

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEETING NOTES

Monday, February 16, 2015

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

Healthy U Initiative

The meeting began with a presentation by Jessica Palacios, associate director for the Office of Human Resources, regarding the university's "kick-off" for the second annual Healthy U campaign (see attachment B). Jessica shared several data related to last year's employee participation in this initiative. Approximately, 191 TAMIU employees participated last year, representing approximately 23.38% of the total employee population. From these, 47 walking teams were created and participated in the Fitness Challenge. These teams walked a total of 123,438,621 steps earning a distance equal to two-and-a-half-times around the world.

Additionally, 15 employees participated in the Walking Club which represents a separate walking activity within the Healthy U campaign, and 15 employees also participated in the Wellness Wednesday initiative. Jessica informed the council that, this year, the Healthy U Committee is exploring the possibility of offering the Wellness Wednesday sessions at times throughout the day other than at noon to increase participation in these information sessions. Also this year, a 5K fun run will be added to the schedule of events for Healthy U.

Jessica finished her presentation by sharing some of the complications associated with the implementation of Healthy U last year. Based on employee survey data collected, it was discovered that one of the factors associated with a lack of employee participation resulted from supervisors not allowing employees to attend during work hours. The president interjected during this part of the presentation and emphatically informed all present that it is in everyone's best interest that all employees participate. He further stated that all supervisors should explore the possibility of providing work schedule accommodations that would allow all employees to participate as this is an initiative that is not only sanctioned by TAMIU but also by the A&M System.

Athletic Department Update

The meeting continued with an update provided by the athletic director. To date, the men's basketball team holds a 10-14 record with several games pending on this year's schedule. If the men's team is successful with the next several games, it was explained that they may earn a position to participate in the post-season NCAA division championship tournament.

The women's team record stands at 11-12 with additional games still left on the season's schedule. As with the men's team, the women's basketball team may still enter the post-season NCAA division championship tournament.

In baseball, the team currently holds a 5-5 record, all in non-conference games. The women's softball team is 3-5, also all in non-conference games played to date.

Griz encouraged everyone in the council to attend all athletic events and extended the same invitation to everyone in the university community. He asked all council members to encourage everyone under their supervision to show their support of student athletes by attending the athletic events throughout the remainder of the year whenever possible.

Texas A&M University System Board of Regents' (BOR) Meeting Update

Dr. Keck provided an extensive summary of the BOR meeting held last week in College Station. The president explained that the chancellor reviewed a recent position/approach taken from his office regarding the Open Carry proposed Texas legislation. In a carefully worded statement, the chancellor reflected that he “trusted the best judgment of everyone on all Texas A&M University System campuses with regard to this gun legislation.” This statement was not meant to be interpreted as a statement that demonstrates support for such legislation. There was a long discussion that followed regarding the interpretation of the chancellor’s official position, and needless to say, it is a highly charged and political issue that must be dealt with carefully, especially at the state level.

The update continued, and the president explained that the chancellor would like the TAMUS to host a U.S. Presidential Debate for the upcoming presidential election. It is not yet known on which TAMUS campus the debate would be held, but it is anticipated that it would be held at the College Station campus in collaboration with the Bush Presidential Library.

A topic of discussion at the BOR meeting centered upon the role Title IX coordinators throughout the university system campuses play. It was regarded as being highly problematic if individual campus coordinators not only serve as Title IX coordinators but also “wear multiple hats” and serve multiple organizational roles. It is perceived that if coordinators are equally responsible for multiple organizational roles other than serving solely in a Title IX job role then this complexity could lead to a dilution of the importance of the role of the Title IX coordinator and investigator. Individual campuses were urged to study this job role and ensure that the person serving is provided the necessary organizational space and time to fully perform these particular job duties.

A subsequent topic of particular interest at the BOR’s meeting centered upon TAMUS’s new public information officer who requested that all logs reflecting any and all criminal activity on all TAMUS campuses be forwarded to his or her office. The request originated with the chancellor who would like to ensure that the BOR are each immediately informed of any campus criminally related issues. Several questions were asked by the system presidents since each campus varies in size and student population that could result in the extensive reporting of trivial information that may not be necessarily useful. The chancellor asked all system presidents “to use their best judgment in reporting information that is important for BOR members to know.”

The final item shared with the council from the meeting elicited the most discussion in the council. At the BOR meeting, \$10,000,000.00 by recommendation of the chancellor was set aside from the Permanent University Fund (PUF) for the sole purpose of recruiting highly sought-after faculty from across the country. To qualify for the funds, each university president was instructed to submit applications that will go through a competitive process for approval. To a great extent, applications should aim to recruit individual faculty in identified academic fields

from specific institutions across the country by offering non-traditional financial compensation packages to fund research activities and projects that are considered to be above and way beyond what present faculty at any current system school may have available for their work. It would not, for example, be considered outside of the realm of possibility to individually name and recruit Nobel laureate faculty whose work and the money to finance their work may range in six to seven figures.

A question regarding sustainability of these faculty projects was asked. The money from the PUF is to be used as a one-time monetary investment, and the issue of long term sustainability would need to be dealt with by each system school. More money from the PUF may be made available for this initiative. The money cannot be used specifically for salaries.

Faculty should feel free to address any question related to this item to the provost.

Washington's Birthday Celebration Association (WBCA) Events

The president announced that this is one of the busiest weeks in Laredo because of WBCA events. He provided a brief summary of events that he would be attending in his role as president. All classes are to be held at their normally scheduled times.

Discover TAMIU

Gina Gonzalez informed the council that, since last week, 60 activities for Discover TAMIU have been scheduled. Anyone wishing to participate by hosting an activity is encouraged to complete the activity form and submit it to Gina and/or the Discover TAMIU Committee.

Annual Institutional Effectiveness Reports (AIER)

Veronica Martinez and Mary Trevino provided a quick update on AIER activities and shared a schedule for AIER meetings to be held this week. These reports need to be completed for the 2013-2014 academic cycle.

Artist in Residence

This week, several members of the Nuevo Mariachi Tecalitlan will be on campus to work with students and members from the university's fine arts department.

Focus Report for SACSCOC and QEP Act on IDEAS

The provost informed everyone in the Council to inform all faculty, staff, and employees to visit the report on UCONNECT in preparation for our SACS on-site visit to be held March 17-19. The provost sent out a separate email regarding this to all employees. Please refer to this email for instructions.

Enrollment

Minita Ramirez provided a brief summary of the most current data regarding enrollment. Please see attachment C.

At approximately 10:00 a.m., the meeting ended.

Alfredo Ramirez, Jr.

