

TEXAS A&M INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY
Faculty Senate Meeting
September 4, 2015
WHTC 215

I. Call to Order (time): 12:04 p.m.

II. Roll Call:

Present: Ruby A. Ynalvez, Frances Gates Rhodes, Vivian Garcia, George Clarke, Katie Lewis, Maria Vilorio, John Maxstadt, James Norris, David Milovich, Marvin Bennett, Leonel Prieto, Lynne Manganaro, Marcela Moran, Alfredo Ramirez, Kimber Palmer, Kenneth Tobin.

Guests: Pablo Arenaz, Rosanne Palacios, Stephen Sears, Brian Gaskins, Lisa Paul

Not present: Gilberto Salinas

III. Approval of Minutes

Minutes of the May, 2015 meeting were unanimously approved.

IV. Our guests were given the floor:

A. Dr. Arenaz:

1. The university must rethink our degrees and how to combine things—in a multidisciplinary way. A task force has been formed to study this and come up with options for students. One example might be a sports management degree—taking from both the College of Education and the School of Business. While we have a multidisciplinary degree in the catalog, we must come up with more defined options.

The recently approved “Strategic Plan for Higher Education in Texas” was discussed. This plan is from the Coordinating Board. They predict there will be 550,000 students in higher education by 2030. The plan calls for universities to be required to show by 2030 that every student who comes through the door will have marketable skills by the time they leave.

A goal is that the average student debt would not exceed 60% of the students first year’s (beyond graduation) salary.

2. We will have a spring assembly prior to classes beginning in the spring semester. The dean of UG studies will talk to us about signature courses, expanded concept of courses, (e.g. religion, philosophy and science) to add to the global nature of what we do. We want to tie the global nature to studies each student would take.

3. We are down by 400 students—due to the fact that we have so few dual enrollment students. However, our total credit hours are up—we need to continue to push students to take 30 credit hours per year. Our average student is taking only 10.1 credit hours per semester.

4. The A&M- College Station was given 640 acres in Costa Rica. This is called the Soltis Center. It can be used for various things. It is in a protected jungle.
5. The system is working on a system wide verification system for taking tests online.
6. TAMIU needs to look at giving college credit for competencies—already attained knowledge and skills, particularly for all professional degrees, and eventually all degrees.
7. We are on track to meet with Broadus and Associates regarding our new classroom building which will be located where the ECHS portable buildings were located a few years ago.
8. Frances Rhodes asked about the air conditioning in faculty offices being turned off, or down, on weekends. Dr. Arenaz said this was due to a system decision—to save money. Faculty can ask for a/c on the weekends on an ad hoc basis by contacting Juan Castillo or Trevor Liddle. These decisions are not controlled locally, but are determined in College Station.
9. Dr. Arenaz would like two new university committees be created. A curriculum catalog committee and a catalog committee that would be responsible for the part of the catalog that is not curriculum-related. He would like this part of the catalog be reviewed on a regular basis and be more user friendly.
10. The subject of merit raises was brought up. There will likely be a fund from which the raises can be granted and will take place in early November. Kimber Palmer asked if there was a criteria used in determining who received equity raises. Dr. Arenaz stated there was no criteria and he did not wish there to be one. In determining who receives the raises he accepts recommendations from the deans and then makes the final decision based on whether there was “something extra” achieved by that faculty member. Dr. Keck has the final say. He stated that “about the only time we have to change salaries” is when a faculty member receives a promotion.
11. The fall 2015 calendar has the Wednesday before Thanksgiving as a Reading Day. This is counted in the total number of mandatory classroom hours.

B. Lisa Paul:

Discussed the issue of Title IX language to be mandatorily placed in each student’s syllabus. The main concern at this time is the rights of pregnant and/or parenting students. The language will be changing once again. Ms. Paul will review and bring it back to the Senate.

C. Rosanne Palacios:

As the VP for Institutional Enrichment, Ms. Palacios wanted to ask the Senate’s support for the “Great Stampede” (formerly All 4 TAMIU) fundraising effort. There is also a new initiative in student philanthropy.

D. Brian Gaskins

1. Kimber Palmer asked why the Junk Email function on the Outlook email program was disabled for the entire TAMIU community, noting that this function is an important tool in weeding out unwanted and inappropriate email that makes it through our filtering system. Mr. Gaskins stated the decision to disable this was not his, but it came because there was an episode where TAMIU's own email ended up in people's Junk Email folder. Ms. Palmer asked for a review of this decision as it has created a mail box full of junk mail.
2. Blackboard- Many faculty members are not happy with Blackboard. Mr. Gaskins stated we have a contract and will be using Bb for at least a few more years, but we might change after that. It is possible that College Station will take over that decision for all A&M system schools, in order to leverage prices for the
3. Regarding the Technology Advisory Committee: The responsibility for TAMIU's website has been changed to be housed in the Office of Public Relations, Marketing, and Info Services under Steve Harmon. The website has been and will be undergoing some changes.
4. The classrooms are currently undergoing upgrades to the computers and projectors.

V. Faculty Senate President Report on Executive Council Meeting-

No news to report other than Dr. Clarke's written report previously sent to us via e-mail. John Maxstadt provided some information on meetings of the Executive Council he attended over the summer. The Faculty Senate has an opportunity to provide feedback to the university committee on UConnect. It was noted by some members that UConnect is not popular on campus. This task has been assigned to the committee on Faculty Work Environment and Morale

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

John Maxstadt noted that his report would be basically similar to the comments given to us by Dr. Arenaz. He did state they discussed the TAMIU strategic plan and the fact that the goals in the plan will have to be assessed. Another topic was that there may be a day care center run by a contractor coming on campus.

VII. Reports from Committee Chairs

With the new academic year, committee assignments and chair appointments were made. The following are the new assignments:

The Academic Oversight Committee

- A. Dr. Gilberto Salinas, Chair**
- B. Dr. Jim Norris
- C. Dr. Ruby Ynalvez

The Budget and Finance Committee

- A. Dr. George Clarke, Chair**
- B. Dr. David Milovich
- C. Dr. Ruby Ynalvez

The University Ethics Committee

- A. **Dr. Lynne Manganaro, Chair**
- B. Ms. Vivian Garcia
- C. Ms. Angela Moran

The Committee on Creation, Composition, and Responsibilities of Committees

- A. **Dr. Frances Rhodes, Chair**
- B. Mr. John Maxstadt
- C. Dr. Lynne Manganaro

The Committee on Faculty Work Environment and Morale

- A. **Dr. Katie Lewis, Chair**
- B. Dr. Marvin Bennett
- C. Dr. Ken Tobin
- D. Dr. Gilberto Salinas

The Faculty Handbook Revision Committee

- A. **Mr. John Maxstadt, Chair**
- B. Dr. Lionel Prieto
- C. Dr. Alfredo Ramirez, Jr.

The Distance Education and Instructional Technology Committee

- A. **Dr. Jim Norris, Chair**

The Technology Advisory Committee

- A. **Dr. Lourdes Vioria**

The Assessment Committee

- A. **Dr. Kimber Palmer, Chair**
- B. Dr. Leonel Prieto
- C. Dr. Katie Lewis

As there were no meetings of the committees over the summer, no reports were made.

Frances Rhodes moved the meeting be adjourned; this motion was seconded by Ken Tobin. The meeting was adjourned at 2:15 p.m.