

Meeting: Faculty Senate  
 Date: March 7, 2017  
 Time: 2:00 p.m.  
 Location: BA 290  
 Adjournment: 4:08 p.m.

# Minutes

Members present: Wilson, Taggart, Huber, Starnes, Sennette, Lubiani, Mitchell, McKisick (for Smith), Larkin, Davis, Anderson, Yan, Taneja, Ou, Kelly, Williams, King (President), Pierce, May  
 Members absent: Jones, Slovak, Tanik, Ballenger, Ballotti, Carr, Sun, Worley

Issue/Topic	Summary of Discussion	Decision/Action
	February 2017 Senate minutes were approved with minor modifications	Moted by Taggart, seconded by Kelly
<p><b>Guest Speakers</b>            Dr. John Humphreys,            Provost &amp; Vice President for Academic Affairs</p>	<p>President King introduced Dr. Humphreys. Dr. Humphreys discussed several topics as summarized below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dr. Humphreys stressed that he would visit the Senate any time to discuss any concerns the faculty have.</li> <li>• The Senate budget before the legislature is demoralizing – A&amp;M-Commerce faces a \$4.4 million budget cut. The House bill is more favorable to higher education. We will have to wait until May, June, July or August before knowing what our budget will look like.</li> <li>• A hiring freeze is in place until September 2017.</li> <li>• The Associate VP of Enrollment Management will start in April. A&amp;M-Commerce has requested a waiver to hire this individual. If the waiver is rejected A&amp;M-Commerce will pay the individual’s salary using local funds until September 1.</li> <li>• Three candidates will be on campus to interview for the VP of Graduate Studies and Research. The individual hired will not start until September 1. The same is true for the Dean of the College of Business.</li> <li>• A new organization chart for Academic Affairs has been produced. President King will obtain a copy and e-mail it to Senators. The new organization is developed around function of a position, rather than the person.</li> </ul> <p>Institutional Effectiveness, Enrollment Management and all academic units in Student Access and Success have been moved into Academic Affairs.</p>	

- Budget Director reports to the Provost now.
- Faculty Ombudsman no longer reports to the Provost. This person will move out of Academic Affairs and into Compliance or Human Resources. Dr. Justice is no longer Faculty Ombudsman. The Senate has been asked to recommend another person for this position.
- Changes to the tenure and promotion process is needed so that there is more consistency. Further, a higher performance should not be expected for someone who chooses to go up for tenure early and the criteria for tenure should not change between when a faculty member is hired versus when that person goes up for tenure. Dean's Council should be removed from the tenure and promotion process (so that Dean's do not have two votes on the tenure decision) – Provost Humphreys recommends creating a University wide committee to replaces Deans Council role in the tenure decision. Should there be a University standard for at least one external supporting letter for T&P? Some departments require three letters, some do not require any.
- A Provost forum is coming soon.
- A&M-Commerce is working on obtaining funding for more endowed positions. There are four in the College of Business. We need at least 40 for a University our size. The Provost's office is working with the Advancement Office on this initiative.
- The new learning management system contract has been signed. We can't migrate all courses right now (approximately 2500 courses). We want IT to migrate a handful of courses first as trial examples. IT has been requested to develop a method to make course transfers to the new system as smooth as possible.

The floor was opened to questions of the Provost as summarized below:

- It is not known when the new learning management system (D2L) will go live – hopefully this will happen by spring 2018. We cannot meet the December deadline to move all 2500 courses for spring 2018. For the Fall 2017

