

Texas A&M University-San Antonio Faculty Senate

Meeting Minutes
September 7, 2012

Opening:

The regular meeting of the TAMU-SA Faculty Senate was called to order at 11:00 a.m. on September 7, 2012, at Brooks City-Base Campus by Dr. Megan Wise de Valdez.

Present:

Megan Wise de Valdez	Kevin Kendrick	Richard Green
Brian Brantley	Lorrie Webb	Dennis Elam
Durant Frantzen	Pat Holmes	Jim Hackard
Vicky Elias	Mary Mayorga	
Stefanie Wittenbach		

A. Approval of Agenda

The agenda was unanimously approved as distributed.

B. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the May 2012, meeting were approved as distributed.

Administrative Update

Dr. Ferrier said that the “university is only as good as its faculty.” Students talk about their professors with Dr. Ferrier and she hears good things about faculty.

Dr. Ferrier presented to the Legislative Budget Board and the Governor’s Board yesterday a request for about \$11 million for downward expansion. 2014/15 is the goal. TAMU-SA also requested \$8 million for student success—tutoring center and staff to assist students; things that established universities offer students, and \$2 million for a research project with A&M College Station—investigate why first generation students leave school. This project is aimed at closing the graduation rate gap. In addition, the university requested \$70 million for a science and technology building where the student parking lot currently is. This will include a water technology center, as STEM is important. TAMU-SA has been awarded the old Alameda museum by the City of San Antonio. Programming for this building will begin in January. The university won’t start an arts program until we have separate accreditation. Programming being considered for the building includes symposiums, local art, and a summer K-12 program for district

schools in the arts. This building gives us a footprint downtown. The university will pay \$1 a year for the lease, with \$300,000 per year provided by the City for expenses.

Dr. Ferrier indicated that she is very excited that the Faculty Senate is going. She reminded everyone that TAMU-SA is a teaching university with applied research, and encouraged faculty to engage students in research when possible.

Dr. Ferrier talked about downward expansion and indicated that the Faculty Senate will be involved in planning for downward expansion. Initially, the expansion will feature 300 students in 2-3 areas of study. The university doesn't want to get into a lot of developmental courses. Bringing in students who can't read or comprehend sets them up for failure. The School of Education & Kinesiology is trying to change what goes on in high school so that we have college ready students. Dr. Ferrier asked Senate members and gathered faculty to start thinking about the things that are important with downward expansion.

The Faculty Senate will begin to talk about concerns with downward expansion. Dr. Ferrier asked that we look at solutions, not just the concerns. The Senate intends to be an entity of action. Dr. Ferrier agreed that that's how we move forward.

Dr. Ferrier indicated that we have a really good reputation, thanks to what happens in the classroom.

A faculty member asked about funding for applied research. Dr. Snow talked about funding for excellence and research projects and mentioned that there is a professional development fund also available to faculty.

Dr. Ferrier asked, "how was the first week?" Many nodded that it was good. A faculty member asked, "Why did we start on a Wednesday?" Dr. Ferrier indicated that the Calendar Committee is the group to talk to. Tracy Hurley is chair of the committee. The university is trying to keep a calendar two years out. Dr. Ferrier said that there will very likely be a recommendation to move to two 8 week sessions from a 10 week summer session.

Dr. Snow talked about the number of faculty currently employed. The university approved the hire of ten new faculty members. Academic Affairs also hired ten new faculty last year. Current faculty: four full professors, 16 associate/tenured professors, 47 assistant professors, five professional track professors (not on a tenure track; on a contract for a specific amount of time), three visiting assistant professors, 10 full-time lecturers, 98 adjuncts, and 11 university supervisors. Total faculty: 194 The average class size is 20, excluding fully online classes. The university offers around 600 classes a semester. The university has a lot of small classes, including lecture classes. When enrollment is so important to the university, the plan is to open courses and get students into them in order to get them enrolled. The university still hires a lot of adjunct faculty; it's going to be a challenge to reduce the number of adjuncts because of our growth.

A faculty member asked how many full-time staff are employed. Dr. Snow responded that there are 300 total.

Concerns were raised by a faculty member about the lack of any kind of training for adjuncts, the need for an adjunct faculty handbook, and the need to include them in formal training programs, particularly about what's expected here. Dr. Snow responded that the university is working on a lot of procedures that the system requires of us.

Executive Committee Update

Summer progress

Megan indicated that the Faculty Senate does not have any official responsibility over the summer; however the executive committee met three times. The executive committee is looking at revising the constitution, which will take place over the course of the next two months. A draft will go to senators for review. The main reason for the revisions is that it's difficult to know how one is going to work when you draft it. Now that the Senate is its own entity, there are gaps between the various versions that were used to draft it that need to be filled.

