

## TAMIU Faculty Senate

### Agenda

Friday, September 6, 2024, 12:00-2:30

STC 230

In attendance: Senators Hayley Kazen, Kate Houston, Andrew Hazelton, Li-Zheng Brooks, Leonel Prieto, Seong Kwan Cho, Andrew Hilburn, Kameron Jorgensen, Puneet Gill, Runchang Lin, Tatiana Gorbunova, Marvin Bennett, Juan Hinojosa

#### I. Guests

##### a. Dr. Ari Gonzalez

##### i. PROF Center is being revamped

1. Website is relaunching, emails have gone out.
2. Schedule of events is expanding
3. Webinars on AI
4. eLearning information and sessions are available
5. Teaching and learning series, pedagogy and professional development with some emphasis on research
  - a. Trying to put together journal editors for mentorship to faculty on revise and resubmit
6. Further presentations will be on faculty wellness, Title IX, etc.
7. More presentations from student support services, etc.
8. Disability services and sensitive situations such as when parents show up advocating for their children, DSS office will coordinate some sessions
9. Faculty are welcome to email Dr. Gonzalez or PROF Center to notify of events that may suit their programming.
10. New institutional membership with NCFDD
  - a. Access to different resources for professional development at all levels of the faculty, writing sessions,
  - b. Free to faculty, faculty must register to create an account and register
  - c. Open to graduate students
  - d. A senator noted that some of these additional resources cost money; Dr. Gonzalez noted that PROF Center will hold competition

##### ii. ACUE

1. Three cohorts have moved through the ACUE curriculum, totalling about 36 faculty.
2. These cohorts will be celebrated, with additional information on what faculty have learned having gone through the program.

- b. Dr. Claudia San Miguel, Provost and Vice President (VP) for Academic Affairs
  - i. SACSCOC report was submitted yesterday 9/5/2024
    - 1. Will hear back sometime in November concerning anything we need to respond to
    - 2. Onsite visit will be in March 2025
    - 3. Anticipating some need for additional information
      - a. Last round 10 years ago: credentialing was an issue—ensuring faculty CVs had correct credentials qualifying faculty to teach their courses
      - b. Once they came onsite, there were additional concerns such as changes to the Office of Institutional Assessment, Research, and Planning
      - c. Expecting some issues with assessment and institutional effectiveness as a whole
      - d. Credentialing may also been an issue.
  - ii. Enrollment
    - 1. Just shy of 9000 students
    - 2. Over 100k SCH production
    - 3. No announcement yet on % for merit pool
      - a. Provost anticipates there will be one, but is ballparking 1.5-2%
  - iii. Dr. Arenaz wants to examine career-readiness for students in concert with Advancement, Student Success, Career Services, coordinating with faculty on how to get students prepared for workforce so that they represent themselves well to prospective employers.
  - iv. Reclassification Policy
    - 1. Draft of the policy included research presentation that faculty seeking reclassification will need to do within a two-week window prior to the P&T committee meeting that considers their reclassification application.
  - v. Early Tenure Policy
    - 1. Requests for early tenure will go to the provost and president, who will either recommend or not recommend. Faculty may still present their dossier even if provost and president do not recommend the faculty member go up for early tenure.
    - 2. Dossier is one-and-done. Can't try again. Terminal contract offered if candidate is unsuccessful.
  - vi. Interfolio
    - 1. Currently in VPAT (Voluntary Product Accessibility Template) process. Trying to get access and everything this semester, but unlikely to be in place by PPE submission.
    - 2. We will be moving for e-portfolios for all internal processes.
    - 3. Interfolio also includes web profiles and will pull from PPE

