

Texas A&M University- San Antonio
Faculty Senate Meeting
Minutes
February 6, 2015 11:30-1:00 p.m.
CAB 334

Call to Order at 11:30 a.m. by E. Westermann

In attendance: Emily Bliss-Zaks, Katherine Gillen, Melissa Jozwiak, Robin Kapavik, Bryant Moore, Rahman Sajjadur, Joseph Simpson, Kathleen Voges, Claire Nolasco, Robert Vinaja, Lorrie Webb, Ed Westermann, and Ramona Pittman

Approval of Faculty Senate Agenda and Minutes from 12/5/2014

Amendment: R. Kapavik requests that the minutes be amended to read that the issue seems to be internal to the College of Education. Will now read "R. Kapavik notes that if you apply the new rule to the 2014 data, Arts & Sciences and Business are in line, the issue seems to be internal to the College of Education."

Motion: R. Kapavik motions to approve the minutes as amended. 2nd.

Vote Passes: 11 yes, 0 no, 0 abstentions

Administrative Update

E. Westermann shares that Dr. Matson is unable to be present with Faculty Senate due to conflicting responsibilities associated with the legislative session. In lieu, he read a letter from Dr. Matson (attached). E. Westermann shares that from his perspective, and from what was said, she believes in shared governance. As such we have the opportunity to really make our voices heard. He asks for Senators to consider concerns and issues, and, that we put those together in a way that we can present to the President and Provost. While he has not had an official meeting with Dr. Matson, he is in communication with her and did meet with the Provost and has an update from the Provost.

Executive Report

On behalf of the Provost: E. Westermann shared that the Faculty Development Leave Policy has gone to the Deans, but also, that it goes to the President. In principle the ideas are supported but there are some specific details the Deans would like to address but they are behind the concept the committee has put together. We should have more information by the March meeting.

Downward expansion: There was a four-page concept paper that was distributed to the colleges. J. Simpson asks for clarification on the audience for that paper. E. Westermann clarifies that the audience it was written for is the A&M System. There were a number of issues raised by the College of A&S with the document in January when briefed by Dr. Bala. To date, it has not been formally been submitted to the System. That is good and bad news. Good in that it allows us to get some input but the bad news is time is ticking until some of those items get hammered out. R. Kapavik asks for clarification on the

reason behind the delay. E. Westermann shares that he believes the delay is because this has been given to Dr. Matson as a top priority. As such they want to make sure the products that go forward to the system reflect the type of detail and planning that show we are ready to implement it.

Old Business

Faculty Handbook: E. Westermann asks for any input/feedback from faculty. M. Jozwiak shared that one person asked about maternity leave being included and syllabus requirements regarding Title Nine. E. Westermann shared that the good news is that the office hours policy was approved and that he is pleased that Faculty Senate can take credit for accomplishing that.

Dean's List: R. Pittman shared that due to her father's illness they have not been able to meet but that she is proposing a meeting between the committee and the Provost in the next week so they can solidify the cut-off hours for each GPA. It should be ready for the March meeting for vote.

Faculty Recognition: M. Jozwiak shared that next week there are three meetings that are being offered for faculty to come and provide feedback. The meetings are scheduled for Tuesday, 2/10 at 9:00 and 12:00 in the CAB. On Wednesday, 2/11 the meeting is at 3:00 at Brooks City Base campus. Following the meetings the committee will meet and discuss if there are any pieces of this plan that could be put together this semester. E. Westermann also asks for the Library to please attend and provide feedback on how this system could recognize their work.

Faculty Development Leave: No additional updates beyond the comments the Provost shared under Administrative Updates.