Review process for action items/documents

As the executive committee has met, the group started thinking of the Senate as an entity of action. Currently, there is nothing in place for the handling of suggestions. The "Order of Business on Action Items" document was reviewed and discussed. The post-tenure review document was used as an example for the process. Megan called for a motion regarding the document. It was moved and seconded that we approve the item as presented. A senate member suggested that we give ourselves the right to respond to the administration after we get their report/response. The motion was amended to include this statement in section 6. In addition, section 3c now revised from the version distributed by the secretary, along with the new d, e. Motion carries to amend the draft document. Motion to approve the "Order of Business on Action Items" document carries.

Faculty Handbook update—Holly Verhasselt has been charged with cleaning up the Kingsville handbook—removing all items that aren't applicable. Dr. Bush will be cleaning up the faculty aspect of the handbook. The basic document will then come to the Faculty Senate. The executive committee will create an adhoc committee to review and revise the proposed handbook. Megan asked for volunteers for the adhoc committee. Richard Green has a draft version that he can make available, and he suggested that the executive committee give those who have already worked on it the opportunity to continue to work on it. Suggestion: post the draft and the other FS version on the intranet, and decide at the next meeting about the committee. A senator moved to post the two versions of the handbook on the intranet so that all senators can look at it. Motion carries. Next meeting: appoint committee and subcommittees with timeframes.

Committee Reports

Faculty evaluation forms

No official committee was established during last year on the issue of faculty evaluation forms. Senators were going to go back to look at different models. Durant presented on what he found. At most of the A&M schools, there's a general policy about annual reviews in the faculty handbook. Each individual school has the ability to create their own annual review, as long as it is consistent with the general policy.

A motion was made and seconded to allow each school to create its own annual review policy in line with the general policy. Discussion: This would be more decentralized, more tailored to individual schools. Evaluations don't come back in a timely fashion, and suggested that there be a timetable within the school's evaluation policy to ensure timely feedback. There is concern that there are separate policies/processes: part of tenure and promotion process and post-tenure is voted on across the university, and that different standards school to school may put someone at a disadvantage during the post-tenure process. The General policy should be adhered to by all schools in order to be consistent. There may be differences in post-tenure from the university level and at the school and department level. There is an assumption that the annual evaluation will be in the faculty handbook since it is core to the handbook.

A motion was made to table the discussion. No second. Motion doesn't carry. The discussion continued. It is important for us to see handbook language and then proceed from there. It is important to have consistency in timelines across the schools. We need to be careful in jumping to divide it by schools. Evaluation differences by type of position/level of teaching may be necessary. A motion was made and seconded to reconsider annual evaluation after seeing a first draft of the faculty handbook.

Admissions requirements/graduation policies

Durant distributed a document outlining major issues with transfer coursework, foreign language requirements, participation in the graduation ceremony, and residency requirements. A motion was made and seconded to adopt the proposed policies for graduation requirements. Were others involved in the preparation of this proposal? Durant indicated that he did not meet with committee.

A motion was made and seconded to remand this to the committee for further work. The committee will solidify the proposal and bring it back to a future meeting.

Proposal on compensation for graduate research project—waiting to hear from administration.

Dr. Snow addressed the recommendation from the Faculty Senate through the Senate President [this is not how this should have been addressed] from administration on the proposal. He gave Megan the draft response/document. Dr. Snow indicated that chairing or serving on thesis review committees is just part of being a faculty member. He said that teaching loads aren't heavier here than at most universities. He can't recommend this policy as it has been presented. He is not opposed to looking at this again in the future. He said that he would have preferred that it come administratively through the school heads. Dr. Snow will prepare a final draft and submit it to Megan.

Post-tenure review procedure

A motion was made and seconded to accept the post-tenure review policy for presentation to all faculty. A concern was raised that the policy is limited to people who are unsatisfactorily ranked, that it does not recognize someone who is post-tenure but continues to do outstanding work. In addition, the policy limits intervention to those who are already unsatisfactory. The university is also likely to have satisfactory and outstanding post-tenure faculty. Is there a way to use the policy to identify faculty who may not have yet reached that unsatisfactory level and help them before they get to the unsatisfactory level? The annual review is intended to provide that feedback for correction prior to post-tenure review. Is the annual review by the supervisor the same as the peer review process? Tenure review process is peer review. Motion passed following discussion. The draft policy will be distributed to all faculty 9/10, due back 9/17. Comments from the general faculty will be distributed to all senators prior to the next meeting for discussion.

D. New Business

Role and responsibilities of senators and Roberts Rules of Order tabled for next meeting. [how to table an agenda item]

E. Agenda for Next Meeting

List the items to be discussed at the next meeting.

Adjournment:

Meeting was adjourned at 12:40 by Megan Wise de Valdez. The next general meeting will be on October 5, 2012 at Main Campus, room 204/207.

Minutes submitted by: Stefanie Wittenbach

Approved by: Megan Wise de Valdez, Brian Brantley, Mary Mayorga