

Faculty Senate Agenda  
Friday, December 6, 2024  
12:00-2:30  
STC 236

Present: Senators: Kate Houston, Andrew Hazelton, Puneet Gill, Maylynda Dalton, Li-Zheng Brooks, Leonel Prieto, Seong Kwan Cho, Andrew Hilburn, Kameron Jorgensen, Runchang Lin, Tatiana Gorbunova, Marvin Bennett, Ediza Garcia, Tim Rubel, Cynthia Sosa, Won Kim.

Meeting called to order at 12:08 PM

I. Guests

A. Mr. Juan Castillo: Acting President

- **TAMIU Presidential Search Update**
  - Nothing has changed much since convocation.
  - Chancellor Sharp is retiring in June, so new chancellor will play a role in recommending our next president to Board of Regents.
  - Expected to start search in February, with new chancellor named in March and able to play role in process.
  - Sept. 1 start for next president is likely.
  - Question about what the campus role is for the search?
    - There will be some representation from local community, with the search chaired by two board members.
    - Some open forums for job advertisements, etc.
    - Sister campuses have not had much involvement for other president searches in the system.
  - Can we ask for campus input?
    - We can advocate for some kind of campus representation, though they are not required to provide it.
- **Convocation went well.**
- Spring legislative session, and SACS reaffirmation.
  - Did well in offsite report, working on assignments for focus report, draft to be in before we leave for Winter break.
  - The House is likely to be hostile to higher education this coming session.
  - Speaker of the TX House is not returning, and he was an advocate of higher education to some degree. There may be some more bills targeting higher education this session.
  - Not expecting budget cuts, but not expecting higher education to be a priority this session given strength of last session on higher education. Not so much appetite for construction. Legislative request is for new programs in computer science and civil engineering, but probably unlikely to get funded by the legislature.
  - Discussion ensued concerning legislative proposals and expansions of SB 17 and SB 18, proposed bills concerning academic freedom, shared governance, etc.
  - Legislature expected to be focused heavily on border security, property tax relief, vouchers, and that may detract from available time to focus on higher education.

- Updates will be forthcoming as the session unfolds.
  - **Concur change**
    - Moving to Chrome River. We are one of the last to implement, at the end of March.
    - It is supposed to be much better than Concur. Mar 31 through early April for trainings, then get new procards. Cutoff for old cards in April.
    - Just one card.
  - **Building update**
    - Buildings are on schedule and should be substantially complete by next December. Move in for Spring 2026.
    - Expansion of Western will have public facing programs—small business development center, etc. will be in that space along with some computer labs.
    - Health Science building will move some offices around.
    - Buildings are on schedule.
    - What are the plans for the space opened in Canseco?
      - Some faculty are sharing offices, so they will spread out to cover some of those.
    - Some elevator replacements will be happening over break. This will necessitate some building floor closures or inaccessibility.
- B. Dr. Claudia San Miguel: Provost and VP of Academic Affairs
- **Update on SB18 Review of Tenured Faculty**
    - Draft policy is circulating in provost's office to finalize and clarify.
    - Ours will be called Periodic Peer Review to avoid confusion with existing post-tenure review policies. Timespan of 5-6 years after you become tenured. Those with tenure longer than that will need to enter a lottery system to determine schedule of their review.
  - **New QEP & Possible Future Core Changes**
    - Core curriculum change proposals. Provost only approved a few because some of them were proposing to change the core where English 1301 and 1302 exist (public speaking proposed).
    - Doesn't want to make those kind of substantive changes without bigger discussion of what the core should entail at this university.
    - We can have those curricular discussions in the spring.
    - QEP: still being written, tied to experiential learning/career readiness.
  - **Update on CNHS dean**
    - Academic Search is doing the search for the permanent nursing dean, put in place by August 15/Sept. 1.
    - Partnered with The Registry—retired admins. Likely to bring on board interim in January.
  - **Proposed Change to Faculty Handbook Regarding Timeline for Notification of Intent to Submit for Full Professor**
    - Deadline to notify of intent to apply for Full Professor is August 1, but that's not enough time to solicit external reviewers.
    - Can it be moved to January 1 to allow time to solicit letters?
  - **Discussion of Low Enrollment Minors and Certificates (limited to 30 minutes)**
    - Teams meeting yesterday
    - Not following College Station model. System wants us to assess if we have minors and certificates that are low-producing.

