

TEXAS A&M INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY
Faculty Senate Meeting
February 3, 2017
KL 420

- I. Call to Order** by Dr. James Norris at 12:08 p.m.
- II. Roll Call: Present:** Dr. James Norris, Dr. Kenneth Tobin, Dr. Marvin Bennett, Dr. Frances Rhodes, Dr. George Clarke, Ms. Vivian Garcia, Dr. Puneet Gill, Ms. Destine Holmgreen, Dr. David Milovich, Ms. Marcela Moran, Dr. Lola Norris, Ms. Kimber Palmer, Dr. Ruby Ynalvez

III. Our Guests were given the floor:

Dr. Pablo Arenaz:

Dr. Arenaz announced that he had a meeting with the Superintendents of UISD and LISD and the President of LCC to try to revive the P16 Council; focusing on *college readiness* for students.

On Jan. 31st our Governor declared a hiring freeze on positions funded through state funds, but it has been interpreted that it does not include faculty positions.

Senate Bill 4 should not affect TAMIU, since we are not a *Sanctuary Campus*.

We should know more about the budgets coming out of the Senate and the House by the end of April.

It was also announced that next week is *Spirit Week*, so there will be a lot of student activities going on all over the campus.

Dr. Tom Mitchell:

Dr. Mitchell announced that student enrollment is up by 2% over last spring and total credit hours have also increased by about 5%. Our goal is to continue to increase graduate student enrollment, which is also up this semester by about 9%. We are also trying to speed up the time in which students are notified as to whether or not they will receive graduate assistanceships and scholarships.

We have also received good feedback from the working students on the 6:00 p.m. evening time slot, but need a better balance between the evening time slots (a 60/40 ratio would be preferred). And undergraduate evening courses should not meet once a week because it kills too many other time slots for students.

We do have permission to continue the current faculty searches despite the freeze, but we will not hire anyone until the fall semester because the Governor's freeze is until the end of the fiscal year in August.

Dr. Mitchell also announced that he is going to propose an increase in summer salary from a cap of \$4,000 to \$5,000 (see attachment). This is contingent on what our overall budget will end up being for the summer. He also mentioned that you must get special permission from your Dean and the Provost if you are going to teach more than two courses in the summer.

IV. Minutes of the December 2nd Faculty Senate meeting were approved.

V. New Business

- Proposal to add language in the Faculty Handbook grievance procedures(s) concerning the Faculty Ombudsperson's role as a suggested first step.

Dr. Rhodes mentioned that there is suppose to be a page on our website and she will forward the info to the Senate's web master. Also, the information could be given to the Handbook Committee to come up with the appropriate wording for inclusion in the Handbook.

VI. Old Business

- Faculty Survey Update:

Dr. Tobin passed out the minutes for a joint meeting of the Assessment and Academic Oversight and Affairs Committees held on February 1st to discuss the tabulation of the results of the Faculty Survey and to discuss the proposed Handbook changes for TOY/SOY (see attachment). It was reported that there were 49 total responses to the Faculty Survey. Included in the handout was a one page summary of faculty concerns that could be forwarded to Drs. Arenaz and Mitchell for their consideration. Also included was a summary of potential action items for the Faculty Senate's consideration. A question was put forth to the Senate as to how to best respond to these results. A motion was made that the Senate hold a non-supervisory, faculty-only forum to discuss the results of the survey during this spring semester. This motion was seconded and approved unanimously. It was also suggested that we utilize a portion of Fall Assembly to continue discussion of the survey results with the Faculty, with a possible open forum for Administration and Faculty in the fall. It was suggested that the responses be grouped by topic (Administrator items vs. Senate items) to make them easier to respond to. Finally, it was suggested that Dr. J. Norris schedule a meeting with Dr. Mitchell and the Faculty Senate Executive Committee to discuss the results before proceeding.

