

Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes – Special Meeting August 14, 2020

Senators Present: 31

Senators Absent: 9

Call to Order and Quorum Call.

This meeting of the Faculty Senate was held online through Blackboard Collaborate due to COVID-19 social distancing requirements.

At 3:35 p.m., The President of the Faculty Senate asked the Parliamentarian, if enough members were present for a quorum. The Parliamentarian replied in the affirmative. The President of the Senate notified the Faculty Senate that copies of letters written during the summer in an official capacity would be included in the appendix of the minutes.

I. Approval of Minutes from June 5, 2020 Special Faculty Senate Meeting.

The President of the Faculty Senate motioned for approval of the previous meeting minutes. The motion was seconded. Minutes were approved.

II. Discussion

a) Fall 2020 semester

The floor was opened to all Senators to discuss issues of concern about the start of the semester. The following topics entered the discussion

- * appreciation for in-person teaching
- * dislike for online teaching
- * dislike for online teach but adapting to it
- * high spread of pandemic in regions where we and students live
- * faculty in the high risk category
- * online teaching as default
- * flexibility with majority online
- * respect for pedagogy and academic freedom
- * concerns with campus contractors not following covid safety regulations
- * concerns with furniture movers with masks on chins
- * faculty denied requests to teach online
- * polling students 1 week prior to classes
- * faculty's needs second to students' needs
- * plexiglass boxes for working in labs
- * lab adjustments till end of semester when possible
- * It seems that there are two major issues when it comes to classes
 - Approval for classes to be delivered online
 - Approval to work remotely (defined as not on campus)
- * Seems to be that if class is f2f and professor wants to be remote...then they are denied
- * HR is accepting (not necessarily approving) remote requests for “all online” teaching & “faculty w/children w/school closures”
- * [Open Letter to the A&M University System Chancellor and Regents Concerning COVID-19 and Campus and Community Safety](#) from TAMU-CC, TAMU-International, and TAMU-San Antonio.

- b) It was proposed that we create a motion to request that admin consider allowing all online faculty to teach remotely. The motion was seconded and discussed.

Motion that all approved online courses be allowed to be taught from a remote work location (not on campus), at the discretion of the faculty member.

The motion passed.

- c) Another motion was then proposed, seconded and discussed.

That the Faculty Senate of Texas A&M University Kingsville recommends Fall 2020 classes be fully-online (except for those classes that the faculty member determines require face to face instruction) so as to assure “as best as we are able, the safety of students, faculty, and staff” as well as the safety of our families and communities both near and far. We take this decision despite our strong affinities for in-person instruction and campus life, which we hope one day soon to be able to return to.

The motion was defeated.

- d) **Discussion of [open letter](#)**

Many Senators feel that TAMUK administration’s flexibility is in good faith. Hence, it would not be appropriate for the Faculty Senate to be associated with the proposed letter.

III. Announcements

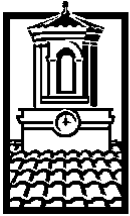
The President of the Faculty Senate shared the following reminders:

- Please email all motions and resolutions to FacultySenateOfficers@tamuk.edu no later than Tuesday, August 18, 2020, 5:00 pm CT if you would like the Executive Committee on Tuesday, August 25, 2020 to add them to the Tuesday, September 1, 2020 3:30pm-5:00pm Faculty Senate meeting Agenda.
- Senators may raise motions and resolutions from the floor rather than submit them to the EC, but should have them ready in writing as in the format in previous FS meetings ([see slides on Faculty Senate webpages](#)).

IV. Adjournment

At 5:29 pm the President of the Faculty Senate motioned to adjourn. The motion was seconded and passed.

Respectfully Submitted,
Christine Radcliff
Faculty Senate Secretary, 2020-2021



July 20, 2020

Dear President Hussey,

On behalf of the Executive Committee of the Faculty Senate, I write to request the formation of an Office of Faculty Ombuds. In what follows, I will briefly outline my thinking on this matter to date.

Such an office might/should, I would think, employ a professional mediator as ombudsperson to facilitate the informal mediation and resolution of conflicts and concerns raised by TAMUK faculty prior to a formal grievance procedure, with the informal agreement of all concerned parties, of course. One way to conceptualize such an office is currently found in TAMUK AOP #1, section 6.4:

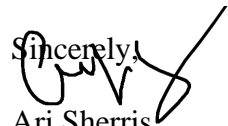
As provided in Section 51.942 of the Texas Education Code, a tenured faculty member subject to termination on the basis of a post-tenure review must be given the opportunity for referral of the matter to a non-binding alternative dispute resolution process as described in Chapter 154, Civil Practice and Remedies Code. The Code describes various processes, including mediation facilitated by an impartial third party. Faculty are encouraged to see the TAMUK Faculty Ombudsman for additional information. The opportunity for referral of the matter to nonbinding alternative dispute resolution must be provided prior to referral of the charges to a hearing committee under Section 7 of this rule (https://www.tamuk.edu/academicaffairs/_files_AA/AOP1.pdf)

As pointed out in the excerpt from AOP #1 , “a non-binding alternative dispute resolution process” would include “mediation.” While AOP #1 only relates such an office to the post-tenure review process, I believe it should be discussed that it should be open to a broader range of grievances that arise among faculty and between faculty and staff, and faculty and administrators whether tenured or not, with the exception, of course, of conflicts that arise that must be addressed by the Office of Compliance (e.g., title IX grievances that include faculty).