- We have latitude to define it how we want to define. Multiple-year time periods, and different metrics to assess what is considered low-enrolled.
  - Low enrolled programs will enter review periods to try to recruit more students and revive these minors. Discussions may include creating different minors out of declining ones that don't improve.
  - Open discussions as to process for that.
  - This information is due to the system in the spring.
  - Questions about MDS concentrations and how those count toward minors since they're degrees produced.
  - Discussion ensued concerning rationale for the review.
  - Discussion ensued concerning potential to affect faculty lines if minors are determined to be low-producing, but the vast majority of our minors exist within majors.
  - Discussion turned to how to get students to see the value of the minor, advising, need to set up some guard rails around the "No Minor" minor, but perhaps try a junior synthesis seminar class to engage them with other fields/disciplinary approaches to encourage minoring.
  - Provost's office will draft the policy and circulate for review and comment.
  - Wants to get a read on minors, enrollments, and how to rethink low-enrolled ones to revive them and make them thrive. We are not in the business of cutting programs or approaching the process with that intention.
- Approval of November Minutes (Senator Hazelton)
    - Senator Hilburn moved; Senator Jorgensen seconded; motion carried unanimously.
  - Old Business
    - A. Senate President Replacement
      - a. Sen. Houston takes over as president.
      - b. Sen. Kazen has turned over duties.
    - B. Senate VP Replacement
      - a. Dr. Gill is new vice president.
    - C. Handbook changes (result of faculty vote)
      - a. Handbook changes passed
      - b. Timeline to make the handbook changes may get moved up since we have pending changes that were voted on and passed back in the fall.
    - D. Safe Zone/Security Alert Systems
      - a. 10% or less uptake for SafeZone.
      - b. They'll ensure emails go out alongside SafeZone alerts, but they are exploring text update options.
      - c. Will remove all the classroom phones.
      - d. Senate has asked for better communication on how to customize SafeZone and limit its data collection while also retaining functionality for emergencies.
      - e. Some Faculty Senates at other universities have experienced dictates that certain apps cannot be installed on personal devices (TikTok) on security grounds because

these devices interface with university systems. Faculty at these campuses have simply stopped using personal devices for any work purposes.

f. Text alerts are in discussion, hopefully they can get through.

- New Business

- A. Program cuts at A&M College Station

- a. Unilateral program closures, and in light of these, given the potential for program terminations, Senate and faculty need to examine procedures that will be created for closing low-enrolled programs.
    - b. Dr. Houston went through A&M and UT handbooks on how they do program closure.
    - c. Should we build a document in terms of steps to take should a program be identified for closure? There should be a procedure regarding review and closure of low-enrolled minors that involves faculty shared governance.
    - d. Dr. Houston reviewed other institutions' program review procedures, suggesting they serve as a model for whatever program review and reporting of recommendations of program closures.
      - i. Discussion ensued concerning the potential for Board of Regents to just ignore such policies as they did at College Station
      - ii. Discussion continued concerning what the threshold might be for low-producing or low-enrolled programs, and what time frame for improvement would be afforded.
      - iii. Discussion about how the present curriculum process enables fast-tracking of these sorts of program closures without faculty input.
      - iv. Adopting a policy like that at A&M and UT would give faculty role in shared governance on program closures.
      - v. Do we want to put together a policy document for program review for provost to consider, potentially reviewing such a document by February?
      - vi. Language would need to go into faculty handbook.
      - vii. Sen. Bennet made a motion to draft such a document, Sen. Sosa seconded to draft; motion carried unanimously.

