

## Faculty Senate Meeting

7 September 2012  
12:00 noon - 2:30 p.m.  
WHTC 125

- I. Call to Order by Mr. Townsend at 12:08 p.m.
- II. Roll Call, **Present:** Mr. B. Townsend, Dr. A. Ramirez, Dr. F. Rhodes, Dr. M. Bennett, Dr. G. Clarke, Mr. J. Maxstadt, Dr. M. Muñoz, Dr. Q. Ni, Dr. J. Norris, Dr. L. Prieto
- III. Our guests, Dr. Arenaz and Mr. Oscar Reyna were given the floor.

### **Dr. Arenaz:**

- Effective Spring 2013 faculty teaching loads will go back to 4 and 4. Research releases, to the equivalent of 25 to 30% of the tenured faculty, will still be offered and the option to conduct Wintermester courses will also begin this Fall. Faculty will be offered the option of either extra pay to teach Wintermester courses or have the courses count as part of their Spring teaching load. Release decisions will be made at the College level between the Deans and representatives from each Department.

- It was announced that student enrollment is holding steady and we may be at or even slightly above where we were last year. Of our incoming Freshman class over 22% are in the top 10% and a little over 50% are in the top 25%; with only 12% of our incoming Freshmen requiring some form of remediation. We are going to start expanding our undergraduate recruiting efforts into the Valley and San Antonio. There was some concern expressed that our overall graduate student enrollment is declining and that work needs to continue to improve their numbers, possibly through increased web offerings. The new Bachelors in Petroleum Engineering is at the Board right now pending approval (possibly in November).

- A question was asked about extending the cutoff date for Faculty submitting grades to the Registrar. The answer was that we can not extend the cutoff date because we have pushed the date as far as we can in order to be able to process financial aid information and to hold Graduation on schedule.

- Mr. Maxstadt requested, on behalf of the Library, of the Provost that all information related to the construction of online degree programs and the development of new online courses for these programs be forwarded to the Library so that they can better prepare to meet the resource needs of the faculty who will be teaching the courses and the students who will be taking the courses.

**Mr. Reyna:**

Presented the Senate with a check list titled “What happens when grades are not turned in on time?” This document was presented in reference to the question of why cutoff dates for submission of student grades could not be extended.

Mr. Reyna announced that the Registrar’s Office is still working with OIT to try to resolve the problem of students signing up for courses without having the prerequisites for those courses. Mr. Reyna was asked if the Registrar’s Office would attempt to address the concern of who is allowed to sign-off to let students take these classes without the proper prerequisites.

IV. Mr. Townsend provided the Senate with a brief overview of this summer’s Senate activities within the Executive Council meetings.

- Announced that there really was very little activity in the Executive Council this summer so no real surprises from that Committee.

- There was much discussion on how Faculty could maintain a heightened research agenda while being asked to steadily increase their teaching loads. This is what evolved into the reduction of teaching loads and the research release time.

- There was also considerable discussion about the push towards online and hybrid course delivery, mostly prompted from the Governor’s request for \$10,000 degrees.

- Fall enrollment is flat, but it was down 18% over the summer. We are going back to the State minimum of 10 students in an undergraduate class and 5 in a graduate class.

V. Committee assignments (a partial listing, should be expanded in the October meeting):

- Handbook Revisions: J. Maxstadt, J. Norris, F. Rhodes

- Academic Affairs: J. Norris, L. Prieto

- Assessment: G. Clarke, M. Bennett

- Morale & Welfare: M. Munoz

- Budget & Finance: G. Clarke, J. Maxstadt

- University Ethics: A. Ramirez, Q. Ni

- Committee on Committee: F. Rhodes, J. Maxstadt

## VI. Handbook Revision Committee:

Mr. Maxstadt presented the Senate with a number of Handbook changes that were voted on and approved previously by the Senate and requested that the Senate renew the vote so that they can be submitted to the Faculty for voting.