New Business

Texas Council of Faculty Senate: L. Webb shares that she will be attending this meeting at the end of the month on the 2/27-28th. In the week prior, they want two major issues going on at our university. L. Webb proposes possibilities include downward expansion and the STEM project/Building. She asks for Senate input to expand on those and other issues. J. Simpson advises that recruitment and leveling off of enrollment. He shared that he had attended a meeting for recruitment for the College of Arts & Science and that he was shocked that they were starting from scratch. K. Gillen raises the concern, related to downward expansion, to move away from reliance on adjunct faculty. E. Westermann shared the TCFS is attended by system school reps from all major systems public and private. Also, Vice Chancellor, Dr. Hallmark, meets with faculty from the A&M System before. At the last meeting there were many other universities experiencing explosive growth, i.e. 50%, often due to online programs. However, these programs did not necessarily address how they were ensuring student success. Student success and retention will be an important issue for us to look at. Transparency in plans and budgets will assist us in talking about these issues as we move forward with this administration. At the last meeting, copyright, academic freedom and raises were all topics. L. Webb shared that raises will be a topic at this meeting.

SRI Survey: E. Westermann sent a request to Jane Mimms asking for historical data for last 8 semesters. She sent data and he organized the data into a graphic. Looking at it, it is clear we are having downward decline in returns, to ¼ students. J. Simpson asks for clarification if the same survey method was used during this time. E. Westermann confirms that he believes we have done at least 7 semesters of electronic returns. When he met with the Provost, he shared that he wanted to take this to Faculty Senate because it intersects with other areas like annual evaluations and recognition. We are using an instrument that has issues and a low end sample and we are using it to evaluate teaching. It is the worst of both worlds. He would like to seek a motion or initiative from Senate requesting that we relook at electronic versus an in-class instrument. J. Simpson asks if it is worth creating an ad hoc committee to look at this. There are several issues cost, contract, readopting logistics, policy, etc. R. Pittman notes that with the numbers so low, if one in four are responding, it is usually disgruntled students and we are using this for recognition. E. Westermann affirms and highlights that if the university average is 26%, some classes may be lower at 5%. Previously, when A&M System sponsored a recognition program, it required a certain number of enrollment and 50% response rate on SRI's for exactly the reasons you raised. Another issue is relooking at questions/instrument. L. Webb suggests that she believes it has been since we were at Gillette since it was looked at under the leadership of Dr. Hurley. K. Gillen asked about V. Elias's student study. E. Westermann shared that he believes one issue is that students don't believe it is anonymous. Possibly because the University started giving extra credit which permitted the instructor to go in after two or three responses and see who responded? It is an ethical problem knowing who the respondents are. J. Simpson shared that this is a larger issue and also impacts evaluations of department chairs, etc. Concern regarding the possibility that data gathered in Survey Monkey is not anonymous (i.e. it is possible to use IP addresses to determine who submitted a response) contributes to a lack of trust. J. Simpson suggests we use methods such as forced responses before students can continue into Blackboard (i.e. two weeks before the end of the semester when a student signs into Blackboard they must complete the survey or they can't continue on to their courses to take exams, etc.). L. Webb shares that students also had concerns about confidentiality with regard to paper surveys. J. Simpson reminds that with online classes we need an electronic option. E. Westermann asks if J. Simpson is willing to chair. Ad. Hoc, committee and asks for anyone interested in serving on the committee to please e-mail E. Westermann.

Motion: K. Gillen motions to establish a committee to examine SRI return rates, delivery methods, instrument question and content. K. Voges 2nd.

J. Simpson asks for clarification on a timeline. E. Westermann asks for recommendations by May meeting. Claire: shares that there are two ways to complete a response in Survey Monkey (via e-mail or using a link on a website) but that there are problems with both. For example with the website you can't limit the number of responses and individual can enter. J. Simpson shares that there are solutions to those issues out there. M. Jozwiak suggests the committee may come back with recommendations for ITAC to approve/fund.

Vote Passes: 12 Yes, 0 No, 0 abstentions.

Note: By appointment J. Simpson will lead a committee to look at SRI return rates, delivery methods instrument questions, and content.

