

**Minutes of the McGovern Medical School Faculty Senate**  
Thursday, November 21, 2019, 4:30 p.m.  
MSB 2.103 & LBJ UT Annex 217 Auditorium

Dr. Parks brought the meeting to order at 4:35 p.m.

**Approval of Minutes.** A quorum was present at 4:36 p.m, and the minutes from the October 17, 2019 meeting were approved unanimously.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Honored time opening for Dean Stoll & Dr. Kevin Morano**

There were no presentations from the Office of Faculty Affairs or Dean Stoll.

**Office of Academic Ombuds (OAO)**

Robin Dickey, PhD, MA, LPC, provided an overview of the OAO. She currently serves as the UTHealth Academic Ombuds. Robin is a licensed professional counselor, professional mediator, and certified integrative wellness coach.

Office of Academic Ombuds (OAO) is a new confidential, informal, impartial/neutral and independent place to discuss concerns, resolve disputes, manage conflicts, and increase skills regarding communication, negotiation and problem-solving.

The academic ombuds listens to people, offers information about resources available at UTHealth, and helps people examine options for resolving concerns. The Ombuds serves as a coach, mediator, facilitator, or simply as a listener.

The OAO will serve UTHealth students, residents, fellows, and faculty. They can notify you of available resources to resolve inter-personal conflict in the office. Communication with the Ombuds is not considered an official notice to the University; nor does it replace any formal reporting channels (e.g., regarding complaints or grievances). This includes Title IX issues.

The contact information for Ombuds is as follows:

[www.go.uth.edu/ombuds](http://www.go.uth.edu/ombuds)

713-500-3457 or confidential mobile: 713-705-5005

[ombuds@uth.tmc.edu](mailto:ombuds@uth.tmc.edu)

*Questions/Comments:* How confidential are the conversations? What is mandatory reporting?

Answer: Self-harm or harm to others. Similar process as with the clergy.

*Questions/Comments:* What if a student has a concern?

Answer: Students are welcome to utilize these services.

*Questions/Comments:* Is there adequate support from the University?

Answer: We are currently in the data gathering phase. We have a lot of support currently.

**Faculty Assistance Program (FAP)** can help with life challenges, particularly things that affect work/life balance. The program offers coaching, and you are not limited in the number of services.

You can visit in person or call (713)-500-3880 [robin.dickey@uth.tmc.edu](mailto:robin.dickey@uth.tmc.edu)

FAP offers counseling and consultation with a licensed mental health professional, legal and financial resources and work-life referrals. This is unique to faculty and offers integrative wellness coaching.

<http://go.uth.edu/fap>

Your family members are also entitled to five free sessions. Staff can also pair you with someone who accepts Blue Cross Blue Shield or your insurance carrier so that you can utilize your insurance to continue services if you desire.

The program also helps with physical wellbeing and professional concerns.

[www.Mylifevalues.com](http://www.Mylifevalues.com) – provides access to self-assessments for mental health concerns.

If you have an issue that is not work-related that you would like to speak to an attorney about, they offer these resources. The initial session is free, and there are discounts available. There are also fitness discounts on the hub. This is a free resource available to faculty.

[Go.uth.edu/wellness](http://Go.uth.edu/wellness)

Sample classes at UTHealth include: environmental wellness and physical well-being, meditation at JJL/UCT, yoga at SPH/SON, holistic garden and nourish kitchen at SPH. If you are interested in becoming a wellness ambassador you can contact [robin.dickey@uth.tmc.edu](mailto:robin.dickey@uth.tmc.edu).

*Questions/Comments:* All of the resources are being made available at the financial expense of the university so we would like to thank the University.

*Questions/Comments:* People are worried about whether the five free sessions provided are flagged as a mental health issue.

Answer: The sessions are documented in a separate system. No diagnosis is given and these visits are covered by HIPAA protection. If necessary, one may be referred to access resources outside the EAP.



## **OLD BUSINESS**

### **Learning Environment and Professionalism Taskforce**

The co-chairs of this taskforce are Renee Flores MD and Allison Ownby PhD, MeD. Dr. Flores provided an overview on the goals of the taskforce. The taskforce was formed in AY 17-18 to explore student mistreatment and the overall learning environment at MMS. The Offices of Admissions, and Student Affairs and Educational Programs are integral to the committee. The goal is to attract a broad, diverse spectrum of faculty members and faculty senators to be part of the committee.

