

Faculty Senate Meeting
Friday, September 6, 2013
Brooks City-Base Campus, Room 145

Present: Senators Brian Brantley, Vicky Elias, Richard Geen, Jim Hackard, Melissa Jozwiak, Mary Mayorga, Ramona Pittman, Sarah Timm, Robert Vinaja, Kathleen Voges, Lorrie Webb and Ed Westerman. Provost Brent Snow.

Absent: Claire Nolasco, Jacob Sherman

Guests: Mesquite reporter Linda Manzanares, Immediate Past President Megan Wise

The meeting was called to order by President Brian Brantley who announced that printed copies of minutes, agenda, and recommendation from Faculty Handbook Committee were available.

Approval of faculty meeting minutes from May, 2013

Lorrie Webb moved to approve minutes as submitted. Robert Vinaja noted that “acclimation” was misspelled. Lorrie Webb amended her motion to approval with correction. Motion was seconded by Jim Hackard and unanimously approved.

Administrative update

Dr. Snow reported that enrollment was expected to be finalized at about 4500 students, although approximately 300 students were being contacted for nonpayment.

He asked the senate to consider creating a process for the production of Dean’s lists or Provost’s lists and advised that he could make student GPA data available to any committee formed for that purpose.

Ed Westerman expressed concern over an email Arts and Sciences faculty had received reporting that a university policy requires that all sections with a shared course number “ought to” use the same textbook. He reported that this might not be appropriate for all disciplines and that sections with different formats may require different textbooks. Lorrie Webb reported that this was a problem even at program level. Dr. Snow reported that there was no university policy but that this was the result of discussions between himself and college deans. Melissa Jazwiak expressed concern over the effect of using textbooks mandated by programs on teaching and teaching evaluations. Kathleen Voges expressed support for academic freedom and reliance on professor’s expertise and their choice of approaches. She explained that this might result in professors with differing approaches using different textbooks to meet SLOs shared by all sections. Megan Wise echoed these concerns, noting that students had noticed when she was uncomfortable with a textbook. She also noted that we are teaching upper division courses and not currently facing multiple sections of general education required courses that might require the use of prescribed textbooks. Richard Green pointed out that instructors could customize ebooks. Vicky Elias reported that this was not a possibility for all classes. Kathleen Voges said she assigns seminal texts rather than textbooks. Lorrie Webb reported she uses a similar strategy and would not feel comfortable requiring a textbook that she would not actually use.

Robert Vinaja said that the faculty jointly defines SLOs and usually comes to consensus on textbooks, but in some cases it does not. Dr. Snow asked if it was common for faculty to have discussion about shared textbooks and senators agreed that it was. Ed Westerman asked if the “policy” was an example of creating a rule in the absence of a real problem. Dr. Snow said that he assumed that textbook choice was part of the process of identifying SLOs. Lorrie Webb said that in her department instruction was geared toward licensure, so SLOs were set by those requirements. Textbooks were more personal to the instructor’s teaching style. Ed Westerman suggested that if the shared SLOs are supported by the textbook, the academic needs were met and that a cookie-cutter approach would not be necessary. Brian Brantley read the email that had sparked the conversation. Richard Green expressed concern that the email cited university policy when no such policy actually existed. Dr. Snow said he liked the idea of consensus in textbook choice, but heard our disagreement. Mary Mayorga noted that the university bookstore did not always stock the books that were requested. Dr. Snow said that the bookstore had not been involved in any of these discussions, but that they had reported problems with late orders. He also said the discussion was in response to student complaints. Megan Wise asked what the student complaints were and said she felt there was likely a disconnect between those complaints and this solution. Dr. Snow advised faculty to order textbooks on time and said he felt that adjuncts should have textbooks and SLOs given to them. Ed Westerman agreed except in occasions when adjuncts have special expertise. Dr. Snow reported that he would take the conversation back to the deans.

Brian Brantley asked if faculty would have input about downward expansion. Dr. Snow explained that we did not receive the funding for downward expansion, so that timeline had been pushed forward by about two years. He said that there is not currently a committee in place, but that faculty must participate in those decisions and recommended that Faculty Senate should begin to look at that process and make recommendations. Ed Westerman expressed concern about plans to add new programs and majors without having a clear plan for downward expansion in place. He noted that the two processes would likely overlap and that we needed to ensure adequate funding for both. He also expressed that downward expansion should be seen as more important. Dr. Snow repeated that faculty involvement is necessary and agreed that we must ensure that we do not overextend and that we must have adequate funding but that the first step is to complete SACS accreditation.

Vicky Elias asked about the timetable for the new building. Dr. Snow reported that the current timeline has it completed by summer 2014. He also reported that the STEM building funding was not approved but that it will be back “on the table” in two years. He said that we are out of space and will be for some time. Kathleen Voges asked if there were any plans to make supplies such as blue books available on the Brooks campus. Dr. Snow responded that he did not know but would check. Ramona Pittman reported that sharing offices with lecturers and adjuncts made research difficult. Dr. Snow reported that there was simply no additional space until the new building is opened and that we would still not have all the space we need. Primarily Arts and Sciences faculty will be housed there. Ramona Pittman asked if there was any space available for cubicles. Brian Brantley reported that the space currently used by Communications could house cubicles after they move to the new building. Dr. Snow said that when the new building opens, the current main campus building will be refit, with first floor housing student affairs. He reminded everyone that the senate has a representative on the Space Committee. In that capacity, Vicky Elias reported that in their last meeting discussion included a lack of office

space at the Gillette facility. Melissa Jozwiak suggested that the current faculty lounge could house cubicles.

