

Faculty Senate Meeting 3/5/2024

Attendees:

President Yasemin Atinc, Tina Lancaster, Adam Northam, Ozum Yesiltas, Benton Pierce, Hongmei Jia, Nikolay Sirakov, Christian Hempelmann, William Kuracina, MaryJo Dondlinger, Carrie Klypchak, Hunkar Gizem Yesilyurt, Julee Walker, Maggie Salem, Jeanette Vaughan, Marta Mercado-Sierra, Zachary Palmer, Stephen Starnes, Jason Davis, Michael Oldham, Josephine Durkin

FACULTY SENATE MEETING AGENDA – March 2024

Date: 03/05/2024

Meeting called to order: 2:01pm by Dr. Yasemin Atinc

Approval of the February meeting minutes.

Zach Palmer, Stephen Starnes in attendance - not listed

Motion to approve Zach Palmer

2nd by Josephine Durkin

President Mark Rudin joining our meeting to address faculty concerns on salary.

* Questions sent previously to Dr. Rudin were addressed

1) Do you understand how the optics look regarding lack of faculty raises while leadership receives tremendous raises?

*working with the provost on an initiative to address faculty salary

2) Why did leadership staff receive raises, with some in excess of 30%?

*Predecessors made across the board merit raises to the ETT. Dr. Rudin scaled those back and is now bringing new hires in at lower salaries than in the past. Dr. Rudin has the ability to apply merit from his pool of funds as well. Some VP were given raises to meet industry standards of contemporaries using his merit pool. Dr. Rudin receives self-assessments and meets with them to determine effectiveness, and determines level of merit.

3) Could the amount of money spent on leadership raises cover the cost of the colleges' contribution to the merit pool?

*Legislative session mandated no tuition increases until Fall 2025. Due to this few universities in the state have money

to award merit raises. Strategy was to find money across campus to contribute. Regents are pressuring universities to provide some level of merit.

4) If the raises were for "market demands", could the same not be required for faculty?

*See answer to question 1

*Dr. Nikolay Sirakov - addressed issues with grant funding payment to faculty; issues with percentage salary funding models in grant should be clarified within working arrangements of faculty; Dr. Rudin will meet with Dr. Sirakov to help resolve the issue; the overall message is to make sure grant procedures are moving the university forward in a positive direction; Additionally Dr. Sirakov brought up the issue of scholarly activity and collaborations with other universities, but that it does not seem to "count" regarding annual evaluations - Dr. Rudin - these types of activities are service, but are not directly benefiting TAMUC students; possibility to establish PhD programs here?

*Dr. Carrie Klypchak addressed disparity between department salaries - Dr. Rudin agreed that is an issue

*Dr. Maggie Salem - addressed the issue of difference in faculty senate and other industry contemporaries; additionally many faculty supplement their salary by taking overloads - Dr. Rudin supports a campus wide look at workload policies

*Dr. Rudin addressed the opportunity for increasing salaries through grant work

*Dr. Benton Pierce - addressed the issue of salary at system campuses and how TAMUC is far below the level of equity, including promotion level increases. Unsure of the last assessment of salary comparisons, e.g., possibly 8 years ago?

- Dr. Rudin indicated some colleges are above, while others are below system contemporaries.

*Dr. Zach Palmer - addressed the issue of "being an R2" concerning workload. Is there a plan to adjust workload to increase research? Dr. Rudin - Dept. Chairs have tremendous latitude to adjust workload based on research production and establishment of research lines. Dr. Rudin hopes those discussions are happening, both on the course release and overload side of the equation

*Dr. Marta Mercado - Sierra: some of the discussions of overload and releases at the Dept Chair level are not being held because there is conflicting information, standards, and guidelines; Dr. Rudin - we need to develop strategies to empower Deans, Department Chairs, and faculty to address these issues

- Additionally will the Presidential GAR program be continued or replaced? Dr. Rudin - IDC funding can also be used or explored to provide GA's for research support

*Dr. Gizem Yesilyurt - issue of use of adjunct has mixed messages; other scholars at universities are drastically paid more, but we stay due to passion for the university and what we do; Dr. Rudin - we need to identify, establish, and then work the procedures that are in place to address workload and salary

*Dr. Jason Davis - addressed the issue of tuition freeze and impending issues of shortfall funding; Dr. Rudin - will be proposing a budget that will address this so that TAMUC does not incur a long term shortfall.

