Presidential Platform & Policy Priorities

Chris Gabler

Faculty Senate President

Edinburg, TX
10 September 2024

Priorities

1. Workload policy

2. Grievance policy

3. Departmental reorganization policy
   - Help affected faculty

4. Financial exigency policy

5. Remove research barriers

6. Faculty salary

Enforce workload policy

- Current policies are robust

- Compliance is lacking

- Enhance awareness and enforcement
  - Chair training
  - Recourse for noncompliant units

Reform grievance policy

- Major policy overhaul
- Deadlines problematic, counterproductive
- Privacy and transparency in balance
- New approaches
  - Informal, privacy-protected layer of conflict resolution
  - On-demand, scalable escalation
- Faculty ombuds

Departmental reorganization policy

- Never again like Chemistry and SOM

- Guarantee: real faculty input, enforceable timelines, timely notifications, comment opportunities, appeal and relief measures
    - Identify foreseen and rectify unforeseen consequences

- Unique opportunity; new COS and CLA Deans

Critical short-term priority: Relief for affected COS, SOM faculty

- Many identified problems

- Solutions need not be reversals

Financial exigency policy

- A last-resort measure to stabilize finances during a financial crisis
- Old idea; good standards and rationale exist
  - AAUP https://www.aaup.org/report/financial-exigency-academic-governance-and-related-matters
- Peer & aspirational institutions have these; we don't
  - UT San Antonio https://www.utsa.edu/hop/chapter2/2.38.html
  - UT Austin https://secure4.compliancebridge.com/utexas/public/getdoc.php?file=2-2230
- "When disaster strikes, the time to prepare has passed."

Remove barriers to faculty research

- Workload reform is key
- Empower underserved groups
  - Those outside prior research development efforts
  - E.g., outside STEM, mid- and late-career faculty
- Staff support (more and better trained)
- Cooperative rather than antagonistic relationships with non-academic units
  - Don't act like grant application review panels
  - Compliance fear? Inadequate training? Inadequate autonomy?

Raise faculty salaries

- Inflation has outpaced salaries

- Purchasing power is lower now than at hire for many faculty

- Rising insurance premiums have resulted in shadow pay cuts for many faculty, especially those with families

R2 salaries + R2 staff support + R2 facilities ≠ R1 research

- Sympathy for Bailey's goals (low cost, national identity, traditional college experience)

- Accumulating faculty debts are increasingly harmful