

TAMIU Faculty Senate Meeting

February 5, 2021; WebEx

I. The meeting was called to order by the Faculty Senate President, Dr. Lola Norris, at 12:02 p.m.

II. *Roll Call*: Dr. Lola Norris, Dr. Lourdes Vilorio, Dr. Marvin Bennett, Ms. Malynda Dalton, Dr. Puneet Gill, Dr. Ariadne Gonzalez, Mr. Jose Gutierrez, Dr. Runchang Lin, Dr. Gilberto Martinez, Mr. Alejandro Mojica, Dr. Neal McReynolds, Dr. Mehnaaz Momen, Dr. James Norris, Ms. Kimber Palmer, Dr. Leonel Prieto, Dr. Rose Saldivar, Dr. Kenneth Tobin, Dr. Ruby Ynalvez

III. Senate member and past Senate President Dr. Ken Tobin guided the Senate in a 'Moment of Silence' to honor and remember former colleagues and senate members who have passed away recently; Dr. Frances Rhodes, Dr. William Riggs, Dr. Carol Waters, Mr. Michael Daniel and Mr. Brendan Townsend. They will be deeply missed.

IV. *Our Guests* were given the floor:

Dr. Pablo Arenaz:

Dr. Arenaz announced that TAMIU has been authorized by the Chancellor to move forward with our merit plan for this year, which will become effective April 1st and show up on the May 1st check. Only people employed before May of last year will be eligible for merit. Also, evaluations must be completed by March the 31st to qualify for merit.

Dr. Arenaz has spent the last two days in virtual meetings with the Board of Regents. The two major agenda items were the approval of Faculty Development Leave and the creation of a quasi-endowment for the \$40 million gift TAMIU obtained from MacKenzie Scott. These monies doubled our current endowment and will be used to create endowed chairs, endowed professorships and scholarships for students.

A new television show, *Around Texas with Chancellor John Sharp*, premieres Thursday, Feb. 4, 2021 on KAMU-TV and will be offered to other public television affiliates across the state. The show will premier faculty, students and others from the System who have made a positive impact on the state of Texas.

The Texas Comptroller reported to the legislation that Texas will have about a \$1 billion short-fall in the current budget, which is much better than the \$4.5 billion that was projected. TAMIU had to give back 5% of its budget last fiscal year and this year and that 5% across all state agencies amounts to about \$1 billion. So it looks like they may not cut our budget anymore. The Legislature is about \$7 billion over what was proposed in the budget and, overall, Higher Education is currently about \$15.9 billion across all 32 institutions, 13 medical schools and all of the community colleges.

Dr. Arenaz mentioned that our overall enrollment looks healthy, and is up about 0.2%. But we will have to wait until next week when the 12-day-roll is submitted to better know our numbers for the semester. The Senate Finance Committee has asked the Presidents and their CFOs to come to Austin to make their presentations for the budget and appropriation requests to

the Committee on the 23rd of this month. Several items will be brought up that may have an impact on TAMIU. The Regional University Initiative may give us additional monies based on numbers of first generation graduates and minority graduates. There is also a initiative to try to increase the monies given for student success programs that we may also be able to draw upon.

We have about \$17 million coming to us from CARES2. \$5 million is ear-marked for student needs and the rest is ear-marked for some Covid-related University short-falls. There is some money in the \$1.9 trillion package that is being pushed by the Democrats for higher education, but it is uncertain how much is going to be there.

We are currently finishing the second vaccine dose for the second group of people we have vaccinated. In total TAMIU has given about 400 doses, including 135 of our own people. We have requested additional doses, but it is up to the State as to whether or not they will send them to us and what the timeline will be for us to receive them. Dr. Arenaz re-iterated that TAMIU, as a public employer, can not require all students to have evidence of a negative Covid test, nor can we require students or faculty to be vaccinated for Covid. But, as of Wednesday (February 3rd) TAMIU has tested slightly under 7000 people and have had 133 test positive, which still gives us under a 2% overall positivity rate.