- B. State legislature priorities for higher education (academic freedom & shared governance)

- a. UNT's review of curriculum and faculty research as possible SB17 violations despite exemptions in that law for faculty research and curriculum.
      - i. UNT emailed all faculty and notified that in anticipation of upcoming legislative session, they were notified that their research, teaching, and curriculum would all be audited for DEI infringements.
    - b. Discussion of possible senate statement or resolution on these issues (Senator Rubel).
      - i. We did draft a statement last time concerning DEI. Discussion ensued about reviving, reaffirming, evaluating the resolution we already have, and do we

want to have it stay standing? Tabled until Senator Rubel returned.; conversation resumed.

- ii. Sen. Rubel presented the latest information regarding the situation at UNT. Faculty members were presented with information that certain activities may not count as legitimate teaching or research output because of the nature of their research or topic of their courses.
  - iii. Discussion returned to the statement and resolution on academic freedom and DEI issues the last time. We will examine that language and reaffirm or consider changes to existing resolution previously passed.
- C. Proposal for Change to Faculty Handbook Regarding Permissions over Removal of Materials from Tenure Binder
- a. Discussion ensued concerning proposed new handbook language re: integrity of tenure and promotion dossiers. Irregularities have been reported.
  - b. Wider discussion continued about procedures or departure therefrom within a particular college.
  - c. Discussion ensued concerning a resolution concerning recurring issues, with goal of achieving a resolution. Discussion continued concerning the role of Faculty Senate in advocating for faculty where faculty need support in seeking resolutions to long-standing issues.
  - d. Referred to Ethics Committee to draft and then forward to provost.
    - i. Motion raised to draft letter. Sen. Rubel moved; Sen. Hilburn seconded. Motion passed unanimously.
- D. Faculty questions submitted to Senate for discussion.
- a. Question over procedure for awards if deadlock cannot be resolved.
  - b. What happens if Dept P&T deadlock and chair refuses to make a choice?
  - c. Discussion ensued concerning this issue. Faculty Senate confirms that in cases of a deadlocked P&T or awards vote, the chair must weigh in and break the tie.
    - i. Can send it back to them to assemble binders/dossiers.
    - ii. Awards Committee will convey information to the affected department.
- Committee Reports
    - A. Academic Oversight—no report.
    - B. Budget and Finance—no report
    - C. University Ethics—
      - a. Met with Randy Brown, had a productive conversation about ethics and ombuds process, as well as administration's role in these. A flowchart on the process is still in the works.
    - D. Committee on Creation, Composition, and Responsibilities of Committees
      - a. About to run election to replace Sen. Kazen as Senator representing University College
      - b. Spring, need to run election to replace Honor Council

- E. Awards
  - a. no report beyond what was discussed above regarding deadlocked awards.
- F. Faculty Handbook Revision
  - a. Committee is working on updates
- G. Assessment
  - a. Will finalize administrative survey in January. Would like to move the survey to end of February.
- H. Distance Education and Instructional Technology
  - a. Each dept on DEITC is updating on what they're doing.
  - b. eLearning went to QM conference, Gen Z learners, aligning rubric, etc.
  - c. Accessibility law coming into play requiring all materials to be accessible.
    - i. There is an accessibility committee to discuss, but all materials uploaded to the LMS/Blackboard will need to be compliant and accessible.
- I. Technology Advisory
  - i. VPAT update
    - 1. Mr. Perez wants to create faculty focus group to discuss VPAT changes; he'll return to Faculty Senate to discuss changes.
  - ii. Discussed issue of slow PC performance, there are two tiers available.
    - 1. Can TAC get some guidance on what the process is to request a higher-spec machine.
- I. Fixed-Term Faculty—no report
- Announcements and Other Business
  - Discussion of P&T requirements and wisdom of standardizing things to evaluate across fields.
  - This ideas emerges periodically regarding the difficulty of comparing across fields.
  - Discussion reached broad consensus that departments should create the guidelines for their candidates, with departmental representatives on the college and university P&T committees serving as an departmental ambassador to describe the field's norms for the candidate coming from their department.
  - Tabled to discuss further in February.
- Motion to adjourn: Sen. Jorgensen moved; Sen. Cho seconded. Carried unanimously.