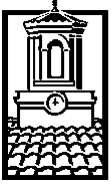
Moreover, there is currently no entity tasked to mediate faculty conflicts at TAMUK. As a result, faculty bring confidential concerns and conflicts to the President of the Faculty Senate. Consultations with a few previous Faculty Senate Presidents indicate that this has been their experience too. However, the Faculty Constitution, correctly to my thinking, does not define conflict mediation and resolution as the role of the Faculty Senate or any member of the Faculty Senate, including the President of the Faculty Senate (See Faculty Senate Constitution, Article II,

Sections 19-23, page 7, https://www.tamuk.edu/senate/_files_FS/FacultyConstitution-ratified-32018.pdf).

As we have discussed on few different occasions, while such an office will by no means be a panacea for the mediation and resolution of all concerns and conflicts, when a mediation process succeeds, it could lead to the flexible collegiality that characterizes many other interactions at our university and which strengthens our sense of community.

Sincerely,


Ari Sherris
President, Faculty Senate



August 3, 2020

Dear Dr. Jeffrey Glick,

Thank you for agreeing to chair a task force to develop *suggested guidelines for chairing departments* at Texas A&M University-Kingsville.

The function of this task force is to research, plan, and write a short information manual—by no means comprehensive—that will suggest ways chairs might plan, schedule, and implement different facets of their job. Such a manual will respect different cultural practices across departments and colleges. The proposed manual might help chairs develop supportive communicative skills, plan and chair meetings, address sensitive issues, and meet the needs of a diverse faculty in an inclusive, friendly and informal manner. By all means keep it practical and accessible.

Your first draft best be reviewed by others outside the task force, including faculty and additional chairs, but not limited to those two groups. The ‘final draft’ best remain a living document. In other words, one that is open to periodic review and changes. These periodic reviews and possible subsequent changes might be carried out annually by future task forces appointed by future Faculty Senate Presidents. The email address for suggested changes will be published in the manual as follows: facultysenateofficers@tamuk.edu.

Membership of the task force is your decision as Chair. However, by way of suggestion, it might be wise to select at least one chair from each college and some combination of seasoned and new chairs, as this may lend different perspectives to your task. Different perspectives might be important to include if not in the actual final draft, at least in the planning and reviewing stages. Obviously, new chairs may have different needs than seasoned chairs; each group may ask different questions.

By way of a deadline, I would hope a ‘final draft’ might be emailed to the Faculty Senate Executive Committee members on Tuesday, February 16, 2021 for discussion in the EC on February 23, 2021. Depending on that discussion, the proposed chairs’ manual could be brought to the Faculty Senate meeting on Tuesday, March 2, 2021 for a discussion and vote in the Faculty Senate. I would hope the task force work would conclude at this stage, but it may continue into the next year with your agreement and the agreement of the President-Elect, to be determined at a later date. Chairs of task forces can be appointed by Faculty Senate Presidents and they do not have to be members of the Faculty Senate or the Faculty Senate Executive Committee.

I hope this short sketch is helpful. Thanks again!

Sincerely,

Ari Sherris
President, Faculty Senate (2020-2021)



August 6, 2020

Dear Chairs Burgos and Collins,

I want to be among the first to congratulate you on assuming Co-Chair responsibilities on the President's Council on Climate, Diversity, and Inclusion. This Council's advice and guidance to the President of the University and to Senior Leadership has the potential to impact our university community and its friends on campus and around the globe.

In progressive and secular Judaism, the heritage from which I draw my strength during these troubling and uncertain times, 'tikkun olam' [תיקון עולם], literally 'fix the world/universe' is figuratively a Hebrew expression for 'social action.' It is to those of us in movements for change, a commitment to break the silence. It is similar to Paulo Freire's concept of regaining a sense of our humanity through a critical stance against silence. Silence must never be allowed to smother and extinguish non-violent educational projects, which I believe you can help us enact together.

As your Council deliberates on ways to educate all of us on an end to terrors of our times—systemic racism, anti-Blackness, Islamophobia, antisemitism, anti-Latinx, anti-LGBTQ+, police brutality, the destruction of our climate, our earth, and life as we know it—I'd like you to consider a place on your future agendas for a series of talks on the above themes that provide our community conversations with public intellectuals, via live streamed interviews or short talks. Perhaps, even our own TEDx site in Peacock Auditorium for these meetings of minds livestreamed from the centers of the world.

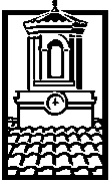
Perhaps set your sights high by teaming up with a small consortium of neighboring universities to invite for livestreamed events: Cornel West and Angela Davis, to give us tools to advocate against anti-Blackness and against systemic racism; Robin Diangelo and Tim Wise to address white fragility and white supremacy; Laverne Cox on LGBTQ+ advocacy; Kaya Gibel Mevorach on raising our voices against antisemitism; Naomi Klein on social activism, climate change, and saving our earth. These public intellectuals would be honored—even if only online—to join our efforts to think big, think hard, and make the world better in South Texas and beyond.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ari Sherris".

