Faculty Senate Meeting
Minutes: Mar. 19, 2021

TEAMS
2:00 - 4:15 p.m.

1. Call to Order: Speaker Moreno called the meeting to order at 2:01 p.m.

Attendance:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Senator</th>
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<tr>
<td>Ross Bernhardt</td>
<td>X Kyoung (Kellie) Lee</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kelli Bippert</td>
<td>X Elizabeth Loika</td>
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<td>Randy Bonnette</td>
<td>X Mark McNamara</td>
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<td>Sean Britt</td>
<td>X Emily Metcalf</td>
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<td>Chuleeporn (Nikki) Changchit</td>
<td>X Miguel Moreno</td>
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<td>Lisa Comparini</td>
<td>X Dorina Murgulet</td>
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<td>Liana Davis</td>
<td>X Bethanie Pletcher</td>
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<td>Shelley Dinkens</td>
<td>X Pablo Rangel</td>
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<td>Dave Edwards</td>
<td>O Mohan Rao</td>
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<td>Pam Greene</td>
<td>X Michael Starek</td>
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<td>Patricia Hernandez</td>
<td>X Abu Waheeduzzaman</td>
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<td>Philip Johnson</td>
<td>X Quihong Zhao</td>
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<td>LaNiece Tucker: Administrative Assistant</td>
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Ex-Officio | Visitors/Guests
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Clarinda Phillips | Sharmeen Ahmed
Amy Aldridge Sanford | Ed Evans
| Kevin Houlihan |

2. Approval of Agenda: Senator Bernhardt made the motion to approve the agenda, seconded by Senator Lee. Motion passed.

3. Approval of February 12, Minutes: Senator Waheeduzzaman offered a revision to the minutes. Senator Metcalf moved to approve as corrected, seconded by Senator Hernandez. Motion passed.

4. Speaker’s Report
   - Administrative Searches
     i. CLA committee held video interviews and identified applicants for on-campus visits in late March or early April.
     ii. COB committee selected applicants for first round video interviews to be conducted at the end of March. On campus visits will be scheduled for April.
     iii. V.P. of Student Engagement and Success (SEAS): initial search committee meeting next week.

Submitted by Pam Greene 3/26/21
Faculty Senate Secretary
• Budget Think Tank Recommendations
  i. Evaluation of Academic Programs:
    1. This recommendation has significant implications and is one that
       faculty senate should take note of because of the possibility of how
       faculty lines are distributed and other resources allocated.
       Senator Murgulet reported from Graduate Counsel, Dean
       Rudowsky, Chair of the committee evaluating academic programs,
       indicated the focus is on identifying ways to increase enrollment.
       The intent is not to look at reducing faculty lines.
  
  ii. University College Evaluation
    1. The dean for UC will not be replaced
    2. Speaker Moreno has been assured by President Miller of no
       non-renewals of contracts.
    3. Questions remain, including, but not limited to: Where will faculty
       from the UC be moved? What will happen to the various UC
       programs? How will responsibilities related to students entering
       with dual credit be managed?
       Senator McNamara shared his experience teaching students
       entering TAMUCC with dual credit, even an A.D. and the benefits
       of the Learning Communities (LCs) for these students. The LCs
       help these students who have a shortened span to graduation bridge
       the gaps that exist in their preparation for careers. The Speaker
       endorsed the learning communities as well, indicating the value of
       the LCs for those with dual credit and compressed experiences at
       the university with preparation for graduate programs. Additional
       discussion addressed social development considerations.
       Senators Loika and Pletcher addressed the implications for those
       entering careers in healthcare and education and the overall
       emotional maturity that needs to be fostered as part of academic
       success.
       Considerations from the perspective of the financial benefits was
       included in the conversation.
       Senator Britt addressed the impact on retention of first year
       students.
  
