

Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes
February 12, 2021
Microsoft Teams Meeting
2:00-4:00 p.m.

1. **Call to Order:** by Speaker Moreno at 2 p.m.

Attendance:

2. Senator		Senator	
Ross Bernhardt	X	Kyoung (Kellie) Lee	X
Kelli Bippert	X	Elizabeth Loika	X
Randy Bonnette	X	Mark McNamara	X
Sean Britt	X	Emily Metcalf	X
Chuleeporn (Nikki) Changchit	X	Miguel Moreno	X
Lisa Comparini	X	Dorina Murgulet	X
Liana Davis	X	Bethanie Pletcher	X
Shelley Dinkens	X	Pablo Rangel	X
Dave Edwards	O	Mohan Rao	X
Pam Greene	X	Michael Starek	X
Patricia Hernandez	X	Abu Waheeduzzaman	X
Philip Johnson	O	Quihong Zhao	X
LaNiece Tucker: Administrative Assistant			X

Ex-Officio	Visitors/Guests
Clarinda Phillips	Sharmeen Ahmed
Amy Aldridge Sanford	Daniel Bartholomay
Andrew Piker	Ed Evans
	Kevin Houlihan
	Lisa Louis

3. **Approval of Agenda:** Senator Bonnette moved to approve, seconded by Senator Metcalf. Motion passed.

4. **Approval of January 22, Minutes:** Senator Bonnette moved to approve the minutes as corrected, seconded by Lisa Comparini. Motion passed.

5. **Guest Speaker**

- a. Lisa Louis, Head of the Research and Learning department, Mary and Jeff Bell Library
Topic: Adding a course marking for open educational resources to the class schedule. *A Proposal for Affordable Course Markings – Phase 1 & 2* was sent in advance (see attachment). Ms. Louis is the Chair of the Affordable Learning Tools Committee, established last year. Daniel Bartholomay is Co-Chair. Senator Rao is the Faculty Senate representative to the committee.

Ms. Louis began by defining Open Education Resources (OER): “Teaching, learning, or research resources that are in the public domain or have been released under an intellectual property license that permits the free use, adaptation, and redistribution by any person.” She went on to explain the State Legislation – Texas Senate Bill 810, passed in 2017, which requires OER course designations in class schedules. TAMUCC is not yet in compliance. An alternative designation or marker such as *Zero Textbook Cost* (ZTC) was suggested and explained.

In the spring of 2020, a survey was sent to faculty to assess how many classes use OER and how many mark those courses as OER, who is teaching in those courses, who is teaching low-cost (under \$50.00), and who wants to learn more about OER. There was a 5% response rate when the survey closed right at the time of COVID restrictions, so the survey was not re-sent. Response data provided enough information to indicate it is time to implement.

- Senator Rao gave an example of a “free” textbook that had an \$80.00 charge for courseware. This would not be considered a “free” textbook.

Ms. Louis elaborated on the differences between low and zero cost. She explained the need for further input from faculty as well as students. There is also contact with other universities to review a variety of models. She acknowledged many faculty are taking steps to limit costs to students by using library resources etc.

- The Provost thanked Ms. Louis and her committee. The Provost indicated there is a System-wide initiative to address OER. She emphasized, as more first-generation students/low-income students pursue higher education at a time when the state is reducing funding, it is more important than ever to make this work.
- Senator McNamara shared his experience taking an undergraduate course. There were a number of “al-la-carte” resources available for purchase. Students with limited resources struggle to compete with those who can afford to purchase options. He added concern for courses that require the purchase of things like clickers when there are options through Bb and other systems that can be used at no cost. (In the chat he suggested incentives for faculty to move to OER or low cost.)
- Senator Comparini indicated there are times when an older (used, less expensive) edition of a textbook may be acceptable, but not available through the bookstore.
- Senator Rao brought up inclusive access. Ms. Louis indicated the committee’s plans to develop a position statement and bring it to Faculty Senate.
- Daniel Bartholomay was given the floor to describe his use of OER exclusively since arriving at TAMUCC. The savings to a student in a course with OER can be the “make or break” point for that student. In our Hispanic-Serving Institution, it is important to make education affordable, accessible, and provide equity for all.
- Speaker Moreno identified the need for training to better understand how to move from traditional course resources to OER.

- Senator Waheeduzzaman indicated an example when an option other than the bookstore may offer students a better price for a textbook. (Senator Changchit cautioned about making recommendations to students.)