Ari Sherris, PhD
President, Faculty Senate (2020-21)

Cc: Dr. Mark Hussey, President
Dr. Lou Reinisch, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs
Members, President's Council on Climate, Diversity, and Inclusion
Faculty Senate



August 10, 2020

Dear Dr. Rasmussen,

Thank you for serving as Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs since March 13, 2018—for nearly 2 ½ years. I was lucky to be a Senator throughout that time as you represented a departure from the often siloed world of academic leadership. Your accessibility, your high-engagement style of communication, and your friendliness, even in debate and disagreement, did not go unappreciated. Throughout your tenure as Provost, you rarely missed a Faculty Senate meeting, which you attended at our invitation, embracing—as you often did--the exchange of free ideas related to your presentations. When we requested you not attend, so that we might hold a closed session, you respected our right to separate and re-group. I look forward to collaborating with you in your role as Associate Vice President for Research and Graduate Studies as you devote your leadership to overseeing the important areas of pre- and post-contracts and grants awards and Graduate Studies.

I am happy that at our meeting (7 August 2020) you agreed to appoint a faculty member from the Graduate Council as a liaison to the Faculty Senate. To my thinking this might facilitate a close working relationship as we improve the Faculty Handbook to expand the increasingly important role of doctoral dissertations at Texas A&M University-Kingsville, supporting new knowledge in the worlds of research and scholarship, as well as strengthening our Carnegie research classification*. It will be particularly important to provide input and feedback with the appointed liaison from the Graduate Council to the Faculty Senate as the Council begins discussing different ways the following might change:

- Graduate Faculty Membership Application Process;
- categories and requirements for membership;
- responsibilities of Graduate Faculty members;
- nomination procedures to the Graduate Faculty;
- renewal procedures to the Graduate Faculty; and,
- determination of tangible evidence of continuing productive scholarship.

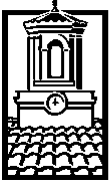
Thank you again for your work as Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs. I look forward to all future collaborations that are planned to have time for the thoughtful free exchange of ideas as well as shared governance, for these are among the clearest indication of the wellness and strength of our academic community.

Sincerely,

Ari Sherris, PhD
President, Faculty Senate (2020-21)

Cc: James Hallmark, Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs
Mark Hussey, President
Lou Reinisch, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs
Jaya Goswami, Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs
Martin Brittain, Assistant Provost
Deans
Department Chairs
Faculty Senate

*https://carnegieclassifications.iu.edu/lookup/view_institution.php?unit_id=228705&start_page=standard.php&clq=%7B%22ipgrad2005_ids%22%3A%2218%22%7D



August 10, 2020

Dear Dr. Reinisch,

Congratulations on assuming the role of Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs at Texas A&M University-Kingsville. I am hopeful that you will develop a strong and constructive relationship with our Faculty Senate leadership, one that is dynamic and inclusive. The new ideas and fresh perspectives that you bring from your international and domestic experiences may prove to be enriching for all of us as we begin to work together at strengthening academic undertakings within and across our community and the world. We are a diverse and inclusive community with different and shared ways of knowing, habits of mind and diverse cultural, religious and secular practices. We are among the most exciting multilingual and multicultural academic communities in South Texas. Bringing that narrative forward into our daily practices might be an important umbrella goal for all of us. With your worldly knowledge, skill and experience we are hopeful of what the future might bring.

As I said in our meeting (7 August), Faculty Senate leadership is now planning across two years, as a result of President Hussey agreeing to monthly meetings with the President and President-Elect of the Faculty Senate. Dr. Hussey's leadership has been instrumental in this. I see it stemming from his goal to improve communication: Without continuity, communication is at best piecemeal.

Nevertheless, taking the next step is important too. To my thinking that means beginning a conversation on shared governance. When Dr. Hussey joined us one of his contributions to Senate leadership at that time influenced the Senate's task force on shared governance. The Faculty Senate joined the President in the Office of Human Resources' administration of the Great Colleges/ModernThink survey (see results in relevant attachment in a separate email to you).

The Executive Committee of the Faculty Senate meets the last Tuesday of August-December and then January through April, with special meetings as needed during the summer break of the Faculty Senate. It would be great if you could attend our next meeting on 25 August 2020 at 3:30 via a Blackboard Collaborate link we will email you. I look forward to hearing from you. Thanks again for joining us!

Sincerely,

Ari Sherris, PhD
President, Faculty Senate (2020-21)

Cc: James Hallmark, Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs
Mark Hussey, President
Lou Reinisch, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs
Jaya Goswami, Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs
Martin Brittain, Assistant Provost
Deans
Department Chairs
Faculty Senate

Questions on COVID-19 policies from Faculty and Chairs, with responses from Emergency Management Team Members.

Received Friday, August 14, 2020

Academic Affairs and Student Affairs

43. Who approves remote online office hours and teaching for high risk age groups? My chair and I are confused by forms for medical conditions from HR. Since when is the age factor a medical condition?

Faculty teaching fully online who have remote work approval should hold synchronous online meetings and office hours and discuss the issue with the Department Chair.

20. If a faculty member is sick or otherwise unable to conduct their course, will faculty members that cover for that course be compensated for their overload?

In such situations, the Department Chair will make a decision.

32 Question: *Why has the university (Provost's office or others through Shane Creel) forced faculty, staff, and students in the MEIE Department to make 300+ face shields for the university, when equivalent or better face shields were available and could easily and cheaply be purchased?*

Graduate students and lecturers from the MEIE and IMT Departments primarily assisted in making the face shields and Dr. Ozcelik coordinated the efforts. Others (e.g., ME Technician, Dr. Peel, Dr. Hossain) assisted to address some issues involving the use of the equipment. The equipment needed was already available in the College and the materials were purchased through Enterprise Risk Management. The activity was a learning opportunity for students that focused on optimizing manufacturing processes and it also served as a way for the College to contribute to the University community.

