

## PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

# Pandemic Blues



**LINDA MOORE**

Well folks the beat goes on and on. Every day I try to remember how blessed I am to have been, and remain, a part of the TCU family. I am trying to stay upbeat while there is ongoing frustration about shared governance, budget issues, and inclusion. We are starting a new semester yet there

is constant anxiety hanging in the air in case changes become necessary. Often it seems impossible to make sense of all of the turmoil on campus and in our society. TCURA will keep trying to support all of you in your quarantine life and provide information about campus activity. We have broken the newsletter up into sections regarding news that may be of interest to you and providing links for more information. There was a lot of summer activity. While many of you keep up with TCU news and may be on top of it all, I also know many of you have questions so we'll try to keep you informed as best we can. There was a lot of hard work done to prepare for the fall semester and provide the best possible experience for students. I want to give a shout out to all the campus constituencies who have been on campus all summer working to keep TCU going and serving as essential employees in this time of pandemic. Thanks to all!

I received many responses from TCURA members about summer correspondence from the Chancellor and other administration officials. I realize that those who are the most upset about an issue often are the most vocal but I want to share some of them that reflect the general sense of our membership:



*"Health care cut. They have spent unchecked but now want us pay the bill. That's insane and certainly not responsible fiduciary decision-making."*

*"So, the benefit cuts are permanent while we have a full freshman class coming in and TCU housing is full. Meanwhile no cuts to administration compensation ranking in the top five. With retirees depending on their benefits while he enjoys his continued level of compensation is hypocrisy. If he truly believes what he is saying in his video, then he should set the example with a 20% compensation cut."*

*"No mention of how TCU got into this financial mess — too many underfunded buildings, the east side of the stadium, and medical school. Interesting how Covid 19 is used as the explanatory factor in creating all the problems!"*

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*"Bottom line TCU has secured cost savings by robbing his retirees for one of his cost saving methods while he certainly enjoys his salary and perks along with the rest of the administration. Thought I would never see this from TCU. Sad."*

*"I just received an email this morning that all retirees have lost their gym membership and to come by and pick up my locker possessions. This was after I questioned this back in June and was assured that retirees would maintain their membership when they started revoking outside memberships. I have had that locker and a membership since the center opened and when I retired as a professor was something that I continued to enjoy all these years since it was one of the benefits given to us for years of service. Bad enough that our retirement benefits are part of a supposed cost saving move....now they take away our free gym membership which cost TCU nothing? Talk about throwing out your retirees like the trash. Certainly not the TCU I once knew and supported. Guess they will take my e-mail address next as a cost saving move."*

*"I cannot foresee any experiences that will change the HEARTS of key board members. The chancellor seems not strong enough to help them see the true value of diversity."*

*"...bringing students into dormitories is similarly dangerous and unethical and, as with athletics, the decision is not being driven by facts, sense, or concern for one's fellow creature. It is being driven by money".*

*"Faculty and staff hear this loud and clear, "you don't matter!"*

*"I certainly would not let Boschini conflate COVID matters with the basic issues."*

*"If your voice held no power, they wouldn't try to silence you"*

And the poem following that reflects the general frustration about the budget issue and buildings.

## CARVING A NAME

**Horatio Alger Jr.**

*I wrote my name upon the sand,  
And trusted it would stand for aye;  
But, soon, alas! the refluent sea  
Had washed my feeble lines away.*

*I carved my name upon the wood,  
And, after years, returned again;  
I missed the shadow of the tree  
That stretched of old upon the plain.*

*To solid marble next, my name  
I gave as a perpetual trust;  
An earthquake rent it to its base,  
And now it lies, o'erlaid with dust.*

*All these have failed. In wiser mood  
I turn and ask myself, "What then?"  
If I would have my name endure,  
I'll write it on the hearts of men,  
In characters of living light,  
Of kindly deeds and actions wrought.  
And these, beyond the touch of time,  
Shall live immortal as my thought.*

There has been ongoing concern about shared governance regarding the changes in personnel (as noted elsewhere). Many of the interim appointments by the Provost did not include discussion with staff, faculty and/or advisory committees. TCURA is being asked to speak up and take a stand on many of these issues as we did in the past regarding medical benefits. Let me hear from you too so the Executive Committee can be responsive to the membership. Email me at [l.moore@tcu.edu](mailto:l.moore@tcu.edu). Be grateful and stay safe and healthy!

