting the BoR/UTS resolution continues.

**12:00 – 1:00pm Lunch with J. B. Milliken, Chancellor**

12:00pm D. Coursey invites everyone to get food from the adjacent room.

12:10pm D. Coursey welcomes Dr. Milliken and Dr. Holmes. He thanks the Chancellor for the support, especially during the COVID crisis, for the faculty.

Dr. Milliken asks to have everyone in the room to introduce yourselves and then he thanks D. Coursey and the FAC and gives some background about actions taken during covid. He emphasizes giving power to the institutions and says the actions and adaption to COVID will be remembered. He emphasizes that higher education has never been more important.

Subsequently he talks about the state of education in Texas. He lays out the upside-down polling of the public on higher education in Texas and states that he needs input from FAC and faculty. He says UTS needs to be proactive on the importance of higher education and he asks for suggestions and then opens the floor for comments.

Comments/Questions: Why has this not been done before? Dr. Milliken: It was never like this before.

C/Q: Social media might be a problem. We need to counter the “bad press” and point out the successes. Dr. Milliken: I don’t disagree, but the numbers don’t help. Not enough followers.

C/Q: We need a common vocabulary to counter misinformation. Dr. Milliken: Not everyone is in the bull’s eye. Health, STEM, business don’t have problems, but English, education, social sciences, and other liberal arts fields have a bad perception in the public.

C/Q: I don’t teach CRT, but let’s talk more about it or it and other topics to follow will get vilified and chipped away. Dr. Milliken: Yes, but we must be political and do our best to support UTS.

C/Q: I am wondering about morale. Could a positive report have been given by UTS, outlining support? Dr. Milliken: Yes, but morale is not the most important thing. Providing an environment to support faculty is.

C/Q: Promotional campaigns, outreach, athletic events seem to be needed. D. Coursey: A lot of employers ask for critical thinking, but the non-STEM fields are usually not recognized to provide exactly that.

C/Q: Let’s talk about return on investment. Student costs are skyrocketing. Their investment is really high. We price out some. Dr. Milliken: Great point, but UTS has already frozen tuition. We need to emphasize that.

Dr. Milliken in closing: Faculty morale matters, the way to get there is what needs to be worked on.

1:20pm 5min break

**1:00 – 2:00 pm Stacey Napier, Vice Chancellor for Governmental Relations – 2023 Legislative Session**

1:27pm D. Coursey introduces Stacey Napier

1:28pm Talks about the budget. Texas has a surplus.

1:46pm S. Napier talks about governmental policy and the possible bills that are going to affect CRT, DEI and tenure.

2:33pm S. Napier closes after a short discussion

D. Coursey introduces EVC Dr. John M. Zervas who joined the meeting.

**2:00 – 4:00 pm Committee Meetings, UTS 2.206A, 1.102, and 1.104**

D. Coursey repeats previews from October:

Academic Affairs: COVID Legacy, faculty mental health, ACUE, employee dept tuition

Governance: Diversity in hiring, GA benefits, parental leave tax issue, student success

Health Affairs: Burnout and related taskforce, faculty mental health

And then sends the FAC committees into their separate meeting rooms to work until 4:15pm. He reiterates the goal as to have a good idea to scope the issues and to have something to give to the Chancellor by April.

C. Packham reminds him that the research committee is also going to work on the previously discussed topics.

**Campus reports – Part 2**

4:23pm D. Coursey reconvenes the meeting. He gives a short overview about the changed agenda for day 2.

4:24pm UT Austin reports

4:27pm MB Galveston reports

4:30pm UT Dallas reports

A short discussion ensues about removing GRE requirements for applications to graduate programs and it is pointed out that according to a change in Regent’s Rules from last year this can now be approved on UTS level.

4:43pm Houston Medical center reports

4:57pm UTEP reports

5:06pm D. Coursey sends the attendants into recess until the next morning.

**Friday, January 27– Day 2**

**8:30 – 9:30 am Working Breakfast and Committee Meetings, UTS 2.206A, 1.102, and 1.104**

**Academic Affairs and Faculty Quality (UTS 2.206A)**

**Health Affairs (UTS 1.102)**

**Governance (UTS 1.104)**

**Research ad hoc (UTS 2.202)**

930am D. Coursey continues the meeting and lays out the agenda for the day. He introduces the next presenter, Savannah Seely.

