



**Faculty Senate Minutes**

May 12, 2021

**Senate Leadership in Attendance**

Bill Carroll, Chair

Kayunta Johnson-Winters, Secretary

Jacqueline Fay, Chair Elect

Heather Jacobson, Parliamentarian

**Guests**

Caitlyn Burge-Incoming Student Body President

No members of the press identified.

First Name	Last Name	College/School	Department
Nilakshi	Veerabathina	COS	Physics
Jeffrey	McGee	COB	MANA
IOANNIS	SCHIZAS	Engineering	Electrical Engineering
Thomas	Rusher	CAPPA	Architecture
Roxanne	Zascavage	CoLA	Criminology and Criminal Justice
Sergio	Espinosa	COLA	Music
Anne	Nordberg	Social Work	Social Work
Baohong	Yuan	Engineering	Bioengineering
Venkat	Devarajan	Engineering	Electrical Engineering
Sara	Washington	CONHI	Nursing undergraduate
Srinivas	Prabakar	Engineering	Civil Engineering
Changhee	Chun	CoLA	Art and Art History
Jared	Kenworthy	COS	Psychology
Stephen	Mattingly	Engineering	Civil Engineering
Patti	Allard	CONHI	Undergraduate Nursing
Amanda	Jackson	COLA	Theatre Arts
Naoko	Witzel	CoLA	Linguistics & TESOL
Imre	Demhardt	CoLA	History
Barbara	Tobolowsky	College of Ed	ELPS
Alan	Bowling	Engineering	Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering
Manfred	Huber	Engineering	Computer Science and Engineering
Taner	Ozdil	CAPPA	Landscape Architecture
David	Levine	Engineering	Computer Science
Catheleen	Jordan	Social Work	Social Work
Andrzej	Korzeniowski	COS	Mathematics

Ramez	Elmasri	Engineering	CSE
Karla	Arenas-Itotia	Social Work	School of Social Work
Karabi	Bezboruah	CAPPA	Public Affairs and Planning
Julienne	Greer	COLA	Theatre Arts
Christy	Spivey	COB	Economics
Melissa	Walsh	COS	Biology
Brent	Boyea	COLA	Political Science
Kaushik	De	COS	Physics
Aimee	Israel-Pelletier	COLA	Modern Languages
Jacqueline	Fay	COLA	English
Joyce	Myers	College of Education	Curriculum and Instruction
Jeffrey	McGee	COB	MANA
Doug	Grisaffe	COB	Marketing
Heather	Jacobson	COLA	Sociology and Anthropology
Shouyi	Wang	Engineering	Industrial, Manufacturing and Systems Engineering
Chris	Morris	COLA	History
Michael	Nelson	CONHI	Kinesiology
Deana	Furr	CONHI	Nursing, Undergrad NTT
Chunke	Su	COLA	Communication
Margaret	Jackymack	jackymack@uta.edu	SAC
Jing	Wang	CONHI	Graduate Nursing
Amy	Austin	COLA	Modern Languages
Estee	Beck	COLA	English

Call to order at 2:02 P.M. -Bill Carroll

**Report from Bill:** Retiring email access. Faculty who retire were forced to use a retired email address and lose other privileges as a result. We negotiated that away. Unfortunately, HR is still following the old practice and they should not be doing so. Faculty who retire should not be forced to take a retired email. Please let retired faculty know. We can revisit this later.

**Topic:** Proposed Remote Work Location Policy (Main agenda item)

*Action taken by Jackie Fay and Bill Carroll:* The first time this policy appeared was a month or two ago and got a draft to look at. It was discussed briefly in senate, took input and assigned it to a committee.

The senate then provided input to Shelby Boseman and Jewel Washington on April 28, 2021. The recommendation was that faculty be exempted from the policy.

Another draft came out last week. Not only had faculty not been removed, but it had been enhanced to the point that there was more concern than the original. At this point, Jackie and Bill decided to send it out to the faculty senate for review. There was a very quick turnaround. There were 13-14 pages of comments from every college on campus total. 99% expressed concern. This information was shared with the president, Shelby Boseman and Jewel Washington. They were informed that there would be a special session of the faculty senate.

*Summary of the most frequent concerns (listed below)* were presented to the president, Jewell Washington and Shelby Boseman on Monday afternoon. They were informed that remote work was not defined in the policy. They (Bill and Jackie) emphasized that it was a solution in search for a problem.

*Most Frequent Concerns:*

- Damaging to morale of all faculty after their huge efforts to carry the university through the pandemic.
- Remote work not defined in policy
- Negative effect on productivity
- Negative effect on recruitment and retention
- Not legally enforceable
- Represents and broadcasts a regressive, conservative approach to employment in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century
- Is a solution in search of a problem, which damages the reputation of academics, higher education and UTA in particular with the legislature

The feedback was that “they could write a definition.” This was done and sent this morning.

The issue was that there have been requests for remote work. Therefore, we have to have a policy because there was a request. There have been people working remotely for years and had permission. Not sure why suddenly we have to have a policy when the requests are fairly low (only 4 out of 1000 faculty). They should be able to handle a small number of requests without this policy for the near term.

Bill: If we need a policy, it should not be this one.

We will present a full list to the central administration once comments are received from the faculty senate.

Senator: The focus should be on the writing: “*Represents and broadcasts a regressive, conservative approach to employment in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.*” Also, the issue of traditional way of academics which is to visit other institutions, which means that we would have to request leave every time we go a week here and there.

Bill: Because it isn’t defined, they opened it up to a criticism.

