

Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes – May 4, 2021

Senators Present: Hisham Al-Bataineh, Bart Ballard, Ammar Bhandari, Travis Braidwood, Lucy Camacho, Mauro Castro, Jieming Chen, Michael Cherry, Steven Corbett, Zhaoqi Fan, Manuel Flores, Jeff Glick, James Glusing, Anders Greenspan, Kelly Hall, David Hicks, Kendra Huff, Patricia Huskin, Dongwook Kim, Robert Kowalsky, Sarah Lucas, Tanner Machado, Lifford McLauchlan, Richard Miller, Kyle Milsap, Mais Nijim, Larry Peel, William Procasky, Christine Radcliff, Kathleen Rees, Alexander Sanchez-Behar, Nick Sciallo, Hui Shen, Velda Soydas, Maria Velez-Hernandez, Teresa Young

Senators Absent: Steven Chumbley, Michael Houf

This meeting of the Faculty Senate was held and recorded online through Zoom due to COVID-19 social distancing requirements. A recording of this meeting and a PDF version of the slideshow can be found on the [Faculty Senate Website](#) under the heading [Digital Faculty Senate Meetings](#).

I. Call to Order and Quorum Call.

At 3:30 p.m. President Chen asked the secretary, Christine Radcliff, if enough members were present for a quorum. Senator Radcliff replied in the affirmative.

II. Presentations

a) President Mark Hussey

President Hussey started his remarks by again thanking us for everything we have done this semester to provide a high-quality education to our students and doing it in the midst of the uncertainty that we face as we are emerging from the grips of this pandemic, and moving to what we all hope will be a new normal that we will all work together to define for TAMUK. He also said he looks forward to seeing everyone at the three commencements that will occur this coming weekend. We are anticipating around 300 graduates from 2020 returning to participate in the Saturday morning ceremony.

Legislative Session Update:

The House and Senate named their conference committees last week. The committees are made up of five members from the House and five members from the Senate, and they work together to negotiate the differences in the two versions of the appropriations bills. The Senate version does not have any of our special items included and the House version has all of our special items included. There is good news from the Comptroller. He provided a revised budget update for the State and in doing so there would be funding for the House version, which originally looked like it would have been a billion dollars short. We might have a good idea of what the legislation looks like by May 20th.

There is currently Senate and House legislation for Regional Comprehensive Universities in Texas. This legislation will create additional funding for “other” comprehensive universities with research programs. Funding will be based on students and student

success. This legislation, if passed, would favor those institutions that successfully educate those students that come from the most modest means and most disadvantaged areas of our state. President Hussey said that he was not sure if passed this legislation would be funded this time, but legislators just wanted to have it passed and enacted for the future.

b) Provost Lou Reinisch

Provost Reinisch started by echoing President Hussey's kudos for all the work everyone has done this semester. On May 12th TAMUK will sign an MOU (memorandum of understanding) with Del-Mar College for dual admission. We are in similar negotiations with Victoria College too. Students who are admitted under these MOU's will still have to meet the regular TAMUK admissions requirements.

Provost Reinisch also announced that the free lunch program would continue over the summer. He reported that twelve faculty members applied and were approved for the voluntary separation program.

Provost Reinisch gave an update on enrollment. Compared to the same time last year our enrollment is currently down 19.4% overall. Enrollment for all Colleges is down: Engineering 30%, Education & Human Performance 22.1%, Arts & Sciences 17.4%, Business Administration 9.6%, and Agriculture and Natural Resources 9.2%. Though this is troubling to hear, Provost Reinisch did say he has heard from other campuses that they are also way down in student enrollment. Students seem to be waiting closer to the start of the fall semester to figure out what they are going to be doing.

Summer/Fall 2021

Provost Reinisch reported that the campus is still moving back towards a more traditional Fall semester. Over the course of the summer desks and other furniture will be returning to the classrooms. He is hoping that the reduced occupancy and directional enter/exit signage will be removed by Fall. He also said that facial coverings will still be required indoors and that they are still thinking about keeping the QR code system for attendance tracking.

