

Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes
Texas A&M University-Commerce
Sept 5, 2023
Time beginning: Call to order 2:01 p.m.

Present: Jason Davis, Janette Vaughn, Michael Oldham, Rusty Fox, Zak Palmer, Bill Kuracina, Maggie Pfeiffer Salem, Hunkar Gizem Yesilyurt, Omar Elariss, Hongmei Jia, Josephine Durkin, Carrie Klypchak, Carlos Bertulani, Stephen Starnes, Adam Northam, Marta Mercado-Sierra, Julee Walker, Nikolay Sirakov, Tami Morton, Sonia Taneja, Julia Ballenger, Benton Pierce, Kiki Hempelmann, Yasmin Atinc, Tina Lancaster (Zoom).

Faculty Senate President Dr. Atinc presented the May 2, 2023, minutes. The motion to pass the May 2023 minutes was moved by Dr. Maggie Salem and seconded by Dr. Julia Ballenger. The minutes were passed unanimously by the faculty senate.

Invited Speaker: Dr. Tammie Vacha-Haase, Provost and VP of Academic Affairs, Texas A&M University-Commerce.

The meeting opened at 2:01 p.m. President Yasemin Atinc introduced the first invited speaker, Dr. Tammie Vacha-Haase.

Dr. Vacha-Haase shared the following information with the Faculty Senate:

Topic: Merit increase

- For the first time, merit increase is effective September 1, 2023.

Topic: Faculty Contracts for the AY 2023-2024

- Majority of the faculty received the contract in April/May
- Departments who did not will contact Dr. Vacha-Haase directly.

Topic: HEF Fund

- For now, stopped the HEF fund from distributing; **It is always a question.**
- Wants to invest the fund intentionally. **There was no pattern of how money was spent.**
- The Provost is still discussing strategically allocating the HEF funds to the colleges and departments with deans and CFO. **(The Provost considers herself a Fiscal Steward and wants to be involved in Strategic budgeting.)**
- \$1.3 Million is allocated each year for the heath funds. The money does not go away. It should be distributed equally and fairly. **(What is needed, and how do we look at it collectively in a budgetary way?)**
- The provost's office is working with the VP for research and development for the school to get the R2 designation. VPAA gave 500K to invest in research.
- The Provost also suggested that the VP for research and development should be a collaborator to support the scholarship.

Topic: Investing in US

- 253 people registered for the one-credit course for free. Of 253 people, 111 are alums, and 142 are faculty & staff.
- Dr. Carrie Klypchak is leading the efforts with the ACUE.
- **Working on Center for Teaching & Learning.**

Topic: Department Heads Evaluation

- A sub-committee is working to review the department head evaluation. (Department head annual evaluation process to see if the assessment is accurate).
- (What should 360-degree evaluation look like? What are the measurement metrics? What are we trying to assess? What should we do with the assessments? How should we provide the feedback?)

Discussion:

- Senator Sirakov raised a concern that faculty should assess every Faculty. Provost & VPAA said that each VP is assessed by their division. Faculty do not evaluate every VP.
She also mentioned that these evaluations need to be documented.
- Senator Mercado-Sierra asked about Evaluation for adjuncts. There are two forms available online. Timing is different for both the forms. (Please check this)
Provost & VPAA assured to review the evaluation forms and timing.

Topic: External searches for Honors College, CHSSA, and CASNR dean positions.

- A national search firm is hired and will work in partnership with faculty and staff to select the candidates for the dean positions.
- To include faculty and senators in the search process.

Topic: Money paid for Adjuncts and Overloads

- The Provost & VPAA is reviewing how money is allocated for adjuncts and overloads with the CFO.
- Changing the process for money for adjuncts and overloads.
- It is in the discussion stage. Deans have not reviewed it yet.
- No change is anticipated in summer pay structure as of now.

Topic: SB 17, 18, & 12

- Provost assured that we are working on it together.
- Invited Dr. James Hallmark, Provost, & VPAA, at College Station to TAMUC. He is expected to come in early October.
- The Provost wants the Faculty Senate to be involved in a discussion with Dr. James Hallmark.

Discussion:

- Senator Julia Ballenger asked for the recent link for updated information for SB 17 & 18. President Faculty Senate shared that it is included in the June 12 email.
- Senator Zak Palmer asked for System guidelines for SB 17 & 18, SB 12.
The Provost said that some campuses within the system have no guidelines; however, TAMUC is in alignment with system policies. Regarding SB 12, at TAMUC, we are a diverse campus, and our guidelines are in place to address the issues of SB12.

Communications: President Yasmin Atinc shared with the Senate the following information:

1. **Attended Assembly of Faculty Senate for Texas A&M at the Opening Game for the season at College Station.**
 - Chancellor Sharp asked what the issues at each campus are.
 - Chancellor Sharp asked about our Dallas campus. There was a discussion about naming it A&M Dallas.

- Dr. James Hallmark discussed that Texas A&M Kingsville had increased enrollment.

Discussion:

- Senator Marta Mercado-Sierra asked if faculty research is about diversity. Will TAMUC fund it?
- Senator Zak Palmer raised concerns about Faculty retention and how these bills would impact faculty retention at TAMUC. **President and Provost did not address this issue.**

2. Department Head Retention Policy

- If the Senate wants to discuss and review the policy.
- There are inconsistencies in TAMUC policy and the system's policy. The policy should be aligned with the system policy.
- Discussion was tabled for the next senate meeting and The Faculty President Senate will email the previously worked on or the draft version of the Department head retention policy to the Faculty Senate.

Discussion:

- What is the dilemma for the Department Head/Department Chair?
Primarily, it is the semantics. According to research, the department head is appointed by a dean whereas the department chair is not.

3. Provost designated an office for Faculty Senate, 249 D.

- Faculty senate executive meetings will be held every third Tuesday of the month in the office.
- The President Faculty Senate will be in the faculty senate office on Tuesdays.

Discussion:

- Senator asked about student evaluations. How are student evaluations distributed? How can faculty get more feedback? How to increase the response rate?

4. Election for Officers for Faculty Senate Executive Team.

- Faculty Senate Representative for the University Curriculum Committee- Dr. Julia Ballenger was selected for the position (President Yasemin Atinc & Seconded by Jason Davis)
- Academic Life & Practices Committee- Dr. Zachary Palmer
- Admission & Retention Committee- Dr. Steven Starnes
- Budget Committee- Dr. William Kuracina (President Yasmin Atinc and Seconded by Julia Ballenger)
- Curriculum Committee- Dr. Benton Pierce (Julia Ballenger and Seconded by Jason Davis)
- Faculty Awards Committee- Dr. Hongmei Jia
- Organization of the Senate Committee- Dr. Marta Mercado-Sierra (President Yasemin Atinc and seconded by Davis)
- Secretary of the Faculty Senate- Dr. Michael Oldham (President Yasemin Atinc and Seconded by Senator Marta Mercado-Sierra)

Discussion:

- To review the number of Faculty Award Committee from each college. As some college have more representation than others.

Motion to adjourn was accepted and the meeting was adjourned at 3:40 PM.