

FACULTY SENATE MEETING
September 5, 2014
12:30 - 3:40 p.m.

WHTC Room 125

I. Call to Order by President Ramirez at 12:47 hrs.

II. Roll Call, Present: Dr. A. Ramirez, Dr. M. Bennett, Dr. G. Clarke, V. Garcia, Dr. L. Manganaro, Dr. H. Mandal, J. Maxstadt, Dr. J. Norris, Dr. Q. Ni, Dr. Kimber Palmer, Dr. L. Prieto, Dr. G. Salinas, Dr. Moran, and B. Townsend.

III. Approval of Minutes

- A vote was taken to approve the Minutes of May's Senate meeting. The minutes were approved unanimously.

IV. University Guest Speakers and Presentations:
Our guests were given the floor

Dr. Arenaz:

Suggests we have more time for undertaking the election process of Teacher of the Year and Scholar of the Year.

The TAMU System requires that standard administrative procedures must have local procedures. So far, most local SAPs have been taken from the Faculty Handbook. The Provost asked the Senate to carry out the necessary steps for a Faculty vote on making recommendation letters for tenure a requirement.

TAMIU will have an International Petroleum Institute that will undertake multi-institutional and multi-disciplinary academic activities.

The International Language Institute is now part of the Binational Center.

Dr. Arenaz and Dr. Keck attended the recent meeting of the A&M Board of Regents: Discussed at this meeting was outcome based funding, which is under consideration. This does not appear to be a popular program as it would involve placing money from various institutions and could result in distributing in to other institutions in the system.

Dr. Arenaz discussed "open stacks"- which has to do with a sharing of textbooks. There is concern for the high cost of textbooks, and the open stack concept might result in a reduced cost for textbooks.

Another item under discussion was a change in the grievance procedure for faculty who do not receive tenure. There would be a reduction in the types of bases upon which they could base their grievance.

Another item: following an audit of College Station, it was determined that at that school there are many faculty on twelve-month contracts, which means they accrue annual leave. This has resulted in a 34 million dollar debt that TAMU must carry. In order to alleviate this there is discussion of putting everyone (including chairs, etc.) on nine-month contracts with additional three-month stipends, or contracts. It is Texas law that for faculty on nine-month contracts, they are not required to be present at the university when students are not in class. Dr. Arenaz will inform the deans of this, as some colleges ask faculty to attend meetings on these days that are supposed to be vacation days for faculty on nine-month contracts. A concern was raised that contracts need to be more specific as to the dates they begin and end.

Dr. Arenaz reiterated the information shared earlier through an email by Dr. Keck in which salary letters sent previously do not include any possible cost of living increases which may be awarded in November.

Dr. Arenaz indicated he was very impressed with the new faculty joining us this fall. Also, that the International Language Institute is now under Bi-National Center.

Fred Juarez- President of the Staff Senate:

Mr. Juarez asked each of us encourage administrative staff in our areas to attend Staff Senate meetings which are held the second Tuesday of the month from 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. All information will be on U-connect.

Roberto Martinez-From the Office of Institutional Advancement:

Mr. Martinez came to reiterate encouraging donations to TAMIU, which will be matched up to a total of \$50,000.00 from the Title V grant. To date, \$15,000.00 has been pledged which will be matched by \$15,000.00 from said grant.

Griz Zimmerman-Athletic Director and Randall Brown Faculty Athletic Representative:

After handing out fall schedule of home games, the two requested the Faculty Senate sponsor the election of two faculty members to the Athletic Advisory Council. The bylaws provide for such elected members. The role of the Faculty Athletic Representative is to ensure integrity of the athletes as well as concern for the welfare of the student-athletes. Dr. Brown mentioned that despite all the pressures the athletes go through, as a group, they have higher retention rates and higher GPAs than the general student population. Since the Faculty Senate will be having an election in the near future, it was the consensus that the hosting of an election for representatives for the council could be handled by the Faculty

Senate. A request was made for information as to the term lengths of these representatives. Since the bylaws do not spell that out, it will have to be dealt with by the council itself.

V. Executive Council- No report given, other than previously sent to all faculty.

VI. Provost Council-

There has been an urgent need to update the faculty handbook in order to match the report that went to SACS in the last few days. Our president and John Maxstadt, chair of the Faculty Handbook Committee made editorial changes that could be made without a vote of the faculty senate. These were non-substantive changes, including updating some descriptions as to the working of the university, correcting some typographical errors and updating job titles.

MOTION: Brendan Townsend moved that the changes that were made be approved. Gilberto Salinas seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

Standard Administrative Procedures (SAPs) were discussed. SAPS will be adopted, and the areas covered by these SAPS items will be removed from the Faculty Handbook. SAPS will cover things like faculty workload and the tenure process. A discussion ensued regarding letters of reference being included in a faculty member's dossier being submitted for tenure consideration.

MOTION:

George Clarke made the following motion:

The Faculty Senate will request the Committee on Faculty Handbook Revision draw up language for a possible modification of the handbook, to be voted on by the faculty at large. This new provision would require the department chair of a faculty member who has applied for tenure consideration, to request three to five letters of recommendation from outside evaluators. These evaluators would be chosen with consultation from the faculty member, and the said letters would become part of the dossier of the faculty member being considered for tenure.

The motion was seconded by Brendan Townsend. Following discussion, the motion passed by the following vote:

9 in favor
1 against
1 abstention

President Ramirez brought up an issue that has come to his attention. Several new faculty members have expressed concern that their first paycheck would not be paid until October 1. This is the usual timetable for the first paycheck of the new school year. For those who have incurred expense in moving to Laredo, this puts them in a financial bind. It was the consensus of the group that the President work with the university administration to come up with a plan whereby the new faculty could have an emergency loan, such as one-half of their forthcoming paycheck, in order to alleviate this problem.

The president also requested consensus that the Faculty Senate sponsor a meeting at least once per semester asking for the attendance for the full body of the faculty. Such consensus was given.

V. NEW Business:

Brendan Townsend requested that the issue of the 11-point or 12-point grading system be placed on the agenda for the October meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 3:40 p.m.