

Approved Faculty Senate Minutes

March 3, 2017

Present: Alex, Bartlett, Blanton, Branson, Commissiong, Craig, DeButte, DeOtte, Dursun-Kilic, Hartin, Ingrassia, King, Klaehn, Lee, Meredith, Nam, Osei-Hwere, Ottoson, Revett, Shao, Tao, Seward,

Guest: Yvette Castillo for Janet Hindman

Absent: Bill Ambrose, David Lust, Choon-Ha Nam, Jean Stuntz

1. Meredith called meeting to order at 12:15pm
2. Senate approve minutes from February 17th meeting
3. Associate Provost, Amy Andersen; Assistant Provost, Susan Allen; Director of Institutional Research, Jarvis Hampton
 - a. Sedona and Digital Measures (<http://www.digitalmeasures.com/>)
Dr. Andersen asked the senate if there were questions about Sedona and mentioned that academic affairs was looking at Digital Measures as an alternative. She also told the group the program has more capabilities compared to Sedona. She has not seen samples of documents from digital measures but believes the program will be more user friendly compared to Sedona. She also mentioned that Digital Measures could help move tenure and promotion to a completely digital process which will be nice for the university. Digital measures is significantly more expensive compared to Sedona.

Craig asked if Sedona could be updated to make it more functional. Jarvis responded he had not heard anything about updates to Sedona. Dr. Andersen added that there were no plans for updates because the company has not done much with updates. There was a suggestion that WT contact act Dr. hallmark about getting a system license to help with cost especially if other system schools are already using the program. Dr. Wendler is aware of the discussion and know about digital measures. Dursun-Kilic mentioned that the formatting in Sedona is very poor and unprofessional the way that it displays faculty information and CVs and makes it important to look into getting a better system. Jarvis told senate there are limited filters in Sedona for formatting which allow faculty to limit what appears on CVs but also said there are no privacy filters. Sedona was selected to help with the college of business with accreditation. Dr. Terry likes Sedona because it is very useful to the college of business. Senate should reach out to digital measures to do a presentation for faculty senate so the senate can ask questions about the new process. SACSCOC process also revealed problems with Sedona and the need to replace it.

Commissiong recommended the university look into other options along with Digital Measures especially if the cost for Digital measures is a concern and faculty feel Sedona is not a good product. Senate was reminded that faculty must Sedona consistently for the University to be in compliance state and consumer protection laws. Student's use faculty CVs to learn about faculty whose classes they are enrolled in. Texas A & M – Corpus Christi, Tarleton and Texas A & M College Station currently use Digital Measures. Sedona is willing to do training for faculty for additional cost, perhaps the university needs to do a better job of training faculty to better use the system. Meredith will arrange for a demonstration with Digital Measures for faculty senate. If adopted, the earliest it will go live will probably be next year. Digital measures will supposedly port data from Sedona into Digital Measures if we decide to go with the program.

4. Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Wade Shaffer
 - a. Are capital campaign funds being directed toward the retention and hiring of faculty?
Dr. Shaffer answered yes and no to question above. He added that capital projects fund student scholarships with monies specifically raised for faculty support going to endowed chairs and professorships in the different colleges. The university currently has 30 endowed chairs and professorships. Such monies don't apply directly to faculty hiring but it helps faculty retention. Funding endowed chairs and professorships is very different from hiring new faculty positions. The university doesn't get a lot of commitment from donors towards hiring new faculty positions. Dr. Shaffer explained that most university gifts are restricted gifts with donors specifying exactly where the money goes and how the money should be applied. The university has to follow those donor instructions. According to Dr. Shaffer about 10% of the money constitute unrestricted funds from capital campaigns. The university is planning another capital campaign and will be seeking input from the university as to what to raise funds for. As far as increases in student enrollment and resulting increases in tuition income Dr. Shaffer said Dr. O'Brien always took a chunk of the money from enrollment and put it back into academic affairs, faculty hiring and retention. For example the college of business gets a lot of money for faculty directly related to significant growth in that college. That money goes into merit increases, PTI salaries and academic affairs as well as contingencies, some of which are usually not budgeted for, like roof repairs, something that is a big issue for the university this semester. Other areas of allocation include rebuilding depleted university reserves for incidental needs and moving some temporary faculty positions into budgeted faculty lines using monies from enrollment increases.

b. Standard operating procedure for student evaluations

Will something be in place and communicated to faculty before the release of evaluations this spring?

Senators were concerned about the lack of consistency with the administration of course evaluations and asked that the university explore creating a standard procedure. Dr. Shaffer said he would look into creating a standard operating procedure for how evaluations should be administered to bring about more consistency. Commissioning suggested collecting best practices across campus to determine what works best to get students to complete evaluations. Dr.