- TOY/SOY:

For the TOY/SOY, it was decided to rename the awards "Distinguished Teacher and Outstanding Teacher of the Year" and "Distinguished Scholar of the Year". There was discussion about including adjuncts in the "Outstanding Teacher of the Year" and a motion was made to strike adjuncts as potential candidates; which carried by a vote of 9 to 4. There was also a suggestion to change the presentation time for the awards to the Fall Assembly, which was agreed upon by all. A vote was made on the final TOY/SOY document, as amended, and it passed unanimously.

- University Course Evaluation:

The University Course Evaluation Instrument Review Committee met on January 29th (see attachment). The summer 2017 evaluation instrument will be piloted in the summer.

Feedback will occur after this period. This instrument could still be further changed, but we will pilot it and get feedback first.

- *Other Business:*

It was suggested that we invite the Registrar to the Senate to discuss what the real results were on student enrollment/attendance as a result of changing the time slots for the evening courses.

VII. Committee Reports

The Academic Oversight Committee - see attached minutes.

The Budget and Finance Committee - no report

The University Ethics Committee - no report.

The Committee on Creation, Composition, and Responsibilities of Committees - no report.

The Committee on Faculty Work Environment and Morale - no report.

The Faculty Handbook Revision Committee - no report.

The Distance Education and Instructional Technology Committee - no report.

The Technology Advisory Committee - Dr. J. Norris reported on the new testing software for online students, *Examity*, which is still in the review and testing phase.

The Assessment Committee - see attached minutes.

VIII. The meeting was adjourned at 2:17 p.m.

SUMMER/INTERSESSION PAY PROPOSAL
Texas A&M International University

Total Summer Faculty Salary Budget for 2017: \$914,000 (Funded from Salary Savings)

Qualifications:

Budget to be kept the same.

Salary increases to come from larger classes, strict adherence to minimum enrollments for non-funding year (8 graduate / 16 undergraduate), and greater use of adjuncts, when appropriate.

To be avoided: any reduction in courses required by students to complete degrees on time. Emphasis placed on required courses.

Pay Proposal: To Be Effective Maymester 2017

- Pay 2.77% of 9-month salary for 1 SCH, capped at \$1,667. Thus, a 3 SCH course would be equivalent to 8.33% of a 9-month salary, with a cap of \$5,000.
- Limit of 1 course in Wintermester, and 2 courses in any combination of Maymester, SSI, SSII, and SSIII. Overloads must be approved by the Chair, Dean, and Provost (and will be rare) and paid at a flat rate of \$3,000.
- Adjunct faculty paid at same rate as in fall and spring semesters.
- No pay for "unorganized courses" such as independent study courses, undergraduate research, or thesis courses (represents no change in current policy).

Agenda for Joint Assessment and Academic Oversight and Affairs Committee

Wednesday February 1 (1:30 to 2:30 pm) in room LVB 346

In Attendance: Senators K. Palmer, K. Tobin, R. Ynalvez, D. Holmgreen

Absent: L. Prieto

1. Committee Member Comments Regarding the Recent Faculty Survey

- Dr. Tobin tabulated a one-page summary of responses from the faculty survey conducted last November.
- Senators Palmer, Ynalvez, and Holmgreen checked all of the survey replies to ensure that the summary accurately reflects the survey responses. To this end, two additional bullet items were added to the summary. To keep this document at one page the suggestion was made to streamline the language within the summary. Also, specific rewording was suggested to two of the bullet items. The summary attached to these minutes incorporates these suggested modifications.
- The joint committee discussed how the survey results could be shared with the faculty. Senator Ynalvez suggested that that we have a faculty forum where the issues uncovered by the survey could be discussed and constructive solutions devised. A suggestion was made that the Faculty Senate could organize a faculty forum later this spring. Concern was expressed that perhaps turnout for such an event might be low. The alternative was suggested that the survey issues might be discussed at the Fall Assembly. The joint committee decided to forward the issue to the senate as a whole for further discussion.

2. Discussion of Proposed Handbook Changes for SoY and ToY

- The draft language shown in the December 2016 Faculty Senate meeting was again shared with the joint committee. The idea of removing the word “Non-Tenure Track” from the new teacher award was endorsed by the joint committee. A color copy of the proposed handbook changes that includes this modification is attached to the minutes for this meeting.

