

TAMIU Faculty Senate Meeting

May 7, 2021; WebEx

I. The meeting was called to order by the Faculty Senate President, Dr. Lola Norris, at 12:03 p.m.

II. *Roll Call:* Dr. Lola Norris, Dr. Lourdes Vilorio, Dr. Marvin Bennett, Ms. Malynda Dalton, Ms. Vivian Garcia, Dr. Puneet Gill, Dr. Ariadne Gonzalez, Dr. Tatiana Gorbunova, Dr. Runchang Lin, Mr. Jose Gutierrez, Dr. Gilberto Martinez, Mr. Alejandro Mojica, Dr. Neal McReynolds, Dr. Mehnaaz Momen, Ms. Angela Moran, Dr. James Norris, Ms. Kimber Palmer, Dr. Leonel Prieto, Dr. Rose Saldivar, Mr. Pedro Segovia, Dr. Kenneth Tobin, Dr. Ruby Ynalvez, Dr. Deepak Ganta, Dr. Kameron Jorgensen, Dr. Hayley Kazen, Dr. Li-Zheng Brooks

III. *Our Guests* were given the floor:

Dr. Pablo Arenaz

Dr. Arenaz began his report by thanking the Faculty Senate for all of their hard work throughout the year. He also announced that there will be at least one or two 'Coffee with the President' meeting(s) over the coming summer.

Dr. Arenaz reported that there were 7 institutions that were left out of the House Bill that was related to Tuition Revenue Bonds. TAMIU currently has a Health Science Building that was put in for possible TRB funding. Also, the State Comptroller has just revised his estimate of how much money can be spent and they have an additional \$1.7 billion to spend for the next biennium. They are talking about adding money to the formula, which would benefit TAMIU and they may restore the 5% cut that we had to deal with in this biennium. That could give us \$1.2 to \$1.3 million in non-formula monies that was cut out of our budget. We still don't have a Legislative report on monies that will be received based on credit-hour production.

We are currently looking for donors to expand the size of the endowment from the MacKenzie Scott money. It was announced yesterday that the Killam family created a million dollar professorship in Petroleum Engineering, a portion of which is a match to the Scott money. Also, an unspecified corporation is considering donating \$250K in scholarship monies for students entering into our new Computer Engineering program.

Other announcements included;

- Wednesday of next week we are going to do a ground-breaking for the new tennis courts. It is expected to take 10 to 12 months to complete them.

- Commencement will take place next Friday (for Arts and Sciences) and Saturday (for Education, University College, Nursing and School of Business).

Mr. Trevor Liddle (Senior Director, Clery Compliance and Contract Administration)

Mr. Liddle announced that because we have additional monies obtained from governmental relief for the pandemic, TAMIU is able to provide required course materials (both digital and printed) for the students at a significantly reduced price. They can also arrange to get

Faculty desk copies of the books. Digital copies of books for the students can be accessed through Blackboard and printed materials through the Book Store.

IV. Introduction of the new Senators:

Dr. Li-Zheng (Lily) Brooks from Accounting;

Dr. Deepak Ganta from Engineering;

Dr. Kameron Jorgensen from Chemistry;

Dr. Hayley Kazen from University College.

V. Approval of April 9th Faculty Senate Minutes: the minutes were approved without corrections.

VI. Dr. Lola Norris announced that certificates acknowledging service on the Faculty Senate will be sent to all Senate members.

VII. Old Business:

A. University Committees and Faculty Senate Election Results:

Senator Dalton reported that she has the list for all of the committees that will be sent out to the Senate and is only pending some appointments from the Provost and from the new Faculty Senate President for the Fall of 2021.

B. Faculty Handbook changes for the Fixed-term Faculty:

Senator Martinez reported that he has sent to all of the Senators two documents regarding Fixed-Term Faculty with tracked changes that were made to them by both the Provost and the Deans. These documents need to be reviewed by the Handbook Committee and presented to the Senate for possible voting early in the Fall semester.

C. Report on Teaching Portfolio:

Senator Vilorio reported that all of the academic units have submitted their sections for the electronic portfolio through AEFIS except for the School of Business. Senator Vilorio is currently working with Connie Lara (Institutional Assessment) to try to set a professional development date for mid July - early August for those faculty who want to get a head start in learning the AEFIS portal. Additionally, the Technology Advisory Committee did request that OIT look into the possibility that faculty could get a subscription to Adobe Acrobat Pro to aid in compiling their data to submit to AEFIS.