Survey Confidence: R. Kapavik expressed deep concern about the information J. Simpson shared (faculty not participating in administrative evaluation due to concerns about confidentiality). She is concerned that if faculty aren't participating because of a fouled system why would we continue to move upward in rank unless we fix the underlying issue. She expressed the desire to fix the system before it moves to upper levels. E. Westermann suggests asking for the return rates from those surveys like we did with the SRI's. If we are at 25% then we have a problem. If we are at 85% then we may not need to address the issue. We want to be sure our input gets heard. He does not know at what level the outcome of the surveys will be made available to the membership. K. Voges expressed concern about the timing of survey announcement being when faculty were extremely busy with exams. J. Simpson said he believe there was a second announcement that went out.

Department Chairs: K. Gillen asked if we could return to the information that was reported back from the last Texas Faculty Senate Council (she remembered something being said about chair's being elected and rotated). She shares that it is her understanding that the term chair usually communicates the individual has been elected in many cases. K. Voges expresses support for defining what a department chair is and defining qualifications (such as tenured). L. Webb commented that she had heard that Department Chairs now have to teach one class and that she didn't know if we are including that in job description that were posted for the positions we are currently interviewing for. J. Simpson expressed that we are hiring academics as Deans and Department Chairs, and that while we are strapped for resources, they may not be engaging in teaching which could help with one area of need. L. Webb reminded us that Dr. Hallmark said that it is his wish for the whole system to have a rotation for Department Chairs and that they are part of the faculty. R. Pittman shared that when she was at A&M College Station; her Department Chair did a four-year rotation but continued to teach one course per academic year and maintained a research agenda. She expressed a desire to know more about what her Dean & Department Chair are doing as a researcher and scholar. E. Westermann expresses that he wishes Dr. Snow had been available to be part of this discussion as he agrees there is the perception that we have Deans that don't do research and aren't in the classroom (with Dr. Hurley being a known exception as she teaches one online course in foundations). We may want to make this as a topic of discussion- to include the issue of how Department Chair appointments are made, and, examine how administration, that call themselves part of the faculty, may or may not teach. When to him, a faculty member teaches. This may be a new business item where we look for policy on those issues and look at differences between the colleges

Shared Governance: K. Voges shared that in the Faculty Forum, Dr. Matson used the term, shared governance, and she felt this was a very new idea to hear from the President. Part of that is related to the evolution of our university. E. Westermann shared that since she will be at the March meeting that perhaps we need to open the lines of communication regarding issues such as the ones we have been discussing here. J. Simpson added that we need to make the open invitation for Dr. Matson to attend all meetings.

Faculty Development Activities: K. Gillen shared that, as a member of the faculty development committee, she wanted to open the conversation up to issues/topics they may be able to work on in the future. One item may be the Provost's office opening a Brown Bag lunch series. She inquired if faculty should provide input into that. E. Westermann shared that we used to have invitations for faculty to present on topics. He will see where the input for the lunch sessions is coming from. K. Gillen expressed that one example of when faculty input may have been beneficial would have been during the online training we did. J. Simpson recognized the positive structure/format/timing of the Online Boot Camp from January. E. Westermann offered background on the issue of online training, sharing that it originated in the Provost's Academic Council, when Brian was Faculty Senate President. The policy came out 1.5 years ago but last fall they said they were serious. In determining how many hours we have to do, Holly Verhasselt and SACS compliance drove the number of credits, etc. We were able to drive some of the policy with regards to the timeline, CLEP credit; however, the continuing requirement will remain there as result of what came out of the Academic Council. Re-up is 1 elective or life product per year. K. Gillen asked if we still have representative on the Provost's Academic Council. E. Westermann shared that he is still the representative but that they have only met once since summer. However, he cautions that the structure of the council provides limited representation. K. Gillen suggests that the point of origin for many of these initiatives (trainings) may impact the degree to which these events are helpful to faculty and inquires if more faculty involvement could help.

