

Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes – February 1, 2022

Senators Present: Hisham Al-Bataineh, Bart Ballard, Travis Braidwood, Lucy Camacho, Jieming Chen, Steven Corbett, Jeff Glick, James Glusing, Anders Greenspan, Kelly Hall, David Hicks, Michael Houf, Patricia Huskin, Robert Kowalsky, Sarah Lucas, Tanner Machado, Lifford McLauchlan, Kyle Milsap, Mais Nijim, Larry Peel, William Procasky, Christine Radcliff, Kathleen Rees, Alexander Sanchez-Behar, Nick Scullo, Velda Soydas, Maria Velez-Hernandez, Teresa Young

Senators Absent: Ammar Bhandari, Mauro Castro, Michael Cherry, Steven Chumbley, Zhaoqi Fan, Manuel Flores, Kendra Huff, Dongwook Kim, Richard Miller, Hui Shen, Daniella Varela,

This meeting of the Faculty Senate was held through Zoom due to COVID-19 social distancing requirements. This meeting was not recorded.

I. Call to Order and Quorum Call.

At 3:32 p.m. President Chen asked the secretary, Christine Radcliff, if enough members were present for a quorum. Senator Radcliff replied in the negative, but the meeting was started in the interest of time.

II. Presentations

a) Interim President James Hallmark

Salary raises

President Hallmark commented that the raises to base pay that go into effect March 1 are a step in the right direction. He also mentioned that they are systematically looking at equity in regards to gender and market.

Release time (reassigned time) for research

President Hallmark posed the question of how can the university help with reassign time for research? He has asked Senate President Chen to create a task force that will provide a series of options to help address this concern. He added that he invites everyone to contribute any ideas they may have also.

Presidential search update

He reported that shortly after he found out he would be Interim President at TAMUK he contacted Parker Executive Search to assist with this process. The appointed search committee members provided good feedback on what qualities and abilities they would like to see in the next President. March 15, 2022 is the priority deadline for interested candidates. A webpage with additional information on the search can be found at <https://www.tamuk.edu/presidential-search/index.html>.

Q: One senator expressed concern for the number of departments that currently do not have administrative assistants, and asked what can be done to get them hired faster and additionally find out what is causing all the vacancies?

A: President Hallmark responded that the main challenge is non-competitive salaries and that market adjustments are needed for these positions. He also said that he can advocate that this is a priority going forward. Additionally, he mentioned that in March 2020 Chancellor Sharp instituted a hiring freeze that has yet to be rescinded.

b) Provost Lou Reinisch

Provost Reinisch thanked all faculty again for showing up and being troopers as we have navigated the pandemic.

Proposed changes to tenure and promotion

He thanked senators again for all of our work and many meetings to review and approve many of the proposed changes to tenure and promotion.

Enrollment update

Enrollment for Spring 2022 is down 531 students. This is a continuing downward trend that started with the Spring 2019 to Spring 2020 decline of 1,177 and then the Spring 2020 to Spring 2021 decline of 401 students.

COVID-19 numbers

Provost Reinisch reported that the COVID numbers have risen quickly and fallen just as quickly as they did at the start of the Fall semester. He announced that the vaccine incentive program will be unveiled at the end of the week.

EduNav

Provost Reinisch announced that the campus will start using EduNav soon. EduNav is a tool that will automatically create optimal education plans, personalized for every student, all the way to degree completion. There is also a component for faculty to help predict class sizes that will help make decisions on the number of sections offered for courses.

Q: Will EduNav replace DegreeWorks?

A: No, it relies on input from DegreeWorks.

Javelina Promise

Provost Reinisch asked that all faculty please promote this initiative in their classes. For those not familiar Javelina Promise is our renewed pledge to ensure a world-class and affordable education is attainable for Texas A&M-Kingsville students by eliminating financial barriers to earning a degree. First time in college (FTIC) and transfer undergraduate students who qualify for Javelina Promise will have their tuition and fees fully covered for up to 4-years. Additional information can be found at <https://www.tamuk.edu/JavelinaPromise/>

Student Lab Safety Training

Previously students who did not complete this training would be locked out of Blackboard. It was decided to remove this block, but lab instructors have been told to bar students from class entry until this training has been completed.

Reassigned time

Provost Reinisch announced that he is creating a pool of time that faculty can apply for. There will be a committee made up of faculty who will review the applications and decide how the pool will be distributed.

c) Ms. Krystal Emery – TAMUK MarCom Marketing Team

Ms. Emery came to speak to the faculty senate about the new recruitment and retention campaign that is being implemented by the Marketing and Communications department. She asked if everyone was familiar with the previous “This is our time” campaign. She mentioned that TAMUK has contracted with a new agency from San Antonio in November 2020 and that this agency wants to bring back the “Javelina Nation” identity. She said they have been filming the first new commercials in 6 years and these new commercials will also be available in Spanish for the first time. They have started using the Javelina Nation campaign already this Spring semester. She asked for feedback from faculty senate on whether they were even familiar with the “This is our time” campaign, and what are our thoughts are on “Javelina Nation”. She also mentioned that they are planning to shoot the new commercial in early March and would love to have faculty members participate, so please reach out to her if you are interested.

