

# Faculty Senate Meeting—February 2, 2016

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**Senators Present:** April Conkey, Kathleen Rees, Manuel Flores, Xiaoliu Chi, Ryan Paul, Khairul Islam, Elizabeth Janzen, Richard Miller, Stan Hodges, Kendra Huff, Ruth Chatelain-Jardon, Don Jones, Daniel Burt, Melody Knight, Monica Wong Ratcliff, Chongwei Xiao, Joseph Sai, Nuri Yilmazer, Rajab Chaloo, David Ramirez, Bruce Marsh, Polly Allred, Jody Briones, Patricia Huskin, Nestor Sherman, Lifford McLauchlan, Maria de Jesus Ayala-Schueneman, Amit Verma

**Senators Absent:** Eliezer Louzada (4), Bart Ballard (1), Armando Ibanez (2), Christine Fiestas (1), Alberto Rodriguez (1), Barbara Cooke (2), Pamela Wright (3), Joachim Reinhuber (4), Ryan Rhoades (4), Valerie Bartelt (2), Hong Zhou (2)

**Attending:** Dr. Heidi Anderson, Abigail De La Mora, Dr. Teresa Riley, President Steven H. Tallant

❖ **Call to Order and Quorum Call - 3:31 p.m.:**

- *Dr. Verma asked parliamentarian, Dr. Nestor Sherman, if there were enough members for a quorum. Dr. Sherman replied in the affirmative.*

❖ **Approval of Minutes from December 1, 2015 Senate Meeting:**

- *Dr. Verma asked for approval of the previous meeting minutes.*

- A motion to approve the minutes was made by Dr. Richard Miller. The motion was seconded, and passed unanimously.

❖ **Presentation from Provost, Dr. Heidi Anderson:**

- *Dr. Heidi Anderson provided a brief update:*

- The search for the Dean of the College of Arts and Science has received a number of applications. Once the deadline for applications has closed, the committee can work on developing a short list of applicants.
- The second search being conducted is the internal search for the Associate Vice President for Research and Sponsored Programs and Dean for the College of Graduate Studies.
  - Dr. Anderson stated that the committee is trying to find someone to overlap Dr. Abdelrahman's departure.
  - The deadline for applications closed on January 29, 2016. Six have applied and the committee plans to meet tomorrow.
  - Dr. Anderson plans to have candidates meet with the Faculty Senate Executive Committee.
- Dr. Anderson has developed an Ad Astra Taskforce.
  - The list of individuals will be sent out to the faculty soon.
  - The purpose of this taskforce is not to get rid of the system, as Dr. Anderson feels this program will be beneficial for the university by providing required classroom utilization reports.

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- This taskforce will need faculty input and recommendations. Dr. Anderson asked senators to ask faculty in their departments to assist in giving information should the taskforce contact them.
- Dr. Anderson said she has been through her first round of the tenure/promotion process, reviewing 19 dossiers.
  - She stated that there were few appeals which are currently being heard.
  - Dr. Anderson stated she learned a lot through the process about our faculty and the breadth of their teaching, scholarship, and scholarship of engagement.
  - She was impressed with the work submitted by the faculty.
- Dr. Anderson stated that in the past two Faculty Senate meetings she has attended, the Senators requested information on the budget.
  - Therefore, Dr. Anderson will relinquish time to President Steven H. Tallant to join the meeting and present this information to the Senate.

➤ **Dr. Anderson opened the floor for questions:**

- Dr. Chaloo asked if the Ad Astra Taskforce had a deadline, and if there will be a report this semester from the committee.
  - *Dr. Anderson stated that the taskforce is working hard this semester to try for a quick implementation for the fall 2016 semester.*
- Dr. Verma asked about Dr. Anderson's concerns expressed to the Executive Committee about how teaching is currently evaluated for promotion and tenure, and her assertion that teaching is only measured one way. He stated the Faculty Handbook already requires that teaching is to be evaluated multiple ways.
  - *Dr. Anderson added, teaching is the hallmark of our profession, but we are really only using one measure (SRI's). So she wants to use multiple measures and she wants to start the conversation to put in other strategies, to form a more robust assessment.*
- Dr. Verma also inquired about an ombudsman on campus.
  - *Dr. Anderson replied that ombudsman positions are very expensive.*
  - *Dr. Verma suggested the university could give a senior faculty member half time release. It was stated that a number of faculty members have served as ombudsman in the past. He emphasized the benefit of having an ombudsman to help in situations where there is a faculty disagreement that does not need to be elevated to the level of a grievance or appeal.*
  - *Dr. Anderson is open to the idea and the conversation, but is hesitant.*
- With no further questions, Dr. Verma thanked Dr. Anderson for her presentation.

❖ **Report from President, Dr. Steven H. Tallant:**

- *President Tallant and Dr. Teresa Riley presented information on the university budget.*
  - President Tallant said it has been a while since he has attended a Faculty Senate meeting but was pleased to come and discuss the budget with the Senate. He said the university has a budget committee that submits the budget to the President for approval. He stated that all this information is online. "Not a penny is spent that is not transparent and online." A handout was given with information on the budget developed for the Faculty Senate.