Shaffer thought that is a great idea but also explained that faculty who remind students tend to have better response rates based on the data. Dr. Shaffer will review strategies used by faculty members with high completion rates to determine the way forward. He is comfortable changing the dates when evaluations open and close but those dates have to be for everyone. Ingrassia suggested evaluations be tied to when student grades are released and in the process create an incentive for students to complete evaluations and also eliminate the need for extra credit. Senators thought this was a good idea but unsure what the implications are for the university and state laws etc. Ingrassia moved that senate explore the possibility of delaying grades to incentivize releasing grades to students who complete evaluations.

c. Hiring freeze update, recent CFO and CAO conference call for the A&M System

The freeze applies to state funds funded positions and only in effect until September 1. Faculty searches depending on local funds will therefore proceed in spite of the freeze. Positions filled before Sept 1 will need to be paid with local funds. Most faculty searches will not be affected by the hiring freeze. University is being asked to plan for a 10% cut in the budget which will potentially impact administrators hiring decisions. Administrators are being asked to come up with a 10% reduction in the areas. The university will not know the final number until the end of May or mid-July, which will be too late to make decisions about searches. If we can increase our student body it will be a good thing for the university especially if the state budgets cuts go through. WT is in good shape with reserves and department payments but not something that can be sustained for too long.

d. Updated Instructor promotion proposal

If approved, how should the promotion process take place? Similar to tenure and promotion process (i.e. faculty committees and administrators) or handled by administrators only?

Dr. Shaffer recommendation is to use the fixed term promotion process as the starting point for instructor proposed promotion. For this process candidate portfolios will be reviewed by the department, college, provost and the president. Senators also believe a peer review process it will probably be more valuable to instructors who decide to go through the process.

e. Other?

Dursun-Kilic mentioned that the six page limit for annual professional summaries was too few for faculty to address all the different questions they need to address. Others disagreed, DeOtte suggested that document should be a highlight not everything you have done, and motioned we keep the six pages. Majority voted yes, 2 opposed and 1 abstained.

5. Old Business

Senate's Parking plan to be phased in by Fall 2018

Based on preliminary discussions with president and Randy Rikel the decision is leaning towards adding more faculty parking spots in the fall of 2017 and proceeding with the faculty senate parking proposal in the fall of 2018.

a. Instructor promotion proposal update

a. Vote to approve?

The part of the proposal 25% was the most discussed section by the committee with concerns about how the colleges will respond to that section and asked for input from faculty senate. The 25% number will be at the department and college level, senators had questions about how these promotions would be funded if departments and colleges are required to have a specific number. DeOtte reminded the senate that if someone is promoted it will be the responsibility of supervisors and administrators to determine if they can afford to or not. If that is the case then that paragraph and number is probably not necessary. Commissioning mentioned that it might be better to have a number as a way of maintaining consistency across the board verses trying to control budgetary decisions of department. After much discussion Craig moved that we keep proposal as is and move it forward and come back to it when we discuss tenure and promotion faculty senate voted yes with 1 abstention. Proposal will be moved forward.

b. Committee on post-tenure review update

First meeting after April 1 – meetings will start April 1st and end Sept 15

Marietta had questions about clarifying who is the chair is and that the chair should come from the department. Provide details on what the process will be and specifics involved.

c. Committee on university committees update

- i. Recommends adding a 4-member team (one JBK staff, one faculty member, one non-JBK staff, and one student) to the Traffic Appeals Committee and still waiting on feedback from a few other committee chairs

ii. H1B training update

Director of HR will invite Deborah from system to train supervisors on the paperwork and process for H1B visas and green cards

FAQ page (<http://wtamu.edu/academics/course-evaluations-faqs.aspx>) currently states that “Professors who do not successfully make it through [post-tenure] review can be **terminated** despite being tenured” - Provost and Meredith will together to revise the language.

6. New Business

a. Texas Council of Faculty Senates Report

- a. We have uptown problems while a number of other schools in the A&M System have downtown problems
- b. Good panel of admins, noted the importance of transparency and communication to build trust between faculty and administration
- c. Faculty significantly concerned regarding Trump immigration policies (e.g. possible impact on DACA students)
- d. Current post-tenure review process appears better here vs. other regional A&M schools
- e. Common concerns for faculty workload
- f. Common concerns regarding hiring freeze, although faculty positions starting Sept. 1 should not be affected

7. Announcements

a. Vice President for Business and Finance, Randy Rikel, attending Senate meeting on 3/24 for big picture finance update. Current Questions

1. Are capital campaign funds being directed toward the retention and hiring of faculty?
2. Where is the money going from significant increases in student enrollment and tuition?
3. What happens to the overhead (F&A) charged on external contracts and grants?

b. President Wendler will attend 4/7 Senate meeting, meeting to begin early at 12:00 to accommodate the President's schedule and give us additional time for discussion

c. Dean of the Graduate School, Angela Spaulding, will attend 4/21 Senate meeting

d. Regents Professor process to be initiated later this month, full professors with 5 years at the full professor rank are eligible

Meeting adjourned at 2:15pm

Submitted by

Enyonam Osei-Hwere