4. Will also be used for faculty searches
- vii. Discussion then diverted into ongoing faculty concerns regarding VPAT process issues and Faculty Senate efforts to create a flow chart for faculty, repository for things that are already approved to streamline process for faculty, etc.
- viii. Questions
  1. Question about the post-tenure review implementation under SB 18. What will the timeline and selection process look like as the university starts to implement its compliance with the new requirements?
    - a. The provost hopes to have a draft policy in September.
  2. Question concerning course releases for research for tenured faculty to reduce teaching load from the 4-4 standard. There have been issues in the College of Nursing and Health Sciences regarding course releases. The dean is stating that faculty must have grants to get course releases in that college regardless of scores on the rubric for research. What is the rule?
    - a. Provost response is that each college has its own measures for course releases. Faculty scoring a combined 9 over two years qualify for course releases.
    - b. Each college should have a mechanism for additional course releases beyond that PPE measure of research productivity.
    - c. Discussion continued on this question about the need for understanding at the dean level of PPE process and specifications in the rubric, as well as how that translates to course releases.
  3. Ques about faculty job ad templates and statement of teaching loads. Teaching loads should be defined for both incoming TT hires and for searches for tenured/associate hires.
    - a. Provost response: Job ads vary widely by department, making it difficult to create a standardized template for HR. She feels there is a need to specify for TT vs. Associate/tenured lines, and that we need to include language about teaching loads in the job ads that are somewhat standardized (e.g. TT hires will teach 2-2, 2-2, 3-2, 3-3 and so on, while associate lines, the teaching load will be 3-3 for research productive faculty).
- ix. Discussion of grants applications, celebrations, and associated issues ensued
  1. Targeting of grant applications—is there a way for faculty to get assistance in this?
    - a. Provost response: We have a contract with Hanover Research to assist in grant-writing and grant-finding capabilities. The Grant Writing Workshop 101 is being held soon under the auspices of the Office of Research and Sponsored Projects.

- b. Stay tuned for more research grants news, opportunities, and learning sessions.
  - x. Discussion of teaching loads and high-enrolled courses weighing down on research productivity
    - 1. Would it be possible to create two tracks for tenure? Teaching and Research tracks for tenure with different teaching loads and expectations of research.
    - 2. Suggestion that instead of the 3-3 load being awarded to faculty with a combined 9 over two years' PPEs for research, perhaps a 13 over 3 years for PPE would help faculty with works in progress and in fields where submission-revision-publication takes more time. Provost will consider.
    - 3. Suggestion that there needs to be a path off of 4-4 for faculty who are "stuck" under heavy teaching loads and can't find the time to publish to get back to 3-3.
    - 4. Dr. Kazen encouraged Faculty Senators to encourage departmental faculty to attend events with the provost to voice these and other concerns.
  - xi. Dr. San Miguel reiterated that the push for R2 will take 10 if not 15 years, and that no one should feel pressed to immediately and single-handedly level up the university. The process will be gradual, evolving, and aspirational.
- c. Dr. Sean Maddan, Associate Provost
  - i. UCC request from Dr. Maddan
    - 1. UCC workload is high, with a great deal of reviewing materials.
    - 2. Often there aren't enough members present for a quorum, or just barely enough for a quorum.
    - 3. UCC manual has been revamped, and as that process unfolded there were discussions of how to maintain a quorum on the committee so that curriculum changes can get the votes they require.
    - 4. Dr. Maddan suggests that Faculty Senate vote on adding a provost's appointee to UCC from among the faculty in order to fill the gaps when faculty don't attend UCC meetings. This person would be a reliable faculty member capable of attending the meetings to which they have been committed by virtue of membership on the UCC, and would assist in maintaining a quorum of 8.
      - a. This is not to "stack the deck," just to ensure there's a quorum.
      - b. Discussion continued concerning designating alternates (UCC members unable to attend can't designate an alternate as UCC handbook doesn't have that language), meeting times discouraging attendance, electronic voting (unfeasible because

of the need for UCC to discuss the curriculum changes before voting)

- c. A UCC member-Senator, noted that there was support for this proposal of an additional provost's appointee among UCC members.

