

**Faculty Senate Meeting
November 7, 2014
12:05 – 3:10 p.m.**

MINUTES

WHTC Room 125

I. Call to Order by President Ramirez at 12:05 p.m.

II. Roll Call, Present:

Kimber Palmer, James Norris, Katie Lewis, John Maxstadt, Alfredo Ramirez, Lynne Manganaro, Marvin Bennett, Brendan Townsend, George Clarke, Marcela Morán, Vivian Garcia, and Hari Mandal.

III. Approval of Minutes:

A vote was taken to approve the minutes of the September Senate meeting. With one minor correction, the minutes were unanimously approved.

IV. Our guests were given the floor:

Dr. Arenaz:

Reporting on the Regents' meeting: The Provost stated that Russ Porter, Associate VP of graduate students at Central Texas, plans to do a meta-analysis of student success. We are not a part of that study. They will look at the mind-set of students and ask why students are attending college, what makes one successful at college, and other such information. System wide data on student success is available to the public on "Empower U" on the system website.

A salary survey will be done regarding the system.

There is talk of changing the faculty contracts from, say mid-August to mid-May, which would alleviate the problem new faculty are experiencing currently when their contracts begin September 1, and don't get paid until October 1, even though they begin their teaching mid-August.

The System may buy transcription software to help online courses meet requirements for dealing with students with disabilities.

A space projections survey will be coming out. Regents continue to question our requests for more buildings. It is hoped the survey will demonstrate that need.

There is some concern about people using Google docs. There will be a study to determine whether there are any security issues, and a decision will be made as to whether Google docs can be used on campus computers.

There will be a working draft of the new QEP in the next few weeks.

The Provost continues to support the requirement of letters from external sources supporting a tenure candidate's research.

The Provost indicated his desire that TAMIU become a "destination institution." That will require improved programs and stellar faculty.

There are virtually no funds to hire a PROF Center director. The Provost is considering having the Center be headed by current faculty, as a half time appointment (they would receive course releases) or some other such configuration, so new money would not have to be spent. There is an idea that perhaps new faculty would have to follow a course of instruction put on by the PROF Center regarding teaching—upon their arrival to the university.

This year there are eight applicants for tenure and promotion, and one applicant for promotion to full professor. There were six new faculty positions added to our campus.

President Ramirez raised the issue of a comprehensive mentoring program, which would include the training of mentors, and documentation of actual success of the mentorship. He would like have some sort of compensation for the mentors. The Provost stated it was unlikely there would be funds in the budget for monetary compensation, but there may be other ways to acknowledge that contributions, such as awards. Concern was expressed that a mentor relationship cannot be forced.

There were no other guest presentations.

V. Faculty Senate Report on Executive Council Meetings

A. President Ramirez attended the Texas Faculty Association meeting recently. He mentioned there were funds for others to attend these meetings, and encouraged others of the senate to go to future meetings.

He met with Jim Hallmark, Vice Chancellor and learned that the A&M school in Texarkana is considering term limits for department chairs. A&M Commerce has an agreement with private companies to deliver online courses. This situation has caused a concern for the quality of their online courses, and has been described as "a real mess." Their faculty also wants compensation for serving on post tenure review committees. A&M San Antonio asked about our administrator evaluations as they are undertaking their own. They are interested in how we carried out ours.

The association passed a resolution that said university funding should be restored to pre-2010 levels.

VI. Faculty Senate Vice President Report on Provost Council Meeting

No report was given, as there was no meeting of this Council.

VII. Reports from Committee Chairs

A. The Academic Oversight Committee, Dr. Gilberto Salinas

No report.

B. The Budget and Finance Committee, Dr. George Clarke

No report.

C. The University Ethics Committee, Dr. Lynne Manganaro

No report.

D. The Committee on Creation, Composition, and Responsibilities of Committees, Dr. Frances Rhodes

No report.

E. The Committee on Faculty Work Environment and Morale, Dr. Qingwen Ni

No report

F. The Faculty Handbook Revision Committee, Mr. John Maxstadt

Mr. Maxstadt reserved his comments for Unfinished Business (see below)

G. The Distance Education and Instructional Technology Committee, Dr. Jim Norris

There is some concern about the intertwining of this committee and the another Distance Education/Technology committee.