Ms. Louis went on to describe Phase 1 – Implementing Course Marketing and Phase 2 – Investigating a Low-Cost Marker. Phase 2 will include a survey. Senators were asked to encourage colleagues to complete the survey. She and others on the committee can address questions that may arise, related to the survey or about the OER.

6. Speaker's Report

- a. Dean Searches
 - i. Both the CLA and COB dean searches committees will begin reviewing applications within the next two weeks. Senators Changchit and Rao are on the search committee for the COB.
 - ii. Virtual interviews of top candidates will begin in mid to late March.
 - iii. On-campus interviews are planned for early April

7. Old Business

- a. Izzy Mascot: No news so far regarding the committee. The Speaker indicated he has not yet met with President Miller to discuss concerns about the ongoing use of the Izzy caricature (e.g., photos.tamucc.edu). A central contact person to direct concerns regarding offensive images in University-related media is a discussion point for the next meeting scheduled for Feb. 18.
 - Senator Bonnette indicated he was invited this week to be on the committee. He had no other information. He indicated intent to bring concerns to Faculty Senate and coordinate with the Speaker about concerns from Faculty Senate.
 - Speaker Moreno indicated a plan to issue a statement from Faculty Senate to supplement the message sent from “Izzy’s Desk” which did not capture the sentiments and concerns expressed by Faculty Senate.
 - Senator Murgulet asked about having Staff Counsel join in composing the statement. The Speaker indicated he would invite the Staff Council to join in making a statement.
- b. Designated Administrator suggestion
 - i. Provost Phillips and Kevin Houlihan were sent (on 2/02/21) the following suggested change to the designated administrator language for 32.01.01.C0.01 Complaint and Appeal Process for Faculty Members:

The President has delegated to the Provost the responsibility to appoint a Designated Administrator (senior campus administrator or investigation committee) to review complaints and/or appeals and make recommendations to the Provost. The default choice for the Designated Administrator will be an investigation committee unless both parties are

administrators when the complaint is submitted and the topic of the complaint falls outside the area of faculty experience (i.e., is an administrative matter). In such cases, the provost may decide to appoint a senior campus administrator.

To date, there has not been a response to the suggested language that was sent nor to the offer to meet that was made when the message was sent.

8. Committee Reports

a. Academic Affairs – Senator Britt

- a. MS/PhD program in Data Science from COSE was reviewed by the University Curriculum Committee (UCC). There was a robust discussion then a vote by the UCC to approve the proposal with amended language that added clarification. There were corrections to titles and clarification related to elective vs. required courses. A project course on page 27 of the proposal was removed since it was not part of the degree plan. In the 5-year financial analysis, this program will have an estimated revenue of \$1 million in the black. Senator Britt brought the motion forward from committee to approve the MS/PhD program. During the discussion, Speaker Moreno asked about the MS and whether it is a targeted degree or “fall-back.” Senator Britt clarified, there is a BS to PhD as well as the MS. The program is designed with both options in mind. The motion passed.

Senator Britt thanked the Academic Affairs Committee for their diligent efforts.

b. Awards, Bylaws, & Elections – Senator Pletcher

- a. Faculty Senate Regular Election Calendar– The Spring 2021 calendar was shared with Faculty Senate. Election commissioners have been notified. A list has been prepared to identify the expected vacant seats.

**Faculty Senate Regular Election Calendar
Spring 2021**

2021 Dates	1. Day	2. Time	3. Event
Week of 2/8	4. Friday	5. 2:00pm	6. -Identify election commissioners (Pletcher) 7. -Create list of expected vacant seats (Pletcher) 8. -Confirm eligible voter lists (election commissioners) 9. -Finalize dates for election and present to Senate at 2/12 meeting
3/4	10. Thursday	11. 9:00am	12. Nomination Period opens
3/17	13. Wednesday	14. 5:00pm	15. Nomination Period closes
3/22	16. Monday	17. 9:00am	18. Qualtrics Ballots sent; Qualtrics Voting Period of Regular Election opens
3/27	19. Friday	20. 1:00pm	21. Qualtrics Voting Period closes; 22. Regular Election ends
3/27	23. Friday	24. Time TBD	25. Open Meeting to count votes
3/31	26. Wednesday	27. 9:00am	28. Qualtrics Voting Period of Run-Off Election opens
4/2	29. Friday	30. 1:00pm	31. Qualtrics Voting Period of Run-Off Election closes
4/2	32. Friday	33. Time TBD	34. Open Meeting to count votes
4/16	35. Friday	36. 2:00-3:30pm	37. Last Meeting of 2020-2021 Faculty Senate
4/16	38. Friday	39. 3:30-5:00pm	40. First Meeting of 2021-2022 Faculty Senate