He announced that TAMUK will be bringing E-Sports and a makerspace to campus. The makerspace will have computers, a 3D printer, laser cutters, solder station, and a booth where students can record podcasts and vodcasts. He also reported that promotion and tenure dates will be announced and that the e-portfolio system will be used again this year. He also reported that the focus groups for the strategic plan were successful, and that the committee will take the suggestions and review the document and make a few changes.

He then opened the floor for questions.

Q: President Chen asked if faculty are required to record their lectures for students in face-to-face or hybrid courses?

A: No, faculty are not required to record the lectures. If faculty want to record the lectures they can, but it is not required.

III. Approval of Minutes from April 6, 2021 Faculty Senate Meeting.

President Chen called for a motion to approve the minutes; Senator Miller moved and Senator Kowalsky seconded. Minutes were approved.

IV. Report of Officers

a) Senate President Chens' Report

President Chen reported that he and President-Elect Machado have a standing meeting with President Hussey and Provost Reinisch the first Thursday of every month. He encouraged all senators to email their thoughts and concerns that they would like brought up at these meetings to himself, President-Elect Machado, or Secretary Radcliff so they can be compiled and used to create the agenda for each meeting.

The meeting they were reporting on at today's faculty senate meeting occurred April 8, 2021. President Chen said that they reported the changes in the Faculty Senate Executive Committee for 2021-2022, and they also discussed the online office hours motion previously passed by the senate. President Hussey said he did not see any reason to change the current wording, so he would be rejecting that motion.

March 2021 Faculty Senate Straw Poll on Tenure and Promotion Change Proposal

President Chen went over the straw poll survey results to make sure President Hussey and Provost Reinisch were aware of the opinions of the faculty senators who participated in the straw poll. He said that President Hussey and Provost Reinisch recommended that the ad hoc committee meet again to come up with a revised version of the proposal. President Chen reported that both the President and Provost feel strongly that changes for the tenure and promotion process need to be made, and they are hopeful that the Faculty Senate will pass the revised proposal in the next academic year.

