



Southeastern Oklahoma
State University

Faculty Senate NEWS BRIEF

The purpose of the Faculty Senate **News Brief** is to keep faculty informed about Faculty Senate meetings. Agendas and minutes of meetings can be accessed by clicking on the [Faculty Senate Homepage](#).

FROM THE SENATE MEETING ON OCTOBER 6, 2021

The **Personnel Policies Committee (PPC)** gave an update regarding their work on the university's current Telework Policy. The PPC read through the suggested revisions to the policy by the Staff Senate and found them excellent. The PPC finds policy as currently stated appears to remove the flexibility that faculty have traditionally enjoyed. The PPC is currently working on revisions and will meet next week to draft an updated policy to have ready for larger discussion with the Faculty Senate by next meeting. The PPC will then turn its attention to faculty compensation and the salary card.

Members of the **University Affairs Committee (UAC)** discussed their initial reactions to the AP Informational Forum given on October 1 by Dean of Graduate Studies Blackwood. One of the statements that received most discussion was the projected goal of increasing enrollment to 10,000 students. Members of the committee posed many important questions: What is the justification (in the form of a cost-benefits analysis) for increasing enrollment? Will there be contingencies to allow for parallel expansion in facilities, infrastructure, and faculty? What is the time frame for this expansion? And what steps are we going to take to improve the aesthetics of campus?

Faculty Senate Chair Daigle summarized the main take-aways from the **Executive Committee's (EC)** meeting with University President Newsom on September 27:



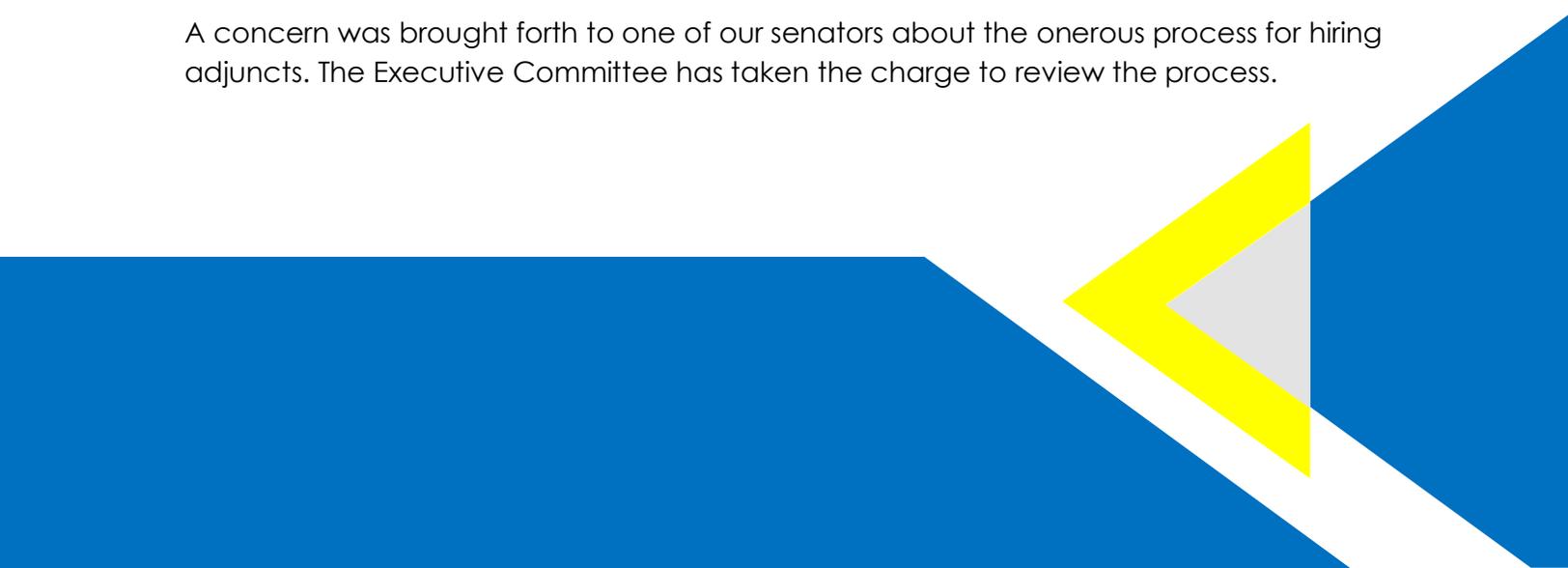
The President gave the following update on COVID-19 vaccination initiatives. About half (309 of 599) faculty members are fully vaccinated, and about 30% of our students have received at least one vaccine shot. President Newsom said he was handcuffed by the state about implementing a vaccine mandate for Spring semester 2022. He did encourage everyone to take advantage of flu shots that are available.

President Newsom said he is following a three-step process to address concerns regarding faculty salary and compensation: First, wants to re-engage step increases. Second, he wants to look at built-in base increases to the current salary card. Lastly, he mentioned his desire to put together a working group to reexamine the appropriateness of the salary card. President Newsom reiterated his desire to make sure that insurance costs are included in any adjustments to salaries, if possible.

President Newsom stated that most of the ad-hoc committees initiated in Fall 2020 have fulfilled their charges and are currently disbanded. He hopes to have the results of these committees released soon.

President Newsom also provided some updates on the University Master Plan. He mentioned some priorities, including renovating Morrison, expanding the Student Union, and upgrading The Loop. He also noted that SE continues to work on renovations and updates related to the “Big Freeze” of Spring 2021. The other large project – the Rodeo Center – was held up by demands by the City of Durant to include a paved road and parking lot to the site, but the unexpected expenses will be covered.

A concern was brought forth to one of our senators about the onerous process for hiring adjuncts. The Executive Committee has taken the charge to review the process.



The Faculty Senate passed a motion charging the Planning Committee to take on the responsibility of nominating a candidate for the Oklahoman Medal for Excellence in Teaching at a Regional University or Community College. It is rare for someone to win on their first nomination, but candidates are viewed more favorably by the committee if there is consensus support by their university. The FS unanimously agreed that we should systematize an annual nomination process for this award, and this is the first step.

ANNOUNCEMENTS & REMINDERS

The first of the Shared Governance Forums for the Fall semester is scheduled for October 11th at 2 pm in Classroom Building 103. The forum will be a face-to-face meeting, but a Zoom link will also be offered. The Administration's topic for this forum is the HLC Quality Initiative. The Faculty Senate has yet to choose its topic for the second Shared Governance Forum, scheduled for November 16th at 2 pm.

Faculty Senate was to be recognized at the Henderson State football game on October 2nd. These plans were cancelled due to the threat of inclement weather. Faculty Senate will now be recognized at the football game scheduled for October 30th against Arkansas-Monticello.

As a reminder, the Faculty Senate is scheduled to meet on 10/20, 11/3, 11/17, and 12/8 (if needed). Faculty members are always invited and welcome to attend meetings of the Faculty Senate. **The next meeting of the Faculty Senate will be at 3:00 p.m., Wednesday, October 20th, via Zoom.** Please visit the [Faculty Senate website](#) for detailed information concerning *your* representative body!

This Faculty Senate News Brief was produced by the Executive Committee of the Faculty Senate: Kay Daigle, chair; Kate Shannon, chair-elect; Randy Clark, past chair; Stan Alluisi, treasurer; William Fridley, archivist; Matthew Sparacio, recorder; Rolando Diaz, parliamentarian.