

Meeting: Faculty Senate
 Date: November 1, 2016
 Time: 2:00 p.m.
 Location: BA 290
 Adjournment: 3:59 p.m.

Minutes

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

| Issue/Topic | Summary of Discussion | Decision/Action |
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| | October 2016 Senate minutes were approved with minor modifications | |
| Guest Speaker Dr. Ray Keck, President, Texas A&M University- Commerce | <p>President King suspended the 15-minute guest speaker rule without objection.</p> <p>Senate President King introduced President Keck. President King indicated that the floor would be open to discussion after President Keck’s presentation. A summary of President Keck’s presentation follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • President Keck gave an overview of his background: first he was a teacher (Spanish literature and music), then a department head, a Provost for 2 years, then a university President for 15 years. He was planning to go back to the faculty ranks when the Chancellor called and asked him to become the Interim President at A&M-Commerce. • President Keck welcomed visitors to the Heritage House, where his family now resides. • President Keck emphasized his affection for the community and this institution, which he described as a strong, healthy, and beautiful. However, President Keck noted that we face some big issues such as the growth experienced was not adequately funded. The amount of \$3.5 million tuition is being used to support the athletic programs due to the disproportionately low athletic fee (\$10.90 per student credit hour). This expenditure has resulted in a shortage of faculty. The athletic fee needs to be doubled to be comparable to sister institutions but this can only be done via student referendum. Doubling of the athletic fee would free up tuition funds, which would be utilized to fund 30-35 faculty lines. The student government association seems receptive to a referendum, but this likely will not be permitted | |

until the fall 2017 semester.

- March 14, 2017 marks the actual date of A&M-Commerce's role as a public institution. This will be recognized on March 10, 2017 since March 14 falls during spring break.
- The groundbreaking ceremony for the nursing building will also be in March 2017.
- The University experienced a 63% fall 2015-to fall 2016 freshmen retention rate, which is down from 72%. A group has been tasked with evaluating our processes to retain students.
- Signature courses are being evaluated for implementation at A&M-Commerce. Class sizes would be 45-200 students. The most charismatic and gifted teachers at A&M-Commerce would teach the freshmen courses. The President and Provost may teach such a course.
- We will move away from fall/spring assemblies as informational events. The goal is to bring in speakers who will address new ideas/topics. President Keck is soliciting ideas for the spring 2017 (January 12) assembly.
- Regarding communication with the A&M-Commerce community, President Keck mentioned that e-mail is not effective or preferred. He suggested more open forums with faculty – once in the fall and once in the spring. It would be faculty called and Senate driven.
- Residential life is very strong at A&M-Commerce. Juniors and seniors would like to live on campus but cannot do so due to lack of housing. There is an initiative to set aside an apartment in each housing complex for a faculty member to live and help mentor students in the complex.
- The University Executive Council meetings need improvement. President Keck wants to broaden communication of UEC activities to all faculty. There needs to be more open discussion at the meetings.
- There should be a standard policy to deal with plagiarism and cheating on campus. There is a standard reporting protocol, but not a standard penalty. Provost Humphreys and Student Life are working to develop the new policy so that there is an institutional response to these infractions.

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| <p>Dr. Mildred Golden Pryor, Professor of Management</p> | <p>This summary concluded President Keck's remarks. The floor was then open to discussion. Topics of discussion were as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regarding the Provost position, if a search is conducted it will cost the University ~\$75,000. If Provost Humphreys will be retained as Provost, an open discussion with faculty would precede such a move. In the end, it is President Keck's decision to retain Dr. Humphreys as Provost or open a search. • President Keck was asked about his perception of the role of the Senate in the University. He indicated the Senate should bring issues to the President's attention and the University President should bring issues to the Senate for feedback on how to handle the issues. President Keck welcomes strong communication and feedback on University decisions. • Regarding Faculty Workload Policy, the Senate has tried every year for the last 5 years to modernize / revise the policy to better reflect faculty roles and instructional delivery methods and to help create a policy that better reflects changing demands on faculty who experience increased service and scholarly demands and increasing student populations but stagnant salaries and resources. The University has reached a Carnegie Research 2 status (Doctoral Universities – Higher Research Activity) – the only A&M System Institution with this designation, but faculty workload policy does not align with the increased scholarly demands. President Keck acknowledges the present policy is bad but pointed out the problem is that there is no pile of funds to deal with the issue. Universities now have to deal with mandated costs to assessment, compliance, and IT that they did not have to deal with before, which further strains resources. President Keck would like to implement 3/3 teaching loads but the funding to do so (to cover all of the classes) is not in place. FWLP can't be a one size fits all – it must be tailored to reflect college, department and discipline expectations. We need more classrooms that can accommodate larger class sizes, which would help move to a 3/3 load. <p>Dr. Pryor addressed the Senate to discuss the "Quality Initiatives and Awards" efforts that the University is pursuing. Dr. Pryor gave a PowerPoint presentation to discuss the expectations and methods being utilized to help the University achieve this distinction. One such award is the national Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award. Prior to applying for the national</p> | |
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| | Baldrige award the University will apply for State of Texas awards. | |
| Communications | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senator Anderson summarized the proceedings of the recent Texas Council of Faculty Senates meeting, which he attended on President King’s behalf. | |
| Committee Reports: | <p>Academic Life: Needs one committee member from the College of Business</p> <p>Awards committee: There were three nominations for the Piper award but only two faculty submitted their application packets. One of these faculty was not qualified for the award based on Piper foundation requirements. The committee voted to approve the application from Dr. Alma Mintu-Wimsatt from the College of Business to go forward in the process.</p> <p>Organization of the Senate: Needs one committee member</p> | |
| Unfinished Business: | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. President King met with Provost Humphreys to update him on what the committee appointed by Dr. Benavides to revise the policy and procedures for professional track faculty had recommended. One recommendation is to change the professional track policy such that there is incentive to apply for promotion. The incentive could be salary increase with promotion or for contracts to be extended (1-5 year contracts for professional track, 3-5 year contracts for associate PT or 5 year contracts for full PT faculty for example). This change could serve as a better recruiting tool for professional track faculty. 2. The organizational Leadership academic honors issue was raised with Provost Humphreys (there is a concern that only grades of A or B are accepted – if a student achieves a grade lower than A or B, the student has to repeat the course). If this is the policy, it leads to a disproportionate number of students in the degree graduating with honors. The Provost said that he would look into this so that there is equivalency with other disciplines. | |

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| | <p>3. The University may be in discussion to move back to all-online course evaluations. This may be a directive of the President’s office, with CFEI planning to implement this. Faculty have expressed their dissatisfaction with online course evaluations in the past, since an accurate depiction/data of teaching effectiveness is needed for annual reports, promotion and tenure. Some faculty would like to see class rank removed out of the evaluation calculation.</p> <p>4. The learning management system selection has been made and is currently undergoing contract negotiation. It should be in place by fall 2017, where it can be utilized side-by-side with the current system until full training/integration is achieved. Pearson will support the old LMS until the new system is fully implemented.</p> | |
| New Business | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The climate survey results are available online. • The meeting was adjourned at 3:59 pm, with unanimous consent to adjourn. | |