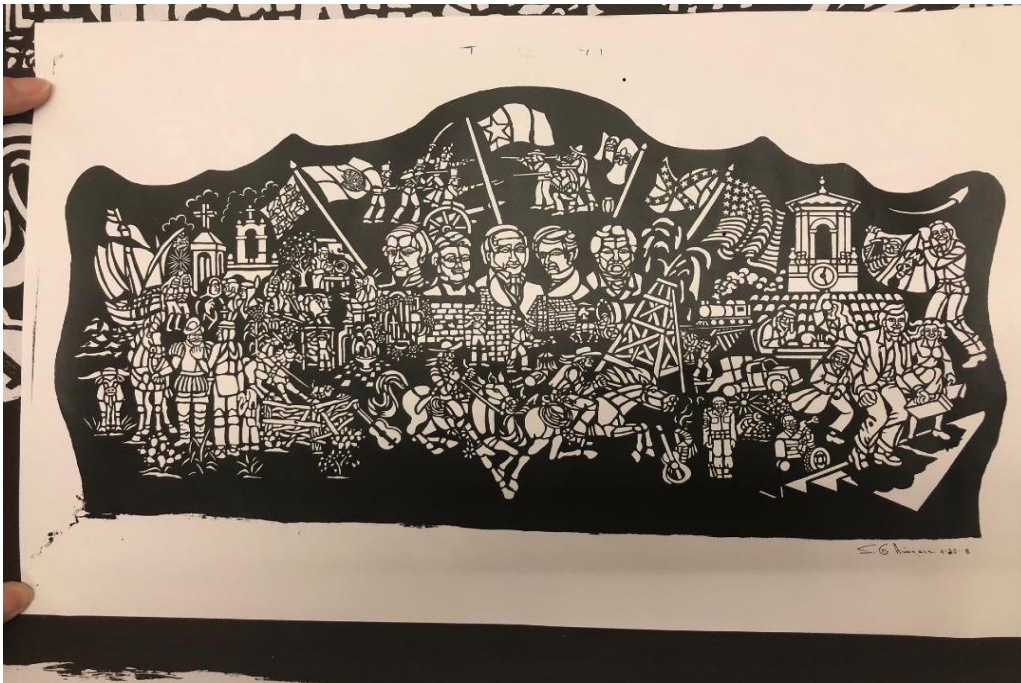
Teaching modalities for fall 2021

The Provost wishes that the majority of undergraduate classes for the fall semester be offered face-to-face or hybrid. He said that it would be ok for more online courses to be offered at the graduate level. They also discussed the role faculty can play in improving the university's fiscal conditions including increasing retention rate and generating "good products" to students. Not only do faculty need to teach well, they need to offer good programs that are useful or marketable for the future growth of our students.

b) Council on Climate, Diversity & Inclusion (CDI)

President Chen reported on the CDI council meeting led by Dr. Nirmal Goswami on April 19th. The subcommittee for the Office of CDI has generated a draft position description for the Director position. The subcommittee for the George Floyd scholarship and symposium is still in the process of getting approval from the George Floyd Foundation to be able to use George Floyd's name. Lastly the subcommittee focusing on honoring the Hispanic heritage and Chicano movement chair, Dr. Manuel Flores proposed three pieces of artistic work, two of which are included below.

Historia de Tejas – a mural to be installed on campus honoring the history of South Texas with a focus on the multicultural heritage of the region. (Est. cost \$10,000).



The second image is titled “Si se puede” and it features three of the prominent figures in the Chicano movement. This was designed by Jesus de la Rosa.

Metal Status – two metal silhouettes in front of the bookstore (Est. cost \$5,000-\$6,000)

c) Emergency Management Committee

Senator Radcliff reported that there was a meeting on April 22nd. It was reported that there was a small outbreak of COVID-19 in athletics (shortly after Easter weekend). They were able to have everyone quarantined quickly and efficiently. The Kleberg County mobile vaccine unit was on campus and they reported that 102 people were vaccinated. They will be coming to campus again, but no dates have been set at this time. TAMUK will be hosting summer camps this year. TAMU System said we can host them 100%, and that for any overnight camps the participants who will be sleeping in the dorms on campus will be required to take an antigen test upon arrival to campus. Anyone participating in a day camp would not have to be tested.

V. Standing Committee Reports

a) Committee on Committees

Committee Chair Senator Sanchez-Behar reported that the committee will begin working this month to fill the seats in the committees that report to the faculty senate.

b) Resolutions and By-Laws Committee – No Report

c) Election Committee

Senator Radcliff announced that she has been chosen as the Chair for 2021-2022.

VI. Reports from Committees Reporting to the Senate

a) Administrator Evaluation Committee

Senator Radcliff reported that the initial emails to complete this year’s evaluation were sent out by OIR on Monday April 26th. If you did not complete the survey there will be three additional reminders sent out. The survey will close at 11:59pm Friday May 7th. This will be the third consecutive year that this evaluation will have been run.

She also wanted to remind everyone that the reason the academic deans are not included in the OIR administered survey is because Faculty Senate President Sherris had asked that the faculty senate run it’s own evaluation of the deans that was distributed by Senator Radcliff in February – March of this year. The results of that evaluation were sent only to the deans that were evaluated. The results were not sent to their supervisors nor to anyone else.

b) Annual Faculty Lecture Committee – No Report

c) Piper Award Committee

It was announced that Steven Lukefahr is the 2021 Piper Award winner.

- d) **Policy Revision Committee** – No Report
- e) **Ad Hoc Committee on Tenure & Promotion Processes** – No Report
- f) **Faculty Evaluation Committee** - No Report

g) Faculty Benefits Committee

Senator Miller reported that the committee is still waiting to receive answers from Provost Reinisch on whether or not he has talked with HR about creating the website with retiree benefits and whether faculty will be able to keep their regular university email, if they wish, rather than having a retiree email address. Senator Miller asked President Chen to please include those two items on the agenda for his next meeting with President Hussey and Provost Reinisch.