- d. Will discuss and vote later in the meeting

- ii. Discussion of SYL issues

1. Issues of faculty who had capital letters in their emails in banner making SYL unusable. This issue is being worked on and will be fixed shortly.
2. Duplicate email issues—need to weed out duplicate emails for faculty who have them so that their SYL account is linked to the correct email.
3. There is a small group of faculty who look fine on both the SYL and the Banner sides, and the problem is probably on the SYL side.
4. Can cross-listed course syllabi be pulled over and copied? No, SYL doesn't allow for that.
5. If you have issues with a draft that can't be edited, email Dr. Maddan.
6. Course policies updates: will be smoothed out moving forward so these are in place before faculty need to create their syllabi.

- II. Approval of May Minutes (Senator Hazelton)

- a. Dr. Jorgensen moved to approve, seconded by Dr. Bennett
- b. Motion carried, no opposing and no abstentions

- III. New Business

- a. Full faculty vote

- i. Reclassification

1. Discussion ensued concerning confusion regarding whether or not the draft policy that has still not been voted on by the faculty is being used by the provost's office to evaluate current cohort.
2. Need to communicate to chairs the new process so that everyone is on the same page concerning reclassification procedures.

- ii. Fixed-Term Growth Plan

- iii. Early Tenure

- iv. Ethics committee description

- v. Many votes will be coming to faculty, so please encourage faculty to vote.

- vi. Items III., a., i.-iv. will be sent out to faculty for a vote.

- b. Handbook Revisions

- i. Items have been approved from May 2024 Faculty Senate meeting for faculty vote

- ii. Handbook template for changes is under consideration

- iii. Discussion of academic grievance policy

1. Faculty Handbook/Student Handbook (Faculty as grievant)

- iv. Review of some handbook items requested by Assoc. Provost Dr. Gonzalez

- v. Dr. Kazen will meet with handbook committee about the following items:
  - 1. Definition of full-time faculty and clarification of the various types of full-time faculty, as well as their job duties
    - a. A senator raised the point that we ensure the review/revision of this language not be used as a Trojan horse to sneak in language about campus presence following the dispute over this matter two years ago.
    - b. Are the various faculty tracks degree-driven? Lecturer with a BA/BS teaching non-credit bearing courses as a Lecturer, but handbook specifies Masters for Lecturers. How to clarify/rectify?
      - i. People with experience/certification can teach as lecturers in non-credit-bearing classes, for instance.
    - c. Instructional track sometimes do not have terminal degrees despite handbook language that says they must have terminal degrees.
    - d. Discussion diverted into discussion of deans hiring people into visiting/instructional lines after failed searches without faculty input, with concern that these individuals will then apply for reclassification. This bypasses shared governance and the role of faculty in making recommendations on the hiring of colleagues.
    - e. Ideally, handbook language will clarify these matters
    - f. Workload language in handbook
      - i. Discussion of quantifying service given the various time commitments of various committees, given that some committees carry very heavy workloads, such as UCC and Faculty Senate.
    - g. Grievance language
      - i. Faculty-staff/staff-faculty grievances are increasing
      - ii. Anonymous grievances are increasing
      - iii. Student-faculty grievances are increasing
    - h. Advising language in handbook is antiquated—faculty don't do that anymore
- c. Open Senate and committee member replacements
  - i. Academic Oversight
    - 1. Open forum for faculty to discuss concerns? Left up to committee to decide, but the last one was two years ago.
  - ii. Study Abroad