- b. Faculty Excellence Awards—Portfolios are due Feb. 15.
- c. Regents Professor Award—to be announced soon.
- c. Budget Analysis – Senator Murgulet
 - a. Scheduled meeting with VP J. Mahlmann Feb. 16.
- d. Committee on Committees – Senator Metcalf
 - a. The survey for all faculty has been updated. She is collaborating with Michael Rendon to finalize the list of committees.
- e. Faculty Affairs – Senator Comparini
 - a. 15.01.01.C0.01 Administration of the Research Enhancement Program has been posted in the I-drive with the committee’s recommendations. Senator Comparini brought the motion forward from the committee to accept with recommendations. Discussion: Senator Lee expressed appreciation to Senator Comparini, the committee Chair for her leadership and the creation of a good experience for committee members.
The Motion passed.
 - b. Policy Revision Introduction:
 - i. 12.07.99.C0.01, Fixed-Term Faculty Members
 - ii. 33.99.04.C0.04, Promotion of Fixed-Term Faculty Librarians

9. New Business

- a. Faculty have expressed concerns about a suspected change in the current classroom capacity based on the CDC recommended 6-feet to 3-feet. These suspicions were

confirmed in today's email (Feb. 12) from Academic Affairs. The email from Academic Affairs alluded to "signs that we can reasonably expect that most of our campus will have the opportunity to be vaccinated by the start of the fall semester." Information regarding the "signs" pertaining to our campus being vaccinated would be a welcomed assurance to faculty who are more likely to be in high-risk groups.

- Senator Loika indicated she has been part of the mega vaccination clinics at the Fairgrounds, vaccinating thousands, with a focus on those who are at high risk. She asked for clarification about those at High Risk, since they are eligible now for vaccines. The Speaker indicated faculty may not personally be at high-risk but live in a household with someone who is. Senator Loika clarified those individuals are, in actuality being given vaccines. She invited concerned faculty to contact her for possible assistance.
 - Senator Comparini asked for the rationale for reducing the distance from 6 feet to 3 feet. The Speaker indicated the World Health Organization (WHO) suggested the reduction to 3 feet. Senator Loika explained the focus still needs to be on getting vaccinated, handwashing, and appropriate mask-wearing along with using good judgement regarding gatherings and distancing. The Speaker indicated the change from 6 to 3 feet would be one way to increase the capacity of classrooms. Senator Rao raised a question as to whether students who were vaccinated could sit in the front of the class and those who were not vaccinated sit in the back. The Speaker deferred. Senator Bonnette requested the Provost respond and share the perspective of the administration. The Speaker invited the Provost to speak.
 - The Provost reinforced the message from her memo - most will have had the opportunity for vaccination by fall semester. The vaccine is not required. She went on to explain, all around the campus, state, and U.S. there are conversations. Generally, the expectation is fall 2021 will look very much like fall 2019. However, in August, if necessary, TAMUCC will pivot and do what is needed for safety based on circumstances at the time. Masks will be expected. Handwashing will be expected. If anyone is not feeling well, they are expected to stay home. Senator Rao asked if students would be required to have the vaccine. The Provost indicated only the state legislature could make that requirement, as was done for meningitis.
- b. Faculty have expressed concern that despite students testing positive for COVID-19 and following the university reporting procedure, faculty are not notified by the university about positive cases in their classrooms. John LaRue said faculty are notified if a student that tests positive indicates they attended a class within 48 hours of either testing positive or developing symptoms. Senator Johnson was invited to elaborate but was not in attendance.
 - c. Faculty have expressed concerns that faculty have been asked to verify and sign the I-9 forms needed for employment. Faculty do not have and should not be required to know the regulations needed to complete the I-9 forms for students. Debra Cortinas from HR communicated that, "At any time, a new hire can contact HR and make an appointment for an HR representative to complete their I-9."