33. Question: Will faculty teaching exclusively on-line be required to be on campus for in-person office hours? Will faculty approved to work remotely be required to be on campus for in-person office hours? Background: Per p. 36 of Faculty Handbook, "A faculty member, teaching a full-time load, is expected to be available for a minimum of five posted office hours per week for conferences with students and academic advising. In lieu of office hours, instructors of on-line courses are expected to make reasonable accommodations to be accessible to students."

As is evident, several aspects of teaching and learning have had to be modified temporarily in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. One such example is that faculty teaching exclusively online who do not have remote work approval are

expected to conduct class from their campus offices. This is to ensure reliable and enhanced connectivity and service. As such, should a student wish to meet with a faculty member in person, every effort should be made to facilitate the meeting face to face, while practicing social distancing and wearing face coverings. Faculty teaching fully online who have remote work approval should hold synchronous online meetings and office hours.

8. What do faculty members do when a student refuses to leave, wear a mask, or adjust their mask to be effective?

In the event of a student who does not wear a face covering in the classroom/teaching space, faculty should first request the student to put on a face covering. If the student does not comply, the faculty member can dismiss the student from the classroom for that class period. If the student refuses to leave, the instructor may immediately dismiss the class and continue the remainder of the class period online. The professor may elect to discuss the matter in private with the student later and follow-up with a memo to the Dean of Students (Kirsten Compary, Kirsten.Compary@tamuk.edu) documenting the incident, or the faculty member may make a written referral of the student for disturbing the class by refusing to comply with the faculty member's request, to the Dean of Student's Office. In both instances, documentation provided should include the name of student, student ID number, other contact information if known, class/section, date/time of the interaction, and a summary of the concern and the outcome. The Dean of Students or designee will inform the student through their official university email address of the face covering policy and that he/she may not return to the classroom without a face covering. Continued disregard for the policy will be handled through the university's Student Disciplinary Code of Conduct. Possible sanctions for a disciplinary violation of the Student Code of Conduct range from a warning to expulsion from the university. For information on the Face Covering Policy, see <https://www.tamuk.edu/finance/hr/compliance/FaceCoverings.html>.

7. Are we, as faculty members, allowed to ask students to leave if they are refusing to wear a mask OR if they are purposefully wearing a mask that is largely ineffective (ie, wearing the mask without covering their nose, wearing masks made of mesh or tulle)?

See response to Question 8.

54. Can the faculty get a uniform statement for their syllabi addressing student compliance with safety precautions in class (or even outside of class), and the

consequences if they don't? And can we get that NOW, as opposed to 2 days before school starts? (Because faculty are preparing their syllabi NOW!) Please refer to the email message sent by the Provost on August 10. Among other things, it states the following:

COURSE SYLLABUS COVID-19 RELATED STATEMENT

All course syllabi for fall 2020 should include the following statement (given below in italics). This information has also been added to the Accessible Syllabus Template available on the website of the Center for Teaching Effectiveness (CTE) at <http://www.tamuk.edu/academicaffairssupport/teaching-effectiveness/teaching-resources.html>.

REQUIREMENTS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

In order to keep themselves and others safe and healthy during the pandemic, students attending class face-to-face are required to (1) wear face coverings over the nose and mouth and (2) scan the QR Code posted in the classroom/teaching location to log their attendance to assist in contact tracing, if needed. For information on the use of face coverings, see <https://www.tamuk.edu/return/facecoveringsfaq.html>.

For information on the Face Covering Policy, see:

<https://www.tamuk.edu/finance/hr/compliance/FaceCoverings.html>

Students are responsible for staying informed on the latest updates regarding the university's response to COVID-19 by checking their TAMUK email regularly and accessing information at

<https://www.tamuk.edu/return/> and <https://www.tamuk.edu/coronavirus/>.

1. Per the Back to School Plan: “Faculty will be available for in-person office hours.”

Question: Will faculty teaching exclusively on-line be required to be on campus for in-person office hours? Will faculty approved to work remotely be required to be on campus for in-person office hours?

Background: Per p. 36 of Faculty Handbook, “A faculty member, teaching a full-time load, is expected to be available for a minimum of five posted office hours per week for conferences with students and academic advising. In lieu of office hours, instructors of on-line courses are expected to make reasonable accommodations to be accessible to students.”

The statement, “Regardless of the method by which classes are offered, students may be able to view saved lectures if they are unable to attend class for any reason,” is intended to accommodate those students who are unable to attend their face-to-face class meeting due to a variety of reasons, for example, health related or dependent care related reasons. The phrase “for any reason” is being used to capture the scope of possible situations that might keep the student from attending class and to allow some flexibility in these uncertain times. It is not intended to include reasons that are not excused. Faculty are encouraged to clarify it at the initial class meeting.

3. Question: The “Faculty/Staff” section of the Fall 2020 Campus Return web site still indicates “Coming Soon” – when will this information be made

available? Please check the updated website: <https://www.tamuk.edu/return/fac-staff.html> for a message to faculty (which was also emailed to faculty on August 10, on behalf of the Provost).

49. If a student who has no Internet access or laptop has to quarantine, how will they be able to work on Blackboard?

In such instances, the student will have to make arrangements with the instructor to complete the coursework.

46. Do faculty continue teaching if a student refuses to wear a mask and they have been asked to leave three times? What if students walk out because of the student's refusal to wear a mask?

See response to Question 8.

39. Do faculty need to wear a face mask while teaching at the front of the classroom, more than 6' away from students? Delivering a lecture while wearing a mask will be difficult.

