

## Faculty Senate Meeting

2 Dec 2011  
12:00 noon - 2:30 pm  
WHTC 250

- I. Call to Order by Mr. Townsend at 12:04 p.m.
- II. Roll Call, **Present:** Mr. B. Townsend, Dr. F. Rhodes, Dr. M. Bennett, Dr. G. Clarke, Dr. S. Duffy, Ms. V. Garcia, Dr. S. Garrett, Dr. L. Hemmer, Dr. J. Kilburn, Dr. M. Moran, Dr. M. Munoz, Dr. J. Norris, Dr. L. Prieto, Dr. A. Ramirez, Dr. C. Sung, Dr. M. Vargas, Mr. J. Perez
- III. Our Guests Dr. Arenaz, Dr. Blackwell and Mayra Hernandez were given the floor.

Dr. Arenaz emailed us a set of learning outcomes developed by the system. The Provost is part of the system Globalization and Cultural Diversity Committee. One of the charges for this committee is to look at learning objectives based on the learning outcomes that faculty were sent and asked to review. As soon as they are fully developed, these learning objectives will also be sent to the faculty for review. This will be part of a broad set of learning outcomes that all schools in the system will have to meet and each institution within the system will have the option of adding their own learning outcomes to this list. By the end of 2013 we will have to revise our core curriculum and to map all of these learning outcomes to the different courses that we have in our core.

Dr. Arenaz also informed us that in the past students were given penalties for their second case of plagiarism/cheating that were deemed inappropriate by our system attorneys and that we could not enforce. Currently we are looking at narrowing the penalties for plagiarism/cheating. It was mentioned that in some departments there is very little reporting of plagiarism/cheating and that this has become a concern. The Senate was asked to go back to the Faculty and discuss this with them, especially in regard to repeat offenders.

Dr. Arenaz asked for the Senate's feedback on the fact that the way that admission to graduate programs is currently set up a student is automatically admitted if they have the appropriate GPA and GRE scores without the faculty or the Program ever looking at their credentials.

The Provost announced that there will be a General Faculty Meeting on Dec 7th where the President will hold a discussion with all of us about the future of the University's budget.

Dr. Blackwell, the Chair of the Honor Council, informed us that when a student is reported for plagiarism/cheating for the second time that the case automatically goes before the Honor Council to decide if there will be additional penalties assessed beyond those given by the faculty member. We were also informed that the current penalty of placing a student on Honor Code Probation only covers that student's extracurricular activities and does not apply to their curricular activities. Administration now wants to narrow the options that the Honor Council

has when dealing with students who have 2 or more violations for plagiarism/cheating in order to give them clearer guidelines. If these options are to be formally placed into the Honor Code then they would require Faculty Senate action. The Senate was presented with a list of the penalties that are currently being proposed by our Administration:

- Undergraduate students; first offense is grade punishment (which is entirely in the hands of the faculty); second offense is an F in the course, a years suspension from the University and permanent expulsion from the program; and third offense is automatic and permanent expulsion from the University. Graduate students would skip the first offense step and go straight to the second and third penalty.

It was emphasized that Faculty must report a student to the Office of Student Affairs if they assess that student of plagiarism/cheating and they access that student with a grade penalty because that is part of the student's due-process and, otherwise, is an invitation to a lawsuit. There is a web form on TAMIU's website that may be used to report incidents of plagiarism/cheating under Current Students/Student Conduct. The Faculty Senate was asked to help inform our colleagues about the necessity of formally reporting students who are caught plagiarizing or cheating.

During the discussion it was suggested that there should be a transition time before initiating such harsh penalties upon the students in order to be certain that all sides; Students, Faculty and Admins; are fully informed of all the potential consequences for these actions.

Dr. Blackwell requested that the Faculty Senate's Ethics Committee take the Administration's proposed plagiarism/cheating penalties and review the wording of these penalties closely before proceeding to formalize them within the Honor Code and the Faculty and Student Handbooks.

IV. The minutes of the November, 11th Faculty Meeting were approved with corrections.

V. Committee Reports

Handbook Committee - Drafts defining "Fixed-Term Faculty" and "Non-Tenure Clinical Educator Track Faculty Appointment, Promotion and Tenure" for possible inclusion in the Handbook were presented for discussion. After much discussion it was agreed to send both of these documents back to the Handbook Committee for further rewording and revising.

Academic Affairs and Oversight Committee - Will be meeting with the Provost to discuss the promotion and tenure process and will report the results of this meeting to the Senate.

Assessment Committee - Dr. Kilburn was elected Chair to this committee. This committee was tasked with completing the Administrator evaluations starting in January. A committee meeting will be called soon to discuss the evaluation of the Senate and the up-and-coming external reviewers who will be assessing individual Graduate and Undergraduate Programs. A vote was

taken to change the date of these reviews from Jan 15 to Jan 31. This passed unanimously.

- Morale and Welfare Committee - The committee needs to meet in February to implement the Faculty Survey.

- Budget and Finance Committee - Met to discuss the presentation that the President made to our students on the new budget. The students voted to not have another increase in Student Athletics fees. A 10% tuition increase was approved which could generate up to \$1 million. It was the opinion of the Committee that some of this money should be used to reduce the current course overload of the Faculty as opposed to using it for a merit pool. A vote was taken and it was unanimously agreed that the monies should be used to decrease Faculty course overloads.

- University Ethics Committee - Will be working on the additions/changes to the Honor Code.

- Committee on Committees - Dr. Rhodes stepped down as the Chair of this committee and Dr. Hemmer was elected as the new Chair.

## VI. Other Business

- the draft of the 2012 - 2013 Academic Calendar was presented.

- The Provost asked the Senate to help out in overhauling the current Grievance Process by tightening up the rules, in specific, the criteria by which additional material is introduced, the calling of witnesses... etc. An Ad Hoc Committee composed of Mr. Townsend, Dr. Vargas, Dr. Clarke and Dr. Bennett was formed to assist in this charge.

- It was announced that OIT has already sent all of the information about the Technology Committee to several members to the Senate, but no one has seen it. It is, however, supposed to be sent to the Senate, eventually.

- It was also announced that the Senate will be meeting on the first Friday that we return from Christmas break.

## VII. The meeting was adjourned at 2:11 p.m.