Volunteers are asked to contact the taskforce [renee.j.flores@uth.tmc.edu](mailto:renee.j.flores@uth.tmc.edu) 203-528-5677. The taskforce will address the student learning environment, faculty professionalism, clinical learning environments, the mistreatment reporting website and defining professionalism amongst the UT Schools.

Dr. Orlander discussed an initiative to improve the work and professional environments to ensure they are positive and conducive to healthy learning practices. The Student Compact initiative will be emailed to all senators for review. Dr. Orlander would like to have this before the next LCME meeting deadline of December 15, 2019.

*Questions/Comments:* There was a motion to have an electronic vote by December 7<sup>th</sup> so that if there is not a large discussion this information can be included in the LCME packet. The motion was approved.



### **Faculty Senate Parking Initiative**

Sean Riley presented garage parking issues, particularly pertaining to garages 4 and 7, which are managed by the TMC. During the IFC meeting UT parking representatives were present to discuss concerns about UT Parking. The TMC owns the garages surrounding Memorial Hermann Hospital. Our goal is to create a basic set of expectations of what we would like to see as a reasonable product for our investment. Concerns: very narrow parking spaces, cars get damaged, cars being towed, and difficulty finding adequate parking availability. Faculty are paying for spaces but do not consistently have access to parking.

The parking representatives are worried that if we expand the size of the parking spaces, this ultimately reduces parking availability. The counter-argument is most people are parking over the line and taking two spaces because the slots are too narrow. Thus, there should not be revenue reduction rather improved space utilization.

*Questions/Comments:* What is the difference between reserved parking?

*Answer:* The reserved parking spaces are priced almost double. The issue is there are not enough spaces allotted for contract parking.

*Questions/Comments:* Why is there a constant increase in rates on an annual basis?

*Answer:* The rates are set by the TMC parking office.

*Questions/Comments:* Is there a way to limit the number of non-contractual parkers in the garage?

*Answer:* Not currently.

*Question/Comments:* The gates are frequently out of order in garage 4 and there is an excessive amount of trash in the garage.

*Questions/Comments:* Motion for an official taskforce within the senate to address these issues. We plan to meet with the TMC. The motion was approved.

*Questions/Comments:* There is an anticipated decrease in parking availability in the future when the new construction is completed. This will need to be addressed.

### **Meditation Session**

Alejandro Chaoul, Ph.D. led a discussion entitled “*Mind-Body Practices for Coping & Flourishing.*” The Jung Center has a Mind Body Spirit Institute that works in collaboration with the McGovern Center for Humanities and Ethics.

There are meditation sessions are held on Mondays, in JLL, room #410. The sessions occur from 12:15-12:45 pm and are free. You can use this time to practice reducing holiday stress, focus on the here and now, and quieting your mind.

Dr. Chaoul discussed his research on yoga and meditation. One of his practices is to:

*Stop, Take a Breath, Open and observe, Proceed (when you are ready) = STOP*

In 45 seconds we are able to pause and reduce our stress which can alter our subsequent reactions.

On Friday, December 6<sup>th</sup>, 2019 from 1:30-4:00 pm, there will be a meditation seminar entitled: *Meditation Mini-Retreat: Deepening Your Meditation Practice On and Off the Cushion.*

The contact information is as follows:

[www.mbsihouston.org](http://www.mbsihouston.org)

[achaoul@junghouston.org](mailto:achaoul@junghouston.org)

[alechaoul@gmail.com](mailto:alechaoul@gmail.com)

The meeting adjourned at 5:28 p.m.

**Next meeting: December 19, 2019, 4:30pm**

Dr. Kenya Maria Parks – Chair

Dr. Catherine Ambrose-Chair-Elect

Dr. Rashedah A. Ekeoduru – Secretary

Dr. Zi Yang Jiang-Secretary-Elect

Dr. Nathan Carlin – 2018-2019 Past-Chair

<https://med.uth.edu/faculty-senate/>  
[ms.facultysenate@uth.tmc.edu](mailto:ms.facultysenate@uth.tmc.edu)