

Faculty Senate Agenda
Friday, March 7th 2025
12:00pm -2:30pm, **STC 120**

In attendance: Kate Houston, Puneet Gill, Andrew Hazelton, Malynda Dalton, Li-Zheng Brooks, Leonel Prieto, Seong Kwan Cho, Andrew Hilburn, Kameron Jorgensen, Viridiana Vela, Runchang Lin, Marvin Bennett, Ediza Garcia, Monica Chavez, Cynthia Gallardo, Tim Rubel, Won Kim, Emily Rice (guest).

A. Dr. Claudia San Miguel, Provost and VP for Academic Affairs

- 1) Meeting began with some discussion of the announcement of the new chancellor of the A&M System, Glenn Hegar. Little is known about Hegar's approach to higher education, so we will need to wait and see.
- 2) SACS re-accreditation process
 - Rellis campus visit went well, they asked for some additional information about advising.
 - On site visit at TAMU is coming up in April
 - There were some flags related to standards with respect to Board of Regents documentation such as TrainTraq, financial conflicts of interests, and providing documentation of those items was difficult to satisfy for SACS.
 - Academic Affairs
 - A. Faculty credentials—14 faculty members required more evidence for credentialing, and that documentation was supplied as to why they were teaching particular classes.
 - B. May come back and say they need more documentation, but hopefully this has been enough to satisfy.
 - Faculty sufficiency (vs. adjuncts) per academic program
 - A. 3 programs were flagged
 - B. Master of Intl Business never was offered, so had no faculty
 - C. Criminal Justice, School Counseling, RN to BSN, and Nursing Administration were also flagged as being under-resourced.
 - D. Hirings are ongoing so documentation has been submitted to SACS.
 - Student Complaints
 - A. There is little documentation of processes concerning grade appeals, student complaints against faculty, etc. This is fine if its being filed via Maxient, but there is ambiguity and lack of documentation when things are handled informally and via email.
 - B. Is the loop being closed on informal resolutions, such as emails, and is this documentation being saved somewhere?
 - SACS Site Visit March 31 to April 2nd, with 1st and 2nd being the big days.
 - A. They will let us know what possible deficiencies we have, then the process continues on the SACS side in terms of seeking more documentation to remedy.
 - B. We will have the final decision in Dec. 2025
 - Question: Will faculty be affected by credentialing if there are deficiencies? We aren't there with any of the 14 affected faculty members, most of it was about providing reasoning as to why they were teaching a particular course. No faculty are at risk of being unable to teach in their programs. It's just a question of

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providing documentation and rationales as to why particular faculty are teaching particular courses.

3) Interfolio

- In beta testing for PPE, will be moving on to promotion and tenure as well.
- PPE for 2025 will be done in Interfolio.
- Beta testing for promotion and tenure over summer for fall implementation; Fall P&T dossiers should be done through Interfolio.
- There will be trainings.
- Everything will be done through Interfolio: PPE, P&T, third-year review, contacting external reviewers, etc.
- The last piece to be implemented will be faculty profiles that will be able to grab from those documents to update faculty webpages.
- Questions: Can it be used for Faculty Awards Committee? Probably.

4) Interim Positions

- Administrators are being evaluated, and given the number of interim positions, the provost's office would like feedback on folks holding the interim positions.
 - A. Provost is wondering whether we should have searches, or should we extend permanent contracts to these individuals?
 - B. Dr. San Miguel is looking for feedback on these individuals.
 - C. Ideas of these interim candidates giving job talks, forums, surveys.
- Faculty senators noted that there is concern about the large number of interim positions
- Senators are asked to solicit feedback from their constituents.

5) PPE Research Releases

- Currently, you need a 9 over two years to be classified as research productive to get the research release down to 3-3.
- Based on faculty senate suggestions from a year or so ago, provost is moving to a 3-year cycle.
- We need to decide on what year 1 will be for implementing this new system.

B. Mr. Gilberto Perez: Assistant Chief Information Officer

- Procurement process is clunky: 3 legs: VPAT, ACR, Security Review
- Updates to VPAT
 - Voluntary product assessment template
 - Goes to vendors to fill out
- ACR: Accessibility conformity report
- Security Review: state-mandated
 - Must review any security threat presented by software or technology that interfaces with our systems.
- VPAT Repository is being developed for the entire A&M System, so if it exists, you won't need to duplicate. The same will be true for approved exceptions.
 - Office of Information Technology is working on taking on most of the heavy lifting in terms of organizing these.
- New form and procedures will streamline the approval process.
 - Vendor, who the contact is, etc.