Senator: Given the level of concern, it could be useful to request a meeting with the provost and PAC or full senate before moving forward with anything. The 14 pages demonstrate the level of concern. We should get them the 'cleaned up' comments so that they could all be collected and given at one step. Had received comments from people in HR who are concerned about what this means for researchers who are permanently located off site and people stationed all over the world. Sometimes people go at short notice. Can't wait a month to get approval from the president. We should communicate this in person.

Bill: We did invite the president, Shelby Boseman and Jewel to the meeting today. The provost had not been involved at all. Meeting with the provost would not be effective. It was written by Shelby and Jewell and the president has the final say. However, they were not able to come due to prior commitments. It was short notice, which can be appreciated.

The request that we made, exempts faculty from the policy. They have already agreed to do that. However, there is a caveat, which is that we have to write another policy for faculty. They are willing to remove us from this policy. They feel strongly that there is a need for a policy, but we have to develop the new policy.

## **Proposal**

### Possible Way Forward:

- Remove faculty from the current proposed Remote Work Location Policy.
- Form an ad hoc senate committee
  - Develop a definition of faculty remote work
  - Draft a faculty progressive remote work policy
  - Timeline-end of summer 2021
- Pass motion to effect the above

One issue with the current policy is that they did not include faculty in writing it in the first place.

Senator: If both Jewel and Shelby told you that there were 4 cases and there was an existing policy that took care of this, what exactly are they hoping to fix? What is the problem? Did they provide any insight in to this?

Bill: They said that the current policy isn't really a policy. It's more of a process and that it needs to be updated because it's outdated. This is a way to replace it. They also expect the number of requests to grow.

Senator: For people who have done this in the past, are they afraid that people won't do their work?

Bill: Not sure. However, the entire concept bothers me. We should be judged based upon our performance. The focus is on the wrong thing.

We asked for a definition of remote work. They provided a description of remote work:

*When there is a departmental-approved work schedule that includes working at a non-UTA site on a consistent, regularly scheduled basis, an employee is considered to be performing remote work. Tenure and Tenure Track Faculty normally perform teaching, research and service utilizing a combination of on-campus, home and other locations. An RWA is not needed when the faculty member or Chair/Dean decide that the performance of job duties can take place at a designated remote location exclusively. All Tenure and Tenure Track Faculty employees working remotely must have an approved RWA prior to working remotely.*

Bill: The issue here is that this only covers tenure and tenure track faculty when we have a lot of full time NTT faculty who have the same working conditions. They should be included.

They want to be able to say that Tenure and Tenure Track faculty are mostly working on campus.

Senator: If we are going to write a policy, we need to be clear as to what the policy is addressing. There are too many things there. If what they want is a legal document, that's one thing. If they are concerned about health then that's something else. If they are concerned about faculty taking university equipment home and not returning it, that's separate. If they think that we are not working then that's different. There is plenty of evidence around the country and corporate America that productivity has gone up. The point is that they need to be clear as to what they want the policy to accomplish before we can write a policy.

Senator: Faculty who identify with disabilities then have to do remote work. Again, this shows that the policy is too broad.

Senator: The entire world has gone through an unsolicited experiment due to the pandemic. There are many lessons. We should think about, what are some positive things that we can do as a result of this experience. For example, young mothers who are trying to earn tenure are having a hard time etc. We should take advantage of this and make it easier. We don't have actual work hours outside of teaching. We work all of the time. The language is also insulting.

Senator: There is inequality here. It is problematic that we have a policy that will impact women so much more than others. Also, people who have caretaker roles. This can impact diversity hires and faculty who are women.

Jackie Fay: There was a comment in the chat that this policy was not run by the Staff Advisory Council either.

Bill: Doesn't think that there was any intention to run it by the senate. Only knew by serving on the HOP committee. This is important to serve on such committees. Senate should have had a role in this.

*Action:*

Bill: Has emails from Shelby saying that they would exempt faculty from this policy. However, faculty need to create a new policy. We need to understand what to address. We need to pass a motion formally requesting that faculty be removed from this policy. We can also request that Shelby and Jewel come to senate and explain this to us.

Senator: In addition to faculty, all research staff should also be exempt because it becomes an unequal policy.

Bill: We only represent the faculty. If we broaden this, they could say no to all of it. They divided the policy up.

Senator: We should include NTT faculty.

Bill: Correct. We should include NTT faculty. We would remove "tenure and tenure track" from the policy. We don't represent staff; we are the faculty senate.

Margaret Jackymack: There are still employees who wish to work remotely. Not sure what the campus' vision is in terms of what offices need to be opened five days a week and who needs to be staffing it as staff members. Didn't know that faculty had a remote work policy.

Bill: We don't have one.

Margaret Jackymack: It will be interesting to see how they go forward with the remote work policy.

Bill: How do you feel about senate making a comment about staff work policy?

Margaret Jackymack: Don't think that you need to because it is a separate issue. There is SAC representation on the HOP. If we need help, they will email Bill and Dr. Fay.

**Motion:** Request that faculty be removed from the current proposed remote work policy.

None opposed. The motion passed without opposition.

Bill: Before we start writing the policy, we will have input from the administration. We also need to form an ad hoc committee. Would like to get one person per college. That would be 8 people. If you are interested and willing to serve on the this, it's an important issue.

Senator: Why don't we start with PAC, if one is not available, pick someone from that college.

Bill: This is reasonable.

**Motion:** Assign the development of the faculty remote work policy to PAC with the provision that we can substitute if a member from a college is not available.

None opposed. The motion passed without opposition.

Senator: Is the procedure for the workload written down anywhere?

Bill: I presume that it is in the HOP.

Senator: Would be helpful to know what is currently in place.

Senator: PAC should look at some scientific findings on these things. For example, looking at the effectiveness of remote work along with the pros and cons.

Adjourned at 3:00 P.M.