Student Activities and Eligibility: E. Westermann brings to the conversation that he is hearing from faculty concerns about training and requirements that are being put on faculty who are working with student organizations. He asks for Senators to talk to their colleges and bring back information on the issue. We have corrected the issue on the accounts but may still have an issue on the time requirements, etc. J. Simpson shared that he specifically asked C. Legras if advisors were going to have a semester or yearly recognition process. She shared that we were moving to a yearly recognition process. At the beginning of the semester advisors received a large bag of recognition. He sent an e-mail asking why (because she had previously told him it was moving to yearly). She said these were updates. There is conflicting information coming out and it is difficult for faculty. E. Westermann commented that he is detecting tension between faculty and staff interface. J. Simpson further expresses frustration with the anonymous nature of the e-mail correspondence. He would like a name attached so he knows who is "Student Activities." R. Pittman expressed concern about students representing the university as Student Ambassadors when they are not necessarily earning passing grades in courses. She inquired about how they are being chosen and expressed the belief that if they are "leaders" on campus they also need to be leaders in the academic classroom. She is concerned about students in high position when they are not performing well in the classroom. E. Westermann states that it gets back to the question of if we are enforcing (or if we should have) eligibility requirements for student representative positions. This will be an important topic to add as a new business item and talk with Andres Holiday, regarding.

There was an overall discussion regarding the issue of the roles and responsibilities given to students and if the level of decision making is appropriate. For example, should students be making decision on what

faculty work will/will not be posted? Additionally, faculty expressed a concern that there is often an inappropriate tone and attitude with which student workers treat faculty. K. Gillen shared a story in which she was reprimanded by a student (in front of other students) about not properly reserving a room in accordance with their policies. C. Nolasco shared that she understands that student workers may be tasked with checking formatting continuity with University standards but that it seems that students are going beyond that. E. Westermann asked if we put in these stories into a narrative and solicit from colleagues ' what are the issues they are experiencing with student organizations, advising, training requirements and student participation, as well as, eligibility standards' - Positive and Negative so we can seek remediation.

Announcements:

Meeting Adjourned at 12:45

Approved 3/6/2015

Dear Senate Chair Westermann:

I am writing, as I cannot be there in person with you today. As you may have heard me say, I am a champion of embracing shared governance as we face a progressive growth oriented environment. I am delighted that the campus has achieved a milestone in its history by achieving SACS accreditation. I am publicly stating that together we should “pause and reset” our plans for academic and student enrollment expansion. This does not mean a delay, but rather a thoughtful, yet expeditious, approach to respectful dialogue and creating a shared common purpose about our future plans, resource allocation and ambitious expectations.

My vision is for A&M-San Antonio to be a national model for student success! Together we must define the specifics of that vision, using proven high impact practices, which will best support the diverse student populations that we serve. The Provost will be leading more discussions about the vision and aspirations for our downward expansion initiatives that align with ambitious student success goals. I will invite you to be at the center of those discussions and to be an active voice in the consultation process. I intend to continue to build a culture of community within the campus and to engage faculty, staff and students in our collaborative efforts.

My commitment to you is to act in a manner that honors the fundamental principles of academic freedom, and assures that all matters relative to instruction including but not limited to, instructional hires, curriculum, research, and student progress in academic programs remain the purview of the faculty. Governance and faculty consultation are critical precursors as we imagine our downward expansion strategies.

It is a busy time with the legislative session, underway. I invite your thoughts or advice on any matters of importance to you and that impact the future of our great university. I look forward to joining in your March meeting.