  iii. Budget Advisory Committee (BAC)
    1. Will include 5 faculty, 5 staff, 1 student, 1 dean, 1 MarCom. Co-
       Chaired by VPFA (J. Mahlmann) and VPAA (C. Phillips)
    2. President Miller requested that FS put together a process to select a
       FS representative to the Budget Advisory Committee.
Speaker Moreno requested the process be drafted by the Faculty Senate Budget Analysis Committee, chaired by Senator Murgulet. Senator Murgulet clarified the role of the BAC will be advisory (not decision-making). Proposals and recommendations from the BAC will be submitted to the President and the President’s Cabinet. The focus will be the alignment of the budget with the strategic plan and noting any potential gaps.

Senator Rao indicated the move to a zero-based budget process is an improvement in the overall approach to budgeting.

Speaker Moreno indicated the BAC is a “win” for faculty; something Faculty Senate has been advocating for over two years.

- The University has assumed ownership of student housing at Miramar and Momentum Village which should bring down costs for students and may be a source of revenue. This acquisition may also allow for better management to enhance students’ living experiences.
- CARES Act funds are coming but have heavy restrictions on how the funds can be spent.
- Legislative forecast looks positive; A new arts building may be a strong possibility.

5. Old Business - none

6. Committee Reports
   a. Academic Affairs – Senator Britt
      a. Curriculog extended one more cycle.
   b. Faculty Affairs – Senator Comparini
      a. 12.07.99.C0.01, Fixed-Term Faculty Members
      b. 33.99.04.C0.04, Promotion of Fixed-Term Faculty Librarians
      c. Designated Administrator

Senator Comparini reported the policy *Promotion of Fixed-Term Faculty Librarians* is posted on the I-drive. There are no substantive comments.

For the policy on *Fixed-Term Faculty Members*, there are concerns related to the removal of the option for 3 and 5 year contracts, a recommendation from a task force that had addressed this issue. Senator Comparini brought forward from the committee the motion to recommending approval of the policy for Promotion of Fixed-Term Librarians and Fixed-Term Faculty Members with the inclusion in the policy for Fixed-Term Faculty Members the recommendation for 1, 3, and 5 year contract options.

Discussion in response to the motion: There was clarification from Senator Changchit and Kevin Houlihan regarding the recommendation being made. The recommendation will move forward to the President’s Cabinet if the motion passes.

Additional robust discussion ensued in support of the recommended 3 and 5 year contract options:

Submitted by Pam Greene 3/26/21
Faculty Senate Secretary
The four senators from the CONHS voiced strong support for the recommendation and expanded on reasons for supporting the recommendation of 3 and 5 year contract options.

Senator Dinkens, a fixed-term faculty member spoke of her experiences over more than a decade as faculty at TAMUCC, helping build the nursing programs. She addressed the negative implications associated with only having one-year contracts as an option. Speaker Moreno added his support for 3 and 5 year contracts. Senator Johnson spoke to the sense of one-year contracts being “probationary” and overall devaluing to the fixed-term faculty.

Additional considerations in the discussion had to do with the investments made in programs by fixed-term faculty and their proven records. The benefits from the commitment and experience of fixed-term faculty contributions across the campus in all colleges, would be at risk of being lost by limiting to one-year contracts and potentially encouraging fixed-term faculty to seek other options.

A tier system for contracts was mentioned as part of the option for 1, 3 and 5 year contracts.

Speaker Moreno shared; he had the opportunity to speak with Vice Chancellor Hallmark and raised the question related to extended contracts within the context of the A&M system. VC Hallmark reportedly indicated there was no reason not to have extended contracts.

At the close of the discussion, the motion was voted on and passed with 19 in favor.

- Senator Comparini addressed the policy on Designated Administrator for the faculty complaints/appeals. The committee has been ambivalent about moving forward with the proposed edits. When a faculty would bring forward a grievance and it is heard by only one administrator (vs. a panel of faculty peers), especially if the grievance has to do with an administrator, there is an inherent power differential, creating the possibility for a flawed process. Appreciation for the collaboration from the Provost was expressed, however, there is a strong belief from Faculty Affairs, the language still does not provide adequate protection for faculty. Senator Comparini asked for suggestions from the floor.