- h) **Guidebook for Department Chairs Task Force** – No Report
- i) **Ad-Hoc Committee on Anti-Racism and Social Justice** - No Report
- j) **Ad-Hoc Committee on Faculty Handbook** – No Report

VII. Old Business

VIII. New Business

a) Committee appointment length for committees that report to the faculty senate

Senator Radcliff moved that the committee appointment length for committees that report to the faculty senate be a two year appointment. The motion was seconded by Senator Miller.

Senator Radcliff reported that the current appointment is only for 1 year, which tends to create a lack of continuity. She also pointed out that the appointment length for other University committees is usually 2 years, and that making this change will also lessen the workload for the Committee on Committees each year.

The motion passed with a vote count of 29 yes, 1 no and 7 abstentions.

b) SRI – adding a statement of importance

Senator Huff reported that a faculty member had made some suggestions for the SRI instrument that were reviewed by the faculty senate executive committee. Most of the suggestions would require major changes to the SRI instrument and they felt that was too much at this time. However, there was a suggestion about adding a statement of importance, and the executive committee agreed that this was something that could be discussed with the full senate. The idea is to add a statement to help students understand how important the SRI is to faculty so they don't just randomly click boxes and move on. The idea is to have students understand that the SRI is used as part of faculty evaluations and has significant gravity.

Senator Huskin called for a motion to discuss, Senator Kowalsky moved and it was seconded.

Senator Miller commented that faculty can add their own questions to the SRI. No one seemed to know that this was possible. Senator Hall asked if someone would take the lead in asking Ms. Maio Zhuang from OIR the steps to add individual questions. There was a comment that maybe promoting the gravity of the SRI could cause the opposite affect too. Many senators commented that they give a verbal or written statement about the SRI at the end of the semester.

Senator Huff moved to rescind this motion and it was seconded by Senator Glick.

c) Annual Administrator Evaluation Instrument

The idea was brought forward for discussion that instead of evaluating individual Administrator performance, to instead evaluate the effectiveness, efficiency and task implementation of business and academic units or offices. Examples of these types of units/offices include: Human Resources, Jernigan Library, Provost's Office, Dean's Office, Sponsored Research Office, etc.

This type of evaluation should be able to provide more constructive evaluation by faculty focused more on the entire business or academic unit or functional effectiveness rather than individuals who come and go. Faculty participation could increase since most of us have to deal or work with all or many of these business/academic units, but rarely with the top administrator. We could encourage faculty to focus on the comment portion of the survey and start with the positive contributions about the units to be evaluated, before the specific constructive complaints get noted. This could be a win-win, where the business/academic units actually respond to comments, and perhaps use the surveys to help justify more resources or more personnel to accomplish their missions.

Many senators commented that with the current Administrator Evaluation, many faculty do not know the person being evaluated by name, nor do they know what exactly their job is that they are being asked to evaluate. Senator Rees commented that this certainly could be something that the senate tasks the Administrator Evaluation Committee to work on.

IX. Announcements

- a) Senator Radcliff announced that the University has entered into a "Read & Publish" Agreement with Cambridge University Press. Any TAMUK faculty member who publishes with Cambridge will have the option to make the article open access without any cost - the cost is included in the library's current agreement with Cambridge. A webinar for authors will be held on May 10, which is designed to discuss the importance of publishing Open Access, and the opportunity to do so

under Read & Publish. If May 10 will not work for your schedule, Cambridge will schedule additional webinars throughout the year.

X. Adjournment

At 5:00pm a motion to adjourn was made by Senator Miller and seconded by Senator Glick, motion was passed.

Respectfully Submitted,

Christine Radcliff

Faculty Senate Secretary, 2021-2022