Face coverings must be worn on the Texas A&M-Kingsville campus inside all public buildings, including lobbies of buildings, restrooms, classrooms, hallways, and stairwells. Face coverings should be worn even if a person is by himself/herself or in any outdoor space where 6 feet of physical distancing is not reliably maintained. Faculty working alone in their offices can remove their face covering. A faculty member may wear a face shield without a mask only during lecturing in the classroom, as long as appropriate social distance (6 feet) can also be maintained between the faculty member and the students. At all other times, if face shield is used, a face covering must also be worn.

11. What written guarantees do faculty have that data collected from the QR will not be used against them in tenure and promotion or post-tenure reviews?

This question should be stated more clearly, establishing the perceived relation between the QR data and performance reviews.

12. How long will attendance data be stored in the QR system, where does it go and who is authorized to read it?

Attendance data will be housed in the Office of Enterprise Risk Management. Select personnel involved in data reporting will have access to the information. The data will be held as long as COVID-19 related reporting is needed.

13. What guarantees do faculty have that this data will not be used in cases against their academic freedom?

See response to Question 11.

General COVID-19

2. Per the Back to School Plan: ATHLETICS AND STUDENT

RECREATION “Each program will maintain an inner bubble comprised of personnel deemed essential to the conduct of competition for purposes of pre-competition and includes coaches, medical staff, administrators, officials and other essential personnel.”

Question: Can additional information be provided defining what the “inner bubble” will be and how it will work? Especially, will students who are part of the “inner bubble” be expected to attend f-2-f classes? Or, will they fall under the provision in the Back to School Plan indicating that: “Regardless of the method by which classes are offered, students may be able to view saved lectures if they are unable to attend class for any reason.” If the latter applies, will faculty teaching f-2-f classes be required to record all f-2-f classes?

“Inner Bubble - The inner bubble consists of student-athletes, coaches, sports medicine, athletic administration and any other support personnel who have daily direct contact with our student-athletes” (Steve Roach, Executive Director of Athletics and Campus Recreation, email communication).

“Classes - Being a part of the inner bubble does not dictate that student-athletes will not be f2f. Student-athletes will follow the schedules and formats provided by each class they are enrolled in. Student athletes have been placed in CoFlex classes and grouped together in sections A, B, or C, based on the sport. They will be in the class with non-athletes too. However, athletes will check in daily with their staff for Covid-19 monitoring. As with all face-to-face students, should an athlete have to miss class due to excused reasons, he/she can access the class recording via Blackboard” (Steve Roach, Executive Director of Athletics and Campus Recreation, email communication).

55. How quickly will test results be reported to students and employees from the Wellness Center? **Within 30 hours from time of receipt at the testing laboratory.**

45. Will TAMUK provide a laptop or a Chromebook and a javNET WiFi/internet access card for those of us who have to work from home and do not have computer and internet access at home if we test positive or have to quarantine due to exposure, or if we have a family member at home that gets the virus and have to care for the person?

Several departments already provide faculty with laptops or other devices which can be used to conduct classes online. Faculty should contact their Department Chair regarding this if they need one.

30. Would the EMT consider live open BB Collaborate meetings to field questions and provide short updates from our campus community at noon each day during September? Members of the re-open team are holding Blackboard Collaborate forums for the campus community the week of 8/17/20.

23. How can endangering human life in face-to-face classes and labs be equal to endangering the financial stability of the university or the economy, particularly when there is an alternative—completely online teaching?

The university is keeping the safety of its community as its priority and following recommendations from state/system/local/ federal entities. In response to student and faculty feedback regarding the class formats, a variety of modes are being offered.

10. What happens when a student or faculty member gets to class without a phone or with a dead phone and no charging cord and cannot swipe the QR?

In such instances when a working phone is unavailable, a student will have to use another device, such as a laptop, to log in to the URL provided below the QR code. After logging in with their TAMUK email and password, they will be prompted to follow the same process as with scanning the QR code.

9. How will the university be enforcing the rules set forth in the Stages of Operation, especially with students and faculty walking to and from classes on a crowded campus? This is a campus-wide effort where everyone is expected to be socially responsible and does their part in ensuring we maintain a safe working, living, and learning environment for our faculty, staff, students, and visitors.

4. Dr. Sherris reported to faculty senate that there were only 800 tests per month allocated to our health and wellness center and that there are 240+ athletes and personnel working with athletes who will need to be tested

once a week according to NCAA COVID protocols. The math doesn't work. Also, where is this budgeted?

“Testing - We are still in the process of finalizing our protocols, but athletics will not be utilizing all of the 800 test kits provided by the System Office. While yet to be determined, athletics may receive a small quantity of those tests, we are in the process of determining how to obtain additional tests and the costs associated with that” (Steve Roach, Executive Director of Athletics and Campus Recreation, email communication).

5. At what point will the university revert to online instruction once COVID starts to spread throughout campus?

Many factors must be considered when making the decision to revert to fully online instruction such as level of spread on campus within faculty and staff instruction support, student population, other essential campus functions, as well as local and regional hospital capacities. Additionally, the President will be in consultation with local health authorities and TAMUS concerning the level of spread on campus.