3. Other Business

None

The meeting adjourned at 2:20 pm.

Faculty Survey – November 2016 (Summary of Comments)

Question: What major problems or concerns do you have about the university, academics, shared governance, etc?

- The administration needs to better listen to the concerns of faculty and not implement changes in a top-down manner. Communications remain a major issue and decisions that impact faculty are too commonly found out about in a roundabout way and in general there is a lack of transparency. Administration needs to better listen to the concerns of faculty and not implement change in a top-down manner.
- There is a complex array of issues associated with adjuncts. They lack access to resources like printers, copies, office space, and keys to open classrooms. HR processes like asking for transcripts each semester could be streamlined. Poor pay and lack of benefits like health insurance is an issue. Additionally the concern was expressed that we have become too reliant on adjuncts.
- TAMIU is trying to become a Tier 1 university when we haven't even achieved Tier 2 status yet. We need to strike a more realistic balance between research, teaching, and service given our status as a regional university.
- There are too many conflicting mandates (increased enrollment, new programs, Signature Courses, Catering to ISD's, More Online teaching, and more) and there is a lack of a unified vision. Many faculty feel stressed, frustrated, and confused. In addition, they feel like they are being pulled in too many directions and this is significantly impacting job performance.
- The appointments of administrators have been made without proper faculty shared governance. Also some administrators in supervisory positions do not seem to be qualified for these positions.
- The proliferation of course releases has a negative impact on programs.
- There is a need for decreased teaching loads (3/3) or releases when teaching excessively large classes. Also the loads are too high (5/5) for visiting professors and professionals. At the very least there should be compensation for overloads should be considered.
- Class sizes as an important issue. The general consensus is that classes are too big in freshman courses and the cap size for classes needs to be lowered. This is especially true of writing intensive courses in areas like the humanities.
- A few indicated that faculty pay is low and there is no clear path toward advancement.
- There needs to be greater transparency when it comes to how merit pay increases are decided.
- Gender discrimination and psychological (not necessarily sexual) harassment is an issue at TAMIU.
- There needs to be more stakeholder input regarding the initiatives and decisions made by OIT.
- Arbitrarily changing evening schedule. It seems that a very few working students are dictating the class schedule for the majority of our traditional students.
- Faculty needs to have access to view all grant account balances for their research funds.
- Concern about the removal of faculty from the tenure-track and in the growth of non-tenured professionals devaluing tenure.
- Worry about a severe deterioration in academic standards
- Class scheduling needs to be prioritized to help students graduate in four years.

Faculty Survey – 2016 (Potential Action Items)

Question: Specifically how would you like the Faculty Senate to confront or take care of your problem or concern?

- Faculty senators should share senate minutes at departmental meetings.
- Need to involve faculty in the decision making process through public forums and more informal venues
- The Faculty Senate could at least make a statement about discrimination and harassment.
- Perhaps a poll of students (SGA) and faculty should be taken to determine the needs scheduling of our students.
- Lobby harder to reduce teaching loads--3/3 is more reasonable than 4/4.
- The Faculty Senate should prioritize class sizes and adjuncts in conversations with administration.
- May want to revise the ideal faculty workload in the handbook given current realities
- Need to develop a faculty led mechanism to determine the potential appeal of existing programs and how they might impact existing programs
- Identify the faculty vision for TAMIU. It would be interest to see if it diverges from that of the administration.
- Perform a formal review of OIT practices related to consultation of stakeholders.
- Prioritize the hiring of non-tenure track but full-time faculty to teach classes generally taught by adjuncts AND put in place methods to transition high-functioning adjuncts into full-time, non-tenure track faculty with full benefits
- The COAS College requires tenured faculty to be on four committees. The Faculty Handbook states that faculty should be on three committees. This should be rectified.
- Add language to the Faculty Handbook to force more openness regarding the merit process
- Add handbook language that ensure tenured faculty inclusion in the hiring of academic administrators