Another issue is whether administration can force faculty to use an online course shell created by another faculty member. Is this a violation of academic freedom? Regardless as to whether the original course was QM certified, is that enough to require following the course shell?

Another issue was raised as to faculty/course evaluations, like faculty/course evaluations that take place in face-to-face classes. They should take place during the regular evaluation period, perhaps with a pop-up window that requires them to fill out the evaluation before they can proceed to the course site. Doing this, however, might result in the student not taking the evaluation seriously, and clicking randomly just to complete the evaluation rather than making considered responses.

H. The Technology Advisory Committee, Mr. Brendan Townsend

No report.

I. The Assessment Committee, Ms. Kimber Palmer

No report.

VIII. Unfinished Business

A. Faculty Handbook Updates and Revisions, Mr. John Maxstadt. Changes to the Faculty Handbook were discussed. Brendan Townsend moved that the proposed changes as set forth in the handout, which is attached to these minutes as Exhibit "A", be reapproved with no further

changes. Dr. Norris seconded the motion, and after completing all discussion on the motion, the motion was passed unanimously.

B. Discussion and Possible Action on the Adoption of Proposed Language for the Requirement of Promotion and Tenure Letters for Faculty P&T Applications from Assistant to Associate Professor and if adopted to Conduct a Faculty-wide election for such a proposal.

Dr. Townsend moved that the language as proposed in the handout, which is attached to these minutes as Exhibit “B,” be approved with no further change. Dr. Clarke seconded the motion. After completing all discussion on the motion and upon secret ballot, the motion carried, as follows:

In favor:	8
Against:	2
Abstention:	1

C. Discussion and Possible Action on the Adoption of a Recommendation to the University Administration for a Proposed Expanded GPA System and if adopted to Conduct a Faculty-wide Non-binding poll, Mr. Brendan Townsend.

Dr. Townsend moved that the poll of faculty be taken. Dr. Manganaro seconded the motion, and after completing all discussion on the motion, the motion was passed unanimously.

D. Discussion and Feedback on October Faculty Assembly—Dr. Alfredo Ramirez, Jr.

Opinions voiced on this issue included concern the meeting was not long enough, and that the administrators (Drs. Keck and Arenaz) had taken too much of the time. Consensus was reached in that another meeting should be organized and that no administrator should be on the agenda, if even invited.

IX. New Business

A concern about the University’s monitoring of certain websites was raised. An email to the Library Director was sent by OIT that outlines a new procedure. This procedure is that whenever a person using a university computer accesses certain websites, such a pornography website, a pop-up window will appear and inform the person that if they are proceed to said website the logging on would be recorded and preserved by the university. It does not stop the access. Some are concerned that this policy acts as censorship, and could intimidate a person accessing the particular website. A broader issue is the implementation of this policy, which has a great impact on faculty, was done without faculty input.

Brian Gaskins was asked to come to the meeting in order answer questions of the Senate about this policy. He stated that the system mandates some of the policies that affect our campus. He stated this policy regarding preservation of logging information on such websites is not a new policy. Apparently, the only new thing is the “warning” pop-up. The reality is that all computer use is being collected and preserved by OIT and is likely available information under the open records law. Currently, OIT has had to review this information when requested by law

enforcement to see if illegal access, such as child pornography, has occurred. He stated the purpose of the pop-up is a “heads up” and would allow the user to understand that their access to the website will be recorded, and allow them to decide if that is “really where they want to go.”

The filtering is done by Cisco. There was some concerned voice for Title 9 (harassment issues).

Another question to Mr. Gaskins was the restriction of downloading program updates to those with administrator access, and the difficulty faculty experience when they want to update their software. Mr. Gaskins indicated this was done due to stem downloads of improper content, such as viruses, to university computer systems. It arose during an audit by the system and since implemented it has reduced some of the workload of OIT in having to deal with unwanted malware, and of people improperly messing with the computers. He mentioned that people who feel they should have administrator access could apply for it.

Regarding a question about refreshing MAC computers, he stated that most MACs were purchased through grant funds, rather than by the university. If it was, then the university cannot replace it, and the faculty will have to find another source of funds to update their MAC.

At approximately 3:00 p.m. Dr. Manganaro moved the meeting be adjourned; said motion was seconded by Dr. V. Garcia. The motion was approved unanimously.