Discussion:

Senator Johnson spoke from his experience of serving as a panel member in the grievance process. He indicated faculty experienced a sense of comfort, regardless of outcome, that due processes had occurred. Justice was served. He indicated agreement with the Faculty Affairs committee and had concerns with an administrator hearing a grievance, particularly if the grievance involved an administrator.

Senator Dinkens requested the Provost be given an invitation to speak. The Provost indicated she was not saying there would never be a faculty committee/panel serving in the role of “designated administrator” for hearing a grievance but did not want to see a blanket statement for “always” a faculty panel.

Senator Waheeduzzaman expressed concern for the sense of vulnerability a faculty may experience when in the situation of filing a grievance. While the EEOC may give permission to sue, faculty may be “too poor to fight.” Senator Waheeduzzaman sighted the high cost of an attorney in addition to external forces to consider, including the impact on one’s family. He reviewed the outcomes he knew of when a panel of faculty heard a grievance compared to when an administrator heard the grievance. By his report, faculty lost when an administrator...
served in the grievance hearing process. When a panel of faculty served in the grievance hearing, the faculty won.

The Provost acknowledged the concerns then indicated there are multiple sides to every case and she was not able to speak directly about cases. She indicated the possibility of being at an impasse with the wording of the policy.

Senator Changchit explained she had reviewed the equivalent policies from the other universities in the A&M system. She found no other university with this issue. All had clear provisions for a faculty panel.

The Speaker indicated there was no related action item on the table. Senator Comparini asked Provost Phillips if she was willing to have the language reviewed one more time, recognizing the investment of time already given to this. A meeting with representatives from Faculty Senate and Academic Affairs was suggested. Senator Murgulet made a motion for efforts to be made to hold a meeting of 1 – 2 representatives from Faculty Senate and representation from Academic Affairs to work toward a compromise in the final language for designated administrator. Senator Comparini seconded. Discussion:

Senator Waheeduzzaman stated Faculty Senate is an Advisory body and gives advice. He was not comfortable with the motion since the senate had previously voted. He indicated administration does not have to agree with the recommendations of Faculty Senate. He further suggested the issue be taken to faculty to get additional input. Senators could go back to their constituents and ask specifically for input.

Mr. Houlihan provided a brief history related to the policy and included guidance from the system for the companion policy that was for non-faculty. Senator Rao raised a question to clarify about the language used by other universities in the system. Senator Changchit reviewed: Designated Administrator for faculty in some of the policies was a committee of faculty or a single administrator. In others the designated administrator was only a faculty committee. TAMUCC is unique.

At 3:52 p.m. Senator McNamara moved to extend the time of the meeting by 15 minutes. Senator Britt seconded. Motion passed.

The motion on the floor was voted on: 16 in favor, 1 against, one abstained. Motion passed. (The senators were reminded Academic Affairs is not obligated to meet.)

- The Faculty Affairs Committee will be meeting to address the policy brought to their attention related to senior faculty being evaluated by junior faculty. Mr. Houlihan has provided related documents. It is sometimes challenging, especially for smaller departments to have senior faculty in the evaluator role. The committee anticipates having recommendations ready to present for a vote at the next meeting of the Faculty Senate.