1. Changes are coming but they aren't defined, need faculty representation in that process.
- iii. Ethics committee needs to look at grievance language to revise to reflect the increase in various types of grievances discussed in III., b., g.
- iv. Handbook revisions will be numerous and plentiful
- v. Distance Education and Instructional Technology Committee: President Arenaz wants to include ethical AI use, Blackboard Ultra, other items.
- vi. Due to retirements, reclassifications, and resignations, we will need to fill some committee vacancies.
- d. Faculty Senate Committees and Chair Decisions
- e. Discussion of Committee Assignments
- f. Finalize University Committees
  - i. There is a need to finalize the membership of various university committees, and the finalized lists will be forthcoming pending conclusion of nomination and elections process.
- g. QM payments to Faculty
  - i. QM payments have been restored to their previous levels.
- h. Discussion then diverted into hiring practices, continuing the discussion from earlier in the meeting.
  - i. Frequently, search committees are simply overruled
  - ii. There have been retention issues with faculty that some feel have led to administration privileging the hiring of faculty spouses, local people, in order to reduce turnover.
  - iii. Faculty describe being run over roughshod in faculty hiring decisions
    1. Deans shouldn't be plugging people into instructional lines after declaring a failed search when the committee has identified suitable candidates and ranked them in a TT search.
    2. There is concern these hires will then apply for reclassification to TT, thus bypassing shared governance and faculty recommendations in hiring process.
  - iv. If chair or dean are going to flip the decisions of the committee, then maybe they need to meet with the committee to explain why they made that choice.
  - v. Would it be appropriate to have language in faculty handbook on searches?  
Open question for consideration
- i. FAQ updates
  - i. VPAT process will have a FAQ on the Faculty Senate page.
- j. Changes with Concur
  - i. Concur is being replaced with a different platform. No word yet on what that new platform will be.
- k. UCC membership changes

- i. Dr. Kazen convened a vote on the requested UCC membership change to add an additional provost's designee. Vote passed with two abstentions and none opposed.
- IV. Old Business
  - a. Labor Day
    - i. The president is opposed to observing the holiday.
      - 1. So far, the President has opposed observing Labor Day for several reasons, including 1) being too close to the start of the semester, 2) staff holiday observance issues (staff would need to give up another holiday were we to observe Labor Day), LEA concerns regarding preexisting commitments to the arena for graduation making it difficult to reconfigure semester schedules.
    - ii. Executive Committee will revisit the issue with Dr. Arenaz in September.
  - b. Discussion of the problems of the half paychecks in September and June ensued. Faculty discussed the drawbacks of the policy and noted that we are the only school in the system to handle the issue in this way, but administration prefers this model and will not be changing it.
- V. Committee Reports: Mostly, no committee reports as they haven't met, with the exception of the handbook committee.
  - a. Academic Oversight: no report
  - b. Budget and Finance: no report
  - c. University Ethics: no report
  - d. Committee on Creation, Composition, and Responsibilities of Committees: no report
  - e. Awards Committee
    - i. Issue emerged with a complaint last year with a student complaint against faculty who were asked to create a website for Teacher of the Year portfolio. This portfolio included student work, and the faculty member had permission from all students whose work was included on the website. Student complained this information was in public (despite having given permission), and this complaint prompted an investigation by administration, which ultimately exonerated the faculty member.
    - ii. Concern that we are asking exemplary faculty to submit these website portfolios for consideration for faculty awards, but that this process can result in this sort of complaint and negatively affect the faculty members.
    - iii. Discussion ensued on the possibility of creating private websites or internal websites not viewable by the public to ensure these kinds of issues do not recur.
    - iv. Awards Committee will discuss in their meetings this year.
  - f. Faculty Handbook Revision
    - i. Dr. Bennett reported that by mid-September the handbook changes from AY 23-24 would go out to faculty for votes.
  - g. Assessment: no report

- h. Distance Education and Instructional Technology: no report
- i. Technology Advisory: no report
- j. Fixed-Term Faculty: no report

VI. Announcements and Other Business

- a. Future Guests
  - i. Dr. Hudson will attend the October meeting discuss voter engagement
    - 1. He would like the Democracy Task Force to become a standing university committee so that faculty may claim it as university-wide service.
  - ii. Mayra Hernandez, director of Student Community and Community Engagement will be invited to a future meeting.
- b. Discussion of Environmental Humanities Initiative started by Dr. Manuel Broncano in AY 23-24.
  - i. Dr. Hilburn announced that it was rebranding as the Environment Studies Initiative, would be interdisciplinary and draw on multiple strengths across disciplines.
  - ii. Conference schedule has been reduced to a 4-hour symposium on water, with invited scholars, regulators, and a keynote by a hydrologist.
  - iii. The symposium will highlight water quality and quantity issues.
  - iv. Date for symposium is Friday, Nov. 8.

- VII. Dr. Houston moved to adjourn, Dr. Hinojosa seconded, motion carried with no abstentions, none opposed.