

Faculty Senate Minutes

Friday, February 7, 2014

11:00 – 12:30

Room 145 Brooks City Base

Present: Brian Brantley, Vicky Elias, Richard Green, Jim Hackard, Ramona Pittman, Sarah Timm, Richard Vinaja, Claire Nolasco

Call to Order

Approval of Minutes - 5 minutes

Move to approve by Richard Green. Second by Mary Mayorga. Approved.

Administrative Update

Tracy A. Hurley represented Provost Brett Snow. Guidelines for evaluation of academic administrators tabled until Dr. Snow is present.

Dr. Hurley reported that there were SACS concerns regarding faculty training for online and hybrid courses. A letter outlining process will be sent by deans to all full and part time faculty. Beginning Spring 2014 faculty will need to complete three training modules (building a course and assessment) and at least one elective. Deadline for completion is December, 2014. Those who come with previous training can “test out” before the first day of class, Fall semester. New hires will have their first semester to complete training. Certificates will be available.

Dr. Hurley discussed the Educause and Next Generation Learning grant. These fund break-through model incubators with twelve \$50,000 grants for competency-based learning and a four-day workshop for seven people in Washington DC in July (including one faculty person). If awarded, faculty will be involved in developing the program. She discussed the challenge of documenting student progress and reported that a bachelor’s degree in general studies might be implemented. Some focused concentrations are possible, but it is too early for anything further. Seven high-level people must commit and attend. Political emphasis is on faster, cheaper learning and the Chancellor’s Office sees competency-based learning as a possible strategy. A Fall 2015 launch is projected with preparation completed by Spring 2015. If the grant application is not approved, competency based education will remain “on the board” but with less emphasis. To complete the application, Dr. Hurley requested signatures from senators who endorsed the proposal and supporting senator were given the opportunity to sign documentation.

Stefanie Wittenbach: Not present – tabled until March meeting

Executive Committee Update - None

Old Business

Population of Standing Committees – 20 minutes

Brian Brantley reported that most senators submitted preferences for committee positions. Preferences were collected at that time from members who had not submitted them. Dr. Brantley reported that there are not enough senate members to populate committees with each senator only serving on one committee. Elections committee appears to be the only committee open to library representatives.

Committees are:

Library

Graduate Council (3 from grad faculty; 1 from each college) – No A&S grad faculty on senate, but senators not specified. When written, intention was that this was the university graduate council. Brian Brantley will talk with their leadership.

Grievances

Undergraduate Curriculum Committee – Brian Brantley will check on the relationship with the standing university curriculum committee

Faculty Development & Research Committee – Mary Mayorga, Claire Nolasco, plus one other

Brian Brantley will forward assignments before next meeting

Faculty Handbook

Durant Frantzen attended to discuss the Faculty Handbook. Collaboration with Dr. Frantzen was assigned to the Faculty Development and Research Committee. Dr. Frantzen asked about the previous senate subcommittee. Subcommittee Chair Dr. Mayorga reported that the committee went through several other handbooks and identified Texas A&M's as the model they preferred. She reported dissatisfaction with the current handbook which was seen as a list of policies. She offered to share the records of that committee. Dr. Hurley reminded Dr. Frantzen to add new policies such as the online training. Faculty surveys were suggested, but in discussion the senate reached consensus that time demands may limit their usefulness.

Texas Council of Faculty Senates

Mary Mayorga

Dr. Mayorga reported that as Vice President for Texas Council of Faculty Senates, she attended their fall conference. The next conference is February 20 – March 1. It is assumed that the Provost's Office will continue to cover registration and travel costs. Brian Brantley recommended that either he or Ed Westerman attend. Jim Hackard recommended that attendance be limited to those who will be on senate next year. Dr. Brantley will discuss attending with Dr. Westerman.

Dr. Mayorga had also been asked to investigate university policies re: records retention. She reported that Dr. Verhasselt of the Provost's Office had supplied the policies sent policies, which indicated that faculty should keep student paper for one academic term, but that the coding used (AC+1) appears to have two definitions, according to policy keys. Assessment documents are covered by a different policy. Dr. Elias reported that she had been unable to locate an official university archive in an earlier search. Dr. Hackard pointed out that students have six months to appeal a grade. Dr. Green speculated that there was a high level of noncompliance. Dr. Elias reminded senators of concerns presented earlier by Sherita Love regarding a lack of policy addressing digital student records. Dr. Pittman reported that education faculty was moving to TK20, which would mean there were digital assessment records in that system. Dr. Mayorga reported that she was waiting for more info from Dr. Verhasselt.

Motion to create ad hoc committee to follow up. Dr. Vinaja recommended assignment to the Faculty Development and Research. Approved by consensus.

Ownership of Digital Instructional Material

Dr. Jenny C. Wilson reported that last semester issue of ownership of intellectual property arose. She was assigned to teach five courses. Issues of payment arose after semester began (faculty paid less for overload than adjunct were paid). Classes were pulled from her and given to an adjunct. The digital course she had designed copied into adjuncts' folders and she was unable to access the course work she had designed. In next semester, she could not see or use course material. She reported that she asked if there was forum other than Blackboard and was reprimanded. As a result, she cannot ensure that students do not have access to her assignments or quizzes (through other students). Dr. Wilson reported that this undermined her ability and created a situation in

which faculty uses their expertise to create classes that can then be taught by anyone.

Dr. Pittman noted that pay is also a problem. Dr. Vinaja noted that universities vary in their intellectual property policies. Dr. Brantley recommended that the matter be forwarded to the Faculty Development and Responsibilities Committee. Dr. Nolasco reported that legally it falls into work product rule but that faculty should get compensation for designed courses. Dr. Mayorga attempted to access the appropriate A&M System policy page and received and page cannot be found error. Dr. Brantley recommended that the committee check into policy and draft a recommendation. Affirmed by consensus.

Dr. Nolasco noted that pay disparity is another important issue. Dr. Hurley suggested that it is an unintended consequence of developing faculty workload and that the Provost's office looking into rectifying the issue.

Dr. Green moved that this also be referred to the Faculty Development and Responsibilities Committee. Second and approved.

President's Circle Research Grants

The need to determine criteria for awarding grants was discussed. After discussion, this was also forwarded to Faculty Development and Responsibilities Committee by consensus.

New Business - none

Announcements

SWTL deadline

Motion to adjourn. Second. Passed.

Adjournment