Dr. Tom Mitchell:

Dr. Mitchell announced that our Criminal Justice Doctoral Program proposal was reviewed by our Coordinating Board and 3 external reviewers and their report stated that they were very pleased with what they saw. It now needs to get the Commissioner's endorsement and then go to the Coordinating Board Academic Committee for approval. So it is possible we may be fully approved by May, although we may have to get SACS approval for any substantive changes so it may get pushed into January 2022.

Some of the Cares Part 2 money will be used to hire additional writing tutors, Learning Center tutors and SI Instructors. If you have a bright junior or senior student these positions will be available soon and they will pay \$10.50 to \$12.50 per hour for up to 19 hours per week.

V. Approval of December 4th Faculty Senate Minutes: the minutes were approved without corrections.

VI. Old Business:

A. Faculty Handbook Changes:

Senator Dalton presented the changes to the wording of the Ombuds description (see attached) that were suggested by the Provost and the Ad Hoc Ombuds Committee (Senators Dalton, Palmer and Bennett). These were just minor changes to the document that the Senate had previously voted on and approved. This will be sent to the Faculty for a vote the following week.

VII. New Business:

A. Administrator's Evaluation Questionnaires:

Senator Gill reported that the Assessment Committee is ready to distribute the Administrator Evaluations, but that they do not have assessment questionnaires ready for the previous suggestion of assessing ARSSB Directors this year. It was decided to hold off on assessing ARSSB Directors in order to give the faculty that are concerned and the Faculty Senate time to develop a proper assessment instrument. It was also decided that the Senate Executive Committee should hold a discussion with the President and the Provost on the possibility of assessing other Directors and other members of Administration.

Senator Dalton offered to send out the current assessments to her contact with OIT so that they could prepare them for electronic vote by the Faculty. It was suggested that the window for evaluations be extended to 2 weeks to try to increase the participation rate. It was also decided that we will continue with the option of either electronic assessments or paper ones, with the placement for the drop box for the paper ballots to be decided by the Assessment Committee.

B. Classroom Issues:

Senator Vilorio reported that there were still issues with asynchronous vs. synchronous teaching in TAMU FLEX courses. There was a long discussion on the concerns of not making classroom recordings available for all of the students. A suggestion was made that the Senate submit a resolution to the Provost citing both student and faculty concerns about not releasing classroom recordings to all students. This was voted on and approved by the Senate and Senators Vilorio, Palmer and Bennett volunteered to wordsmith a resolution for the Senate's approval to be submitted to the Provost for his consideration.

There was an issue brought up about the failure of the Proctorio test monitoring software last November. The Distance Education and Instructional Technology Committee (DEITC) sent a proposal to the Provost addressing possible solutions should this problem occur again (see attached). They are awaiting a response from the Provost to this proposal and it was suggested that the Senate Executive Committee discuss this with the Provost at a future meeting.

C. Development of a University-Wide, Fixed-Term Faculty Promotion Policy:

Dr. Lola Norris reported that the Senate Executive Committee met with the Provost and the Provost charged the Senate with developing a university-wide policy for promotion of Fixed-Term Faculty to be placed in the body of the Faculty Handbook. Senator Dalton added that the President and the Provost want to establish a fixed timeline for the promotion process that parallels that of tenured faculty, with the President having the final say on granting promotion of Fixed-Term Faculty. The Senate Fixed-Term Promotion Ad Hoc Committee was requested to work on the wording for this policy.

D. Ongoing Technology and Distance Education Issues:

Dr. Lola Norris reported that her computer is freezing during almost every class. Dr. McReynolds also reported that we (faculty) are still having many problems with excessive log-ins on computers using DUO authentication software.