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- **Projected Revenue Increase:** A&M-Kingsville had a spectacular year and was named one of the fastest growing universities in the United States.
  - Last fiscal year (2015), the budget was \$145 million.
  - For fiscal year 2016, the projected budget is \$160 million which is a \$14.4 million increase from last year.
- **Salaries:**
  - President Tallant discussed the difference between one-time monies and forever monies. Salary increases are considered forever monies as the university will need to ensure the amount is available for years to come.
  - President Tallant stated that \$3.5 million was given to merit increases in September 2015 and January 2016.
  - Built into the growth plan is a formula to increase funding per SCH.
    - Unallocated Faculty Salary Pool is money used to hire adjunct faculty. The University earns \$60 per semester credit hour (SCH) additional funding to cover adjuncts and classrooms.
    - President Tallant stated that this is the only university in America that does it this way. He stated that the university is putting these funds back into the classroom.
  - Added 40 new tenure track positions this year (mostly engineering), and 100 positions over the last two years.
  - \$376,000 is budgeted for summer faculty salaries.
- **Academic Support:**
  - The Weslaco Engineering program received additional support as well as the Engineering Teaching Lab which needed the upgrade.
  - Eagle Ford Shale Center also received increases as well.
  - A total of \$1.4 million has been designated to classroom technology support.
- **Institutional Program Support:**
  - President Tallant said they have hired a director for development and have gotten back the money invested in that.
  - Marketing and Communications received a budget increase to restore funding that was cut previously in 2010 during state budget cuts. It was mentioned that during that cut, 82 positions were eliminated with no one losing their job.
  - An increase to \$600,000 in scholarships for students. “We don’t get students if we don’t give scholarships!”
  - Teaching/Research Assistant funding has also increased to \$300,000. “Again, money going in to the students.”
  - Athletic recruitment has also increased (in part to help with Title IX.)
    - The university is currently \$4 million below competitors but hopes to change that.
    - Athletic budget is \$6 million, increased from \$4 million a couple of years ago.
  - Admissions/Enrollment Management has also seen an increase in their budget to \$69,000 and has hired a recruiter in Houston.
  - Advising and software licenses have also seen an increase as well.
- **One-Time Expenses:**
  - Money has been allocated for video surveillance system.

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- There have been 400 cameras installed and more added by May all over campus including the parking lots.
- The university has created a position to help with the disconnection there has been with UPD and iTech. This person will be monitoring the cameras that are being installed.
- President Tallant stated that he believes in privacy but when a student gets assaulted on campus, we want data.
- Money is also allocated to upgrades to the Engineering Teaching Lab (done prior to ABET accreditation, but billed in 2016).
- Monies have been allocated for searches. President Tallant said it was not fair to have colleges pay for searches or the hiring of consultants for these searches.
- **Ongoing Money:** total of \$10.124 million.
  - \$3 million of the money is not being touched or spent but rather held in reserves to earn interest. Oil prices have been a concern and the reserve money is being saved in case of another budget cut by the state. This money will ensure the university will survive if that occurs.
  - President Tallant stated that his priorities are to first take care of our people first, then our students, then our equipment and maintain what we have built and done.
  - Dr. Teresa Riley inserted an explanation of the impact of the loss of TAMSA.
    - In one month TAMUK lost \$10 million.
    - Dr. Tallant made sure we were planning and budgeting for the loss of TAMSA.
- **Salary Savings:** President Tallant explained the crazy way the budget here has been built on projected salary savings. It has taken the university several years to gradually redistribute that money back to the colleges. Every year for the last four years he takes part of the budget to get us out of that. In several years, we will have gradually got it to where if there are salary savings in a college, it will actually be a bonus for the college.
- **Promises:**
  - We will bank money this year.
  - If we don't have to give money back to the legislature, we will have another merit raise.
  - The money we have in the bank right now is for what the legislature might do to us...or we will have it for merit increases.
- **President Tallant opened the floor for questions:**
  - Dr. Don Jones asks if we are taking steps to make sure we keep our TAMUK umbrella over investments we are making in the valley.
    - *President Tallant stated that TAMUK has built other campuses in the past. Under his watch as President he will not allow Weslaco to become a stand-alone university. He cannot promise what the legislature or system will do in the future.*
  - President Tallant thanked Phi Kappa Phi for the invitation to the induction ceremony.
  - With no more questions, Dr. Verma thanked Dr. Tallant for his presentation.

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## ❖ Report from Committees and Officers:

- *Dr. Verma asked for the various committees and officers to give updates to the Faculty Senate.*
  - Faculty Senate President Update - Dr. Verma
    - *Dr. Verma will be attending the Texas Council of Faculty Senate Presidents at the end of the month. There will also be a special meeting with the A&M System Faculty Senate Presidents and Dr. James Hallmark, Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs. Dr. Hallmark has asked for agenda items. If senators have items to bring to this meeting please let Dr. Verma know.*

## ❖ Old Business:

- *Dr. Verma stated that there was no old business at this time.*

## ❖ New Business:

- *Dr. Verma opened the floor for new business items.*
  - *Dr. Verma asked the Senate if there was any new business to discuss. With no new business, Dr. Verma continued.*

## ❖ Announcements:

- *Dr. Verma opened the floor for various committees to give an update.*
  - *Election Committee – Dr. McLauchlan:*
    - *Regular Senate elections are coming up at the end of the month.*
  - *Announcements from the Floor:*
    - *Dr. Verma has asked Dr. Elizabeth Janzen to chair the new SRI Implementation Committee and she asked if there were any Senators who would like to volunteer and serve. Currently, Dr. Don Jones and Dr. Daniel Burt have confirmed to serve on the committee. Dr. Janzen would like to have those for and against the issue.*

## ❖ Adjournment:

- *Dr. Verma announced the next meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 1, 2016.*
  - *With no further items, the meeting was adjourned at 4:14 p.m.*