  
  
  c. Awards, Bylaws, & Elections – Senator Pletcher
  
  a. Faculty Excellence Awards – The recommendations from the committee were forwarded to Dr. Aldridge Sanford and Provost Phillips.
  
  b. Regular FS Election – The ballots have been prepared and will be distributed through Qualtrics late Friday afternoon. They will open Monday morning at 9 am and the election will run through Friday at 1 pm. All senators were asked to encourage voting. Five colleges have 2 vacancies each. UC and the library each have one vacancy.
d. Budget Analysis – Senator Murgulet
   a. Meeting with VPFA Mahlmann:
      • There was a discussion regarding nominations from Faculty Senate for the BAC. Final approval will be made by the President’s Cabinet to insure diverse representation.
      • University Service fees for out-of-state students and international students has had a substantial increase. This continues to be explored.
   b. Concerns related to the Scholar Achievement in Graduate Education (SAGE) Fellowship Award for terminal degree programs has been taken to the Dean of Graduate Studies. Funds left from 2020 cannot be used now. The applicant pool is increasing and more funds will possibly be needed in the near future.
   c. BAC: It will be important for representatives from each college to share their financial needs to insure representation.

e. Committee on Committees – Senator Metcalf
   a. Faculty Committee Interest Survey was sent out Monday. It will be open for two weeks. Appointments to committees will be made once results are in.

7. New Business
   • Staff Counsel has asked Faculty Senate to co-sponsor ($860) the promotional T-shirts for Blue Tuesdays. Proceeds from the sales will support the Dorothy Yeater Memorial Scholarship. Shirts will be available around Administrative Day in April. Faculty Senate voted – there was a clear consensus to be co-sponsors.

8. Liaison Reports
   • IT (Ed Evans):
      i. Instructional Technology & Distance Education: The Black Board template is under review. The Examity link is being removed due to the Examity’s URL change. Faculty can add the new link back into their courses.
      ii. Best Practices – the second cohort will begin March 29 and run through April 24.
      iii. Quality Matters – Registration for this needs to be in by March 29. It is a two week asynchronous, online course that will be April 6 – 20.
      iv. Application of the Quality Matters Rubric – This asynchronous course will be May 5 – 18. Registration needs to be in by April 22.

      Quality Matters is an international organization which sets standards/best practices. There is system-wide participation. Applying Quality Matters practices and getting the “stamp of approval” is a symbol of quality. Individual courses are eligible to pursue this designation as well as entire programs.
• Mascot Committee (Senator Johnson): The University will continue using “Islanders.” There is a search for ideas and images for a new character that represents Islanders and is culturally sensitive. There is involvement from students and alumni in addition to faculty and staff. The goal is to have the new mascot image by fall 2021.

• CPIRA (Senator Murgulet) Posted in the CHAT at 4:09 -The main updates from CPIRA are that Sarah Scott presented key findings/final results related to the survey conducted by her/CPIRA on the impacts of COVID-19 to graduate students. There were some interesting findings that came out of it, and too many to summarize here. It was an amazing survey and very well done by Sarah. Senators interested to learn more should reach out to CPIRA and/or Sarah. Secondly, some questions have been raised concerning intellectual property and procedures involving the university’s use of recorded/archived lectures. Additionally, some constituents would like to have a better clarification of university IP procedures with industry partnerships so CPIRA has formed a new task force to look into these issues a bit further.

9. Provost’s Comments

• Starfish: Reporting rates were at 76% which exceeded expectations. There were 2700 flags of concern for attendance, failure danger, and performance. So far, 57% have been addressed (this is up from 21%). Faculty are to be notified when students are contacted or not responsive.

• Safety: TAMUCC is expecting guidance from the A&M system for summer and fall semesters. Announcements will be forthcoming.

• Course Evaluations by students: An Ad Hoc committee is forming to evaluate the current questions.

• Blended Courses – What is meant by “blended?” A committee is meeting to determine what is meant by blended courses, making sure we are consistent with the Coordinating Board’s use of the term “blended courses.”

• Director of the Honors Program: This position is open. A replacement is needed. This is a program that will continue to grow.

• Women’s History Month Activities are still underway. Everyone is encouraged to participate.

• Interfolio – There will be more information on this all-digital system to be used for promotion and tenure. The information should be coming early April.

10. Adjourn: Senator Comparini made the motion to adjourn at 4:15