

Faculty Senate

Minutes: (WebEx) Meeting September 11, 2020

(Votes were managed using the electronic polling feature.)

1. Call to Order by Speaker Moreno at 2:01 pm

Welcome extended to all in attendance.

Faculty Senate

| 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 | | Mohan Rao | X |
| Pam Greene | X | Michael Starek | X |
| Patricia Hernandez | X | Abu Waheeduzzaman | X |
| Philip Johnson | X | Quihong Zhao | X |
| LaNiece Tucker: Administrative Assistant | | | X |

| ExOfficio | |
|----------------------|---|
| Clarinda Phillips | X |
| Amy Aldridge Sanford | X |
| Andrew Piker | X |

| Visitors/Guests |
|-----------------|
| Kevin Houlihan |
| Ed Edwards |

Additional Visitors

| | | |
|------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|
| Ahmed, Sharmeen | Keys, Yolanda | Sanders, Jennifer |
| Bahr, Keisha | Lee, Sinae | Sipes, Diana |
| Bajiyo, Leticia | Mareh-Fuehrer, Michelle | Watson, Josh |
| Benham-Hutchins, Marge | McCollough, Cherie | Wiehe, Jarred |
| Bezio, Kelly | Mehrubeo, Ruby | Ye, Chunlai |
| Carstensen, Robin | Monahan, Laura | |
| deGhize', Susan | Mulic, Dino | |
| Devlin, Donna | Murphey, Christina | |
| Flores, Jose | Owora, Agatha | |
| Hemmer, Lynn | Rijkhoff, Sanne | |
| Johnson, Timothy | Sanos, Sandrine | |

2. **Approval of Agenda:** New Business was added (to follow committee reports) and Provost Report to follow Liaison reports.
3. **Approval of August 18 Retreat Minutes:** Motion to approve as amended by Senator Britt, 2nd by Senator Metcalf. Motion passed.
4. **Speaker's Report:**
 - a. COVID-19 case count dashboard: Faculty have asked why the TAMUCC case count website does not include cumulative totals. Response from Cheryl Cain (VP for MarCom) indicated different ways to report data were reviewed and a decision was made to opt for weekly counts. The prior weeks' data remain on the site allowing people want to calculate cumulative totals.

On August 15, C. Cain was contacted regarding faculty asking if new cases of self-reported COVID-19 cases could be reported **daily** for our campus as it is at College Station (<https://www.tamu.edu/coronavirus/dashboard/>). This would be viewed as useful with TAMUCC is starting the semester (increasing the concentration of individuals on campus) and it is an example illustrated at the flagship campus. C. Cain indicated she would follow up.

- b. Student's dropped due to COVID-19 training requirement.
Taken To Clarinda Phillips (VP for Academic Affairs/Provost)

Recap: Students who did not complete the COVID-19 training on Blackboard are were locked out of their Blackboard courses. The need to make sure that all students were current with the training to ensure the safest possible situation amid a national pandemic was understood. However, this placed an unnecessary burden on faculty. Due to this lockout even after the COVID-19 training has been completed, faculty were not able to grade the student's work and provide timely feedback on assignments which could put students behind right from the start of the semester. Additionally, faculty were put in a position to assist students with makeup assignments that were inaccessible during the lockout period. This resulted in extra time and attention to reset availability settings or adaptive releases once the student appears again in blackboard, as well as the extra communication trying to calm stressed students. Communication was made even more challenging because the students were not only locked out of Blackboard, but the faculty member could no longer see them in Blackboard. A third of the students were locked out for one faculty member. Faculty seem to be collaterally burdened through no fault of their own.

One solution could be to isolate the lock out to the student but not to the faculty. This would allow faculty access to grade the assignments that had been turned in and continue to utilize the communication functions in blackboard.

An offer was extended to work collaboratively on a possible solution that keeps students responsible for completing necessary training while not placing extra burdens on the faculty member who is trying to comply.

Response: The Provost indicated the desire for all Islanders to do their part to limit the spread of COVID-19. This included communicating to students that we are taking this seriously. Locking students out of their course shells was an intermediate solution before the student would be dropped, which involves many more steps to get reinstatement. Unfortunately, Blackboard does not allow us to block student course access and still allow for other faculty functions (e.g., communication, grading) to be available.

The Provost acknowledged an unintended consequence that resulted in faculty having to do additional work to accommodate these students. She did request the names of the faculty that contacted the Speaker so she could express her appreciation directly to them.

Continued, related Concerns: Lack of communication with faculty regarding student situation.