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- OIT will do the legwork, then faculty will get notified when things move through.
- Exceptions field will be ready to go in case it looks like there's need for exception so that time isn't wasted between rejection and turnaround.
- Procurement won't go back and forth; it'll be one step of approval.
- One form will do all three things: VPAT, ACR, Security Review.
- Discussion ensued concerning software availability, difficulties with downloading software and then putting them on different machines when the approvals already exist. Why do faculty need to be putting in requests for basic software (such as Adobe)?
- This new approval process should be up and running by the Fall, which will streamline things for faculty.
- Questions and discussion ensued concerning A/V support and Help Desk support in the evenings. A/V support seems slow to respond to requests. Faculty discussion highlighted the inadequacy of equipment requests that go nowhere are communications that go unanswered.
- Discussion ensued concerning SafeZone
 - If you download the app, register it, then delete it, you will get the text alerts.
 - We are below 10% adoption.

I. Approval of February Minutes

- a. Motion to approve: Senator Houston, seconded by Senator Gill.
- b. Motion carried unanimously with one abstention from a member who wasn't present at last meeting.

II. Old Business

A. Update on Higher Ed Bills in Texas Legislature

- Bill ending tenure looks to be dying, hasn't been assigned to any committee. Prevailing sentiment appears to be that this issue was handled during the last legislative session.
- Shared governance bill on faculty senates, curriculum, and governing boards has been assigned to Higher Ed Committee (SB 37). This one looks likely to pass and makes significant changes to processes.
- Curriculum bill banning instruction of "DEI" topics has not been assigned to committee.
- There is also a bill that preserves research and teaching carveouts, but this has also not been assigned to committee.
- Accreditation body bill to create Texas accrediting body and remove from SACS over DEI concerns among the legislators.

B. Update on Letters Submitted to Office of Provost from Senate

- Increasing Transparency with Regards to Senate Complaints

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- i. This issue originated when Senate Executive Committee brought concerns to office of the Provost about recurring issues.
 - ii. Dr. San Miguel agreed there should be a feedback loop to bring back news to us about what measures have been taken at next meeting with either Executive Committee or full Senate.
 - iii. On the specific complaints raised (removal of tenure dossier materials, exclusion of faculty from meetings, and failure to uphold procedures)
 - 1. Affected dean has met with Office of the Provost and has been management counseled on these issues.
- Centralizing the Role of Faculty in Program Review
 - i. Dr. San Miguel liked the outlined process that Faculty Senate presented for low-enrolled minors, which was based on similar documents from A&M and UT system schools.
 - ii. Submission of low-enrolled minors document to BoR hasn't happened yet.
 - iii. The draft policy for low-enrolled minors is generous toward low-enrolled programs and protects them as much as possible from arbitrary closure.
 - iv. Provost agrees that faculty need to be involved. She will be taking the Faculty Senate suggestions into account when she's crafting a process and committees to review low-enrolled programs.
 - v. Discussion ensued concerning Faculty Senate's role in advocating for affected programs, but provost's office seems open to working with us on policy changes.
 - vi. New policy is being written, but Dr. San Miguel liked the presentation we made and likes the reasoning.
- C. Update on Low Enrollment Minors Process
 - See above discussion
- D. Faculty Development Leave Committee Update
 - It's back on track, review of applications went through, and FDL decisions went out.
 - Committee had received the materials late, but it's done now.

III. New Business

- A. A&M Regents Executive Order Banning Drag Shows
 - a. Sen. Rubel prefaced his statements by saying he thinks it's about more than just banning drag shows, it's about the A&M System violating civil liberties and privacy rights.
 - i. Would like to draw attention to the fact that a ban on drag is setting a precedent to target groups the Regents do not like.
 - ii. Federal lawsuit has been filed by civil rights organization.
 - b. Sen. Rubel suggests responding in two ways: one more passive, one more head-on
 - i. File an official complaint with Office of General Counsel.