VIII. Committee Reports:

1. The Budget and Finance Committee: This committee did not meet.
2. Academic Oversight Committee: Senator Viloría reported that the committee is continuing with its meetings with the Deans to collect feedback for customizing the TAMIU Faculty Electronic Portfolio (FEP). Once collected, this feedback will be presented to the Senate.
3. The University Ethics Committee: This committee did not meet.
4. The Committee on Committees: This committee did not meet.
5. The Awards Committee: Senator Gill reported that the committee has been meeting and has added a question to the rubric for the teaching evaluators. "Please describe strategies and/or tools and/or practices the teacher used to facilitate different learning environments simultaneously." Also nominees should be sent to the Awards Committee by February 15th.
6. The Faculty Handbook Committee: See previous report.
7. The Assessment Committee: See previous report.
8. The Technology Advisory Committee: Senator Viloría reported that Mr. Munoa wanted the Senate to know that the Quicklaunch TAMIU SSO portal that will be launched later in the year. Currently the site is open for Beta Testing from staff, faculty, and students. The site is accessible via sso.tamiu.edu (see attached report).
9. The Distance Education and Instructional Technology Committee: This committee did not meet.
10. Fixed-Term Promotion Ad Hoc Committee: Senator Martínez reported that the committee will meet next week.

IX. Other Business or Announcements: Senator Viloría reported that the current TAMIU directory does have numerous search options, but you still need to know the name of the person in order to do a search. It was requested that maybe Faculty could get a print out or a pdf of the directory or, possibly, an internal directory be added to the new Quicklaunch portal.

X. The meeting was adjourned at 2:32 p.m.

From: [Abrego, Patricia C.](#)
To: [Viloria, Maria D.](#)
Subject: FW: Regarding proctoring solution Plan B for faculty
Date: Monday, February 1, 2021 5:15:02 PM
Importance: High

Below is the email that was sent to Dr. Mitchell on November 30th after being discussed at the DEITC that same afternoon. Thanks.

Pat

From: Abrego, Patricia C. <pabrego@tamiu.edu>
Sent: Monday, November 30, 2020 8:10 PM
To: Mitchell, Thomas R <tmitchell@tamiu.edu>
Cc: Norris, James A <jnorris@tamiu.edu>; elearning@tamiu.edu
Subject: Regarding proctoring solution Plan B for faculty
Importance: High

Dear Dr. Mitchell:

We had our DEITC meeting this afternoon and one of the discussion items centered around proctoring solutions and choices faculty will need to make if technical difficulties arise at the time of the final exams.

In the event that the proctoring solution (Respondus Monitor, Proctorio, and Examity) experience an outage or an overload and services are not available, faculty may consider any of the following alternate solutions:

- 1) Turn off proctoring solution and allow students to proceed with the exam at the time it was originally scheduled, or
- 2) Re-schedule the exam to another day (make-up day) based on consensus from students but still within the final exam window.

In addition, if only a couple of students are having technical issues with the proctoring solutions, it will be up to the faculty member to determine an alternate course of action and create an exemption **only** for those students. Please contact the eLearning group if you need assistance.

If you approved with these recommendations, would you please send it to College Deans as soon as tomorrow? Thanks.

Respectfully,

Dr. James Norris and Pat Abrego, DEITC Co-chairs

The Faculty Ombuds Officer is a part-time position elected by voting faculty for a term of three years, beginning in the Fall semester after election. Nominees for Faculty Ombuds Officer are solicited through the Faculty Senate Executive Committee, to be vetted by the Faculty Senate, and approved by the Provost, before going to a vote by the faculty. The Ombuds Officer will receive release time of 3 SCH per semester. The Officer may be re-elected for an additional terms.

The Ombuds is a designated neutral **officer of the university, neither an advocate for the employee nor the administration.** ~~neither the employee nor a management advocate.~~ The Ombuds Officer is empowered to facilitate timely and equitable mediation outside of the faculty grievance process. The role of the Ombuds Officer is to foster a resolution to issues or concerns prior to **a possible** ~~initiating~~ filing of a formal grievance. The Ombuds Officer does not serve notice to the University, cannot impose remedies or sanctions, or enforce or change any policy, rule, or procedure. However, the Ombuds Officer may serve as a communication resource and catalyst for institutional change for the university by reporting trends and identifying opportunities to enhance policies and procedures.