6. How many active cases will we need to have before that's a possibility? **There is no set number of active cases given the many factors listed in the answer to question 5.**

Human Resources

42. How should faculty proceed with HR's documentation of medical conditions? One BlueCross BlueShield network doctor in Kingsville refuses to write a letter. Would test records be enough that align with CDC? Should this doctor be reported to HR or elsewhere? **This same doctor refuses to complete FMLA/ADA paperwork on behalf of his patients. Enterprise Risk Management will notify TAMUS Risk Management and Benefits so that BlueCross BlueShield can be notified.**

53. What protocols will employees follow for quarantining? Please elaborate. **Employees are to self-quarantine at home in a manner that is consistent with CDC guidelines.** <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/quarantine.html>

57. If a faculty member has to quarantine or gets sick from Covid, will they have to use their sick days? I'm especially asking for young faculty who will not have built

up a reserve yet. Employees who self-quarantine qualify for 80-hours of Emergency Family Medical Leave, apart from earned accruals. When possible, employees will be allowed to work remotely when they come in close contact or are COVID positive. In fact, that is our first option. If a person becomes sick and is unable to work, or is seeking a diagnosis, 80 hours of EFMLA could be used to cover their absence or sick period.

Enterprise Risk Management & Facilities

54. Texas Education Agency (TEA) is recommending that if 10% of a class tests positive for COVID19, the class is shut down: What is TAMUK's position? We will follow the current Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, CDC and Texas Department of State Health Services guidance for Institutions of Higher Education.

50. Why isn't the university using ID swipe stations instead of QR codes in every classroom? Additional computer hardware and software is required for the use of ID swipes. The QR code system was readily available at no additional cost.

51. When and if a vaccine is available, will the University offer it to students and employees free of cost? If not, why not? This has yet to be determined.

52. What protocols will be used for quarantining students? Please elaborate. We will advise individuals with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 to go to their place of residence, Bishop Turner Residence Hall (if living on-campus and unable to return to their place of residence), or a healthcare facility depending on how severe their symptoms are, and follow CDC guidance for caring for oneself. We will advise individuals to watch for emergency symptoms and seek emergency medical care if these symptoms occur.

47. Will the furniture in halls be roped off or moved into storage to deter people from sitting down? The chargers could be a problem too. What will happen to them?

We are removing hallway benches and possibly the charging stations to prevent loitering.

48. Are there plans to shut off water fountains in all buildings? Those could harbor viruses all too easily.

No. We have a limited number of water bottle filling stations on campus. Therefore, water fountains will remain in operation with enhanced cleaning by SSC. This will assist in preventing the development of Legionella bacteria and the development and spread of Legionnaires disease.

44. Could you elaborate on how TAMUK reached out and actually spoke to the local hospital in regards to their capacity in handling possibly 6,000 students coming back to Kingsville from other areas/hot zones? This could create a logistical nightmare if not discussed and planned for if an influx of cases happens locally. Could you outline a plan that is in place, and the frequency of updates? We have been in continuous direct communication with the TDSHS Region 11, and the Coastal bend Regional Advisory Council (CBRAC) concerning campus continuity of operations, and both have received a copy of our Back to School Plan – Fall 2020. The university receives daily local and regional hospital capacity data.

40. Will masks with exhalation valves be rejected? The CDC claims they allow unfiltered exhaled air to escape. Why or why not will they be rejected? We will adhere to the current CDC guidance.

41. How is our campus defining a ‘mask’ and a ‘face covering’? I have heard someone say, we are requiring face coverings, not masks! Please explain. Please refer to the campus face covering FAQ <https://www.tamuk.edu/return/facecoveringsfaq.html>

37. Who can you legally/FERPA-allowed disclose that to and how do you protect HIPAA in your reporting? Only a small group of individuals who will be notifying close contacts of a positive case will know personally identifying information about positive cases. These individuals include the Dean of Students, Executive Director of Risk Management, Executive Director of Human Resources, and the Director of Student Health and Wellness.

38. Do you and all the students who attended have to quarantine for 14 days? Do the students/faculty in their other classes also quarantine for 14 days? It is recommended that if you have close contact with the positive case (exposure within 6 feet for more than 15 minutes) you should self-quarantine for 14 days, even if face coverings were utilized. If a student or faculty member tests positive for COVID-19 we will activate the QR code attendance system, previously mentioned, to identify all learning spaces the infected individual was in. These

spaces will be secured from entry to allow SSC to disinfect all identified areas which will take a minimum of 24-hours. Once a positive case has been identified, all courses scheduled for delivery in those identified learning spaces will shift to a virtual delivery format until the disinfecting is complete and the learning spaces are reopened for normal operations.

35. Will faculty members be given PPE and if so, when, how, and what?

Faculty members must provide their own PPE. The University will not provide PPE to faculty.

36. What do you do if a student who attended class reports that they tested positive for COVID-19?

When a student tests positive for COVID-19, they must inform the Dean of Students. The disclosure triggers a notification to the students' close contacts and those who may have shared learning space with the individual. A QR code attendance system will aid in the notification process. Individuals in a learning space will be required to scan a QR code unique to that space upon entering. Most smartphones can scan a QR code using the camera function or a free application that can be downloaded for iOS or Android. Individuals will affirm their presence, including faculty, in that room and the information will be logged in a database managed by the Office of Enterprise Risk Management. If an individual tested positive for COVID-19, this system will allow a team of University officials to contact others who shared that space with the positive case.

34. What are your rights if a student seems sick? Can you request to take their temperature, ask them to leave, request that they visit health services, report them somewhere, etc?

