

Faculty Senate Meeting
October 7, 2022
11:30 am - 1:00 pm
AGENDA

S&T 161

Link: <https://tamusa.zoom.us/j/84004434845?pwd=NjVRbDdCTS9jbWJRMXhCaHNjYjB6Zz09>

Attendance: Graham, Jim Meyer, Bob Alonzo, Daniel, Pride, Eunhye, Kathryn, Ho, Liz, Thomas, Beth, Kim, Catherine, Sarah, Davida, Jeff, Karen, Bob Shelton, Joe, CTM, MA, Graham

1. Call to Order
1:31. Approval of minutes. Joe and Megan are at TX council of faculty senates. Joe is filling in as speaker.
Matthew moves to accept as amended
Daniel Seconds
Vote: 16 in favor. Opposed: 0 abstain: 0.
2. Approval of Minutes (5 minutes)
3. Administrative Update
 - a. Provost Abdelrahman (10 minutes)
 - Melissa Jozwiak received a grant from the dept. of education for childcare 1.7 million over four years.
 - Another grant with Vijay
 - Partnership with Alamo colleges to address cyber and Stem education
 - Working on Health Sciences. Mentioned last time that community health is moving to CoAS. Will be hiring faculty with support from the system.
 - Alignment to put faculty where they are most aligned. Some in Arts and Sciences, teaching in Cyber. Debra's email indicated a bigger look at the departments. They departments are complex and they want to make sure the alignments make sense. There will be a committee. Things will change quickly in the spring.
 - Dean Feakes also sent a proposal for changes to the administrative assistants. She's exploring ideas to make this work. I wanted you to know that. It's a little broader – it requires some reorg, esp. with the possible shifts in dept. Things are happening from the dean's office.
 - Accreditation visits. Next week – Counseling. The week after is ACSB(??)
 - Contract with Hanover Higher Education. Helping to add new programs – market study, needs, before jumping into creating programs. The deans were on the call. If you have ideas, please pass them along to your chair. We want programs that will be supportive and address student needs.
 - b. President Matson (10 minutes)

- President of the American Association of State Universities and Colleges speaking today for Latinx heritage month.
- University health initiative summit (page 2 in the report) That consisted of University Health System's executive team, A&M Health Sciences, TAMUSA, SWISD. The purpose of the conversation was to talk about what if. Joint affiliation agreements, joint programming, how we will meet the growing needs of the hospital and community. Askign for assistance beyond state funding from the system. More coming – know that these conversations are underway. Will be signing a joint agreement, linking academics and administration. Very exciting.
- 9/14 there was a minor fire, a lab “incident.” Handled quickly and appropriately. No injuries, no damage to the equipment. A chance to evaluate emergency response teams. Reviewing our practices in the labs. No one did anything wrong – this is all proactive. Fire is one of the most likely emergencies to be prepared for.
- 9/29 leg. Budget board hearing. Presented our requests for exceptional line item: Alamo Works (in the report) – degree programs to increase workforce preparation.
- Working with sub-awardees around Ready to Work.
- Our target enrollment growth is 10%. It's a stretch. An extensive cabinet meeting about our enrollment plan and our strategic plan and how we can achieve that sort of growth. Some is admin and staff work. Some is collaborative with faculty, esp. in graduate programs.
- Administrative assistants – that work is ongoing in the review of compensation. We'll be looking at the results. Shared governance conversations. With our budget, there's excess revenue. Priorities – filling the bridge to base gap, 2nd is merit, 3rd is academic programming.

DD: committee for the restructuring of CoAS. What's the structure – can you clarify?

MA: I'm leaving this to the dean. (we should work on this before the meeting with Debra in Oct.) She knows that she has to be consulting with faculty. Restructuring can sound scary. That's not the case here. It will be good restructuring - there will never be 100% agreement. It's to align disciplines, to create synergies.

DD: we don't know where it's headed.

MA: I'm sure that she'll come back with other plans.

Jeff Statler: with the fire, no one knew where to go. We had to ask the Fire Fighters.

Communications should include someone from the university saying that they're from the university and that information will be coming from them.

CTM: I was in close communication with the teams. The incident itself was handled well.

Communication is the biggest gap we found.

CTM: I was asked recently about whether the university will put out a message about the DACA ruling. We're communicating with DACA students and to undocumented students (we don't know all of them). We'll be pushing out support and resources through Kim Nanez's office. If students need support, please direct them to the Dreamers Resource Hub, in Student Success. We're prepared and are handling those situations as needed.

4. Old Business

a. Faculty Handbook – Matthew Mangum (5 minutes)

MM: committee has met twice since last meeting. MM, LL, MWDV have met with provost. Will review the draft approved last year, check that everything is in line with System policy, clear citations to rules, procedures, and guidelines, which may be in flux. Will have that review finished by 10/31 and will coordinate with provost. Plans to have the final draft by the December meeting.

MA: these things should be done in tandem, faculty and admin collaborating.