## THE SNEAKY EYE DISEASE: GLAUCOMA

CAROLYN SPENCE CAGLE PHD, RNC-E

Good vision opens your world for learning, balance, and overall life satisfaction. Annual eye exams, to identify your risk for or actual glaucoma disease, protect your vision for safely moving through life and all it has to offer.

### What is glaucoma and why is it called the ‘sneaky disease’?

Glaucoma disease occurs in 3M Americans, and many more people are unaware that they have the disease, the leading cause of blindness. The disease has few early symptoms and, once diagnosed, it causes irreversible vision loss. Loss of peripheral (side) vision occurs first to affect your ability to safely drive and navigate in life. Annual and complete eye exams can identify glaucoma that damages the optic nerve and other eye diseases such as macular degeneration that affects the retina (back part of the eye). These exams detect increased eye pressure characteristic of glaucoma. Such exams will assess your visual field (peripheral vision)

and your corneal (front part of your eye) thickness that relate to your risk or presence of glaucoma. Risk factors for developing glaucoma include family history, Hispanic or African American descent, or past eye injury. I am at risk for developing glaucoma due to inheriting cupping of my optic disk, something my mother and twin sister also have.

### What are treatments for glaucoma?

Prescription pills and eye drops remain the primary treatment options for early glaucoma now. These decrease eye pressure by helping fluid drain from your eyes. Once diagnosed, you need to routinely take pills or drops to protect your vision. Should you have rare side effects to these medications or your insurance does not cover well the cost of these treatments, talk with your eye specialist to receive help. Goodrx.com may also help with finding cheaper medications. Other treatments could include surgery (usually for advanced glaucoma) and

shunts (drains) placed with cataract surgery and covered by Medicare.

### How can you prevent glaucoma?

- Engage in regular exercise to keep eye pressure low
- Avoid inverted positions (e.g., “downward facing dog” in yoga) that may increase eye pressure in some people
- Protect your eyes with goggles during sports or other activities where the potential for flying debris or assault exists
- AND, get annual and complete eye exams to identify eye pressure issues early! Some eye professionals recommend such exams every six months if you are at risk for glaucoma.

### References

Glaucoma is a leading cause of blindness (June 2018). UCLA health: Healthy years, 15(6), 1, 7.







## HEADLINES OF INTEREST

KEY TCU NEWS TO KEEP YOU INFORMED

### TCU Executive Compensation Out Paces Faculty Salaries and Benefits

The compensation of TCU executives has continued to rank above the university's peers even as compensation for its faculty and staff has fallen behind. The percent of expenses devoted by the university to executive salaries ranked 5th out of 67 comparable schools, according to a report by the Faculty Relations Committee. Twenty executives received compensation that totaled to \$11.4 million, according to TCU's 2017 IRS Form 990 filing cited in the report. The percent devoted to faculty and staff compensation ranked 64th out of 67. **CLICK FOR MORE**

### TCU Faculty Expressing Lack of Confidence in University Leadership Amid Pandemic

TCU's faculty is growing less confident in university leadership with how it is handling issues related to the coronavirus pandemic and racial injustices. The frustration levels reached a point where the school's Faculty Senate held a rare summer meeting in which it discussed a vote of no confidence in university leadership. **CLICK FOR MORE**

### TCU's New Race and Reconciliation Initiative Formed

For some of us, the Civil War is the distant past, yet for many others, its legacy continues to shape every aspect of our lives today. As our country and community reckon with the long history and potency of racism, we are obligated to understand how slavery and the Confederacy have shaped TCU's past and continue to inform our present practices. **CLICK FOR MORE**

### Student-Inspired 'End Racism' Mural on TCU Campus Calls for Action

TCU student Kellton Hollins is taking a stand to END RACISM and is inviting fellow Horned Frogs to join him. Inspired by the "End Racism Now" mural painted on the Main Street of downtown Fort Worth in June, Hollins approached Chancellor Victor J. Boschini, Jr. on July 4 with the idea to create something similar on the TCU campus. Within hours, his request was approved. **CLICK FOR MORE**

### New Dashboard for COVID-19 Reporting at TCU

TCU COVID-19 reporting has been updated to provide our community with a more comprehensive view of our COVID-19 response and ability to support a healthy campus. The dashboard includes daily, weekly and monthly new positive cases reported, and total cases for a better understanding of trends, in addition to current active cases. **CLICK FOR MORE**

## CHANGES IN ADMINISTRATION

### DETAILS FROM THE PROVOST

#### DR. KAREN STEELE

Dr. Karen Steele resigned as Dean of the School of Interdisciplinary Studies (SIS). She will serve in a temporary position as Special Assistant to the Provost. Following this appointment, Karen will return to the faculty in the English department.