Regards,

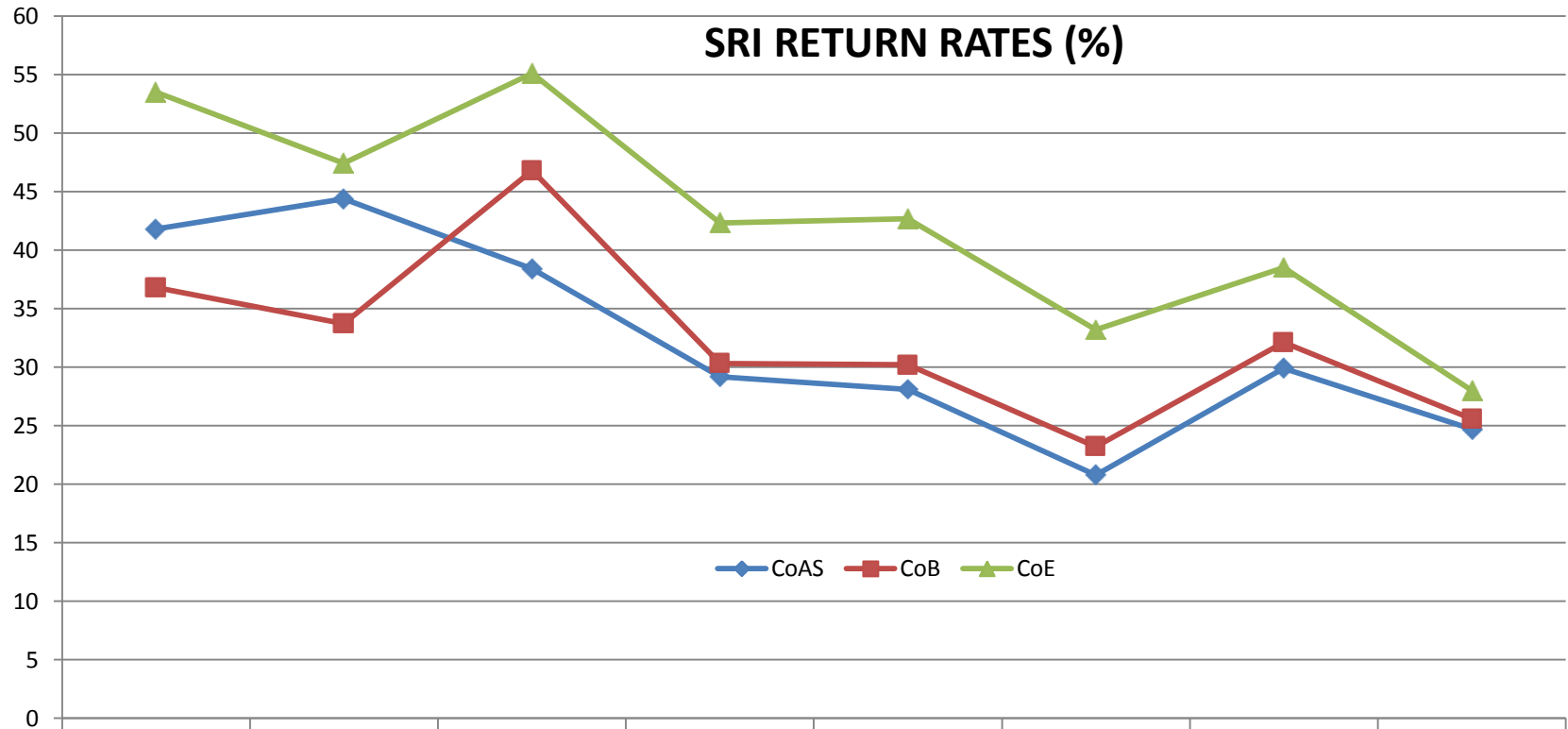
Cynthia

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SRI RETURN RATES (%)



	Spring 2011	Fall 2011	Spring 2012	Fall 2012	Spring 2013	Fall 2013	Spring 2014	Fall 2014
CoAS	41.8	44.4	38.4	29.2	28.1	20.8	29.9	24.7
CoB	36.8	33.7	46.8	30.3	30.2	23.2	32.1	25.6
CoE	53.5	47.4	55.1	42.3	42.7	33.2	38.5	28

Appri