Ed Westerman asked what the response rates on SRIs were. Dr. Snow responded that the spring response rates had been similar to previous semesters'. Ed expressed concern that the rates were too low to be considered representative and asked if scantron-based SRIs could be completed in the classrooms. Richard Green said he saw the SRIs as unreliable and useless regardless of the response rate. Ed agreed that there were concerns with the information, but that they could be useful. Richard said he saw no reason to be concerned. Robert Vinaja suggested that Blackboard be used to drive students to the SRIs. Vicky Elias reported that she and Amy Bohmann had surveyed students and found that they did not believe the online forms were truly anonymous. Robert responded that they could have similar concerns about professors recognizing their handwriting.

Executive Committee update

Summer progress

Brian Brantley reported that the executive committee had not really met until convocation and that the previous executive board was continuing to work on constitutional updates as an ad hoc committee.

Review process for action items/documents

Brian Brantley reported that a review process for action items/documents had been composed but that he had been unable to find it. Megan Wise said she had a copy and would email it to Brian

Committee reports

Faculty Handbook update

Mary Mayorga reported that the faculty handbook committee had met last semester, and had looked at handbooks from other universities. The committee selected the Texas A&M College Station handbook as a model. This would require a complete rewrite. She had spoken with Dr. Verhasselt about the recommendation and has her support. Mary reported that the current version is missing a lot of useful information.

She presented the committee's recommendation (attached) which is to completely rewrite the handbook using College Station's as a model. They further recommend that one person be appointed to complete the rewrite and that the appointed faculty member be given compensation or course release with a goal of completion by the end of the Spring semester. She also suggested that the author be encouraged to list this as both a service and a publication.

Richard Green moved that we table this to next meeting for sake of time. The motion was seconded and passed with one abstention.

President's Circle Research Grants program

Megan Wise reported that President's Circle grants had been awarded and funds were in the process of being dispersed. The funding rates was approximately 40%. She noted the limited time in which the award process had been established and that the senate

should expect a similar amount of money available for the 2014/2015 school year with a new senate committee. She said she would be happy to provide feedback for improvement.

Constitution updates

Discussion was postponed until the next meeting.

Space committee

Vicky Elias reported no other Space Committee updates.

Old business

Annual review update from the Schools

Brian Brantley reported that a policy recommendation had been formulated that would allow faculty to evaluate department heads and deans. A survey was also created. Megan Wise explained that although the Senate had recommended that faculty participate in the evaluations, seeing the proposed policy and survey was not technically a Senate issue. Brian Brantley said we would see the outcome if not the proposal itself. Dr. Snow expressed his assurance that it would be shared before it was finalized. Richard Green said faculty should be informed of it and that it would be controversial.

New business

Ed Westerman moved that each senator talk to faculty from their schools about which issues they would like to see the senate address and that these issues be compiled into a list and faculty members be allowed to vote on the issues the senate will pursue. The motion was seconded and passed with one abstention. Ed volunteered to serve as the collecting point and to create the survey.

Role and responsibilities of senators and Roberts Rules of Order was tabled until the next meeting

Copyright of lectures

Vicky Elias explained that the university had purchased systems that automate the process of putting classroom lectures online but that ownership of the lectures had not been addressed. Richard Green explained that these were being used by the six classes utilizing the Hiflex process and that absent any agreement, copyright belongs to university. Mary Mayorga asked why the process was being adopted. Richard said it facilitates space issues for evening classes by allowing students to access classroom lectures at other times. Dr. Snow noted that although students can access the lectures online, they are on-campus courses. Kathleen Voges asked if space utilization problems are due to colleges reserving blocks of classrooms. Richard said it was more a problem of the number of students who work and only take evening classes. Kathleen asked if we are we that heavily nontraditional. Richard said business classes are, but that it might be different in other colleges. Mary Mayorga reported that education faces similar challenges. Ramona Pittman asked if syllabi and other documents are also university property. Lorrie Webb reported that if they are constructed on university time and

equipment, they are. Ed Westerman said the issue was intellectual property and that it should be addressed in the faculty handbook. He noted that some professors will not post their lectures online because of this issue. Richard Green moved to establish a subcommittee to look into the issue. Mary Mayorga seconded. The motion was approved with one abstention. Richard Green moved that further actions be postponed until the next meeting. Vicky Elias seconded. The motion passed with one abstention.

Richard Green moved that all other agenda items be move we tabled until the next meeting. The motion was seconded and approved.

The meeting was adjourned.

Action Items:

- Textbook “policy” response from administration
- Possibility of bookstore or supplies availability at Brooks Campus – administration
- Constitution Committee progress
- Review process for action items/documents (Brian Brantley)
- Faculty handbook recommendation (tabled)
- Annual review update (Brian Brantley)
- Survey of faculty re: issues of interest (Ed Westerman)
- Copyright of lectures / other intellectual properties
- Role and responsibilities of senators and Roberts Rules of Order
- Conference of faculty senates

Future Agenda Items:

- Formation of process for creating a Dean’s List / Provost’s List
- Location of Faculty Senate permanent files
- Faculty recommendations re: planning for downward expansion
- Faculty recommendations re: cubicles in current Faculty Lounge
- Faculty recommendations re: SRIs
- President’s Circle Research Grants

October 4th, 2013 Main Campus room 353 11:00-12:30