She also shared the contact information for the Marketing Team and all of the various ways to follow TAMUK on social media.

Marketing Team

Krystal Emery, Assistant Director of Marketing – Krystal.Emery@tamuk.edu

Sarah Tuley, Marketing Coordinator – Sarah.Tuley@tamuk.edu

Jake Gonzalez, Communication Specialist – Jake. Gonzalez@tamuk.edu

Social Media

facebook.com/javelinas

twitter.com/javelination

Instagram.com/javelination

tiktok: @javelination

At 4:19pm President Chen asked the parliamentarian, Patricia Huskin, if enough members were present for a quorum. Senator Huskin replied in the affirmative.

III. Approval of Minutes from December 2021 Faculty Senate Meetings.

President Chen asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the November 2, 2021 meeting; Senator Huskin moved and Senator Glick seconded. Minutes were approved.

IV. Report of Officers

a) Senate President Chen

Meeting with Interim President Hallmark – January 2022

At this meeting President Hallmark shared that his first priority is to facilitate the hiring of our new President. He then asked President Chen what the top issues are from faculty. President Chen responded that those issues in no particular order are the lack of raises to base salary, decline in enrollment, and teaching load (reassigned time). At that time President Hallmark asked for a Task Force to be created to review and present options for teaching load here at TAMUK.

Revisions to Faculty Handbook and AOP1

President Chen then reported that he had received a copy of the revised Faculty Handbook and AOP1 from Provost Reinisch that included the agreed upon changes to promotion and tenure along with additional handbook changes that had been proposed by the Task-Force on Faculty Handbook Changes from the 2020-2021 Faculty Senate. The Faculty Senate Executive Committee reviewed the documents and sent their approval back to Provost Reinisch.

V. Old Business

a) SRI Motion

Discussion continued about the possibility of changing the completion date for SRI's to the last day of classes instead of the end of the semester after final exams. Secretary Radcliff said that she would contact the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment (OIR), who is responsible for the distribution of SRI's, and ask if this change is possible and what the procedure would look like to actually change the timeframe.

b) Hiring of Lab Assistants and Tas

It was reported that these positions can be hired at any time. It was brought up that sometimes issues arise with the business office during the hiring process, and President Chen and President-Elect Machado agreed to pursue this issue in their next meeting with President Hallmark and Provost Reinisch.

VI. Standing Committee Reports

a) Committee on Committees

President Chen asked Committee Chair Sanchez-Behar to have the committee create the task force previously mentioned to review and suggest multiple options for teaching load and reassigned time. He asked that the committee be made up of two representatives from each College.

b) Resolutions and By-Laws Committee – No Report

c) Election Committee

Senator Radcliff reported that they had completed apportionment for the Spring 2020 election cycle. The only change from last year was that the College of Arts & Sciences will be gaining another At-Large seat for the 2022-2024 term. The call for department election nominees will be sent out tomorrow, and the committee hopes to have all elections completed before Spring Break.

VII. Reports from Committees Reporting to the Senate

a) Administrator Evaluation Committee

Senator Machado reported that based on the poll the committee sent out at the end of last semester Department Chairs, Deans and the Provost should be evaluated. Senator's Shepherd and Kowalsky are working on evaluation questions for the Dean evaluations.

b) Annual Faculty Lecture Committee

It was reported that due to COVID the 2020 and 2021 winners have yet to give their lecture there would not be a 2022 faculty lecturer. It was announced that Dr. Maribel Gonzales-Garcia will be giving her lecture on April 7, 2022 and that they are still working to find a date in the Fall for Dr. Richard Miller to give his lecture. It was also reported that the call for applications for the 2023 Annual Faculty Lecture would be coming soon.

c) Faculty Benefits Committee – No Report

d) Faculty Evaluation Committee – No Report

- e) **Faculty Handbook Committee** – No Report
- f) **Piper Award Committee** – No Report
- g) **Policy Revision Committee** – No Report
- h) **Ad-Hoc Committee on Anti-Racism and Social Justice** - No Report

VIII. **New Business**

a) **Proposed changes to sections H2 and H3 of the Faculty Handbook** (*see handout*)