- The description of “Fixed-term Faculty”. **This was approved unanimously.**

- The structure of the Technology Advisory Council. The description of this committee was changed since it was previously approved by the Senate such that the Technology Advisory Council would no longer deal with technology and instructional issues. These concerns would be dealt with by a separate and new committee called the Distance Education and Instructional Technology Committee (which is a currently functioning, ad hoc committee). It was insisted that both committees be co-chaired by a Faculty Senate representative and that the guidelines of the Faculty Handbook be followed in the selection of the other committee chair such that no person should be able to chair a committee if they have direct control over the function of that committee. A vote was called to move the instructional issues from the Technology Advisory Council to the Distance Education Committee and to have both committees be co-chaired by a Faculty Senate representative. **This was approved unanimously.**

- For the “Midpoint Review of Faculty” the evaluation report be submitted to the dean and Provost with a copy sent to the faculty member. **This was approved unanimously.**

- Adding a paragraph in the “Documentation and Presentations in Support of Applications” section dealing with exactly who can and when can additional support materials be introduced. It was requested that this paragraph be reworded and resubmitted to the Senate for a vote. A proposal was also made to change the wording that “Dossiers can comprise no more than twenty pages” to “twenty-five pages” in order to be consistent with the Provost’s current guidelines.

- The wording in the section dealing with course releases for faculty teaching doctoral seminars was voted on and approved previously by the Senate and a motion was made to renew this change so that it can go out for a vote of the faculty. **This was approved unanimously.**

- A series of changes to be made as clarification and elaboration of the grievance process under the “Faculty-Faculty” section. These changes were tabled for a future online vote.

## VII. The meeting was adjourned at 2:42 pm for lack of a quorum to continue.

Faculty Senate Questionnaire Spring 2012  
Suggestions and comments

1. Connect faculty with administration
2. Update website
3. Reduce teaching loads (made on seven responses)
4. Bring back Teaching / Research Track
5. The vision of the university needs alignment
6. Increase faculty salaries (made on four responses)
7. Curriculum and university website needs to be more user friendly
8. More effective communication
9. Faculty's knowledge of the identified vision of the university
10. Sharing of information from administration to faculty
11. How to handle faculty being harassed by students via email / phone (not addressed in handbook)
12. Include non tenure track / instructors on Senate
13. Closer oversight of official and unofficial committees – senate should be more involved in ensuring that committees actually do the work they are supposed to (main complaint is in the Scholarship Committee and Budget Committee)
14. More oversight on loads, and specifically the expectations for those with reduced loads for whatever reason.
15. Faculty should have more input on the scheduling of classes.
16. Merit pay
17. Low faculty morale
18. Senate needs to regain trust of the faculty
19. Senate needs to fight harder for the good of the faculty
20. Academic quality concern: Wide variety of teaching styles and grading etc. Should there more be more oversight to ensure equity across disciplines?
21. Library not doing enough to support academics – more 1 hours classes on library services each semester.
22. Concern: How much support is there for online students in areas of bookstore access / advising / student support services?
23. Mentoring – Mentioned five times
24. Faculty voice: Decisions are being made with little or no input from faculty on things like major requirement
25. Faculty morale (mentioned five times) and workload: “We have seen our workload increase in small incremental ways none of which are considered a “big deal” - larger classes, increase of technology, more emphasis on research – or because it is deemed important to accreditation (WIN). It has now become burdensome.”
26. Limited teaching slots: no freedom in scheduling classes that make more sense to faculty / students
27. Teaching / Research balance is off
28. The worry of the anti-intellectual attitude of Texas politics , and scape-goating of professors is having a majorly negative impact on faculty morale.

29. Minimize the number of office hours and days on campus
30. Promote / support faculty related activities to increase connection with each other and university
31. Allow colleges / departments to schedule their own classes “and get rid of this absurd MWF schedule” (this was mentioned three times)
32. Persuade administration to separate on campus and off-campus affairs.
33. More transparency and oversight of the tenure process.
34. Low staffing levels – not enough support staff.
35. Inaccurate job titles and inconsistent job title inflation
36. Senate needs to have strong leadership and work on behalf of the faculty and not at the behest of the administration pursuing their agenda
37. Clear departmentally defined contract terms for non-tenure faculty
38. Shared governance – there is none. We are told what is going to happen and very occasionally have the chance to say something. (Shared governance and the perceived lack of same was mentioned in 5 comments)
39. Senate should not be used to achieve promotion
40. Faculty are disrespected in mass emails. Email sent saying that faculty were careless in placing book orders was demeaning to faculty.
41. Improve transparency in faculty evaluation and PTR process.
42. Senate should develop a FAQ page and a form that people can fill in to ask about situations that may have already been arbitrated on campus.
43. Frustration regarding access to basic supplies including paper and printer ink.
44. Budget process: Faculty senate should ensure that the compromises made for this biennium do not become expectations for the future and that proper credit is given for the sacrifices made by the faculty.