**9:30 – 10:30 am Savannah Seely, SAC President – Introduction Meeting - Via Zoom**

S. Seely lays out the Student Advisory Council work and charge. She talks about micro credentials being a topic with SAC. She presents <https://seekut.utsystem.edu/> as a resource. For the SAC student academic success is a priority. SAC says it is important to provide clear information about cost and requirements of their education to students.

S. Seely opens the floor for questions and discussion. A discussion about the importance, but also the limitations of SeekUT ensues. Afterwards the discussion shifts to micro credentials and the industree needs and THECB support.

S. Seely summarizes SAC committee work:

Graduate and health committee – graduate students on health campuses.

* Make students aware of safety assistance (urban campuses). Safety app
* Lack in mentoring related to non-academic careers. Career exploration
* Insurance for students

Academic Campus committee

* Student worker pay.
* Transparency on campus jobs. Discrepancy on pay scales, availabilities.
* Tuition and fee transparency. What are the charges.
* Support and resources for students. Bad websites
* Freshman seminar courses. Make them more effective. Build up info as provided during orientation.

S. Seely states that SAC is standing back on DEI.

D. Coursey says that GA pay is a complicated issue and asks what SAC is thinking about different salary ranges in various programs. S. Seely points out that flexibility is needed.

10:32am D. Coursey thanks the speaker.

**Campus reports – Part 3**

10:32am UT Health San Antonio reports

10:47am UTPB reports

**11:00 am – 12:00 pm Dr. Rebecca Karoff, Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs – Transfer Students / Student Success Updates**

11:01am D. Coursey: Introduces Dr. Karoff.

Dr. Karoff talks about student success and ACUE. She emphasizes the need for an instructor sense of belonging.

Q/C: How can we (FAC) help you? Dr. Karoff: Help to change perception. The ACUE program is not punishment for bad teaching evaluations but aimed at improving education. A lively discussion about ACUE ensues. Meetings and possible conferences are mentioned.

Q/C: How do ACUE seats get awarded by the campuses. The Chancellor wants recommendations.

Dr. Karoff mentions that there are other projects to elevate faculty role. One topic is the “Hispanics serving system” and that there is ongoing work on that.

Q/C: There is a Postdoc crises. Why should graduate students become postdocs? Academia does not look appealing. Graduate students, postdocs, faculty don’t want to come to Texas. Dr. Karoff: There need to be incentives and we need to work and think about those fundamental problems.

12:09pm D. Coursey thanks Dr. Karoff. He states that the meeting will continue with a working lunch.

**12:00 – 1:00 pm Working Lunch**

**Campus reports – Part 4**

12:28pm MD Anderson reports

12:36pm UTRGV reports

12:43pm UTSA reports

12:53pm UT Tyler reports

1:02pm D. Coursey summarizes the senate support at the institutions based on collected information. He lays out the process of the upcoming election in April for FAC secretary and FAC Chair-elect.

D. Coursey introduces a text to be discussed in executive session: “UTS FAC supports the UTS BOR free speech resolution as it reflects our existing UTS and individual institution policies.”

1:13pm Motion to enter executive session. The motion is seconded and unanimously approved.

<executive session>

1:44pm The meeting returns from executive session. A motion is made to vote on the resolution:

“UTS FAC supports the UTS BOR free speech resolution as it reflects our existing UTS and individual institution policies.”

The motion is seconded and approved by a majority taken by voice votes. The resolution passes.

**1:00 – 2:00pm Committee Reports**

1:46pm Academic Affairs – D. Catsam reports:

* A survey will be sent out to find methods/incentivize ACUE participation.
* Work on the COVID legacy project will continue.

1:53pm Governance – J. Fay reports:

* Diversity in hiring – create fellowship program and lean on alumni relations to draw students to Texas.
* Graduate student support, present list of existing support at peer institutions. Look into non-financial support.
* Dependent tuition support, not directly allowed, but endowments or scholarships are possible to be used.
* Family Leave. Tax issues are under review.
* Student success – flesh out further ideas.
* Produce Shared Governance Survey.

2:08pm Health Affairs – S. Rossi reports:

* Burnout – wellness methods to be explored.  
  Suicide prevention survey at UT Southwestern. 85% of participants received follow-ups.

2:14pm Research – C. Packham reports:

* Plan a symposium – cross disciplinary, campus across system.
* Postdoc and graduate students. How do we advocate for Texas better.
* Survey to assess research structure at partner institutions.
* Bonus: Investigate dependent tuition issues.

2:17pm D. Coursey adjourns the meeting.