<p>Dean Dobbs, Associate Provost, Academic Foundations</p> <p>Quynh Dang, Associate Professor of Health and Human Performance</p>	<p>semester, new courses will use D2L, moving existing courses is the issue.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Starting Fall 2017, the Provost plans to have a conference travel budget for faculty. Any faculty member with a paper accepted to a national conference will receive \$2,000 travel expenses towards participation in the conference. The sources of these funds has not been identified yet. The conference must be major in scope to receive the funding (funds cannot be used for local or regional meetings). Hopefully the program will evolve to remove needed partial funding from departments and Colleges, with full support from the Provost's office instead.</li> <li>GAs positions can be extended into the summer if currently employed spring 2017. If they are not currently employed, the hiring freeze applies to them.</li> <li>We may be understaffed summer 2017; lab courses for example, will either be taught by the faculty member or by a graduate student as instructor of record.</li> </ul> <p>Dean Dobbs and Dr. Dang visit the Senate to present the proposal for Signature Courses and to hear faculty feedback. Provost Humphrey also participated in the discussion. The presentation and feedback is summarized below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The motivation for Signature Courses comes from a general unhappiness with Freshman Success Seminar and a need to find a better method to retain first year full time freshmen students.</li> <li>If Signature Courses do not work at improving retention we will move on from it.</li> <li>A&amp;M-Commerce is also reevaluating the First Year Experience in order to improve retention.</li> <li>Dean Dobbs and Dean Adkins were charged with developing a Signature Course program. The work towards developing a proposal for the program originated in the University Studies committee and then was passed on to a committee of five faculty appointed by the four Deans and the School of Agriculture and one faculty</li> </ul>	
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	<p>member appointed by the Faculty Senate. Dean Adkins chairs this committee. The initial work was a two-pronged task. 1. Develop the curriculum guidelines. 2. Develop the implementation plan in order to move the proposal along as fast as possible. Once a good proposal was in hand, it would be presented to the Faculty Senate for comments.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A Signature Course will be part of the Core Curriculum. Speech will be removed from the core to make room for the Signature Course, which will reside under the component area option of the core curriculum.</li> <li>• A Signature Course must meet three of the six core objectives (critical thinking, communication, and social responsibility).</li> <li>• The proposal will be placed in CourseLeaf once the Senate approves the plan.</li> <li>• A&amp;M-Commerce retention of first year full time freshmen last year was 63% compared to a national average of 76%. The University of Texas had a 90% retention rate after Signature Courses were institutionalized.</li> <li>• A major component of Signature Courses is to get the most active, energetic, engaging faculty to propose and teach courses.</li> <li>• The department housing speech courses will be affected significantly by this change. Faculty who currently teach speech courses will likely see their workload change to teaching more upper level courses rather than lower level speech courses, which will see enrollment decline.</li> <li>• The question was raised whether fully online students and TAB students will have to take a Signature Course. The University is considering making an exception for these students to not have to take the Signature Course since these courses will be taught face-to-face.</li> <li>• Other students besides first year full time students will not be eligible to take these courses (at least for now).</li> <li>• Initially, no Signature Course will be taught back-to-back fall/spring.</li> <li>• It is not clear yet how a course can be team-taught. Likely, there will only be one instructor of record. Thus,</li> </ul>	
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<p>Tomas Aguirre, Assistant Vice- President, Dean of Students</p>	<p>how a second instructor would receive teaching credit (if any) is not known. It appears that only one faculty member will receive teaching credit for any one course.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adjuncts are eligible to teach a course – any faculty member teaching a course must have taught for A&amp;M-Commerce for at least one year.</li> <li>• There will be no new course development funds.</li> <li>• The proposal needs to move to the Coordinating Board as soon as possible for approval.</li> </ul> <p>Dean Aguirre visited the Senate to discuss the athletic fee referendum. Dr. Humphreys was also present for the discussion, which is summarized below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A&amp;M-Commerce does not have enough faculty, we do not have a scheduling issue; we have a body issue. Several faculty are over burdened. Six new faculty lines were created by cuts elsewhere this year. There is nothing left to cut to create new faculty lines. The only way to hire more faculty is to obtain more funding. Dr. Keck understands this problem. The only way to obtain significantly more funding is to increase the athletic fee. We had a chance to do this several years ago, but did not. If the athletic fee is increased, the athletic department will not have to utilize funds from academic units to sustain their activities, which will free up funds that can be used to hire faculty. If the referendum passes, approximately 16 new faculty lines will be created – 9 in year one, 5 in year two, 2 in year three.</li> <li>• If it does not pass and if the Senate bill from the State Legislature passes, then we will be cutting faculty lines instead.</li> <li>• Students will be voting to meet the needs of future students.</li> <li>• The increased athletic fee should free up approximately \$3.6 million dollars that will go to academic affairs.</li> <li>• The Board of Regents requires an audit trail to show how the funds were used, if it passes.</li> <li>• The Student Government Association voted to support the referendum. Administration is working to make the</li> </ul>	
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	<p>University aware of the facts associated with the referendum; it is up to the students to support the referendum or not.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The voting will take place online starting on April 12, 2017.</li> <li>• Even if the referendum passes, the Board of Regents does not have to approve it. The Board will want to see good student turnout and good support for the referendum before they will approve it.</li> </ul>	
<b>Communications</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Texas Council of Faculty Senate reports will be shared at the next Senate meeting</li> <li>• Chancellor Sharp and several from the State Legislature will be on hand for the University's 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of being a public institution celebration.</li> <li>• President King is working to get Senators on more University committees (why was Senate representation not present on the University computer software committee, the committee dealing with underutilized fees, etc.)</li> <li>• There is a proposal to close the University on Fridays during the summer or at noon on Fridays. This is likely to happen.</li> <li>• President King spoke with Derek Preas regarding campus scheduling. There is not enough staff to get many jobs done in a timely manner and there is no funding to hire more people.</li> </ul>	
<b>Committee Reports:</b>	<p>Budget: The tasks that the BRDC was charged with have all been put on hold due to the uncertainty in the budget.</p> <p>Awards: Recipients have been named. The functioning of the awards committee needs to be improved due to some issues that came forward this year with the process of obtaining nominations.</p>	
<b>Unfinished Business:</b>	None	
<b>New Business</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New Senators are needed from Biology, Economics &amp; Finance, Educational Leadership, History, Engineering &amp; Technology, Library, Marketing and Business Analytics</li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Senate approved the split of the department of Psychology, Counseling &amp; Special Education.</li><li>• The Senate approved the proposal for Signature Courses to go forward.</li></ul>	Motioned by Senator Davis, seconded by Senator Taggart.
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