- c. Spring 2021 academic planning: Questions were raised with Clarinda Phillips (VP for Academic Affairs/Provost). Has there been any plans set in place regarding the maximum percentage of fully online courses offered in the Spring semester? In a review of the courses completed by the Speaker, there are approximately 38% of fall courses fully online while 62% of courses have some face-to-face component. It was noted in some of the President's addresses, there seemed a tendency to combine the fully online courses with courses that have some online component. If a maximum percentage has been set, will the percentage be the standard for all colleges and departments? Currently, the percentage of fully online courses does not seem to be the same across all colleges. The Speaker indicated he is from a college that has one of the lowest percentages of fully online classes (20%) whereas COSE has the highest percent of fully online courses (45%). An additional question: Has there been a plan to change the process for requesting to teach on-line courses?

Response from the Provost: The Registrar's Office (Christie Roberts) sent instructions about the Spring 2021 schedule build to department chairs yesterday (August 31). We will plan the Spring 2021 schedule with the same target percentages as the revised Fall 2020 schedule (25% F2F, 50% Blended, 25% Online). All colleges/departments were given the same set of instructions. The management of the process done within colleges. Some colleges did exceptions by submitting justifications (e.g., capacity of labs), which were reviewed by the Provost. At the time of her response, September 1, she indicated she was not aware of any changes to the process for requesting a fully online schedule.

- d. Budget Think Tank current plans:
- i. President Miller would like the Budget Think Tank to have two phases. Phase 1 is to identify the areas recommended for further investigation. Phase 2: making actual recommendations within those identified areas. For example, phase 1 could be we

recommend looking at programs based on a scorecard, and Phase 2 could be we recommend looking at these programs that scored poorly on the scorecard. Pres. Miller will attend the next meeting to explain expectations and to provide guidance.

- II. Reviewing Budget Survey Results (an attachment was provided).
 - III. Breaking into sub-groups to look at these areas to see where to consolidate, identify what to investigate and what should be taken off of the table, etc.
 - IV. Subgroups will report back to at an all committee meeting to ensure there is congruence on the decisions of what to investigate. It is important to have representation from faculty senate in all sub-groups. There are four faculty participating in the Task Force: Frank Spaniol, Don Deis, Kevin Concannon, and Speaker Moreno.
 - V. There will be a preliminary report of “here is what we recommend investigating.” After feedback from campus admin is received, phase 2 can begin.
- e. CONHS Dean Search: Initial review of second batch of applicants Sept. 11 with candidate interviews Sept. 14 – 15.
 - f. Merit Pay Notification: Appreciation was expressed for receiving the NOA earlier this year. However, there was no direct mention of merit. Due to the budget dependence on enrollment, information is needed from the 12-day census to determine the final budget. We know the enrollment is down. The increase in graduate students helps to offset the decrease in enrollment. Summer enrollment was up by 4%. Announcements about budget are expected soon.
 - g. Equity Pay: The funds for equity pay have been set apart. Strong commitment to the process of achieving equity pay remains.
 - h. COVID-19 tracing: QUESTION in CHAT: Concern was raised about tracing of positive COVID-19 cases and notification of faculty. Response: Going forward, faculty will receive an e-mail from the Registrar’s Office, the same as students receive.
 - i. Early Text adoption date: In previous years, the date for text adoption was later in October, while this year it is Sept. 28 for spring semester. The Provost did explain the details of the process and the history of being out of compliance with the later date. In her liaison report, she indicated we are required to announce textbook adoptions two weeks before the schedule is live so students can make decisions related to texts. The schedule will go live Oct. 12.
 - j. Clarification re. rumor that syllabi will be due in September: Need further clarification related to this.

5. **Old Business:** No Old Business

6. **Committee Reports**

- a. Academic Affairs: Senator Britt There are a list of proposals that will be reviewed before the Oct. Faculty Senate meeting. There is a spread sheet which guides the process for organizing the expedited reviews. COSE, COB, CONHS will be reviewed first – looking at changes in language for the catalog. The plan is in place to alternate colleges each year for fairness.

There is a tab for the general ed. requirements and QEP (I-Know initiative).
Final review of Courseleaf catalog software for implementation use in catalog changes will be September 14. There are plans to replace Curriculog.

b. Faculty Affairs (FA): Senator Comparini

At the August 18 meeting of Faculty Senate (retreat) four policies were brought to the senate from FA.

- *32.01.01.C0.01 Complaint and Appeal Process for Faculty Members* (Revised April 2020). FA has received guidance from K. Houlihan regarding the process for requesting a “re-visiting” or re-review of a policy when not sent to for review. The specific concern relates to the “Designated Administrator” concerns regarding whether the process does or does not facilitate a fair process for faculty. The request further specified consideration for modeling after *08.01.01.C1 Civil Rights Compliance* regarding the language used for “Designated Administrator.” Senator Comparini indicated the FA would review both prior to the next schedule meeting of the Faculty Senate.

