

**TEXAS A&M INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY**  
**Faculty Senate Meeting**  
**February 6, 2015**  
**Western Hemispheric Trade Center Room 125**

**I. Call to Order: 12:03 p.m.**

**II. Roll Call, Present:**

President Alfredo Ramirez, Jr., Kimber J. Palmer, Quingien Ni, James Norris, Hari Mandel, Gilberto Salinas, Leonel Prieto, Katie Lewis, Maria de Lourdes Vilorio, John Maxstadt, Marvin E. Bennett, Lynne Manganaro, Vivian Garcia, George Clarke.

**III. Approval of Minutes**

Approval of the December minutes was postponed to the next meeting.

**IV. Our guests were given the floor:**

**A. Dr. Pablo Arenaz, Provost and VP for Academic Affairs:**

The university has been occupied with the SACS accreditation efforts. We received our offsite report that called for many adjustments and issues to be addressed. Dr. Arenaz and others attended the SACS conference in December. The onsite team will be coming to campus March 17<sup>th</sup> through the 19<sup>th</sup>, and they may want to speak with faculty members.

We received a large number of recommendations and areas that needed to be addressed. Most of them were as to form, rather than substance, and not considered “major”. Dr. Arenaz feels good about our updated and improved report. The chair of the onsite committee was here on Tuesday, February 3, and gave us suggestions, mostly regarding information that needed to be explained or provided to the team. For instance, explaining how we assess our research and how do we tie our research to the mission of the university. One of our Regents will also be visiting with the team.

Comments to address included the fact that we did not have a specific policy for aggrieving academic freedom issues (our standing grievance procedure was deemed not sufficient for this purpose) A policy has been created.

We are heading toward addressing our Quality Enhancement Plan “QEP.” Kevin Lindbergh and Claudia San Miguel will be visiting all colleges and departments with further information for faculty concerning the QEP.

The President and Provost will be visiting the Texas Senate Finance Committee in the near future, and will be presenting our Appropriation Request. As for Tuition Revenue Bonds “TRB”s, we are asking for a new classroom building to be built (where the Early College temporary classrooms were located) for small to medium sized classrooms. Most likely, the College of Education would be moved there, freeing the fourth floor of the library up for more student study space.

There are plans to build additional parking southeast of the Zaffarini Student Success Center.

Other requests include TRBs for the new convocation center, a space larger than the Kinesiology Center for graduation and other large gatherings, as well as gym space. This is a joint effort with the city of Laredo, as voters approved a \$20 million expenditure for this purpose. The Kinesiology Center would be retrofitted for classroom and lab space. We would also like to add onto the Rec Center.

Dr. Keck and Dr. Arenaz will return to Austin on February 18 and 19<sup>th</sup> for the House Appropriations committee meeting.

We will be having “Discover TAMIU”—a student-recruiting tool in March—for younger kids to come on campus and learn about attending TAMIU.

In response to a question, Dr. Arenaz confirmed that research faculty teaching loads would be 3-3. There will be a specific definition of “research faculty.” Wednesday, February 11, Dr. Keck and Dr. Arenaz will be attending a Regents Meeting, at which Dr. Manuel Broncano will be named our newest Regents Professor.

#### **V. Faculty Senate President Report on Executive Council Meeting-**

No news to report other than Dr. Ramirez’s written report previously sent to us via e-mail.

#### **VI. Faculty Senate Vice-President Report on Provost Council Meetings**

No report.

#### **VII. Reports from Committee Chairs**

A. The Academic Oversight Committee, Dr. Gilberto Salinas

Committee did not meet.

B. The Budget and Finance Committee, Dr. George Clarke

Committee did not meet.

C. The University Ethics Committee, Dr. Lynne Manganaro

Committee did not meet.

D. The Committee on Creation, Composition, and Responsibilities of Committees, Dr. Francis Rhodes.

Dr. Rhodes was unable to attend this meeting.

E. The Committee on Faculty Work Environment and Morale, Dr. Qingwen Ni

This committee did not meet.

F. The Faculty Handbook Revision Committee, Mr. John Maxstadt.

This report is held until later in the meeting

G. The Distance Education and Instructional Technology Committee, Dr. Jim Norris

This committee met and discussed the upcoming transition from ANGEL to Blackboard. Currently, several professors are using Bb as part of a pilot program towards full participation of all faculty to begin in the fall. This transition is not going very smoothly. A question was raised as to why OIT chose Blackboard without any faculty involvement in the decision, but no answer to that question was known.

