

Faculty Senate Minutes

Friday, December 6, 2013

11:00 – 12:30

Room 353 Main Campus

Present: Brian Brantley, Vicky Elias, Richard Green, Jim Hackard, Melissa Jozwiak, Mary Mayorga, Ramona Pittman, Sarah Timm, Robert Vinaja, Kathleen Voges, Ed Westerman,

Absent: Claire Nolasco, Lorrie Webb

Call to Order

Minutes were submitted and approved with corrections.

Executive Committee Update

Faculty Handbook – President Brian Brantley reported that Durant Frantzen had been appointed to compose an updated faculty handbook and had received a course reassignment. He asked for volunteers to work with Dr. Frantzen. There was brief discussion of his responsibilities and the role of committee members. Dr. Brantley will invite Dr. Frantzen to the February Faculty Senate meeting.

Conference of Faculty Senates – Mary Mayorga reported that she had attended the October meeting of the Texas Council of Faculty Senates and that another meeting is scheduled for March. As an organizational officer she will attend that meeting but recommended that we send two other representatives. She will present further information at the February Faculty Senate meeting.

Administrative Update – Dr. Brent Snow

The Faculty Handbook is expected to be completed in two semesters.

Funding approval for downward expansion is not available until Fall of 2015 and the earliest possible date of lower division student enrollment is 2016. Snow discussed setting up a steering committee but stated that planning was less detailed than many assume. Dr. Westerman pointed out that planning must occur before budget request and that enrollment drives decisions about workloads, job lines, etc. An associated concern about poor communication was voiced by several senators. Dr. Westerman suggested that recent decisions about shared office spaces had increased faculty concerns about lack of planning and communication. Dr. Mayorga stated that this resulted in faculty perceptions of being excluded and inability to plan. Dr. Snow asked where communication breakdown occurred. Dr. Brantley reported that we cannot know, but that faculty frequently relied on rumor. Dr. Jozwaik suggested that information on university committees would help identify communication breakdowns. Dr. Elias stated that communications with faculty and staff should reflect the differences in roles and concerns of those two groups. Dr. Snow asked if the formation of a steering committee to address downward expansion would be beneficial. Other examples of problematic communication were reported, including lack of knowledge about who will be moving from the Brooks Campus to the Main Campus, scheduling classes at the Gillette building

with faculty consultation, calendar inconsistencies with other A&M campuses, and lack of an updated academic calendar online. Dr. Snow noted possible ways to improve communication. There was consensus for the need to implement a steering committee “sooner rather than later.” Dr. Green recommended representation from each college and from Faculty Senate.

Old Business

Dr. Ed Westerman reported on the survey of faculty concerns. The top two concerns are merit increases and teaching/scholarship awards. He pointed out that the constitution mandates a standing Faculty Development Committee that could address the need for merit increases. He moved that we elect representation to each of the constitutional standing committees. The motion was seconded and after discussion, was approved.

Dr. Green moved that we select one member to determine what committees our members are currently serving on and develop recommendations for filling slots on the committees listed in constitution. Seconded. In clarification, Dr. Green stated he expected the appointee to solicit memberships. Motion carried with two abstentions.

Dr. Brantley called for volunteers. Dr. Green nominated Lorrie Webb. Nominations. RG – nominates Lorrie Webb. Dr. Westerman moved that the Senate President communicate with each senator, about his or her preference on serving on committees. Seconded and carried.

Formation of Subcommittee on Dean’s List/Provost’s List – Dr. Snow repeated his request for Faculty Senate input on criteria. Dr. Brantley proposed the formation of an ad hoc committee for university-wide standards but not college standards. Dr. Snow will present information on student grades at the February Faculty Senate meeting.

Blackboard policies, software choices, Faculty Senate representation on ITAC. Faculty Senate discussed issues identified by Sherita Love regarding lack of policies associated with academic technological tools and need for senate input. Dr. Vinaja pointed out that three senators currently serve on ITAC. Several senators voiced a lack of clear policies regarding email retention, retaining graded material, etc. and a lack of knowledge about what level of oversight would develop such policies. Dr. Mayorga volunteered to consult Dr. Verhasselt of the Provost’s office for more information and present it at the February meeting.

Items postponed until the next meeting:

President’s Circle Research Grant – revising the process – 10 minutes

Formation of Subcommittee on Copyright of Digitized Lectures – 10 minutes

Move to adjourn. Second.

Adjournment