*Dr. Zach Palmer - addressed issues of quality of students being admitted, failure on assignments, low attendance; if retention of students is paramount, how can TAMUC retain these students? How can the university help? - Dr. Rudin - COVID was more impactful that people give credit for; students coming in had “passed standards”, but lacking study habits and or classroom habits; this trend is not a “bubble”, but rather the norm for now. We may need to adjust styles of teaching and reaching students to help retain. Are current policies being upheld? Ideas from Faculty Senate can and should bubble up to address new ways to address these issues. Other faculty members echoed the issues of attendance. Providing points for attendance is an option. Is this a university-wide cultural issue regarding attendance / online tests / level of competence? Additionally, questions were raised regarding student with varied background were at a lower standard than in the past - Dr. Rudin answered yes.

Dr. Rudin addressed the university R2 status - Only 2 metrics research expenditures and doctoral students (>20 a year); if your department does not produce PhD students, nor is grant active, then your impact as a department is less on the R2 status; Dr. Donham should be working with every department to increase the grant funding and contribute to the metric for Carnegie designation; currently the only thing preventing the R2 designation is maintaining level of expenditure (3 year rolling average); grant activity is only a part of scholarly activity at the university

Dr. Rudin expressed an interest in coming back to Faculty Senate to continue the conversation.

Updates from the Assembly of Faculty Senates and TCFS meeting.

*Dr. Atinc - attended the meeting this semester; Dr. Hallmark was not in attendance; SB 16/17 - please do not be concerned as long as DEI topics are part of curriculum; shared governance should be addressed at the campus level; workload policy - shared concern across all institutions; Tarleton State and Prairie View are now R2 status; A&M Qatar campus is “sundowning”, but not fully shutdown, due to terrorist / political;

Faculty Senate Awards Day in collaboration with TABPHE- April 24, 2024.

* Date is finalized; venue in place; Dr. Edwards will be a part of the event, but have not heard from Dr. Joey regarding keynote speaker; previous year award winners (2020) - will call award winners up together and award plaques.

Regents Professor Ceremony April 9, 2024.

* Date confirmed, and time is set for 11am. Faculty are encouraged to attend and wear regalia to celebrate Dr. Darrell Harp.

Senators working on the revision of the University T&P and Department Head policies.

* Dr. Benton Pierce and Dr. Marta Sierra-Mercado - should be able to present their work at the next Faculty Senate meeting; need a non-tenure track procedure finalized. Possibly at Dr. Villanueva-Russell? Will those policies be attached to current timelines and policies? Yes, but need to make faculty aware of the policies, starting at the

Department Head level, as well as Deans tracking progress. Not easily accessed on the university website.

* New policy is due to be activated Fall 2024.

* Hoping to eliminate 4th and 5th year review.

* Dr. Zach Palmer - Policy is finished by committee. Dean Schroeder will approve the policy. Established search committee guidelines, interim hiring procedures, every 5 years there will be a reassessment and justification of terms past two terms (e.g, 10 years) to continue as chair. Will come to FS for approval.

Campus Wide Survey Results

* Dr. Zach Palmer - approximately 117 responses - the number one concern is faculty salary; all Faculty Senate members need to communicate with faculty members in their department to share what is going on; as an example - distribute the survey results to our faculty members within departments.

Senate Committee Reports

* Dr. Stephen Starnes - nothing to report

* Dr. William Kuracina - nothing to report

* Dr. Marta Mercado-Sierra - nothing to report, but requests Dr. Donham to address issues;

* Dr. Hongmei Gia - voting to award winners will be notified by email

Ombudsperson

* Will be attending to address the Faculty Senate in the future

Potential for Dr. Vacha-Haase to attend

Announcements from Dr. Donham, VP of Research

1. Dr. Lucy Pickering has developed a professional development training for Ethics in Authorship. She will be piloting this course for new faculty who were hired for Fall 2023 and Spring 2024. She will be teaching it on Monday, March 4th and Thursday, March 7th from 2:00 – 2:30. There are 20 individuals registered for the training so far. If anyone has any questions about it, they can contact her at Lucy.Pickering@tamuc.edu.

2. A lot of faculty and staff don't realize the potential impact of export control. Some examples include, but not limited to foreign travel, international visiting scholars, purchasing certain brands of equipment, shipping equipment overseas, restriction on taking a work computer overseas, international collaborations and/or agreements, and teaching certain courses online to international students in their home countries. I have invited the Executive Director of System Export Control Office to provide a professional development workshop on Export Control. This training will be in the afternoon of Wednesday, March 20, 2024. More details will follow as final arrangements are made.

Note from Dr. Yasemin Atinc: Please share everything with your respective departments!

Jason Starnes motion to adjourn

Second by Maggie Salem

Meeting adjourned at 3:44pm