A motion was brought from committee by Senator Comparini recommending these policies be sent forward to the President’s Cabinet:

- *31.05.01.C1 Faculty Consulting, External Professional Employment, and Conflict of Interest*
- *33.99.99.C0.01 Postdoctoral Research Associates* (S. Scott from CPIRA did clarify it is typical for Post Docs not to be allowed to be the PI)
- *12.99.01.C0.01 Faculty Development Leave*

Faculty Development Leave: Senator Waheeduzzaman brought up points for discussion. K. Houlihan clarified when faculty have been in an administrative position then return to a faculty position, the development leave allows time to build a research program. He addressed what the system allows and indicated our campus does not have to do the same. There was clarification related to faculty who have been in an Admin. Role receiving full salary, vs. faculty (not related to being in an admin role) granted development leave at ½ salary for one year. K. Houlihan clarified the administration role is not spelled out specifically for our campus. At the system level, it is 100% administrative duties. (Department Chairs, for example on our campus, are not technically in an administrative role, but have administrative release.) Because of using “may” we would not be out of sync with the system. Senator Changchit used an example from the COB where there can be a “grace period” for those returning to a fulltime faculty role. Accommodations are made so they are not held to unreasonable standards. Senator Waheeduzzaman explained the concern has to do with the intent of this procedure which is to “reward” faculty. Making provisions for those transitioning from an administrative position to faculty needs a separate policy/procedure. He made a motion to recommend an amendment to the policy to strike the second sentence in 1. 1.1.: ***Faculty members who have held an administrative position at TAMU CC for more than four(4) years and have returned to faculty may be granted faculty development leave for an academic year at full salary.*** Senator Starek seconded. The motion for the amendment passed. **Vote on the motion** from the Faculty Affairs Committee as amended passed.

c. Awards, Bylaws, & Elections: Senator Pletcher

- a. Ms. Tucker has updated the website with dates/deadlines for awards
- b. USC just posted First Year Advocate Award
- c. E-mail blast for the Piper Award has gone out.
- d. Budget Analysis: Senator Murgulet
 - a. A meeting is scheduled with Jaclyn Mahlman.
 - b. The committee will meet to review the Budget Think Tank Survey and make recommendations to the Speaker.
- e. Committee on Committees: Senator Metcalf
 - a. Senator Murgulet has agreed to be the Faculty Senate representative to the Graduate Counsel.

7. New Business

- a. Senator Comparini indicated her constituents requested more information from Administration about what was the “trigger point” related to COVID-19, for moving courses online.
- b. As situations change, who has the ability to determine when to change course format?
- c. There is a dramatic increase in labor requirements by faculty, staff, and administration in order to accommodate the safety needs related to COVID-19.

Further input and additional comments on a, b, and c were requested by Speaker Moreno.

- d. Senator Dickens : If a course is going well after being converted to online, what is the process for providing input about that course staying online? The response given from the Provost: Faculty are encouraged to present preferences to those responsible for scheduling and addressing the needs of the college.
- e. Islander Mascot: The Speaker indicated he has received written concerns related to our mascot. It is described as an “embarrassment”, demeaning, and potentially offensive to Pacific Islanders. The mascot is not native to our region. It could be considered cultural appropriation. Senator Johnson was able to provide history about the selection, when the tarpon was under consideration, the athletic department at the time managed to create the Islander theme instead. The mascot was not determined by consensus. A motion was made by Senator Comparini for Faculty Senate to investigate the appropriateness of our mascot. 2nd by Senator Britt. Motion passed. Plan: collaborate with the greater TAMUCC community and experts regarding the Pacific Islanders.

8. Liaison Reports

Student Success & Retention Senator Changchit : Starfish reports are to be submitted between September 21 – 28. There are concerns related to the messages students receive as a result of the reports. The messages appear as though they are from faculty when in fact, they are from CASA. There is an e-mail from the Provost with a link for faculty to view the messages that are being sent.

9. Provost Report

- a. Academic Affairs will be sending a monthly e-mail. There is a communication coordinator to assist with more regular communication to meet the needs for dissemination of information.
- b. Fall 2020 has had a successful start – but everyone needs to remain flexible and vigilant even with decreasing COVID-19 numbers.
- c. The Provost is living in a residence hall.
- d. There are 58 Faculty participating in a program to enhance teaching effectiveness from the Association of College & University Educators (ACUE).
- e. Oct. 1 is the deadline for feedback on the P&T and Fixed Term reports.
- f. Budget: There is a 5% state budget cut.
- g. Graduation Parade: Sat. Sept 12 faculty and staff are invited to be anywhere on the parade route, using social distancing, to celebrate our graduates who are receiving diplomas. There were 650 students cleared for graduation in August. TAMUCC is making progress in spite of COVID-19.

10. For the Good of the Order:

IT: ED Edwards

- a. Thanked faculty for the collaboration in preparing for fall courses. There were 70 classrooms equipped with equipment to broadcast classes synchronously.
- b. Requested everyone turn office computers on for the audit that is pending.
- c. Announced - Digital strategy symposium is pending

11. Adjournment: Senator Waheeduzzaman moved for adjournment at 4:03 pm