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- ii. Circulate a letter among A&M campuses to show support.
 - 1. Sen. Rubel expressed that a letter is an ask, whereas it should be more in defense of rights.
- iii. A guest then spoke in support of such action, reflecting the experiences of students who feel the need to censor part of themselves, and that such action by Senate would be a strong statement in defense of student civil rights.
- c. Discussion ensued concerning vehicles for taking action on this.
 - i. Issues that touch on it
 - 1. Freedom of expression
 - 2. Shared governance: there was no consultation of faculty, staff, or students. The BoR created this policy during a 9-minute phone call meeting.
 - ii. President Houston is unclear on next steps given early stage of this.
 - 1. No guidance from OGC, where to channel things, etc.
 - 2. Can Senate act on this and in what ways? What avenue is best?
 - 3. First step may be considering whether we would like to issue a statement in defense of the community while determining next steps, would also like to be discussing with faculty, and with other System Faculty Senates around the system.
 - iii. Further discussion ensued concerning phases of response, by starting with a statement, then would have a response by next meeting. Discussion ensued concerning the optics of waiting on lodging a formal complaint.
- d. Vote on making statement
 - i. Sen. Rubel made motion to do a statement, seconded by Sen. Bennett.
 - ii. Unanimously carried.
 - iii. Discussion then ensued about discussing with faculty and how to go about that, sharing document with other organizations, SGA, getting it to filter toward students.
 - iv. Dr. Houston will draft and circulate for comment by senators, to be released before next meeting.
- B. Update on Senator Dalton's Trip to TCFS Meeting
 - a. Senator Dalton distributed a handout on different organizations in the state and what is available.
 - b. Texas Council of Faculty Senates
 - c. Attended panel discussion on how to address or how to think about some of the bills being proposed by the legislature.
 - d. Roundup Reports discussed issues at various campuses, looking for common themes across campuses, then held roundtables based on those common issues.

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- i. Attendees noted the trend in high rates of admin turnover and hiring, interim admin appointments that roll into permanent positions.
 - ii. SB 17 was also discussed.
 - iii. Decline of transparency and communication, decline of shared governance were also noted by attendees.
 - e. Senator Dalton found it interesting to see what campuses are getting hit with different things, large vs. small universities, remote locations vs bigger markets, and how those factors affect campus needs and wants.
 - f. A&M Senate reps at TCFS had a lunch with Vice Chancellor Hallmark.
- C. Methods for Administrator Assessment
 - a. Note on Interim Positions—Provost San Miguel is trying to gather feedback on interim appointments.
 - b. Uptake on administrator assessments are low given login concerns—that by logging in, faculty may believe they open themselves up to retaliation if they're critical.
 - c. Potential solution would be to run them through Microsoft Forms, since they require university license to access but do not require you to log in.
 - i. But can this be set up in MS Forms that allows this to be differentiated the way the OIT system is currently?
 - ii. Discussion ensued concerning platforms, how to increase participation in surveys, etc.
 - iii. Discussion ensued concerning Senators' efforts to increase participation to boost response rates. Senators are encouraged to appeal to colleagues to complete the evaluations.
 - iv. Survey window will be 17th to 24th of March.
 - v. President Houston recommends Senators should encourage participation by sending reminder emails to their constituencies.
 - d. After discussion, the decision was made to stick with the original platform and consider changes for next cycle.
- D. After Hours OIT Support for Faculty
 - a. See above discussion with Gilberto Perez.
 - b. Appears to be a disconnect between official line of "there is tech/AV support after hours" and what faculty are finding after hours.
 - c. Technology Advisory Committee will take this up.
 - d. There appears to be a breakdown in support.
- E. Concerns over UCC Approval Process (Shared Governance)
 - a. Faculty are reporting that online workflow processes for UCC happen after hours or over weekends.
 - b. Chairs are seeing that curriculum changes are being approved on the behalf of chair's by Assoc. Provost.