Important qualifications for the Faculty Ombuds Officer include:

- Tenured fulltime faculty member
- Faculty members with administrative duties (Department Chair level and above) shall not be considered for this position
- Knowledge of university policies and resources
- Extensive cross-campus experience
- Strong communication skills
- Ability to be objective and neutral
- Strong conflict resolution skills
- Commitment to promote ethical conduct in the performance of the Faculty Ombuds Officer role
- Understanding of cross-cultural values and commitment to diversity

Texas A&M International University/ Technology Advisory Committee
Meeting Agenda

February 1, 2021

4:00 p.m. Virtual

Meeting Facilitator: Dr. Maria de Lourdes Vilorio

Invitees:

Kenneth Tobin– Faculty Senate Appointee,
Frances Bernat- COAS
Cynthia L. Piña, COE,
Hugo Garcia –ARSSBA,
Seong Kwan Cho – CNHS,
Elizabeth DeZouche – KL,
Alma Jasso Chavez, University College
President's Appointee, Marvin E. Bennett, III
Fred Juarez III, VP for Finance & Admissions Appointee,
Albert Chavez, VP for IT Appointee
Cathy Colunga, VP for Institutional Advancement Appointee
Gina Gonzalez, VP for Student Success Appointee
Miguel Munoa, VP for Informational Technology/CIO, ex-officio
Patricia Abrego, Director of Instructional Technology & Distance Education
Pablo Reyes, Associate Director of User Services
Ricardo Ramirez, Associate Director of Student Information Services
Roberto Gonzalez, Associate Director of Instructional Technology Services

Welcome/ Roll call-

- I. Review/Approve November 9, 2020 Minutes
- II. New Business
 1. Upcoming changes to Uconnect- Mr. Munoa presented the following information:
New Quicklaunch TAMIU SSO portal that will be launched later in the year.
Currently the site is open for Beta Testing from staff, faculty, and students. The site is accessible via <https://sso.tamtu.edu>
 2. Request to extend DUO to 30 days instead of 1 day for BlackBoard –This issue will be analyzed by Mr. Alber Chavez and the TAMIU IT team. It appears that some individuals are experiencing more than the usual DUO prompts perhaps due to change of web browser or other “yet undiscoverable issues”.
 3. Employee Directory (Why can’t we have a directory with official titles?)- It turns out that the TAMIU Employee Handbook is available but it is intentionally somewhat hidden to

deter possible mass emails from unsolicited sources. Dr. Vilorio will be explaining its location to the Faculty Senators at the February 2021 meeting.

4. AEFIS and ADOBE PRO (Can we invest in getting ADOBE Pro for all faculty?)- It was agreed that Mr. Munoz would facilitate a quote for this program. He did inform the TAC that based on his recollection this is a costly program. Nevertheless, it was agreed to proceed with a price quote so that the TAC can further discuss this faculty request.
5. XEROX copier Training - The TAMU Purchasing Dept. spearheaded the XEROX multi-function machine(s) training last spring 2020. However, only 1 person per department has been directly trained and the original intent was to train all the department employees but due to COVID-19 social distancing guidelines, the follow-up trainings have not resumed. However, there is a PDF self-guide document enclosed for your review.
6. Respondus Server Issues (Final Exam Challenges)- Since the unforeseeable event that occurred on November 25, 2020, when the Amazon East Coast Web servers crashed and many institutions were directly affected by this interruption, Dr. Abrego and Dr. James Norris drafted an email with Plan B recommendations for Dr. Thomas Mitchell (see attached). The Distance Education Instruction Committee still awaits a response.
7. March 2, 2021 Agenda Items -

III. Open Agenda-