10. Liaison Reports

- a. Information Technology: Ed Evans

Submitted by Pam Greene 2/18/2021
Faculty Senate Secretary

- i. IT challenges identified by Senators Waheeduzzaman, Loika, Rao, and Comparini during this meeting were acknowledged. Senator Waheeduzzaman indicated he has used IT service desk, but the resolution was temporary. Mr. Evans invited senators and others to let him know if issues were not resolved through the use of the IT service desk. He indicated he had already contacted IT during the meeting so they could begin trouble-shooting. He further indicated understanding the need for all faculty to have the resources needed and expressed a commitment and willingness to assist.
Senator Changchit expressed her appreciation for the timely addition of students in Bb. Historically, those who registered late might take 2 or 3 days to be added, creating added demands for faculty and challenges for students. Now, it is almost immediate. This timely addition is very helpful.
- ii. Mr. Evans thanked all who have been leaving computers turned on so they are in the position to receive patches that allow improvements. IT may be reaching out to individuals who need updates. This could cause concern for some. Mr. Evans encouraged anyone who was concerned to hang up and call the IT service desk to verify the identity of the IT staff then reconnect. The Tech. Management Program is responsible for verifying asset inventory and who is using the equipment.
- iii. Mr. Evans reviewed the plans for the *Spring into Quality* series, part of the implementation of the strategic plan. The Quality Matters program addresses the application of the quality matters rubric in online courses. There will be opportunities for enrolling in a Peer Review Course for those who want to do Quality Matters review for other courses. New faculty hires go through online training for teaching. Now, this training will include Quality Matters. There has been confusion and concern about the length of new hire training. Mr. Evans gave assurances the training time is about the same as it has been with revisions to the training overall. The training focuses on best practices ranging from face-to-face to synchronous fully online practices.
- iv. Mr. Evans invited everyone to attend the 2021 South Texas Digital Strategies Symposium.

11. Provost's comments -

a. The Provost and Kellie Smith were asked to speak to the Board of Regents about ACUE along with representatives from College Station. To be invited along with College Station was an honor and “win” for TAMUCC. Our faculty who are participating model life-long learning and are renewing their passion for teaching. This program requires extra work by the participating faculty, no small effort in the midst of COVID-19.

b. Power Hour – the Provost indicated she is encouraged and inspired by the creativity and efforts to engage students. How does the University need to re-structure? The Provost mentioned the potential use of Learning Assistants to engage students and give faculty a lift.

c. Starfish will launch Monday (Feb. 15). The responses to flags have been modified. The effectiveness of changes will need to be evaluated.

d. International Students' Parade of Nations will be held in the midst of virtual operations.

e. Interfolio, is software for creating and evaluating P & T portfolios electronically. Hopefully, it will work for all colleges and make the process better. Senator Bonnette added in reviewing, using Interfolio, the process is definitely better.

- f. Chairs of search committees and department chairs are exploring how to better support the diversification of faculty. This extends beyond hiring. It is about creating a sense of belonging.
- g. Black History month is being celebrated virtually.
- h. Sunday evening, The Theater Improv Group will perform: *Two is Better than One*.
- i. A number of items mentioned (above) are examples of how we (TAMUCC) continue to progress. This campus is in no way stalled.

The Provost invited questions.

- a. Senator Britt: Census Day reporting is challenging if a student was removed from Bb for not completing COVID-19 training. Students can be overlooked. Is there a way to block a student's access to Bb without removing their name if they have not been compliant? He explained the problem accurately reporting for Census Day. The Provost responded by giving examples of other efforts, removal from Bb "got their attention" without changing the students' schedule. She invited other ideas. Mr. Evans indicated fewer than 70 students (as of February) needed the training, and most were in progress. Mr. Evans agreed to explore further. Students remain on the course list in S.A.I.L. but not all faculty know to check that roster.
- b. Senator Waheeduzzaman: Digital Measures does not capture information in a desirable way for the COB. He asked about the possibility of each college being able to customize. The Provost acknowledged there is no perfect software nor process. Interfolio is an example of a program that gets us closer to differentiation between colleges. Interfolio, we hope, will be better than anything in use currently, but we will not know for sure until we have the opportunity to actually use it.

12. For the good of the order

- a. Speaker Moreno congratulated Senator Pletcher on behalf of Faculty Senate. Chancellor Sharp named Dr. Pletcher to the Chancellor's Academy of Teacher Education.

13. **Adjourn:** at 3:56 p.m. Senator Bonnette made the motion to adjourn.