Senator Houf shared a draft document outlining proposed changes to the Faculty Handbook in sections H2 and H3 concerning the University Policy on Official or Excused Absences. He said this is not a change in policy, but the intent of the edits is to help faculty better understand and comply with these policies. He said that he worked with Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs Goswami to clarify the language in these sections. Senator Houf said that comments are welcome before approval and inclusion in the catalogs and Student Handbook. He asked that all feedback please be sent to him by 5pm Tuesday February 8, 2022.

b) **Senior faculty reinvestment program**

Senator Rees brought this topic up to see if this program still exists. She gave the background of the program that was started in 2017-2018 when Dr. Richard Miller was President of the Faculty Senate. She said \$15,000 of funding was available the first year, and that the committee awarded 5 faculty the first year and that there has been nothing since. Senator Rees asked if this could be resurrected. She did not remember where the money came from, but President Chen and President-Elect Machado said they would add this to their agenda for the next meeting they have with President Hallmark and Provost Reinisch.

IX. **Announcements**

a) Senator Radcliff made three announcements regarding the library

i) Swank Digital Campus now available

- <https://libguides.tamuk.edu/swank>
- Swank Digital Campus provides colleges and universities with the largest academic streaming collection of its kind.

ii) Black Life in America collection (1976 – present) now available

- <https://0-infoweb-newsbank-com.oasis.lib.tamuk.edu/apps/news/?p=AAHX>
- The experience and impact of African Americans as recorded by the news media

iii) Library fund allocation letters were sent to departmental liaisons January 25, 2022

X. **Adjournment**

At 5:03 pm a motion to adjourn was made by Senator houf, the motion was seconded by Senator Huskin, motion was passed.

Respectfully Submitted,

Christine Radcliff

Faculty Senate Secretary, 2021-2022

Draft Draft Draft Draft Draft Draft

The following edits are concerned with sections H2 and H3 of the Faculty Handbook to reflect University Policy on Official or Excused Absences. This is not a change in policy, the intent of the edits is to help faculty better understand and comply with these policies.

H.2 Class Attendance Policy

Regular, punctual class attendance is important in attaining the educational objectives of the University. Each faculty member will include an attendance policy consistent with University regulations in class syllabi and explain the policy in detail to the class at the beginning of the semester. Each faculty member is encouraged to keep a current attendance record on all students.

Commented [MSH1]: Department eliminated. Sub-units have to conform to university and system policies.

The University defines certain types of absences as “official” or “excused” absences (see H.3 for a list of “official” or “excused” absences). For official or excused absences, it is the student’s responsibility to inform the instructor with documentation from the appropriate authority. A student wishing to be excused for any other reason must obtain the approval of each instructor concerned.

Commented [MSH2]: This section and lists of types of absences have been moved to H3 which lists categories and specific types of excused absences, while H2 defines the policy.

A student will not be penalized for official or excused absences. If a student’s absence is excused, the instructor must either provide the student an opportunity to make up any quiz, exam or other work that contributes to the final grade or provide a satisfactory alternative by a date agreed upon by the student and instructor. Faculty members should not place any undue burden nor additional requirements on students beyond providing documentation of the absence (such as requiring this document a specified number of days before the absence). If a student is absent for any other reason, each faculty member concerned will determine whether or not the student will be permitted to make up the written work missed during the absence.

Commented [MSH3]: There have been instances of faculty imposing extra requirements on students, such as a week’s advance notice of an absence, before make up work was allowed.

Students who persist in being absent from class without satisfactory explanations to their instructors may be dropped from the course regardless of whether or not they are passing. Faculty members who wish to have such a student dropped from their class must fill out the appropriate form and submit it to the Registrar’s Office through appropriate channels.

H.3 Student Absences

H.3.1 Illness or Death in the Family

A student with an excused absence due to an illness, confining illness, serious illness, or death in the family should present justification for the absence to each faculty member concerned. The Office of the Dean of Students provides notification to faculty about student absences due to illness or other urgent circumstances, upon the student’s request.

Commented [MSH4]: New section to confine types of absences to one section.

H.3.2 Student Absences on Religious Holy Days

A student who is absent from classes to observe a religious holy day will be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment scheduled for that day within a reasonable time before or after the absence. The student should notify each faculty member of this proposed absence as early in the semester as possible. The instructor may appropriately respond if the student fails to satisfactorily complete the assignment or examination within a reasonable time after the absence.

H.3.3 Student Field Trips and Other Official Off-Campus Trips

Class field trips, when carefully planned, often have significant value; however, the value of such trips must be weighed not only against that of the faculty member's own class to be missed, but also against that of all the other classes that students will miss.

Field trips not involving class absences, especially those scheduled on Saturdays and holidays and for short distances, may be planned on short notice. They should, however, be approved by the department chair or dean of the college.

