The president’s executive council met on Monday to discuss a series of agenda items (see exhibit A) impacting our university. The following is a summary of that meeting.

I would like to preface this week’s notes by borrowing a phrase from our former Faculty Senate President Mr. Brendan Townsend. “I will be making a very important announcement, but you must read all of the way to the end of these notes to see the announcement.” That said,…

**Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) Presentation—Drs. Claudia San Miguel and Stephen Duffy**

The meeting began with a presentation regarding the current status of the university’s progress on the ongoing development and refinement of the QEP for the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools’ (SACS) Reaffirmation Process. As all faculty are aware, according to the SACS *Handbook for Reaffirmation of Accreditation*, “student learning is at the heart of the mission of all institutions of higher learning…Developing a QEP as a part of the reaffirmation process is an opportunity and an impetus for the institution to enhance overall institutional quality and effectiveness by focusing on an issue or issues the institution considers important to improving student learning.”

To accomplish this, Drs. San Miguel and Duffy presented two lists of QEP topics for consideration that have been generated over the last several months through the university’s ongoing long-range and strategic organizational planning structures including the Jeffrey Selingo Spring 2014 Faculty Assembly. Attached for your review, you will find both lists (see exhibits B and C). A university-wide election will be held in which all faculty will have the opportunity to vote on a list of suggested QEP topics for adoption in April. All faculty are urged to participate in the selection process as university-wide faculty involvement in this part of the QEP is critical to ensure that the next generation of TAMIU’s Quality Enhancement Plan will lead to even greater degrees of student learning.

**Annual Property Inventory—Mrs. Elizabeth N. Martinez**

Mrs. Martinez informed all executive council members that the university’s annual property inventory audit is currently underway. She urged all those responsible for the university’s fixed assets to help ensure an accurate inventory by cooperating with those conducting the count. Faculty should allow access to all fixed assets under their care in their offices, classrooms, and labs to help ensure the successful completion of this process.

**Annual Employee Evaluations—Mrs. Elizabeth N. Martínez**

Elizabeth also informed the council that the process for conducting annual employee evaluations is underway, and all evaluations must be completed by April 01st. To date, 73 employee evaluations have been completed and submitted out of a total 427 employee count. Mrs. Martinez also highly stressed the importance of all those completing evaluations to review and share the current job description with each employee at the time of evaluation in order to make any revisions that will ensure all job descriptions are accurate and correct. Job descriptions are one of the components that help form job families that make up job pay grade systems, and those
systems form the basis of an organization’s employee salary and compensation system. For these reasons, it is important that all job descriptions are accurate and correct.

**Health Initiative—Mrs. Elizabeth Martínez**
The last announcement that Mrs. Martínez made was about the new TAMIU Health Initiative that is part of the larger A&M System Health Initiative. The TAMIU Healthy U Committee has organized a series of walking challenges of which the first one was held this past Monday. Two walking group are part of the initiative. The first group is a Walking Challenge Group and the second is a Walking Club or Walking Group. Approximately, 225 employee participants have registered and are now competing in each of these categories. Winners from each category will be selected and announced at the annual TAMIU Employee Enrichment Day. I imagine there is still time to join. Those interested should contact Ms. Jessica Palacios in the Office of Human Resources.

**Turnitin.com—Dr. Leebrian Gaskins**
Brian announced that TAMIU had been recognized by the third party vendor—Turnitin.com that we contract with to utilize their anti-plagiarism software. While any award or recognition from a third party vendor to its client probably merits some scrutiny, at first glance, utilization reports from this company reflect us as one of the universities within our student population category that significantly requires, encourages and uses the software to help students navigate through the complexities of academic writing and the requirements of such written formats. See attached exhibit D.

**University Athletics—Mr. Griz Zimmermann**
Griz shared with the council the upcoming schedule of TAMIU athletic events including the Women’s Basketball Heartland Conference Postseason Tournament which begins today and ends on Saturday. Please see the attached flyer (exhibit E) for additional information.

**Polar Plunge—Dr. Catheryn Weitman**
On behalf of the Special Education Department in the College of Education, Dr. Weitman announced that Dr. Randy Brown, department chair and associate professor of special education, is leading a campaign to raise funds to support 44,000 athletes of Special Olympics Texas of which 1,409 athletes are from the Laredo Area. See attached email (exhibit F). The local organization currently has established a $2,000.00 goal. Those interested in donating can do so by following the instructions on the attached email. The donation period is still open. On Friday, March 07th, Dr. Randy Brown will be taking the Polar Plunge at 10:00 a.m. at the City of Laredo Parks and Leisure Inner City Pool located at 202 W. Plum. Everyone is welcome.

**Enrollment—Dr. Minita Ramirez**
Minita shared with the council the most current enrollment information. Please see attached report (exhibit G). While this enrollment period reflected the lowest number of student drops, Dr. Ramírez provided a caveat regarding the total enrollment which reflects an increase over the Spring 2013 Semester’s enrollment. While enrollment numbers reflect an increase over last year’s spring semester, technically, official census or enrollment reports submitted to the state of Texas may reflect a decrease from last year’s spring enrollment because of the flex scheduling process that the university adopted this year.
**Freshman Retention Report—Dr. Conchita Hickey**
Dr. Hickey shared the most recent retention rate regarding this academic year’s freshmen cohort. Currently, the freshmen retention rate sits at 91.5 percent. This represents the highest freshmen retention rate since the tracking of freshmen cohorts began several years ago.

**Common Read Initiative—Dr. Conchita Hickey**
Dr. Hickey also announced that the committee that organizes and hosts the annual common read initiative in conjunction with the City of Laredo has selected this year’s book. This year’s selection goes to Jasmina Dervisevic-Cesic’s, *The River Runs Salt, Runs Sweet: A Memoir of Visegrad, Bosnia*.

**Spring Break Revolution—Mr. Jerry Alva**
Jerry shared with the council a series of informative sessions for our students on different topics of importance to them that are related to the upcoming Spring Break Holiday. See the attached flyer (exhibit H). These sessions are being organized and hosted by several university departments including: Counseling and Disability Services, Housing and Residence Life, Recreational Sports, Student Conduct and Community Engagement, Student Health Services, and the University Police Department.

**Authorship of Narrative for The Society of Martha Washington Colonial Pageant and Ball**
Mrs. Candy Hein and Dr. Minita Ramírez recognized Dr. Debbie Blackwell for her academic expertise in drafting this year’s colonial ball narrative that helped to provide one more historical link in the chain of annual revisions to this narrative. Mrs. Hein stated emphatically that Dr. Blackwell’s efforts in this regard were more than worthy of recognition for women in the academy.

**PROF Center and Faculty Senate Professional Development Opportunity**
I shared with the council that we had extended an invitation to Mr. Gaines West of the West, Webb, Allbritton & Gentry Law Firm to make a presentation through the TAMIU Prof Center Professional Development Series. Mr. West has represented faculty in higher education settings for over 30 years. Tentatively, Mr. West has accepted an invitation to join us on Friday, March 28, 2014, to speak about current issues facing faculty in higher education. Details are forthcoming.

**Important Faculty Senate Announcement**
On behalf of the members of the TAMIU Faculty Senate, I announced this month’s Faculty Senate Meeting that will be held tomorrow Friday, March 07, 2014, at 12:30 p.m. in WHTC 125!

With that, the council adjourned.