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

**Thursday, March 20, 2024 at 4:30 PM**

**Zoom Meeting**

**1. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 4:31 pm with a quorum of members present.

**2. Housekeeping**

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 – February 2024**

Approved at 4:32pm. No objections

**4. Reports**

a. Faculty Affairs Update – Dr. Nahid Rianon, Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs. Faculty Affairs is continuing to mentor and evaluate promotions applications. Close to 80 people are up for promotion this year. Faculty Affairs is also recruiting mentors for the mentorship program.

b. Interfaculty Council Update - Dr. Barbara Orlando, Faculty Senate Chair-Elect, gave an update on the Interfaculty Council. Dr Cain presented awards to Drs. Harrington and Williams for their service on the IFC. Dr. Orlando also mentioned Dr. Morano gave the IFC updates on the political changes and how they might affect UTHealth Houston. The IFC also received updates from TMC library operations/pricing and updates from IT on available AI tools and storage at UTHealth Houston. Additionally, the IFC had updates on the new President search, tribunal activities and The Burk scholarship.

**5. New Business**

a. Committee on Committee Nominations – Dr. Summer Ott, Past Chair, MMS Faculty Senate. Dr. Ott is soliciting nominations for membership on the Committee on Committees. The Committee on Committee advises the Dean on members for 10 standing committees. There are 2 full terms (3-year term) and 1 partial term (1-year term) positions open. Applicants must be current Faculty Senators. Email nominations to Dr. Ott and Valerie. Deadline for nominations is in 2 weeks and the candidates will be presented at the next meeting.

b. Sponsored Projects Administration Update - Kathy Kreidler, Associate Vice President, Sponsored Projects Administration, gave an update on federal research. There was an executive order for a hiring freeze and a return to office at NIH earlier this year. There was also a DHHS communications halt. Currently, there is an effort to eliminate all DEI programs and language in grants at the federal level; SPA has an AI tool to search for certain words based on perceived DEI language prior to submission and in progress reports. Cancelled NIH study sections are now being rescheduled. An immediate reduction of indirect costs (IDC) to 15% was ordered for NIH grants, but a number of injunctions have paused these efforts and Congress will likely address IDC on federal grants in the FY2026 budget. There is an expected drop of IDC, potentially around the 40% level. Currently UTHealth Houston captures close to 56% from federal grants and close to 30% IDC across all grants from all sponsors. There are some mitigation strategies if lower IDC rates become reality, including what has traditionally been covered under IDC becoming direct costs, increasing data curation fees, a limit to unfunded projects at SPA, not allowing IDC waivers, increasing industry sponsored clinical trials and review of the administrative structure for research. So far, there are no updates on carryovers and no-cost extensions. There are also some efforts to possibly restructure NIH from 27 to 15 institutes and centralize all grant reviews under CSR.

c. Compensation Committee Update – Dr. Erin Fox, Co-Chair, Compensation Committee. The compensation committee will be sending out a survey to all departments.

**6. Announcements**

a. Match Day is March 21, 10-12 on Webber Plaza

b. UTHealth Houston Colorectal Cancer Symposium, March 24th at 12 pm at IMM. RSVP here: <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1vbIB7-GPv8xoixT1y449JqFWKGHjFTofe3rlGmvl6gs/viewform;30-4:30pm?edit_requested=true>

c. 9th Annual Hot Topics in Aging Conference, March 25 from 8:30-4:30, in the Gallery at the Deluxe Theater. More information: <https://www.uth.edu/aging/about/events/hot-topics-conference>

d. Houston Shock Symposium, April 3-5 (<https://www.houstonshock.org/>)

e. Cheves Smythe Distinguished Lecture, April 8th at 12pm in MSB 2.006. Speaker: Fred Gage, PhD, Aging as a Major Risk Factor for Dementia.

**7. Adjournment time: 5:27 pm**

Next meeting: April 17, 2025 at 4:30 PM