

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEETING NOTES

Monday, March 23, 2015

The president's executive council met on Monday, March 23, 2015, to discuss a series of agenda items impacting our university (see attachment A). The following is a summary of the discussion of those items.

Office of Public Relations, Marketing and Information Services

The meeting began with an announcement by Mr. Steve Harmon, director of the Office of Public Relations, Marketing and Information Services, of the addition of two new employees in this department. Mr. Rolando E. Santos has been hired to serve in the capacity of videographer and photographer for the department and the university. Ms. Kacy L. Mathews was also hired to serve in the role of designer. Both employees bring previous experience in their respective areas. Rolando worked for KGNS and most recently LCC prior to joining TAMIU. Kacy recently earned a Bachelor's Degree of Fine Arts and Design. Both new employees were welcomed to the university community by the executive council members.

SACSCOC Visit

The president announced that while everyone in the university community especially those with a much closer degree of proximity to the SACSCOC reaffirmation visit deserve to breathe a sigh of relief. SACSCOC's exit marks the beginning of the next phase of the reaffirmation process. To this end, the president reminded everyone that while the end is in sight, the Office of Institutional Effectiveness will begin the process of completing this year's programmatic assessments reports (AIER) to ensure that all academic programs and departments are "closing the loop" on assessment. Additionally, the president reminded everyone that the successful completion of the reaffirmation process is imperative because without it approximately 65% of the current student population would become ineligible to qualify for federal financial assistance to pay tuition and earn a college education. Without 65% of tuition revenue, the university would equally be unable to operate.

Harvard Kennedy School of Government

On Thursday and Friday of last week, a group of 28 graduate fellows from the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University visited with students, faculty, and administrators at TAMIU. The primary purpose for their visit was to explore and identify research project possibilities in both the university community and the community at-large. Dr. Keck shared that prior to their arrival at TAMIU, the fellows had spent several days in San Antonio and their respective community leaders to become informed of that community's needs.

Discover TAMIU

Saturday, March 14, 2015, marked the successful undertaking of the first ever Discover TAMIU recruitment program under the direction of Ms. Gina Gonzalez, associate vice-president of student success. The president announced that the program was a great success with over 100 activities and approximately 1000 participants representing both local and out of town recruitment markets such as San Antonio, Eagle Pass, the Rio Grande Valley and of course, Laredo. It is expected that this program will continue.

Spring Graduation

The decision to hold one or the typical three graduation ceremonies has not yet been made. This decision hinges upon the potential of the university hosting U. S. Senator Ted Cruz as the commencement speaker. As many may recall, earlier this semester, Dr. Keck welcomed Ms. Cassandra Garcia from Senator Cruz's office. Ms. Garcia wanted to take an opportunity to introduce the senator's office staff and his work as the U. S. Senator representing our community. In that meeting, she asked if the university would consider hosting him as this year's spring commencement speaker. In recent days, the senator has announced his candidacy for the U. S. Presidency. A decision is expected in the near future. One fact remains unchanged and that is that this spring's commencement ceremonies will be held on Friday, May 22nd.

Teaching Loads and Space Utilization Reports

On Thursday, the university administration will listen to two reports from Mr. Glen Dowling from the Texas A&M University System Offices. Mr. Dowling holds significant experience in the study of space utilization and the relationship to teaching load assignments. As such, his reports and presentations will focus on the university's current space utilization and faculty teaching loads.

Tuition Revenue Bonds (TRB)"/"Capital Improvement Projects"

The president announced that a bill has been filed in the Texas State House of Representatives that includes TAMU's request for two TRBs. The version that was recently filed and which will make its way through the state legislative process accounts for a TRB that will fund the capital improvements for our library and the second or subsequent TRB is designed to pay for an additional building for classrooms. No current legislative activity currently exists to suggest that the TRB request for a new convocation building has or will be moving forward.

It is interesting to note that in recent months a moment has evolved to move away from using the term tuition revenue bonds and using the term capital improvement projects instead because it removes the negative connotation associated with the perceived direct connection or relationship that does not necessarily exist between tuition and buildings.

University Organizational Strategic Planning Meeting

The university administration held a planning meeting earlier this semester to agree upon a strategic planning process that will be held on Saturday, April 11th. It was a meeting before the meeting, sort of speak. For these purposes, representatives from throughout the university will be organized into three planning groups representing three broad organizational areas reflecting teaching, research, and services. The event is expected to be held for a half-day.