MM: thank you for your willingness to partner with us on this

5. New Business

a. Update from the Center for Academic Innovation – Dr. Kathryn Appenzeller Knowles (10 minutes)

- Move to ITS, with Daniel Rendon and his team. The goal was to provide more support to faculty, concerns about timely resolution to issues. As it was structured, one person was trying to handle all requests, and that wasn't sustainable. In ITS there will be more than one person. If you've submitted tickets to the Center, it's all going to IT. Instead of trying to figure out which program should handle the requests, it's now all going to one team. This allows the Center to work on other issues besides Blackboard, namely supporting faculty with teaching and learning, pedagogy, best practices. Going to be providing more support for those. Forward thinking proactive approaches, not just what's not working with your technology. What does faculty want in support for teaching? Working on ideas with faculty. Excited that KK approached her to work on Celebrate Dyslexia – going to have trainings for working with dyslexia. Talked with Matthew about peer-to-peer workshops.
- Completed the needs assessment, looking at results. Requesting help from FS to create a task force to prioritize. What is most important, how can we build out a robust center. Will be working more with FS to create the initiatives. If you have ideas about what you'd like to do and offer to other faculty, even informal things (brown bag sessions, etc.), please let her know. Would welcome any help.

MM: has a permanent director been announced? KAN: no

MA: the name didn't match what the center was doing – they were mostly fixing issues with tickets.

KAP: looking at the persistent issues so that we can set up training about those issues. ITS and the center are working together to best communicate with f, s, and students.

DD: Who do we email in ITS to get the help we need? Or do we go through the submission process.

KAP: an email on Oct 1 with some of that language. You will submit a help desk ticket through ITS and it will get routed to Daniel Rendon and his team. If you need immediate assistance, it's Daniel.

JS: great to have an innovation center. ITS part is really important. There needs to be a way to get classroom help quickly, and there's no way to get that – it's a ticket, like everything else. If you call, you have to wait five minutes about how to reset your password. Can there be a

separate line – asked for this before. When you do get a hold of them, they ask for confidential information to confirm my identity but I had to say this in front of my students. The second issue is LMS – our platform. There was strong support at the faculty breakfast for updating our LMS. Students complain about it, faculty complain about it.

KAP: I've been meeting with Blackboard vendors to better understand what campuses were using and what's possible. There are some updates available to our LMS, which probably isn't a surprise. One wouldn't change the organization of content within the shells – it's more of an update so that it doesn't feel so old. It won't change the functionality. There's another update that would reorganize, change the formatting of content, etc. It's a heavier lift. The Center is working on LMS with IT and administration, especially with the second option. Getting the center, admin, and IT on the same page before making the change. [why aren't faculty involved in those discussions?] May be meeting with Blackboard, but we're trying to figure out our asks [why aren't faculty involved in this?]

MA: Moving to Canvas would be a few million dollars and that's beyond our budget. We have to make sure that you are being supported and at one time we make the shift. Thinking about inviting Bb to come to campus, but we need to make sure that faculty show up. We need to make sure that there's representation.

DD: for me, I just want to see it, I want to mess around with it.

KAP: there's possibility for beta testing before we make the change. Not sure about the sandbox option. The first switch to base navigation is like updating your phone and the look changes but not the functionality and how you interact with it. The Ultra update would change the interactions, and so we'd want to do beta testing, sandbox.

MA: we could update without paying for it – are you willing?

JS: if we could do it in a sandbox way.

KG: is Ultra the most up-to-date? The highest level?

KAK: not sure.

David: at my previous institution, we had Bb fellows, who were mentored and guided, working with people from Blackboard to make their best shells, people in different disciplines, and they were the ones who explained it to their colleagues, rather than Blackboard employees doing that.

KAK: with Beta testing we could identify some faculty to work with it and share out to other faculty. Or faculty in various disciplines and departments. Blackboard is willing to help with this transition if we do switch to ultra. There are opportunities to improve what we have now without the two updates, so that that way it doesn't seem like starting over.

MA: according to the CIO, we're using the latest version – but I'll ask and share with you. Can you invite the CIO to your next meeting.

b. Chair for the Early Retirement Committee (5 minutes)

JS: doesn't have to be a faculty senator. This was a committee put forward by the faculty senate. We need a COB rep and a new chair to replace Dan Glazer. The committee is working on rules for early retirement. Send names to the FS EC if you're interested or if you know someone who would be good for this.

TB: terms?

JS: until it's done.

DD: the chair should send an email of who's eligible.

JS: we'll forward this to Leonard. A lot of my work was sending emails.

c. Administrative Assistants – Thomas Beaumont (10 minutes)

TB: speaking on behalf of a sizeable cohort concerned about the status of administrative assistants.

TB motion – DD second

Recognizes Bob Alonzo.

Bob: hired as an adjunct in 2009. Full time in 2011. Retired from the FBI. Was an admin supervisor. With large organizations, change is inevitable. Admin work seems to be increasing exponentially. Our mission – we're exceeding expectations. Moving forward to meet the university's goals requires work, work that's placed on admin staff, they're tasked to do more with less. The support provided to them must increase just as much as their expectations are. People leave, the work doesn't get done. The mission suffers. We need to review administrative processes that are in place to meet our changing situation. All facets of our growth be examined and provide the most effective means – we need to take care of each other. A&M promotes community. They are part of this community. Let's take care of them as they take care of us.