D. Assessment of the Faculty Senate by the Faculty:

Senator Lola Norris announced that 72 out of 212 faculty members participated in the assessment and that a summary of the results were sent to all senate members (see attached). It was commented that one of the survey results is that the Faculty Senate should attempt to engage in more meaningful dialog with the Faculty in the future.

VIII. Committee Reports:

A. The Academic Oversight Committee: did not met

B. The Budget and Finance Committee: did not met

C. The University Ethics Committee: did not met.

D. The Committee on Creation, Composition, and Responsibilities of Committees: see previous report.

E. The Awards Committee: did not met.

F. The Faculty Handbook Revision Committee: see previous report.

G. The Assessment Committee: See previous report.

H. The Technology Advisory Committee: did not met.

I. The Distance Education and Instructional Technology Committee:

Senator Jim Norris reported on some of the highlights of the DEITC's last meeting:

- There is a new M.S. in Social Counseling that will start in the Fall.
- There are 2 new concentrations in the MBA, one in Health Care Administration and one in Criminal Justice Administration, that will start in Summer I.
- It was announced that the Provost is strongly insisting that all online courses become QM certified.
- There was a lot of discussion about plagiarism prevention, especially in certain online graduate courses and the Committee is looking into a number of videos dealing with academic honesty that could be made available to the students.
- Also, there was discussion about making course content more accessible by including alt-text for all online graphics and transcripts for online lectures. Next week there will be special sessions held to show Faculty how to fix their online content.
- On May 18th there is a copyright course that Faculty can sign up for.
- DEITC is currently asking for nominations for the Instructional Technology Excellence Award which are due by June 30th.

I. Technology Advisory Committee:

Senator Viloría reported that the committee met.

- The Uconnect portal will be updated over the summer.
- There will be an audio-video project this summer to update the equipment in some of the larger classrooms and to add new ports so Faculty can connect their own devices.
- They are working on creating wider Wi-Fi access to accommodate the return of students to the campus.
- Also they are going to be adding more outdoor furniture for students to use.
- It was requested that there be more printing stations added to the campus for the students and 5 additional ones will be in place this summer.

J. Fixed-Term Promotion Ad Hoc Committee: see previous report.

IX. Senate President Lola Norris adjourned the 2020 - 2021 Faculty Senate and called to order the 2021 - 2022 Faculty Senate in order to elect the new Faculty Senate Officers.

Senator Lourdes Viloría was nominated and accepted the position of Faculty Senate President.

Senator Jim Norris was nominated and accepted the position of Faculty Senate Vice President.

Senator Malynda Dalton was nominated and accepted the position of Elections Officer.

Senator Marvin Bennett was nominated and accepted the position of Faculty Senate Secretary.

X. Announcements and Other Business:

It was announced that those who want to virtually attend the *Celebration of Life* for Frances Rhodes it will be tomorrow at 1:00 p.m.

XI. Adjournment of the 2021 - 2022 Faculty Senate.

XII. The 2021 - 2022 Faculty Senate Reconvenes to Debate and Vote on the Faculty Awards.

See attached listing of nominees for:

- A. Outstanding Teacher of the Year
- B. Distinguished Teacher of the Year.
- C. Distinguished Scholar of the Year.

XIII. The meeting was adjourned at 3:04 p.m.



TEXAS A&M INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

RESULTS SUMMARY

Faculty Senate Evaluation Spring 2021

Faculty Senate

72 of 212 voted

1. The Faculty Senate positively advocates to the administration on behalf of the faculty.

Strongly Agree-	35
Agree-	19
Neutral-	9
Disagree-	4
Strongly Disagree-	4
Insufficient information to Render an Informed Opinion-	1

2. The Faculty Senate is responsive to the concerns of the faculty.

Strongly Agree-	36
Agree-	23
Neutral-	4
Disagree-	2
Strongly Disagree-	6
Insufficient information to Render an Informed Opinion-	1

3. The Faculty Senate engages in meaningful dialogue with the faculty.

Strongly Agree-	29
Agree-	20
Neutral-	12
Disagree-	4
Strongly Disagree-	4
Insufficient information to Render an Informed Opinion-	3