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- c. More information is needed from faculty who have brought up these issues in order to determine appropriate next steps.
 - d. UCC is also the venue where these things are coming from, where the changes originated from, and then can be appealed via UCC.
 - F. Study Abroad Task Force
 - a. After the Provost's forum on Study aboard and other matters, decision made to form a task force.
 - b. Study Abroad Task force was formed to provide alternative proposals.
 - c. Julien Carriere is chairing, with representatives from Humanities, College of Ed, Criminal Justice, Nick Hudson (SOLE), Reading the Globe.
 - d. It's a good committee of 9, working on different sections of a proposal. Looking to submit the proposal to the provost at the end of the semester.
 - G. Dr. Hallmark Visit and TAMIU President Search Update
 - a. Have heard little about the presidential search since Hallmark's visit.
 - b. Names have been solicited for Presidential Search
 - i. Many Regents Professors were suggested to serve on the search committee.
 - ii. There were also some self-nominations.
 - iii. Those names have been passed along to Vice Chancellor Hallmark
 - iv. Will be a fairly large committee of 8-12 on the Search Committee. Faculty, student, staff, and community representatives.
 - H. PPE Research Releases—Moving to 3-Year Formula
 - a. Senate has a question for provost: What is the new number for the 3-year period? 12? Or 13? Currently a 9 over 2 years, which is difficult to hit. A 12 would be more achievable than a 13, for example, and would reward research-productive faculty consistently.
 - b. Discussion: What role can we take in shaping this discussion?
 - c. Sen. Houston will discuss PPE at Exec. Com.
 - d. After discussion, senators felt it best to start fresh with next year as Year 1 for the base period to start the three-year formula.
 - I. Discussion Ensued concerning Institutional Enhancement Funds
 - a. These funds have been stripped from House and Senate budgets.
 - b. Interim President Juan Castillo noted that should those cuts remain, they would take as many measures as possible to prevent layoffs via financial exigency.
- IV. Committee Reports
- A. Academic Oversight—no report
 - B. Budget and Finance—gave a brief update in terms of legislative request to include IEF again.
 - C. University Ethics--none
 - D. Committee on Creation, Composition, and Responsibilities of Committees--none
 - E. Awards

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- a. Issues & Possible Revisions
 - i. Misunderstanding around digital portfolios, leading to disputes between colleges given miscommunications, etc.
 - ii. Do we allow colleges to do whatever portfolio they want and then we evaluate them all?
 - iii. Esp. given the shift to Interfolio
 - iv. Updates:
 - 1. Blackboard shell is created to start reviewing the materials.
 - 2. Echo recordings of teaching demonstrations will be available.
 - v. Every senator will have to do at least 1, maybe 2 evaluations between 4/1 and 4/13.
 - 1. Should these just be assigned to senator? Yes.
 - vi. Would like to include a section on Faculty Senate website with a FAQ for faculty so they know what to prepare. How many course evaluations? Etc.
 - vii. COAS P&T wanted to standardize process for awards, definition of terms, etc. Senate was asked to try to define these terms and create a rubric, etc. But the breakdown is happening at COAS P&T, and COAS needs to figure out their own standards. Senate will not create these documents for COAS.
 - viii. The awards info goes from dean to chairs, who then solicit from faculty.
- F. Faculty Handbook
 - a. Promotion to Full Professor: Timelines/deadlines moved up somewhat so that external letters can be solicited.
 - b. Updates to Chapter for Fixed-Term Faculty
 - c. Working on these changes, and the work is ongoing.
- G. Assessment—no report, surveys ready to go out to faculty for administrator evaluations.
- H. Distance Education and Instructional Technology
 - a. AI Rule & Accessibility Training for Course Content
 - i. Strong rules coming for AI detection tools that are hosted outside of university.
 - ii. FERPA rules question on this: uploading student material to a third-party platform that is used to train AI (including AI detectors) violated FERPA.
 - iii. Limitations on AI use in meetings, transcriptions, minutes, etc.
 - iv. A&M System is getting worried about potentially sensitive information going into AI.
 - v. Accessibility training for course content is coming, please communicate to faculty that we'll have to be in compliance with that.
- I. Technology Advisory
 - a. Discussed processes for ordering higher-spec'd computing resources
 - b. If you want the highest spec'd stuff, it has to happen via department budget office
 - c. AI supercomputer is coming to system, which we will have access to.

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- d. After hours support
- e. The timeframe to refresh PC monitors is 10 years.
- J. Fixed-Term Faculty—no report

V. Announcements and Other Business

- a. When we send the minutes for Executive Council, Deans Council, Provost's Council, etc., can the minutes be communicated via link?
- b. We should also begin sending out Faculty Senate meeting minutes when these are finalized and approved at the next meeting.
- c.

VI. Senator Houston moved to adjourn; Senator Dalton seconded. Motion carried unanimously.