Like faculty and staff, students are asked to complete COVID-19 training which encourages them to self-monitor for symptoms and informs them that they should not attend class when feeling ill. In addition, everyone in a public space, including labs and classrooms, are required to wear a face covering. When worn appropriately, face coverings mitigate virus transmission through source control. Students who do not comply with the face covering requirement can be asked to leave the classroom. However, a student wearing a face covering should be allowed to stay. If a faculty member believes a student may be ill, they may wish to speak to them privately after class—while maintaining social distance—to encourage them to seek medical care.

26. Biology and Earth Science Building room 104 is rated for 10 people. However, the chairs are not set up with 6 ft on all sides. How is that going to happen? Chairs have not been pushed all the way in? See for yourselves!

Corrected

27. How will most people, not just visually challenged, be able to read the signage on 8.5x11 sheets of paper in building after building?

The information on these signs is intended to reinforce the audio and visual public health messages that are being broadcasted nationwide.

28. When and how will the walk-through traffic for the breezeway in the Bio & Earth Sci Building (between the Peacock and the Bio lobby be addressed? Will or won't there be large signage, perhaps banners, to stop people from walking through to and from the SUB? Who will tell them to put their masks back on when they walk through? Won't that small space become a difficult area of increased infection if only disinfected 2 (maybe 3) times a day?

Since there will not be personnel monitoring the traffic, use of face coverings, etc. all members of the campus community must be socially responsible to keep themselves and others safe.

29. How will concerns be addressed hourly and daily? Why aren't the QRs in every hallway to alert staff, faculty and students in each specific building to confusion in the hallways, people without masks in the hallways, etc? Couldn't these be linked to just those folks assigned to those buildings?

This question should be stated more clearly, establishing the link between building confusion and the desired notification process.

31. Where is the signage preventing students from wandering in any direction down the hallway on the first floor of the Bio & Earth Sci Building? Do we really want random students walking through the building? When mentioned to Juan Garza from the At-Risk Management group, he responded, "The teachers will tell the students" as he finished fastening tiny pieces of tape on the ground that many will not see, not to mention the visually challenged. The appears not to be serious. It appears to be paying lip-service to safety guidelines. Wouldn't a large placard in the middle of the hallway instructing students to not walk down the hallway unless they need one of the 4 faculty members there?

Building occupants can place the signage they think appropriate to control the flow of traffic within buildings.

24. There is a growing body of research on amount of time in close proximity with all others wearing masks that is not looking good. Offices without windows, in buildings with poor airflow and the possibility of asymptomatic spread are not any place for meetings with students. Why hasn't the plan included an emphasis on online meetings and online advisement? Just entering and exiting some small offices into narrow hallways is problematic? What are the solutions? Do you really care about people's health?

Faculty will be available for in-person office hours. Students must schedule office hours visits with individual faculty members while practicing physical distancing. If you feel your office will not allow for physical distancing you may schedule the office hours visit in a different location.

25. Two classrooms (207 and 209) in the Biology and Earth Sciences Building have been scheduled with classes all day all week. Where will these students wait to go in? The hallways? Outside? Where are the indicators on the hallway floors? Where are they on the sidewalks? Have videos been made to train students about proper waiting behaviors in the actual places where waiting is to occur? Finally, where will they be waiting to enter Peacock?

This is a campus-wide effort where everyone is expected to be socially responsible and does their part in ensuring we maintain a safe working, living, and learning environment for our faculty, staff, students, and visitors.

18. Classrooms and laboratories are being overloaded and rated for a higher capacity than social distancing should allow. Measurements were done by SSC with apparent minimal care or concern for established CDC guidelines. Could the SSC please justify the current measurement of labs? **All classrooms and laboratories have established COVID Max Capacities based on the recommended CDC social distancing guidelines. The measurements and COVID Max Capacities were calculated and established in concert with Academic Affairs, Enterprise Risk Management, and Facilitates Planning and Construction.**

19. With students, staff, and faculty returning to campus from various hotspots across Texas, and no preemptive testing plan in place (test before you return), is the University prepared for a local outbreak? Keeping in mind there are asymptomatic carriers, symptomatic people that will ignore mild symptoms, and pre-symptomatic viral shedders, wouldn't it be safer to require tests everyone and a 15 day quarantine upon arrival? **We will continue working with and follow the directions from the Texas Department of State Health Services (TDSHS) Region**

11. Additionally, all students, faculty, and staff must complete the COVID-19 online training and self-screening certification prior to returning to campus.

21. Has the University consulted with anyone with infectious disease experience about the COVID response and Fall 2020 planning? If so, who and what was determined? If not, why not and why not now? We have been in continuous direct communication with Dr. Emilie Prot, TDSHS Region 11 Medical Director concerning our COVID response and throughout the development of our Back to School Plan – Fall 2020.

22. What metrics have changed in disease prevalence, treatment, or prevention from the Spring 2020 semester where we moved ALL classes online to now allow some face-to-face classes and labs? Is not the threat of infection greater now? A greater number of individuals within the region have been infected with COVID-19 over the past month due to pervasive community spread. However, over the past 5 months, our campus has focused on preventing the spread through the implementation of non-pharmaceutical interventions including engineering and administrative controls aimed at providing our campus community with a safe working, living, and learning environment.

17. The Office of Risk Management is failing to properly respond to this situation and appropriately equip the classrooms, hallways, and buildings with signage containing traffic flow instructions and social distancing spacing. They seem to be providing the "appearance of compliance" as they often brag. How can this be improved?