Employee Evaluations Deadline

Mr. Juan Castillo, vice-president for finance and administration, reminded everyone with supervisory responsibilities to ensure that all employee evaluations are completed and submitted to the appropriate office by April 01st.

With a related issue/concern/question, an extensive discussion was held regarding the most effective and appropriate method(s)/steps/administrative actions for evaluators to complete when charged with the responsibility of documenting employee performance. Specifically, the

questions centered upon when, where and how should evaluators of employee performance, the same people that serve in a supervisory capacity, document specific incidents related to employee performance. Should individual instances of employee performance be documented on separate disciplinary memorandums or addressed verbally without documentation for minor infractions or should these incidents be documented on an employee's annual evaluation or both?

While the discussion clearly and most vividly centered upon the administration's responsibility for holding employees accountable for their performance and documenting it, curiously, it did not center upon the formative training responsibilities and requirements of such supervisors. It would appear that in order for annual employee evaluations to serve as effective and appropriate tools to accurately capture and realistically account for employee performance, employees would first need to be trained and more than adequately informed of minimally expected levels of performance, the procedures to be followed when those expectations fall below accepted levels and the timelines for remediation. Based on the discussion, it would appear that subsequent discussions will follow and hopefully training as well for both administrators and employees which includes faculty.

Historically Underutilized Businesses

Mr. Castillo asked all administrators with purchasing responsibilities to hold all purchases between now and May that may be completed in May at the annual meeting for Historically Underutilized Businesses. A state requirement exists that obligates the universities in Texas to complete certain purchasing transactions from these businesses.

External Employment

Following the employee performance discussion, a subsequent extensive discussion was held regarding the requirement for all employees to report in writing any external employment relationships. Lisa Paul, associate vice-president for compliance, informed the council that the provost has emailed a link to a form that outlines self-reporting requirements for all employees (this includes faculty) to complete if they are engaged in any external employment relationships. It appears that this may even include those external employment relationships that are not even remotely related to one's job in the university community. That is perplexing, but I digress. For additional details, employees should see their immediate supervisor.

Reading the Globe

Dr. Conchita Hickey provided a brief summary of the TAMIU students who recently returned from their study abroad experience that is part of the Reading the Globe initiative. Dr. Hickey shared with the council that the students who traveled did an outstanding job of representing the university and gained life changing experiences.

Current plans are underway to select the readings for next year's initiative. This year's group is expected to present their experiences in September.

The Big Event

Dr. Minita Ramirez, Mr. Jerry Alva, and Ms. Jackie Briseno announced to the council that on Saturday, March 28, 2015, the Student Government Association (SGA) in coordination with TAMIU and the South Texas Food Bank will be participating in an annual service activity titled

The Main Event. This event is organized by TAMIU to provide service to the community at-large. Anyone who works or attends TAMIU is welcome to attend and participate. All are encouraged to participate.

Registration for Maymester; Summer Sessions I, II, III; and Fall 2015

Ms. Gina Gonzalez announced that priority registration will begin on March 25th and end on March 27th. Priority groups include seniors, Early College High School, STEM Academy and juniors. For additional and more accurate information, everyone impacted by the registration period(s) should contact the Registrar's Office and/or their respective academic advisors.

Mariachi Festival

A new initiative starting this spring will be a mariachi festival featuring Nuevo Mariachi Tecalitlan from Guadalajara who will be on campus on April 12 and 13 to conduct workshops for those interested in the genre. The visit will end with a concert that will take place on April 15, 2015, at 7:00 p.m. Those interested should contact the Department of Fine and Performing Arts.

Athletic Update

Mr. Griz Zimmermann provided an update on several upcoming and current athletic events including, but not limited to, men's baseball and women's softball. A complete summary of Griz's update is beyond the scope of these notes and my cognitive capacity to accurately capture and recap all of the details of the update and the respective NCAA rules. I apologize.

Lamar Bruni Vergara Research Conference

The meeting ended with a reminder by Dr. Jeff Brown of the upcoming LBV Conference scheduled for April 01-02, 2015.

With that, the meeting adjourned at approximately 11:00 a.m.

Alfredo Ramirez, Jr.
TAMIU Faculty Senate President