H. The Technology Advisory Committee, Dr. Brendan Townsend

Since Dr. Townsend was not able to attend this meeting, he will present his report at our next meeting.

I. The Assessment Committee, Dr. Kimber Palmer

This committee has not met yet, but Ms. Palmer has gathered the instruments used in the past. Dr. Arenaz has requested to give input into whatever instrument is to be used, so those will be shared with him. Following that, the committee will meet and finalize the instrument for distribution.

**VII. Unfinished Business**

A. Update on university election for handbook amendments and changes and GPA poll, Dr. Frances Rhodes

Dr. Rhodes is attempting to get a focus report for current faculty since there have been many additions and deletions since the last list was used. Due to involvement with SACS, it has been difficult getting that report. Dr. Rhodes will continue to work on obtaining this list.

**IX. New Business**

A. Consider Faculty Handbook Policy Change Regarding Faculty Service Expectations, Dr. Kevin Lindberg.

Dr. Lindbergh discussed a concern, identified by our SACS consultants, as to provisions and language regarding service that is expected by faculty. On page 16 of our faculty handbook, it may be interpreted that some service is “encouraged”—or optional, rather than required. He asks that we modify this language to indicate clearly that service is required. John Maxstadt has agreed to create some language to consider and vote on.

B. Consider Adoption of Gun Control Resolution, Dr. Alfredo Ramirez, Jr.

Dr. Ramirez requested consideration of a resolution regarding handguns on campus, similar to one approved by the Texas Council of Faculty Senates. John Maxstadt moved the following resolution be approved; Kimber Palmer seconded that motion:

WHEREAS, allowing concealed firearms on university campuses, excepting law enforcement personnel, threatens our ability to create and maintain a safe, open learning environment for students, faculty and staff,

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the members of Texas A&M International Faculty Senate oppose any legislation or initiatives that will overturn the present prohibitions on carrying weapons on university campuses.

This resolution passed as follows:

Votes:

For-	9
Against-	2
Abstentions-	1

C. Consider adoption of resolution regarding funding, Dr. Alfredo Ramirez

Dr. Ramirez requested consideration of a resolution regarding Funding, similar to one approved by the Texas Council of Faculty Senates. Kimber Palmer moved the following resolution be approved; Gilberto Salinas seconded that motion. The resolution is as follows:

WHEREAS, funding by the State of Texas for higher education is not keeping pace with the needs of students in the State of Texas;

WHEREAS, funding by the State of Texas for full-time students at institutes of higher education has stagnated at 1990 levels;

WHEREAS, the 2012- 2013 higher education cuts will further lower per-student funding levels in upcoming years;

WHEREAS, Texas higher education funding per full-time equivalent students has dropped 21.4 percent declining from \$9,487 in 2001-2002 to \$7,452 in 2009-2010;

WHEREAS, to fully restore funding would require a 27.3 percent increase;

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Texas A&M International University Faculty Senate petitions the 84<sup>th</sup> Texas State Legislature to Increase funding for higher education by 25 percent.

This resolution passed unanimously.

C. Consider Adoption of Resolution Regarding the Hazelwood Act, Dr. Alfredo Ramirez, Jr.

Dr. Ramirez requested consideration of a resolution regarding the Hazelwood Act, similar to one approved by the Texas Council of Faculty Senates. Gilberto Salinas moved the following resolution be approved; Jim Norris seconded that motion:

WHEREAS, the Texas A&M International University Faculty Senate has the highest regard for the devotion and sacrifice of those who have served in the armed forces of the United States;

WHEREAS, we are committed to the education of these Texans and greatly value their contributions to the classroom and to our universities;

WHEREAS, the Texas legislature passed and implemented the Hazelwood act so Texans who were honorably discharged from military service could receive a quality education;

WHEREAS, this was an unfunded mandate;

THEREFORE, be it resolved that the Texas A&M International University Faculty Senate encourages the 84<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature to fully fund the Hazelwood act.

Said motion passed unanimously.

D. Texas Council of Faculty Senates Spring Meeting, Dr. Alfredo Ramirez, Jr.

Dr. Ramirez shared information about the upcoming meeting of the Texas Council of Faculty Senates to be held February 27-28, 2015 in Austin. He stated the senate's budget would accommodate a few of our members to attend this meeting, and asked interested parties to contact him.

Adjournment: 1:30 p.m.