Our public health informational campaign was developed based on CDC guidance in concert with Marketing & Communication, Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, and Enterprise Risk Management and copiously placed throughout the facilities emphasizing physical distance to be maintained (e.g., 6-foot interpersonal physical separation) and COVID maximum occupancy capacity. If faculty wish to display more signage in a particular area, they can contact Enterprise Risk Management and signage will be provided to them to display as they deem necessary. We are all in this together.

55. Why aren't we hiring more contact tracers? Following the State and the A&M System will not meet our estimated needs according to a Johns Hopkins Center for Health Security study published August 7, 2020. Also, the Contact Tracing Workforce Estimator at George Washington University indicates the estimated needs of the State of Texas are not being met.

See: <https://www.gwhwi.org/estimator-613404.html> Total estimated need for Texas is: 28, 342 Contact Tracers. The current level of Contact Tracers in Texas is

3,722. There are zero reserve Contact Tracers in Texas. These are all reasons to take the lead on this on our campus. Where is campus leadership? Who is really getting ahead of the ball and who is simply paying lip service to our needs? These are clearly questions of probable life and death on our campus.

This recognized shortage of contact tracers and the fact that Kleberg County utilizes the Texas Department of State Health Services Region 11 as its Local Health Authority led to the development of the QR code used for classroom attendance and check in at other locations on campus where scheduled events are hosted. This system will allow us to conduct near real-time preliminary contact tracing on campus. Additionally, those that test positive, experiencing symptoms, or identified as a close contact are required to self-report through the TAMUS portal that will initiate contact tracing from College Station. The self-reporting process is similar to what we do for the First Report of Injury to initiate a Worker's Compensation claim.

The supervisor (for faculty & staff) or the Dean of Students (for students) will need to report the any of the following situations to the TAMUS COVID-19 portal:

- **Person who received a positive test result for C-19 (on campus or off campus testing site)**
- **Person who has symptoms and may have C-19 but has not been tested or test results are pending**
- **Person who has been exposed to someone who has received a positive C-19 test result.**

56. Why aren't we sharing staffing and transmission data in our community on contact tracing? Texas does not make contact tracing staffing and transmission data public, but Oregon, Hawaii, and Maryland do make contact tracing staffing and transmission data public and several additional states make staffing and transmission data accessible. Measuring how quickly and completely contact tracers are able to successfully touch base with new cases and their contacts is critical. Sharing these trajectories with our community will increase the drive for accountability among our own contact tracers to do better and better. Keeping all this data hidden does not serve anyone best. Could leaders on our campus take the next step and get better?

Curative Inc., the laboratory performing swab test analysis of our on-campus COVID-19 testing, will notify individuals via email of their test results whether they are negative or positive after a test. Additionally, the **Texas A&M Health Science Center Ops Center will call all persons with a positive test finding within 24 hours** of the Ops Center receiving that notification. Due to this lag time,

Enterprise Risk Management will conduct preliminary contact tracing on campus to identify close contacts to begin notifications along with facilities requiring disinfecting.

58. The following statement is included in the response to question #38:

“If a student or faculty member tests positive for COVID-19 we will activate the QR code attendance system, previously mentioned, to identify all learning spaces the infected individual was in. These spaces will be secured from entry to allow SSC to disinfect all identified areas which will take a minimum of 24-hours” (#38).

It is evident that all "learning spaces" are strictly covered to assist with contact tracing, but what is being done in the Library? As far as I am aware an ID swipe machine has been installed at the entrance to the building, but that can only identify when a person entered the building. Were that person to test positive there are no additional measures in place to identify where the person went after they entered the Library, nor any way to identify how long they were in the building (15 min, 3 hrs, etc.). It is expected that students will use the computer lab and the tables available on all floors (some located outside faculty/staff offices) to study. Again what measures are in place to notify those employees who upon entering/exiting their offices went through the persons social distance space? Additionally, there are concerns about the air circulation outside these offices when students may be sitting at a particular table for longer than the 15 min safe zone.

The ID card swipe data will be used for contact tracing. This is a campus-wide effort where everyone is expected to be socially responsible and does their part in ensuring we maintain a safe working, living, and learning environment for our faculty, staff, students, and visitors.

59. The same way that wipes are provided to students entering the classrooms for cleaning at their discretion, will the same supplies be available in the library for the same reason?

Yes.

MARCOM

14. When COVID-19 Campus updates are sent out, why isn't there a contact number or web address, where if a person on campus thinks they may have been exposed, that they can call for testing or get further instructions? Emails sent to Julie Navejar on this matter have been ignored.

As previously noted, (see correspondence to Faculty Senate Executive Committee from July 24), the University does not compile a comprehensive list of the type of public health data requested. While the University does gather basic information related to positive COVID-19 cases on campus, Texas A&M University-Kingsville is not an official tracker of public health data. In addition, the regional public health authority has not provided transmission data for positive cases in nearly two months, so that information is unknown in most cases.

Again, the University does not have the authority to require the disclosure of protected health information from individual persons, nor does it have the authority or resources to collect and disseminate this information.

Individuals can email concerns to JavelinaHelp@tamuk.edu and those emails will be directed to the appropriate individuals on campus.

In addition, our team has received numerous emails from faculty, staff and students in response to COVID-19 updates that have been addressed regularly.

16. Why aren't we getting a weekly update of how many people working or studying on campus have (1) tested and (2) tested positive?

Please refer to <https://www.tamuk.edu/coronavirus/COVID-Cases.html>

Since we have begun on-campus testing, we will be adding the number of COVID-19 tests administered each week.