Annually, a circular medallion attached to an appropriate ribbon is presented by the Provost, ~~prior to (or during) Spring Graduation~~, to the selected faculty members. The medallion will be appropriate for, and should be worn as a part of, the recipients' academic regalia. The medallion should be inscribed, "~~Distinguished~~ University Scholar, [year]," ~~or~~ "~~Distinguished~~ University Teacher, [year]," and "~~Outstanding~~ Teacher [year]." Special parking and a small stipend may also be included for all award winners. In addition, the ~~Distinguished~~ University Scholar, and ~~Distinguished~~ University Teacher, and ~~Outstanding~~ Teacher of the Year may will be invited to give short lectures during ~~Fall Convocation~~. *during Fall Assc.*

Procedure

~~During the Fall Semester an open nomination process will be conducted for the Minnie Piper Stevens teacher award and nominees for the previous year's Teacher of the Year will be strongly encouraged to participate.~~ At the beginning of each Spring Semester, each college's promotion and tenure committee will call for nominations for the college's ~~Distinguished~~ University Scholar of the Year, and ~~Distinguished~~ University Teacher of the Year, and ~~Outstanding~~ Teacher of the Year. Each college's promotion and tenure committee will decide how the nomination process will work within their purview (whether that be an open nomination process or one in which departments forward nominees to the college's P&T committee). ~~Only tenured and tenured-track faculty that have been at Texas A&M International University for at least three calendar years will be eligible for the Distinguished University Scholar and Teacher of the Year awards. For the Outstanding Teacher of the Year adjuncts, instructors, lecturers, and fixed-term professionals must have been employed by Texas A&M International University for at least three years. The only limitation to eligibility will be that a faculty member must not be in his or her first year of employment at Texas A&M International University.~~

Nominees for college ~~Distinguished~~ University Scholar of the Year, and ~~Distinguished~~ University Teacher of the Year, and ~~Outstanding~~ Teacher of the Year will be required to submit a brief (no more than 20 pages) portfolio highlighting their achievements (similar to the promotion/tenure portfolio) for the use of the respective P&T committees in the decision-making process.

Nominees for **Distinguished University** Scholar of the Year must include evidence regarding scholarly and creative accomplishments over a period of three calendar years (ending with the year covered in the most recent PPE), and the candidates will be judged on their accomplishments over that three-year period.

College P&T committees will meet no later than February 15 to review nominees' portfolios and select the college **Distinguished University** Scholar and Teacher of the Year **and Outstanding Teacher of the Year** award recipients. The College of Arts and Sciences will choose two Scholars and two Teachers of the Year **for each teacher award**; the A.R. Sanchez School of Business, the College of Education, the College of Nursing and Health Sciences, **University College**, and Killam Library will each choose one Scholar and one Teacher of the Year **for each teacher award**. These winners then become the nominees for the **Distinguished University** Scholar, ~~and the Distinguished University Teacher of the Year~~, **and Outstanding Teacher of the Year**.

Once College / School award recipients have been designated, the chair of each college's P&T committee will forward their colleagues' names in a recommendation letter to the chair of the Faculty Senate Work Environment and Morale Committee. The Work Environment and Morale Committee will appoint a team of highly qualified faculty (not necessarily senators) who will observe and report on the classroom instruction of all college winners for **Distinguished University** Teacher ~~and of the Year~~ **Outstanding Teacher of the Year**. The college winners will arrange these observation sessions with the appointed team during the last two weeks of March. The **nominee's** observation reports will be added to the Teacher of the Year portfolios prior to Faculty Senate review. The **Distinguished University** Scholar of the Year, ~~and Distinguished University~~ **Teacher of the Year**, **and Outstanding Teacher of the Year** portfolios will be made available to members of the Faculty Senate for their information and review during the last two weeks of April.

At the May meeting of the Faculty Senate, the entire Senate will vote for a **Distinguished** University Scholar of the Year, ~~and Distinguished~~ **University** Teacher of the Year, **and Outstanding Teacher of the Year** from the nominees for each award. Senators who are in the running for one of the awards and senators who have not read all the portfolios will not participate in the voting.

