

Texas A&M International University

Faculty Senate

March 1st 2024

12pm – 2:30pm

STC 230

- I. The meeting was called to order by the Faculty Senate President, Dr. Hayley Kazen, at 12pm.
- II. *Roll Call*: See sign-in sheet at the end of minutes.
- III. Our guests were given the floor.

Dr. John Kilburn

Explained the University Intramural grants process – internal grants. Please see the following [website](#) for the individual explanation for each program.

Dr. Arenaz added that maybe we need a different template for creative research grants.

Dr. Pablo Arenaz

Last week was the TAMU Century Chancellor’s Council meeting where Dr. Arenaz presented.

Happy about Spring 2024 - the largest spring enrollment.

The TAMU Board of Regents Chair addressed the council and expressed the TAMU system’s efforts to support first generation students throughout the system.

Freshman retention 92%.

University college trying to get students back. The new program for 5 plus year stop outs - will be contacted by TAMIU recruiters to entice them to come to TAMIU.

Two new articulation agreements Lone Star college – Houston and Southwest Texas Jr College in Brownsville, Texas. Still working in Alamo college MOU the goal is to increase transfer students at TAMIU.

Transfer student graduation rate is at 69%.

Dr. San Miguel

Follett Issues:

Digital vs hard bound textbooks - Dr. Kazen is still waiting to hear from Mr. Castillo and Follett - some faculty prefer physical copies and Follett defaults to digital copies if a digital copy is available¹.

¹ Dr. Kazen followed up with Mr. Castillo and received confirmation that if a digital version of the course textbook is available, then the digital version is the version that will be provided to students.

Program Directors/Coordinators

Appears to be variation across programs and colleges with regards to the role, duties and responsibilities of program directors. Sometimes those roles align with reductions in other areas, such as course reductions, but this is not consistent. Office of the Provost is reviewing.

COAS Dean

Candidate encountered personal issues and had to withdraw from the position. Currently deciding whether to launch a search in Fall, or whether to wait and launch search again in two years. No current announcement with regards to the Interim Dean.

FLEX-Entry

Flex-entry courses only had 2 weeks of instruction before “Mid-terms”. Provost agreed that this was not ideal, and would take this timeline into consideration for the next iteration of FLEX-entry in years time.

AI Detection

TAMU System is not recommending or supporting the use of AI Detection tools due to reliability issues and a rapidly evolving environment. Office of the Provost is working to develop guidelines for faculty and will release those as soon as they are available – hopefully by the Fall.

Faculty recommended to review this assignments and whether the formatting and kinds of assignments may need revision in the face of AI.

Current tension is over how much to integrate with AI, and what the best way is to engage with students over AI.

Dr. Sosa proposed that we have a subcommittee to work on AI. However, Dr. Kazen mentioned that there are currently two committees working on AI issues, DEITC and Ethics Committee.

The faculty survey on bringing back TurnItIn’s AI detection tool had 60 respondents, and 80% wanted a return of the TurnItIn Detection Tool. Dr. Kazen presented the results of the survey to Dr. San Miguel and Dr. Abrego and was informed that the response was insufficient to create an argument to bring back TurnItIn’s AI Detection Tool.

There are also concerns over whether the use of AI detection tools may create FERPA issues and the more we use outside tools the more we train AI to adopt the language. Faculty Senate is pushing TAMIU Administration for guidelines for faculty and students on what are the recommended AI detection tools and procedures.

Mr. Garcia

Discover TAMIU

Those interested in submitting an activity can still do so. This is a way to invite the community to visit TAMIU. This is the 9th year of Discover TAMIU.

Flex-Entry MidTerms

Midterms for Flex-entry courses occur 2 weeks into the course. Midterm grades submitted to TAMIU serve an advisory purpose for TAMIU so the institution can intervene if students are at risk. It can also help advisors to build course schedules for students because Fall enrollment is already underway before completion of the Spring semester.

Registrar with work with Provost to discuss the timelines of Midterm grade submissions for Flex-entry courses.

