

Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes

Texas A&M University-Commerce

Nov. 2, 2022

Time beginning and ending: 2:01 p.m. to 3:02 p.m.

Present: Hongmei Jia, Joshua Ege, Christian Hempelmann, Stephen Starnes, , Samantha Klassen, Kathryn Dixon, Julia Ballenger, Jason Davis, Mark Moreno (Secretary), Michael Oldham, Jennifer Hudson (for Tina Lancaster), Sawyer Magnus, Yasemin Atinc (President), Brandon Randolph-Seng, Nikolay Sirakov, Benton Pierce, Marta Mercado-Sierra, Emily Homer (for Zachary “Zak” Palmer), Thomas Boucher, Jackie Rosenfeld (for Andrea Williams), Bahar Modir, Tami Morton, Johanna Delgado-Acevedo, James Devlin, Ozum Yesiltas, MaryJo Dondlinger, Brock Johnson, Jane Kosarek

Not Present: Johanna Brooke Clemmons, Omar El Ariss

- **The Senate unanimously voted to approve the minutes for Oct. 4, 2022**

1.) Dr. Cephas Archie, Vice President for Diversity and Inclusion with Dr. Joyce Miller, Diversity, and Inclusion committee chair, discussed initiatives.

Dr. Archie, in conjunction with the university Committee for Diversity and Inclusion, presented the latest initiatives directed from his office, “based on the priorities currently established”; transforming lives, and being an inclusive community welcoming staff and faculty to participate in such initiatives, and inviting community members “to be at the table,” including alumni, the city of Commerce and the school district.

His PowerPoint presentation focused upon 1.) “Who is missing at our table?” 2.) How we establish a culture that makes people feel they have a seat at the table,” who can help identify problem areas that lead to establishing priorities and data-driven decision-making. 3.) Systematically increase allocation of resources that prioritize equity and inclusion. 4.) To allow for support of such diversity and inclusion-oriented goals; 5.) Assessing what is already in place to support diversity and inclusion priorities. The idea of diversity cannot be silenced but “intentionally embedded,” Dr. Archie said. To that effect he is developing a diversity and equity plan, working alongside the university Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee. The “strategic alignment” of factors includes the areas of academics; the university strategic plan; an affirmative action plan; a student enrollment plan; SACSCOC accreditation goals, and a Student Affairs strategic plan woven into DEIA plan.

Dr. Archie outlined the next steps in the process, including collaboration with Institutional Research for necessary data; with the city government and ISD; and gaining the endorsement the Faculty Senate, Staff Council, student government, and the Administrative Council.

He answered several questions from senators: In response, Dr. Archie stressed the need for greater communication among faculty and staff regarding enrollments, and the need to

identify problem areas in D&I. He identified some culture and climate issues, which is an important factor in considering general faculty morale at the university.

2.) Ms. Tammi Thompson, Interim Director of Human Resources, discussed salary and merit issues, and the reflection of those on faculty recruitment and retention.

Senator Sirakov raised the issue of tenure within his department (Mathematics), where an assistant professor going up for tenure and promotion was supported by their colleagues. The College of Science and Engineering's T&P Committee overrode the department to deny tenure to the assistant professor, decision supported by the college dean. He is in the process of drafting a letter asking the College for a detailed explanation for the decision. Senator Atinc suggested formulation of a university-wide committee that could examine policies in place for such contingencies within colleges. Ms. Thompson reminded senators that there are policies that allow for formal steps to be taken in such instances. (Senator Sirakov needed to leave for a master's thesis defense.)

On the issue of salary and merit, Ms. Thompson reminded senators that faculty salaries are not administrated by Human Resources. Those issues are taken up by the department head, at the dean's level, and by the incoming provost. She wanted to leave open the floor for questions or concerns among faculty senators. Senator Pierce stated that our university's salaries for faculty rank low among peer in the state, but wished to see comparisons. Senators debated whether the Senate could support hiring an outside consultant to report on comparative salaries among state universities. Several senators believed the price was too high for such an effort (Dr. Atinc mentioned a figure of around \$200,000). A vote on a resolution to approve/disapprove such a hire was tabled.

3.) Faculty Senate Committee Reports: There were no reports.

4.) Dr. Sang Su's Piper Award Nomination was unanimously accepted by the faculty senate.

5.) Final Announcements

Dr. Atinc provided updates regarding the planned Faculty Summit in April: Need confirmations included for a guest speaker, food, and rooms. She also provided updates on the Texas Council of Faculty Senates meeting in San Antonio; lunch with President Rudin and faculty senators is also scheduled. Committees of faculty and deans are currently being formed to revise the university T&P policy.

Senator Dondlinger is putting up the minutes of each meeting on the Senate web site.

Senator Moreno moved to adjourn; Senator Davis seconded. The meeting is adjourned.