Field trips involving class absences should be justified by (1) identifying the value that cannot be obtained by some other means and (2) relating this value to the objectives of a specific course. If a field trip involving class absences is considered indispensable, it should be carefully planned, approved by the chair and college dean, and scheduled well in advance of the trip date.

Trips by student performers and contestants, such as band, athletic teams, and debaters officially representing the University, are scheduled by coaches and faculty sponsors. Trip sponsors are responsible for compiling travel lists and providing official documentation to students. Students are responsible for providing the documentation to faculty members. Documentation should be provided at least one week prior to departure or, if that is not feasible, at the time the departure plans are finalized. Student teachers cannot be excused to represent the University on official trips unless satisfactory arrangements are made well in advance with the Dean of the College of Education and Human Performance.

All travel involving students must comply with established University guidelines regarding planning, mode of travel, safety requirements, and advance completion of travel forms including liability waivers for the individuals traveling. The travel guidelines apply to any student who travels more than 25 miles from campus to an activity or event that is organized or sponsored by the University, funded by the University, using a vehicle owned or leased by the University; or travel required by a student organization registered at the University. These provisions apply to faculty, staff, and students who engage in transporting students off campus on any University business or related travel activities. Information about Travel Procedures and the forms can be found at "Dean of Students Travel Procedure".

Commented [MSH5]: This section has been revised to better define who is responsible for communication and time line for communication.

Current Handbook Language

H.2 Class Attendance Policy Regular, punctual class attendance is important in attaining the educational objectives of the University. Each faculty member should formulate an attendance policy consistent with department and University regulations and explain the policy in detail to the class at the beginning of the semester. Each faculty member is encouraged to keep a current attendance record on all students.

The University defines certain types of absences as "official" or "excused" absences. These are absences due to confining illness, serious illness or death in the family, and participation in sanctioned intercollegiate competition or officially approved class activity. A student wishing to be excused for any other reason must obtain the approval of each instructor concerned. Faculty members or sponsors who request an official student absence for the purpose of an intercollegiate competition or class activity should obtain advance written approval from the appropriate authority.

A student with an excused absence due to a confining illness, serious illness, or death in the family should present justification for the absence to each faculty member concerned. The Office of the Dean of Students provides notification to faculty about student absences due to illness or other urgent circumstances, upon student request.

A student will not be penalized for official or excused absences provided the work missed is made up in a manner satisfactory to the faculty member. If a student is absent for any other reason, each faculty member concerned will determine whether or not the student will be permitted to make up the written work missed during the absence.

Students who persist in being absent from class without satisfactory explanation to their instructors may be dropped from the course regardless of whether or not they are passing. Faculty members who wish to have such a student dropped from their class must fill out the appropriate form and submit it to the Registrar's Office through appropriate channels.

H.3 Student Absences

H.3.1 Student Absences on Religious Holy Days A student who is absent from classes to observe a religious holy day will be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment scheduled for that day within a reasonable time before or after the absence. The student should notify each faculty member of this proposed absence as early in the semester as possible.

The instructor may appropriately respond if the student fails to satisfactorily complete the assignment or examination within a reasonable time after the absence.

H.3.2 Student Field Trips and Other Official Off-Campus Trips

Class field trips, when carefully planned, often have significant value; however, the value of such trips must be weighed not only against that of the faculty member's own class to be missed, but also against that of all the other classes which students will miss.

Field trips not involving class absences, especially those scheduled on Saturdays and holidays and for short distances, may be planned on short notice. They should, however, be approved by the department chair or dean of the college.

Field trips involving class absences should be justified by (1) identifying the value which cannot be obtained by some other means and (2) relating this value to the objectives of a specific course. If a field trip involving class absences is considered indispensable, it should be carefully planned, approved by the chair and college dean, and scheduled well in advance of the trip date.

Trips by student performers and contestants, such as band, athletic teams, and debaters officially representing the University, are scheduled by coaches and faculty sponsors. The names of participants (in alphabetical order) and the exact time and date of the scheduled absence from the campus must be submitted to the Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs at least one week prior to the time of departure. Student teachers cannot be excused to represent the University on official trips unless complete satisfactory arrangements are made well in advance with the Dean of the College of Education and Human Performance.

All travel involving students must comply with established University guidelines regarding planning, mode of travel, safety requirements, and advance completion of travel forms including liability waivers for the individuals traveling. The travel guidelines apply to any student who travels more than 25 miles from campus to an activity or event that is organized or sponsored by the University, funded by the University, using a vehicle owned or leased by the University; or travel required by a student organization registered at the University. These provisions apply to faculty, staff, and students who engage in transporting students off campus on any University business or related travel activities. Information about Travel Procedures and the forms can be found at Dean of Students Travel Procedure.