

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

S&T 161

Attendance

- In Person: Joseph Simpson, Cynthia Teniente Matson, Mohamed Abdelrahman, Daniel Delgado, Pride Abongwa, Eunhye Kwon, Ho Huynh, Lizbett Tinoco, Thomas Beaumont, Elizabeth Hasseler, Kimberly Grotewold, Catherine O'Brien, Sarah Katz, Davida Smyth (for Megan Wise de Valdez), Jeffrey Statler (for Kenneth Sweet), Karen Koehler, Matthew Mangum, Zechun Cao, Kemming Li, Bob Shelton, Graham Hotard, Jim Meyer, Robert Alonzo, Kathryn Appenzeller Knowles, James Finley
- Via Zoom: Sabina De Vries, Aida Almanza, Gilbert Barrera, Brandon Earwood, Sarah Pollock, Elizabeth Leyva, Amy Porter, Chin-Yen Liu, Jacob Hardy, Karen Burgard, Melissa Jozwiak, Merrit Rhen-Debraal, Sha Johnson, Syed Harun, Deirdre McDonald, Armando Tejada, Socorro Garcia, Michael Boucher, Katherine Bridgman, Katherine Gillen, Xingyuan Fei, Pablo Calafiore, Scott Gage

Meeting called to order at 11:31 am, by Joseph Simpson, filling in for Leonard Love and Megan Wise de Valdez, who were attending the Texas Council of Faculty Senates.

Approval of Minutes

Senator Mangum called to vote with edits to the attendance list. Senator Delgado seconds.

- Yes: 16
- No: 0
- Abstain: 0

Administrative Update

a. Provost Abdelrahman

- Partnering with Alamo Colleges to address cyber and STEM education
- Will be hiring Community Health faculty with support from the A&M System.
- Will be working on alignment of faculty, as indicated in an email to College of Arts and Sciences faculty from Dean Feakes. There will be a committee.
- Dean Feakes also sent the Provost a proposal for changes to the administrative assistants' roles.
- Accreditation visits are upcoming, including Counseling next week and after that AACSB.
- Contracted with Hanover Higher Education to help with adding new programs: market studies, etc. The deans were on the call. If you have ideas for programs, please pass them along to your chair. We want programs that will be supportive and address student needs.

b. President Matson

- There was a minor lab fire on September 14, which was handled quickly and appropriately. There were no injuries or damage to the equipment. It represents a chance to evaluate emergency response teams and review our practices in the labs. No one did anything wrong.
- Shared other items from the President's report, including the exceptional line item request for "Alamo Works" and the 10% target enrollment growth. Meeting this goal will require collaboration with faculty, especially with regard to graduate program.
- Work is ongoing with compensation study. Priorities for excess revenue are filling the bridge to base gap, merit pay, academic programming.

c. Questions

- Senator Delgado asked for clarification regarding the composition of the committee in CoAS addressing restructuring. Provost Abdelrahman explained that it's up to the Dean, who will be consulting with faculty. The goal is to align disciplines.
- Professor Statler explained that following the fire evacuation, no one knew where to go and that it would have been helpful to have had someone from the University communicating with people. President Matson explained that communication was the biggest gap that was found in the post-event assessment.
- President Matson shared that she had been asked prior to the meeting about whether the University will put out a message about the DACA ruling. The University is communicating with DACA students and with those students known to be undocumented and is 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.

Old Business

a. Faculty Handbook – Senator Mangum

- The committee has met twice since last meeting and Senators Mangum, Love, and Wise de Valdez have met with Provost.
- The committee has begun review of 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.
- Review will be completed by October 31 and the committee will then coordinate with provost, with plans to have the final draft by the December meeting.

New Business

a. Update from the Center for Academic Innovation – Dr. Kathryn Appenzeller Knowles

- Blackboard and other technology support has been moved to ITS, to Daniel Rendon and his team so as provide greater and more timely support to faculty. As it was structured, one person was trying to handle all requests and that wasn't sustainable. In ITS there will be more people working on requests. Tickets that have been submitted to CAI will be moving to ITS.