IV. The minutes from the February meeting were approved with no corrections. Dr. Linn motioned to approve, Dr. Viloría seconded. Drs. Garcia and Pena did not vote.

V. New Business

a. Texas Council of Faculty Senates

The president of the TAMU faculty senate has more access to the Chancellor and President. The TAMU faculty senate president - stated that there is going to be a review the system governance review.

Reports of events of “gotcha journalism” where citizens who align with the legislature are posing as job seekers and ask faculty about DEI policies and then report on the faculty who claim there is still DEI policies in place. Faculty are cautioned to be vigilant of anyone they do not know asking about DEI and are reminded that classroom teaching is exempt from DEI restrictions.

b. Grievance Process and Record Keeping

Faculty Senate has discovered that we need to review the Faculty Senate Handbook language on grievance process language. The Office of the Provost keeps the grievance documentation, however the Handbook incorrectly states that the Senate keeps those records and so we need to edit the handbook to reflect the actual procedures. Furthermore, we need to centralize the storage of Student Grade Appeals for example.

c. SAP and Handbook Alignment on Terminal Contracts for Those Not Granted Tenure

The SAP states that the faculty member who withdraws from tenure review or is unsuccessful at tenure review, will be offered a terminal contract for a period of 1 year only. The handbook however, currently states that the faculty member reverts to a fixed-term faculty line but does not state that the contract is terminal. Dr. Kazen will create language for a Handbook update to ensure alignment with the SAP.

VI. Old Business

a. Financial Report

This is currently in process and will be circulated to the University community when finalized.

b. Ethics Point

There is a need to clearly delineate grievance procedures and Ethics Points procedures to ensure that reports are appropriately filed to the relevant committees.

c. AI Detection Tools

Nothing further to add from discussion earlier in the session (see notes above).

VII. Committee Reports

a. Academic Oversight: Report was presented by Dr. Vilorio - AOC will meet next week to review procedures and timelines for early tenure.

b. Budget and Finance: Did not meet.

c. Ethics – Working on two issues: review and process on ethics complaints, and Labor Day Survey.

d. Committee on Committee: Follow-up on committees that need reps from Enrollment Management and Student Success- The Committee on Committee recommends updating the Faculty Senate Committees composition for student representation and split 6 and 6 Student Success and Enrollment Management get 6 representatives. Suggestion for Calendar Committee – Try to get one main TAMU calendar- will be a goal but it can potentially be challenging due to the number of events. Some universities have a calendar committee.

e. Awards: Dr. Garcia reported that all senators have been added to a Blackboard page where we will be viewing and voting dossiers submitted for these awards.

f. Handbook Committee: We will aim to get all faculty to vote on all the pending items in April and leave pending items for September. See below for the list of pending items that potentially need faculty vote below:

Follow up on list of revisions.

1. Senate Mission Statement
2. TAC updated description.
3. Fixed term to tenure track classification policy
4. Graduate Council changes
5. TAMU Mission Statement
6. Changes in committee (TAC and DEITC) composition to include Student Engagement and Enrollment Management and/or Graduate School representatives.
7. Potential changes suggested by the Associate Provost

Pending Items:

1. Ethics Committee updated description.

2. Growth Plan for fixed-term faculty
3. Early Tenure process

- g. Assessment: No report. This is not an assessment year for faculty senate or administrators
- h. Distance Education and Instructional Technology Committee: System updates do not affect Blackboard. Dr. Sosa is conducting training in Microsoft tools university wide. Getting different software packages for employees at a discounted price.
- i. Fixed-term Faculty Committee: Growth Plan Procedures- post tenure review process for fixed term faculty revisions.

VIII. Announcements

The State Legislature has mandated post tenure review process for all tenured faculty. Dr. San Miguel is looking to Texas A&M Corpus Christi as an example of the new post tenure review process based on a lottery system

At conclusion of this last agenda item it was so moved by Prof. Rubel that the meeting be adjourned, and upon being seconded by Dr. Bennett the meeting was so adjourned at 2:30pm.

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