**McGovern Medical School at UTHealth Houston Faculty Senate**

**Thursday, December 19, 2024 at 4:30 PM**

**Zoom Meeting**

**1. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 4:32 pm with a quorum of members present.

**2. Housekeeping**

a. Dr Fox reviewed the Faculty Senate rules and responsibilities. Attendance rules (attend a minimum of 60% of the monthly meetings) were reviewed. Dial-in attendees must email Valerie Guerrero with their call-in number for proper identification. If you anticipate an absence, reach out to Valerie Guerrero to excuse it. Please remain muted unless speaking, and the chat will be monitored for questions.

**3. Approval of Minutes – October 2024**

Approved at 4:33pm. No objections

**4. Reports**

a. Dr. Barbara Orlando, Faculty Senate Chair-Elect, gave an update from the November and December IFC meetings. Dr. Ross Shegog is the new IFC chair for 2025 and Dr. Kurt Kasper will be the IFC chair in 2026. Dr. Orlando provided updates on the Outstanding Teaching awards and the cyber security enhancement measures and strategies presented at the last IFC meeting. There was also a discussion about the selection process for the next UTHealth Houston president and the role that the IFC plays in this process.

**5. New Business**

a. Luis Ostrosky, MD, Professor of Internal Medicine and Memorial Hermann Chief of Infectious Disease, gave an update on a number of relevant emerging infectious diseases. Current data regarding Covid 19 showed a low positivity rate, stable and/or decreasing number of hospitalizations and all time low mortality rate. Dr. Ostrosky also mentioned the dashboard for respiratory viruses, which showed a mini covid 19 cluster this summer, but indicated that rsv and flu are now the primary respiratory viruses. Dr. Ostrosky also mentioned that the latest vaccines for Covid 19 provided good coverage of the latest variants, Kp3 and xec, though less than 4% of people are getting vaccinated for Covid 19. The CDC has not issued any new policy or procedural changes for Covid 19 treatment/prevention.. Avian influenza (H5N1) is being monitored closely with 61 human cases - 1 severe case in west Louisiana - though no sustained human to human transmission has been reported. MPox, clade 1 - Tpoxx resistance, is also being monitored. Dengue virus is currently active in Mexico and Oropuche is active in the Caribbean and Latin America. Mirror bacteria were also mentioned due to their high risk for pathogenesis. Some concerns were raised about possibly defunding CDC, NIH, FDA and infectious disease research/monitoring.

b. Naveen Vanga, MD, Associate Professor of Anesthesiology, presented the Master of Science in Anesthesia, a new degree program at McGovern Medical School. Dr. Vanga discussed the need to train more anesthesiology assistants and the development of the program from the initial concept through funding, accreditation, approval and implementation. The new Masters program is 28 months and 100 credit hours. New space for the program was created in the basement of the UTHealth Houston Physicians building. New students to the program were originally recruited through health fairs. Last year, there were 300 applicants and 35 were accepted. This year there have already been 1800+ applications.

c. Nnaemeka Okafor, MD, Vice President, Chief Analytics and Informatics Officer for Memorial Hermann and Martin Citardi, MD, Vice Dean for Clinical Technology held a question and answer session regarding the UTHealth Houston and Memorial Hermann EPIC systems. The general consensus was that the new system was better than the previous system and that most people were happy with the transition. Katie McBeth mentioned that the transition on the UThealth/outpatient side was fairly smooth. On the inpatient at Hermann more specialized training was needed. A number of people also identified specific issues, some of which were specific to software limitations, while other issues were outside of the standard workflow and working groups may be used to identify/improve these specific use cases.

**6. Announcements**

a. The New Investigator Development Program (NIDP) presents Grants 101 from 8:30-12:30 on January 13-14 (https://www.uth.edu/nidp/)

b. 1st Annual UTHealth Houston Movement Disorders Symposium, January 25th. To register: www.eeds.com/live/137945

c. Kristi Tebo, MD, named Assistant Dean of Global Health at MMS

**7. Adjournment time: 5:21 pm**

Next meeting: January 16, 2024 at 5:30 PM