The winner of the University Teacher of the Year will be the University's nominee for the next year's Golden Apple Award. Award recipients, as well as the college winners in **both all three** categories, will be announced at Spring Graduation and Fall Convocation. Once recognized as **Distinguished** University Scholar, **or Distinguished University Teacher, of the Year and Outstanding Teacher of the Year, these** faculty members will not be eligible for consideration for any additional faculty award for three years.

Minutes

1. K. Miller provided an overview of changes to the course evaluation process since Fall 2015.
2. The committee examined the summer pilot instrument (which was originally sent to all deans and chairs for review and feedback) and subsequent revisions suggested by COAS faculty.
3. G. Clarke suggested that the existing pilot instrument's core questions were biased towards small classes and proposed the committee devise an instrument with 3-4 core questions and then a set of questions tailored to course type (large lecture, small discussion-oriented classes, labs, etc.)—similar to the current University of Washington. K. Miller indicated doing so would not be feasible this semester given our CoursEval pilot and that, for now, this group would have to focus on university-wide core questions. In the future, this could perhaps be part of the customizable section of the instrument.
4. Each question on the instrument was reviewed and, if needed, revised to foster 1) applicability to all courses and 2) student understanding. The following new question was added to the Challenge Index: Relative to other similar level college courses you have taken, I believe my final grade will be (Much higher-much lower).
5. Two new open-ended questions were agreed upon as well: What I liked most about this course is/ What I liked least about this course is. The committee liked that these questions are unrestrictive and allow students to provide holistic feedback in a way that can help instructors 1) learn what teaching practices work for students and 2) target areas for improvement.
6. The committee debated adding the following question, or something similar, to the Teaching Effectiveness index: The instructor helped me understand the importance of the subject matter. Although it was not added to the pilot instrument, the committee would like to review this item again after the spring data has been collected and analyzed. The committee discussed keeping the number of core questions limited—the tighter we can make the core questions, the better.
7. The SLO and customizable questions will not be part of the pilot this semester. We will need to pilot the core questions first. Once we have determined our software provider, we will be able to add in the customizable sections in the future.
8. S. Duffy suggested that we involve SGA in the process of collecting student feedback about the pilot this spring. The committee can help SGA put together a survey, or short interview form,

7. I believe my final grade will be:

Please complete the following statements:

8. What I liked most about this course is...
9. What I liked least about this course is...

II. Student Learning Questions (Customizable)

- 1) The extent to which the course helped students to meet specific course SLOs (provided by instructor)
 - a. The idea here is to use evaluations as an indirect measure of student learning that can be used to assess course SLOs
 - b. 1-5 indirect measures of student learning recommended (closed)

III. Course/faculty-specific questions (Customizable)

- a. Up to 3 additional questions (can be open or closed)

that essentially asks 1) Do students think the new instrument is good? 2) What questions would they like to add or delete? And 3) What do they interpret specific questions to mean?

9. The meeting closed with a plan to meet with the software company, AEFIS, on Feb. 15th to discuss how their platform could meet our needs. K. Miller will arrange a time and send out a calendar invite to the committee.

Attendees: David Allen, Ken Tobin, Stephen Duffy, Anna Cieslicka, George Clarke, Lilia Cantu, Jim Norris, Karyn Miller

Committee Members: David Allen, Ken Tobin, Stephen Duffy, Anna Cieslicka, George Clarke, Lilia Cantu, Jim Norris, Karyn Miller, Belva Gonzalez, Wendy Donnell, Alfredo Ramirez, Milton Mayfield, Destine Holmgren

**Courseval Pilot
Summer 2017
Evaluation instrument questions
Revised 1.27.17**

I. Core Questions (Not customizable)

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements:

Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Strongly Disagree

1. The instructor engaged students in the subject matter.
2. The instructor provided feedback on my performance throughout the semester.
3. The course was well-organized.

4. Overall, the quality of the instruction in this course was:

Excellent, Good, Fair, Poor, Very Poor

Relative to other similar level college courses you have taken:

Much Higher, Higher, Average, Lower, Much Lower

5. The academic/creative challenge was:
6. The amount of effort required in this course was: