

TAMIU Faculty Senate Meeting

March 6, 2020; WHTC Rm 126

- I. The meeting was called to order by the Faculty Senate President, Dr. Lola Norris, at 12:02 p.m.
- II. *Roll Call:* Dr. Lola Norris, Dr. Marvin Bennett, Ms. Malynda Dalton, Ms. Vivian Garcia, Dr. Puneet Gill, Dr. Ariadne Gonzalez, Mr. Jose Gutierrez, Dr. Runchang Lin, Dr. Gilberto Martinez, Dr. Neal McReynolds, Ms. Angela Moran, Dr. James Norris, Ms. Kimber Palmer, Dr. Kenneth Tobin, Dr. Lourdes Vilorio
- III. *Our Guests* were given the floor.

Dr. Pablo Arenaz

Dr. Arenaz presented to the Senate an update on our enrollment data. TAMIU continues to be one of the top regional institutions in the state. Our six year graduation rate is over 55%, with 47% in our five year graduation rate. Twenty-three to twenty-four percent of our incoming class of students are in the top 10%. The average time that a student takes to receive a degree at TAMIU has dropped from 6 years (approximately 12 years ago) to 4.9 years.

The legislative affairs people of the A & M System have been working on a proposal to try to find monies for the 27 non-flagship, non-emerging research institutions in the state. They are trying to expand the small-school supplement. For us that would mean an increase of about \$1.2M per year. Also, they are trying to get more monies to support graduating 'at-risk' students. This could bring us as much as an additional \$4M per year to our state appropriations.

It was announced that Dr. Rex Ball will be our commencement speaker for next May's graduation. We also have 2 big events coming up in the next six weeks. On the 28th of March there will be an Alumni Event celebrating TAMIU's 50 years. Also on that evening we will be presenting Outstanding Alumni awards to Norma Cantu and Henry Cuellar. Also, on the 16th of April we will have the Trailblazer Tower dedication.

Next month the President and the Provost will be going to the Coordinating Board Education and Workforce Committee meeting hoping for their approval of our Petroleum and Computer Engineering degrees. And then to College Station for a programmatic budget review where our budget for next year will be recommended for approval.

Dr. Arenaz gave the Senate an update as to how TAMIU and the System will be moving forward in the case of the COVID-19 virus:

- not approving any international travel funding for faculty, staff or students,
- two study-abroad courses for this Spring have been canceled,
- we currently have 8 students in South Korea that we are strongly encouraging to return,
- we are currently working with on-campus student housing to create safe places for quarantining if it becomes necessary,
- strongly encouraging anyone with flu-like symptoms to stay at home and self-quarantine,
- worse case scenario, getting Echo360 up and running so that faculty can record their lectures from home and upload them to Blackboard if the campus is forced to close,
- at this point there are no restrictions with travel within the United States, but if faculty are

travelling internationally for personal reasons there is a form you must complete to let the university know where you are going,

- the System will allow faculty and Staff who have been travelling and who either have to be quarantined or who contract the virus to be able to take sick leave for it.

Dr. Tom Mitchell

Dr. Mitchell informed the Senate that from 2015 to 2019 the average number of hours that our students graduated with from 142 to 134 hours. One of the important areas where TAMIU is the lowest among the regional universities is in our operating expenses per full-time student equivalent. We are also among the lowest in faculty expenditures per full-time student equivalent.

We also have a search underway for a Director of the Library and for a Dean for the University College. Our faculty searches are winding down, with a few remaining in the College of Business.

The BS degrees in Petroleum and Computer Engineering are set to be approved by the Coordinating Board in April. A proposal has also been submitted to the System for a PhD in Criminal Justice. We are currently working on a Masters of Science degree in System Engineering. The next possible degrees we are looking into are a BS in Computer Science and a BS in either Mechanical or Civil Engineering.

Dr. David Allen (Associate VP for Institutional Assessment)

The Senate Academic Oversight Committee (Dr. Tobin, Dr. McReynolds and Dr. Viloría) met with Dr. Allen to discuss course evaluations and inflation of scores. Strategies discussed to increase student participation in course evaluations included:

- increase Duo authentication to 30 days instead of having to do it daily,
- developing course-evaluation script and a student FAQ concerning evaluations,
- having more student-manned course evaluation stations available,
- getting more iPads and making them available for course evaluation stations to use,
- sending graduate students course evaluation reminders through their personal emails
- increase social media presence during course evaluation week.

It was suggested that in judging evaluations courses should be broken up in bins of similarities (1000 level, 2000 level, Win courses combined), (3000 level and 4000 level combined) and graduate level.

Dr. Allen presented an analysis of the last 10 years of student evaluation response rates:

- When we used the University of Washington instrument rates were 65 to low 70s.
 - With mean scores 4.4 to 4.9.
- When we first went to online evaluations it dropped to 50s to low 60s.
 - With mean scores 4.6 to 4.69.

Dr. Filiz Shine

Dr. Shine brought up a concern to the Senate about new faculty and the fact that as new faculty their health insurance coverage does not start until around the 1st of October. Which is a long time not to be covered especially for those with small children.

Dr. Stephen Benigno

Dr. Benigno presented a number of rebuttals to the Senate concerning his denial of tenure and the recent possible changes to the faculty handbook as suggested by the Provost (see attachments).

IV. The minutes of the February 2020 Senate meeting were approved with no corrections.

V. Old Business

1. Elections and University Committees Update. Senator Dalton announced that she is currently going through the official list of University Committee members and that she hopes to be able to send out the complete listing soon so that nominations can be made in March and elections can occur in early April. Also, Senators Kimber Palmer and Vivian Garcia volunteered to help sort through the committee lists.

2. Faculty Survey for Spring 2020. It was agreed to ask the faculty the following question:

"What is your preference for the length of the regular long semester (14, 15 or 16 weeks)?"

Senator Gill agreed to email this out to the Senate for further discussion so that it could be sent to the faculty by the end of March or early April.

3. Suggested Revision of the Faculty Handbook Regarding Appeal for Promotion and Tenure.

The Handbook Committee met to discuss this change (see attachment) and decided that further discussion involving the Provost and, possibly, System Legal should take place before it is presented to the Senate and the Faculty for a vote.

4. Proposed Standard Class Meeting Times and Passing Period.

Senator Lola Norris reported that the new class meeting time blocks were not going to happen next year and that the Registrar has agreed to discuss any time block changes with departments that will be strongly affected by the change.

VI. New Business

1. Report from Texas Council of Faculty Senates.

Senator Lola Norris reported on her attendance to the latest TCFS meeting (see attachment).

They had 2 panels, one by the American Association of University Professors who recommended that AAUP have a presence on campus. The second panel discussed the best practices in the hiring and evaluation of academic administrators and the need to get more faculty involvement in this.

They also had a Round Robin where they asked for institutional support for Faculty Senates (see attachment).

2. Summer Salaries. Senator Lola Norris reported that she is still negotiating a possible increase in summer salaries with the Provost. The Provost did agree that Chairs of graduate students should get a bonus to their salary when the graduate student successfully defends their thesis.

3. Ongoing Technology and Distance Education Issues. It was asked that TAC look into trying to extend the length of the Duo sign-in beyond the daily requirement. Also the outdated technology in Student Center room 231 is not controlled by OIT, but by Events Services. There is also a lot of outdated technology in SC room 236 as well.

VII. Committee Reports

1. Academic Oversight Committee: see previous notes.

2. Budget and Finance Committee: did not meet.

3. The University Ethics Committee: did not meet.

4. The Committee on Creation, Composition, and Responsibilities of Committees: see previous notes.

5. The Awards Committee: Senator Gill reported that the Committee is meeting today to look over the schedules and syllabi for candidates for the Teacher of the Year awards. Also, they are currently compiling a list of classroom observers for the nominees

6. The Handbook Committee: see previous notes.

7. The Assessment Committee: did not meet.

8. The Distance Education and Instructional Technology Committee: did not meet

9. The Technology Advisory Committee: see previous notes. Also, there was much discussion in this committee concerning increasing participation in student course evaluations.

10. Fixed-Term Promotion Committee: Senator Martinez reported that they were continuing meeting with the Associate Dean of the College of Arts & Sciences in developing Fixed-Term Promotion Guidelines for that College. They have a rough draft, but still need to address some issues such as teaching loads.

VIII. Other Business or Announcements

It was announced that the next Coffee with the President will be on March 24th.

- IX. The meeting was adjourned at 2:40 p.m.

From page 53, 2019 TAMIU Faculty Handbook

If the committee determines that the allegations do establish a *prima facie* case, the matter shall be referred for an evidentiary hearing by the same appeals committee. A *prima facie* case for purposes of this subsection means that the faculty member's evidence, alone and un rebutted, would establish that a violation as defined above may have occurred.

In any evidentiary hearing, the burden of proving that the decision was made in violation of academic freedom or for an illegal reason or without adequate consideration of the faculty member's record of professional achievement shall rest with the faculty member. . . .

Suggested Revision (additions in italics)

If the committee determines that the allegations do establish a *prima facie* case, the matter shall be referred for an evidentiary hearing. A *prima facie* case for purposes of this subsection means that the faculty member's evidence, alone and un rebutted, would establish that a violation as defined above may have occurred. *However, if the faculty member is appealing the recommendation of the Provost and/or the President on the basis of their having made their recommendations "without adequate consideration of the faculty member's record of professional achievement," that evidence must include the documents reviewed by the Provost and/or President and the conclusions that they drew after evaluating those documents. Thus, that evidence in support of a claim of an inadequate "consideration of the faculty member's record," must include the complete dossier and supplementary documents submitted by the faculty member for promotion and tenure along with committee reports, external letters, and all administrative recommendations that have been added to the application dossier since its original submission by the faculty member. The faculty member, however, may submit any additional documents to the committee in support of the appeal. The faculty member may also address the committee for a specific, limited time established by the committee. The administration cannot address the committee nor can it provide any additional documentation beyond that included in the complete application dossier and supplemental application documents.*

If the committee determines that the allegations do establish a *prima facie* case, the matter shall be referred to an evidentiary hearing. *The members of the evidentiary hearing cannot have been members of the committee that determined that a prima facie case justified a hearing. The hearing committee will be composed of 2 representatives from the Grievance Pool selected by the faculty member appealing the tenure/promotion decision, 2 representatives selected from the Grievance Pool selected by the Provost, and 3 Faculty Senators selected by the Faculty Senate President. No member of the hearing committee can be from the college of the faculty member filing the appeal nor from the University Promotion and Tenure Committee.*

Report on Texas Council of Faculty Senates Meeting

Attended the meeting in Austin on February 21-22

The first panel discussion was by AAUP (American Association of University professors) whose mission is to advance academic freedom and shared governance.

(Mission: to advance academic freedom and shared governance; to define fundamental professional values and standards for higher education; to promote the economic security of faculty, academic professionals, graduate students, post-doctoral fellows, and all those engaged in teaching and research in higher education; to help the higher education community organize to make our goals a reality; and to ensure higher education's contribution to the common good.)

They encouraged that every university have a presence of AAUP on campus. AAUP has moral authority and influence, can help faculty and faculty senates.

The second panel discussed the best practices in the hiring and evaluation of academic administrators. They talked about the need to make sure that faculty is involved in these processes.

The speaker of the evening banquet was Dr. Harrison Keller, the new commissioner of Higher Education Coordinating Board, who instead of giving talk answered questions from the floor. Some of the questions were about fields of study and meta-majors, dual credit.

The Round Robin is always very interesting, as we can see many similar issues across the state. Again some of the topics mentioned were large decline in enrollment at some universities, consolidation of programs in others, problems with dual credit, issues with accessibility.

An interesting ad-hoc round robin was on institutional support of faculty senates. The questions every representative has to answer were: 1. Budget? 1. Staff support? 2. Course release? Office space? And discretionary funds?

3.0 Institutional Support for Faculty Councils/Senates

The Chair of the Academic Senate or Faculty Council runs the meetings, and is responsible for the operations of Faculty Council and its various committees. The Chair advises the President, Provost, and other administrators on a wide variety of issues, including pressing issues and long-term vision at the university, and serves on a large number of administrative committees.

To help the Chair execute their extensive, wide-ranging responsibilities to both internal and external constituencies, the position of Chair should receive significant institutional support. We surveyed our committee members as to the level of support. Having dedicated full-time staff is critical for retaining institutional memory because the Faculty Council Chair or Academic Senate President typically serves a one-year term and a year previously to that as Chair Elect.

UT campus	Faculty Council/Academic Senate		Chair Support	
	Recurring budget	Staff members	Course relief	Discret. funds
Angelo State	\$1000+TCFS fee	0.0 FTE	2 courses	\$0
Lamar Beaumont	\$7000-\$10000	0.0 FTE	2 courses	\$0
Sam Houston	\$5100	0.0 FTE	2 courses + 2 chair elect	\$0
Sul Ross Alpine	\$7200	0.0 FTE	2 courses	\$0 no space
Sul Ross Rio	\$1500	0.0 FTE	0 courses	\$0 no space
Tarleton	\$0	0.0 FTE	2 courses	\$0 no space
Texas A&M CS	\$30k	1.0 FTE	0 courses	\$10k
Texas Corpus Christi	\$6769	0.5 FTE	4 courses + summer	+ shared space
Texas A&M Kingsville	Travel to TCFS twice a year	0.5 FTE	2 courses	\$0 + no space
Texas A&M San Antonio	\$9000	0.0 FTE	2 courses	\$0 + no space
Texas International	\$2000	0.0 FTE	1 course + 1 secretary	\$0 + no space
Texas Woman's	\$30000+\$20000 travel	1.0 FTE	2 courses	Space + student worker
Univ. Houston	\$30,000	2.0 FTE + 1 work study	4 courses + 2 chair elect	1 month + \$5k chair-elect + office space
Univ. Houston Clear Lake	unknown	0.0 FTE	2 courses + 1 course for three comm chairs	\$0k + space

Univ. Houston Downtown	\$10k	1.0 FTE	4 courses + 2 courses chair elect + 1 course sec	\$0k
UNT	\$6k	1.0 FTE + grad asst.	0 courses	\$3k + space
UNT Dallas	\$5k	0.0 FTE	0 course	\$0k
North Texas HSC	\$10k for faculty awards + travel	3.0 FTE	10% release	\$0k + space
UT Arlington	Yes (\$3k)	0.5 FTE	2 courses	10% 9mo
UT Austin	Yes (\$5k)	2.5 FTE	2 courses	\$15k
UT Dallas	Travel + dues	0.3 FTE	None	\$30k **
UT El Paso	Yes (food/copies)	Part-time student	1 course	None
UT Perm. Basin	No	No	None ##	None
UT RGV	Yes (food/travel)	0.5 FTE	2 courses	None + space
UT San Antonio	Yes	0.25 FTE	1 course	1 mo. summer
UT Tyler	\$10k	0.3 FTE	2 courses	None
West Texas A&M	Food + travel	0.0 FTE	2 courses	\$0k

** UT Dallas provides \$30k in discretionary funds to support the service of the faculty members who serve as a Chair, two co-Chairs and the Faculty Secretary. Also, chairs of high-workload committees receive discretionary funds to support their service.

Although there is no guaranteed course relief for the President of the Faculty Senate at UT Permian Basin, the President received two courses of teaching relief in 2018-