4. The Faculty Senate keeps the faculty apprised of developments between faculty and administration.

Strongly Agree- 33

Agree- 25

Neutral- 7

Disagree- 3

Strongly Disagree- 3

Insufficient information to Render an Informed Opinion- 1

5. The Faculty Senate serves an important role in the overall university governance.

Strongly Agree- 36

Agree- 14

Neutral- 6

Disagree- 8

Strongly Disagree- 6

Insufficient information to Render an Informed Opinion- 2

6. Additional Comments

- I think upper administration will do whatever they want any way.
- Faculty Senate has done an amazing job during COVID, and I commend their efforts.
- Make feedback regarding surveys public and/or have a public presentation of the results. At the very least show what is done with the results of the survey to make TAMIU a better place.
- Dr. Norris is very responsive to the needs of the faculty.
- The Faculty Senate strives to be a liaison between faculty and administration. Thus far, that under Dr. Norris's leadership and considering the challenges that 2020-2021 have brought – The Faculty Senate is doing an outstanding job!
- My neutral vote on #5 above is because the senate can too easily be quashed by the desires of the President or the Provost. It's hard to feel fully represented by a body that can be so easily neutered.
- The Faculty Senate is beyond weak. While others [were] fighting for classes to move virtual last semester, our Senate was stuck sitting around not even bothered to put up a fight. Only after faculty members and other institutions had moved, they put

forth a weak petition. The Senate is just a way for some faculty who win a popularity contest to get out of engaging in meaningful service.

- This has been a stressful time for all concerned, but I admire how the faculty senate has been the voice of reason during these turbulent times. I regret that the higher administration has been resistant to the important concerns raised by the faculty senate. Although there is more work to be done, thank you for doing the right thing, always!
- Our Senators are our voice. Keep up with the good job.
- The senate president has been a clear advocate but some other members of the senate seem to be an echo chamber of what the provost and president want. It is dismaying that the senate has not been able to truly reach the provost and president in regard to the COVID crisis. Despite the survey and the resolution on the recordings situation. I am glad that they try, but it is unfortunate that the senate doesn't seem to have much power when it comes to really changing things.
- The Faculty Senate should have a bigger role in the decision making process.
- I appreciate your work. Thank you.
- Thank you for advocating for faculty!
- While the idea of shared governance is promoted, shared governance is not a reality. Administrators consistently overrule.
- The Faculty Senate was essential in keeping the faculty informed during the pandemic. The regular reports were much appreciated.
- This year the Faculty Senate took several steps to advocate for faculty, particularly with regarding to teaching during the pandemic. However, I believe that the FS could have also advocated for longer term institutional changes related to promotion and tenure, as women faculty with caregiving responsibilities have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic. In addition to the tenure clock extension, I believe the FS should advocate for changes to P&T standards that take into consideration the realities that faculty with small children or aging relatives have had to deal with for more than a year. There is ample social science research now on this topic to justify such changes.
- The Faculty Senate has no power and although they try they have no ability to make any of the numerous changes that need to be made here.
- The role of the Faculty Senate should be to advocate on behalf of the faculty, especially at a non-unionized institution. At TAMIU, however, the Faculty Senate

serves as a rubber stamp for decisions of the President and the Provost. The unchecked absurdity of the upper administration's actions during the pandemic has laid this bare. Disheartening, to say the least.

- I would like to see some senators side more with faculty than administration.
- Faculty senate is ignored by administration.
- I wish the Faculty Senate had a bit more governing power than they do.
- Whereas the faculty senate does send updates regarding its meetings and regarding important administrative developments at TAMU, its other activities are very much a mystery to some of the newer faculty. Many of us, for example, have worked in the past for universities where faculty were unionized and were able to exert real pressure on the administration. The faculty senate at TAMU has not made clear to us exactly what kind of authority it has when it comes to collective bargaining.
- I believe the senate needs to conduct a faculty outreach program. Many faculty believe the senate has real power. The message needs to be disseminated that the senate is an advisory body only subject to the caprice of the administration. Given this constraint I believe the senate does the best job it can for the faculty.
- Thank you Faculty Senate for all of your efforts during the COVID-19 crisis! Great job! Nice work with the faculty hand book too!

2021 University Awards Nominees (Per Category)

Nominees for the Outstanding Teacher of the Year Award

Gilda Martinez -- COE

Hayley Kazen -- UC

Juan Arellano -- COAS

Flor (Mayela) Hernandez -- COAS

Heriberto Garcia -- ARSB

Nominees for the Distinguished Teacher of the Year Award

Won Kim -- COE

Fei Luo -- COAS

Ediza Garcia -- COAS

Brett Nickerson -- CNHS

Dr. Anwen Yin -- ARSB

Nominees for the Distinguished Scholar of the Year Award

Maria Vilorio -- COE

Andy Hilburn -- COAS

Deepak Ganta -- COAS

Seong Kwan Cho -- CNHS

Dr. Yinghong (Susan) Wei -- ARSB