MA: the great resignation is happening everywhere. It's the nature of things. We don't compete with business as much as other universities. Agrees with Bob – we need to review the processes and ensure efficiencies. The president mentioned the salary survey. It should come. The study is looking at our peers. At a previous institution, I lost faculty to Google, paying a quarter of a million dollars. We need to address the working conditions, remaining efficient. At CSU Global, the president and provost didn't have admin – they were trying to be efficient. We know that our salaries cannot compete with private companies. We're trying to be as competitive as we can. Dean Feakes is trying to do it for admin, but in a different way, using the resources you have but serving multiple departments – an admin that's focused on budgets, an admin on other things. The Dean knows that this is an issue. I'm willing to work on this.

KK: folks have come to me as a senator. It's an issue in CoEHD as well – we need to address all colleges, not just CoAS.

Davida: it's urgent. Cindy in our dept., the system would fall apart if she left. She's supporting grants, scheduling, she's wearing four hats. We would be lost if she left.

MA: we should never be in that position. We are humans we are fragile. This is something that we need to talk about. The lines are there, but the money isn't. How do we become more efficient. Can you merge lines and keep people. Create more synergies to the positions, elevating the positions, and paying more. I appreciate your bringing this and we are aware. We're doing what we can.

DD: cautious about how much we lean on the pay survey. We know pay is low. I'm trained to look at data. I can get on the BLS website and see very quickly and it doesn't take training to see the differences. The survey can be helpful. We know that there's a problem. We don't need to measure how many they have lots. Echoing the urgency that Davida represents.

MA: we always need a back-up plan.

JS: we have been in an environment where things just extend on because there's not enough effort. Our job call was supposed to go out in September, it was posted yesterday. Our foundations are on sand. We need to get to the redundancies, the succession, immediately.

KG: the ones who are there are taking on the roles of those who aren't.

MA: we can try to add some compensation, but money doesn't solve all the problems?

KK: will this address similar positions receiving similar pay.

MA: you solve a problem you create ten more unless you solve it in a global way.

Bob: admin are being asked to do work from departments above them, and it's taking them away for working for faculty.

MA: that shouldn't happen, except in exceptional circumstance

JS – call the vote

In favor: 16 , against 0, 1 abstention.

6. Committee Updates (20 minutes)

a. Calendar Committee – Matthew Mangum

MM: not sure if I represent the COB or FS in the committee. Calendar committee met last week. Learned that Jane Mims has a difficult job. It's being taken very seriously. Addressed issues for the spring, won't be too many class days. Lots of emphasis on meeting seat-time for accreditation. A diverse group of F and S, with lots of views, many of which are contradictory. Spring semester ends on May 15, but my letter ends before that. Things like that have been brought up. Could get rid of reading days. Some want to extend reading days. If you have strong feelings about this, about time bands, please let me know and I'll take it the committee.

MA: we want to align with other universities within the region, within the system, if possible. This semester ended up being a 17 week semester, and I will ask the chairs and deans to consider that there was an increased emphasis on teaching – only 4% but it's something.

b. Assessment of Academic Administrators – Megan Wise de Valdez

TB: since our last meeting, MWDV met with D&C to get feedback. Has circulated their suggestions to the committee. Have made changes in response to their feedback. Submitted a second edited version to the Provost on Wednesday for another round of review. Anticipated that this will come back to the senate.

MA: appreciates this work. Wants to know how the admin are supporting the mission and vision.

DD: was there discussion about the extent to which this will be used in evaluating admin with their supervisors. Our evaluations affect us.

TB: yes, there has been. It's just a portion of their assessment. Will it have specific consequences, no. Faculty want it to have some teeth. We're navigating the process and compromising.

DD: there are no term limits on chairs. Anything helps, but if there's no teeth.

MA: do you think that it can be ignored if everyone is complaining about the chair? It's mainly about participation. This is a tool for us to see how folks are thinking about them. We are overachievers. You need to give admin the leeway to enact leadership, but this will help. It will be as standard as course evaluations, and if there are problems we'll address it.

SG: comment - Hi, everyone. I'd like sincere clarification on something. I've never been at a university where Executive Administrators, namely the university President and Provost, both attend and participate in Faculty Senate meetings. Why do we allow that here?

JF: The provost is ex-officio member of senate. I will bring this comment to the next executive committee meeting.

SG: Thanks, James. What about President Matson?

SG: I appreciate the opportunity to evaluate our administrators, and many thanks to all who have been involved in that work. Somewhat related, can we establish term limits for some of our administrative positions? Specifically, can we establish term limits for chairs?

c. Other committee updates

JS: constitution review committee will be meeting soon. Will have a report.

LT: WAC committee hasn't met, but wanted to let folks know that the requirement will be implemented next fall. Please share with your departments. Each student will take two WI classes in their major. As we're having discussions about class size, restructuring, please keep the requirement in mind.

JS: for students who are starting? Or all students?

LT: will have information next meeting.

Parkign committee will be meeting.

7. Adjournment

1:00