- This move allows the Center to work on other issues besides Blackboard, namely supporting faculty with teaching and learning, pedagogy, best practices. Requests feedback on what sort of pedagogical support faculty want.
 - Has completed the needs assessment and is looking at results. Requests assistance from FS in creating a task force to prioritize projects. What is most important and how can we build out a robust center? Will be looking to work 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.
 - Provost Abdelrahman explained that the move to ITS was because CAI was mostly fixing issues with technology.
 - Dr. Appenzeller Knowles explained that CAI and ITS are working together to identify persistent issues and to set up related trainings and to communicate effectively with faculty, students, and staff. If you need immediate assistance, contact Daniel Rendon.
 - Senator Simpson asked for a way to get classroom help quickly, some sort of process outside of the regular ticket submission process
 - Senator Simpson noted strong support the faculty breakfast for updating our LMS. Dr. Appenzeller Knowles has been meeting with Blackboard vendors to better understand what campuses are using and what's possible. CAI is working with ITS and University administration to determine what update the University should pursue. One option is a switch to the base navigation, akin to a phone update, and the other, which is more thorough, would change the interactions and the functionality. May be meeting with Blackboard again after figuring out the University's asks and perhaps inviting Blackboard reps to come to campus to meet with faculty.
 - Some senators expressed interest in beta testing and sandboxing.
- b. Chair for the Early Retirement Committee
- With the upcoming retirement of Professor Glazer, there is a need to elect a new representative from the College of Business and for the committee to elect a new chair. The representative does not need to be a senator. The term will be until the committee has finished its work drafting materials regarding early retirement.
 - No one volunteered.
 - Request to please send nominations (self or others) to the FS executive committee.
- c. Administrative Assistants
- Senator Beaumont introduced a resolution that was drafted on behalf of a sizeable cohort in the College of Arts and Sciences who are concerned about the status of administrative assistants.
 - Motion to discuss: Senator Beaumont. Second: Senator Delgado.
 - The Senate recognized Professor Robert Alonzo, who spoke of his experience as a supervisor with the FBI, the increase in administrative work as the University grows, and the need to increase support for them as their workload grows. Meeting the University mission, Professor Alonzo insisted, requires taking care of administrative

assistants and he called for the University to review those administrative processes that are in place so as to meet our changing situation.

- Senator Kohler: It's an issue in CoEHD as well, and colleagues have come to her asking about this issue.
- Further discussion of the necessity of addressing this issue, how the pay survey may or may not help to resolve things, and the effects on faculty of overworked administrative assistants and high turnover. Senator Simpson calls the vote
 - In favor: 16
 - Against: 0
 - Abstain: 1

d. Committee Updates (20 minutes)

- Calendar Committee – Senator Mangum. The committee has addressed issues for Spring 2023 so that there won't be too many class days. The committee has addressed reading days, with some wanting more and some wanting fewer or to eliminate them. If faculty have thoughts about reading days, about time bands, please share them with Senator Mangum. Provost Abdelrahman explained that because the Fall 2022 calendar ended up having a 17-week semester he will ask the chairs and deans to consider in their evaluation processes that there was an increased emphasis on teaching (only 4%, but it's something).
- Assessment of Academic Administrators – Senator Beaumont. Senator Wise de Valdez has meet with the Deans and Chairs to solicit their feedback and has circulated their suggestions to the committee, which has made changes in response. A revised version of the assessment has been to the Provost on Wednesday for another round of review. It is anticipated that this will come back to the Senate. Provost Abdelrahman explained that he appreciates this work. Senator Delgado asked about the extent to which this assessment will be used in evaluating admin with their supervisors. Senator Beaumont explained that this assessment will be a portion of the Deans' and Chairs' evaluations but that the assessment on its own will not have specific consequences for individual administrators.
- Constitution and Bylaws Review Committee – Senator Simpson. The committee will be meeting soon and will provide a report.
- Writing Across the Curriculum Committee – Senator Tinoco. The Writing Intentional (WI) designation will be implemented next fall. Please share with colleagues that each student will take at least two WI classes in their major and to keep the requirement in mind when discussing class sizes, degree plans, etc. More information will be forthcoming.

Adjournment

1:00 pm