#### DR. SONJA S. WATSON

Dr. Sonja S. Watson, dean of AddRan College of Liberal Arts, has accepted a one- year appointment as interim dean of SIS and will continue her role as dean of AddRan. She will lead a task force comprised of faculty, staff and students from AddRan and SIS to create a Unity of Vision for SIS and to examine the relationship between the two colleges and answer the following questions and conclude with a recommendation to the provost:

1. What is, or could be, the overarching role of SIS to Texas Christian University?
2. What is, or could be, the relationship between SIS

and AddRan with respect to identity and vision, as well as infrastructure and human resources?

3. Should the non-credit bearing units within SIS (such as Intensive English and Idea Factory) remain in the school?
4. Should other identity studies (such as Middle East Studies, Asian Studies and Jewish Studies) be housed within SIS?
5. Should SIS remain a stand-alone college or become a school housed within AddRan?

Dean Watson will recruit and hire an Associate Dean of Faculty and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion for SIS and AddRan College. This would be an external/internal search and is a new position. Initial key responsibilities will be to serve as a liaison between SIS and AddRan and to co-chair this task force. \$50,000 in discretionary funding has been committed to Dean Watson to support both colleges during this year. This is

in addition to the package committed to the dean that includes research start-up, research seed funding and four new faculty positions over the next five years to recruit faculty of color.

#### DR. DIANE SNOW

Dr. Diane Snow is retiring from TCU and her position as Dean of the John V. Roach Honors College. Dr. Ron Pitcock, who has been serving as acting dean, has been named Interim Dean of the Honors College.

#### ROMY HUGHES

Romy Hughes will be retiring from Director of the Koehler Center effective September 1. She will join the Learning Community International School as the Director of Faculty Affairs.

#### JOANNA SCHMIDT

Joanna Schmidt, the current Koehler Center Assistant Director, will be stepping in as the Interim Director for the Koehler Center for the 2020-2021 academic year.





## CHANCELLOR'S RESPONSE TO FACULTY

### OPEN LETTER ADDRESSING BUDGET AND SHARED GOVERNANCE ISSUES

In essence, the Chancellor's response to the open letter from faculty ignored or refused to respond to the issues raised in the letter. Many of the decisions reiterated in his response below had been put in place (or discussed as decisions) prior to the pandemic. There is a lot of distrust still around issues of shared governance. Stay tuned.

#### Dear TCU Faculty and Staff,

I am writing to you today in response to the open letter addressed to the Texas Christian University Administration and Board of Trustees and signed by Professor Sean Atkinson, the chair of the TCU Faculty Senate.

In a short span of time, the global COVID-19 pandemic has changed everything about the way that we at TCU, and all academic institutions across America, conduct business. The top priority for TCU leaders – on the Board, on the faculty, and in the Administration – must be to safeguard our community right now and safeguard the solvency of our University for future generations.

As you are well aware, the TCU Board of Trustees, which has final fiduciary responsibility for TCU, made the difficult decision to permanently reduce University-paid retirement benefit contributions from 11.5% to 8%.

Shared governance discussions regarding the new benefit structure were extensive, spanning an entire academic year.

Ultimately, the decision was made in direct response to the Board's directive to:

- Increase institutional financial aid;
- Maintain steady enrollment growth;
- Preserve our low student-to-faculty ratio, and
- Flatten, or eliminate, tuition increases.

The Board's decision will help us meet those goals and achieve significant cost savings to our overall budget, addressing our long-term goal of making the budget more sustainable. The current contribution level will help TCU retain jobs and maintain a competitive level of employee benefits for current and future employees.

In making hiring decisions, the Board reiterated their endorsement for making diversity, equity and inclusion a key part of all hiring decisions. While we are making great strides in this area in many ways our work has only just begun. Within the next week, I will announce a new University initiative toward ensuring that TCU achieves a higher understanding of our history, enabling us to be more informed and effective in assuring a welcoming campus for everyone.

At the same time, we all share deep concerns for the health and safety of our campus community. We are learning and responding to new information each and every day. Our "Phased" approach allows our plans to evolve as the pandemic evolves. Our path forward is guided by the principles outlined in our stated Return to Campus Guidelines from the Fall 2020 Campus Readiness Task Force. Every department and

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#### NOTE

If you do not wish to continue receiving this newsletter, notify the newsletter editor or any of the others listed as contacts here.



#### FIND US ON FACEBOOK

Search "TCU Retirees' Association" in the search line, and filter by groups. Click the "Join" button.

*Chancellor's Open Letter to Faculty  
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unit on campus puts health and safety protocols in place to protect our community, and continues to modify and strengthen these protocols as information is released.

As you know, we delayed the Phase 3 return to campus, and staff will continue to work remotely if they can complete their essential duties from home. If staff are unable to complete duties at home but cannot return to campus for personal or family health reasons, we will encourage them to work with Human Resources to seek accommodations or appropriate job modifications.

Contact tracing is a collaborative effort between our Health Center, Human Resources, the TCU Office of Emergency Management and Tarrant County Public Health. The TCU COVID-19 Self-Report Hotline is available to all students, faculty and staff. Contract tracing is initiated when these offices are notified of a case. Students are tested and treated on campus in the Health Center. To safeguard employee privacy, employees should be tested and treated through their healthcare provider. More information on testing for students will be available in the

coming weeks. Again, as the pandemic evolves, our plans will address the latest information. I can personally assure you that keeping our students, faculty and staff safe is our top priority.

Welcoming students to a safe campus and delivering the treasured TCU culture of connection – whether in- person or online – is critical to our ability to attract and retain students during these unprecedented times and beyond. With that in mind, the TCU Connected Campus microsite was launched in May to support the new fall academic experience. Thank you to our faculty and staff who are working tirelessly to deliver top quality online courses, in-person classes and a student experience full of the personal connections that make us unique.

Pertinent information has been communicated through multiple campus messages and we will continue to maintain a constant stream of relevant information. Copies of campus messages have been consistently posted to TCU's COVID-19 microsite.

I understand your frustration. We all feel it. We know that everyone is making sacrifices and working hard to adapt to a new reality. Please be assured the full administrative team and I keep the future of the

University, and your best interests, in mind at all times. I deeply respect each TCU team member's role and voice, as well as your right to use it. I try to listen to all criticism and make the necessary changes/ adjustments when feasible. These are tough times we are enduring. All of us will not agree on all of these decisions. There are also, and will continue to be, many questions which cannot be answered with certainty due to the current environment. For those issues, I can only ask for your continued patience. I have been meeting with our governance leaders even more frequently nowadays, and will continue to do so.

We must, and we will, continue to work together to address the challenges that face our great University and strive to create a better TCU, able to serve generations to come.

As always, if you have ideas or suggestions on how we should better address these issues, please share them with me. I have been and remain open to new approaches that contribute to TCU's mission.

**In service,**

**Victor J. Boschini, Jr.  
Chancellor**



## *In Memorium*

### **Mildred Payne**

College of Science and  
Engineering  
March 18

### **Terry Ellmore**

Radio Television Film  
March 24

### **Dick Frey**

Defensive line coach for the  
1976 football season  
April 25

### **Audrey Nell Abron**

Office of Admission  
May 6

### **Helen Boyer**

Health Center  
May 12

### **Michael Meckna**

School of Music  
May 23

### **William A. Reese II**

Department of Sociology  
June 3

### **Barbara Snell**

Neeley School of Business  
June 7

### **Don Coerver**

Department of History and  
Associate Dean of AddRan College  
June 25

### **Jan Ferrari**

Wife of former  
Chancellor Michael Ferrari  
July 2

### **Kristen Adams**

KinderFrogs  
August 2

### **Robert Rhodes**

Neeley School of Business  
August 14



## MISSION STATEMENT

The TCU Retirees' Association exists to provide opportunities for fellowship, to promote lifelong learning, to advocate for fair benefits, to recognize the accomplishments of its members, and to strengthen the relationship between the retirees and the University.

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