

STC Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes Tuesday, March 26, 2019

Members present:

Diane Teter, Bruce Griffiths, Nathan England, Sandra Ledesma, Bill Greene, Eric Reitinger, Mark Murray, Roy Escaname, Francisco Ortiz, Richard Smith, Aaron Wilson, Linda Jackson, Veronica Dominguez, Khalid Salmani, Mehrzad Mahmoudian- Geller, Lyudmyla Dickinson, Iris Jasso, Reynaldo Jasso, Laura Salas, Margarita Vangeulova, Sean Kennedy, Steve Miller, Sharon Rice, Darnel Miller, Daniel A. Montez, Mario Morin,

Faculty/Guest present: Benito Garza, Amadita Zamora, Shannon Perales, Juan C. Gaytan, Wendi J. W. Williams, Tim Weber, Sam Solis, Joseph Perez, Alex Garza, Mayra P. Garcia

Meeting Call to Order at 4:00 p.m.

President's Report and Voting Items -Diane Teter:

→Update on Executive Officers meeting with Dr. Petrosian on March 22, 2019 - (Present at meeting were Mary Elizondo, Bruce Griffiths, Sandra Ledesma, Diane Teter).

- Moving forward on STC Retirees Association: Since 2014-2015 an attempt to get the retiree's association going and current options to move forward on this is to do it internally like the Alumni association or through a 501 c or similar to that. It has "supposedly" been decided that it will be done internally and hope to have a retiree's association by the end of this May.
- Criminal Background Checks on invited speakers to STC events: At the meeting there were questions about criminal back ground checks when inviting speakers to STC events and this was not correct. What is needed is procurement time and explanation a month in advance if the speaker is a paid speaker. The advance notice is required by administration to know what the funds are for. The issue is when the notice of guest speaker is short timed and there is a lack of awareness as to what funds are to be used for and/or for whom it will be for. Therefore, it is not a background check but rather timely submission of the paper work such as vendor agreement information in order to pay the speaker.
- Continuing difficulties of faculty to promote their STC student club activities: E-mails sent in from Shannon Perales, Mehrzad Mahmoudian- Geller, Bill Greene and Janene Israel were shared with Dr. Petrosian and there should be a forward movement with the much needed support from Administration and PR for advisors and student clubs.

Questions: *Is there a possibility that there might be a budget given to the organizations?*

Faculty Senate Presidents response was that *what could get done with more support so they are aware of it and Advisors need to keep on top of it.*

Comment: *Fundraising has become difficult and limiting due to diverse reasons one being the City of McAllen guidelines.*

→Policy related to Instructor/Student and Supervisor/Employee Romantic Relationships: PDC meeting this past Friday discussed this issue and instances in past years of faculty/student relationships and how it has gotten out of hand in some areas. Dr. Reid asked in PDC meeting if Faculty Senate wanted to partake in spear heading this. Diane Teter stated it would be shared with Faculty Senate members and discuss the issue and decide as a group.

Faculty Senates members were asked who would like or is interested in participating on the issue of Romantic Relationships prohibition or not and let the Faculty Senate president know now or after the meeting is over. The general consensus at the PDC meeting was that no one was in favor of these types of relationships at the school.

Questions:

Diane Teter asks FS members if anyone was in favor of instructor/student, Supervisor/employee romantic relationships? Is there any reason or circumstances where you think these should be tolerated?

What if you are married and spouse wants to take a class so are they not allowed to take a class at STC? So what needs to change? Or enforce the current policy? Or do they want no relationships anywhere ever?

Comments:

Diane Teter: This are all good questions if Faculty Senate wants to promote our way of thinking as far as consensual relationships or not then it might be a better if Faculty Senate begins at the ground floor while they are discussing this issue. Information was received from Michigan and several other handouts from other colleges across the U.S. and how they handle situations like this. PDC is taking a look at this information. If no one wants to commit right now think about it.

Rick Reittinger in favor of romantic relationships does believe there should be a policy of some sort because employees could be involved in a romantic relationship with someone in another department or division where there might not be a conflict with faculty interaction. What is the commitment? To create the policy or to say, to evaluate if we have policy on hand that's sufficient?

Diane Teter states that the commitment is to look at what we have on hand and further mentions that with the work place answers, we have this very policy in the list of things we have to complete in our mandatory training and if we are going to follow that we should have to content that goes according to the test being taken.

A policy was thought to already be in place and other comments were that a separate and specific policy is being sought to identify the ways this can happen or new relationships that form.

Current policy states spouses can take a class at STC but not in the spouse's class. Also you can't have a chair and faculty member in a relationship but you can have two members of the same department, so long as one is not in a supervisory position.

Richard Smith moves that we vote if we are all happy with the policy the way that it is and to vote yes to that. Rick Reittinger and Bruce Griffiths stated a preference to having something concrete to look at first before voting and become aware of what specifically the policy states and then move on from there if a new or additional policy with specifics needs to be added.

Rick Reittinger volunteers to research what STC currently has as a policy and from there decide the next steps. Other volunteers were requested at this time to assist Rick review the policy and

other institutes but current policy first before doing any more work. Nathan England volunteered to work on the policy analysis.

Comments: Wendy Williams suggested when reviewing the policy, a “lens” to look through is how it aligns with modern sensibilities and Title IX and make sure it’s not binary gender so it may be related to that as well. Not knowing the date of the original date of the initiation of the policy as that may be a part of the issue.

Rick agrees that it could be possible some policies like the institute have been around 25 years. In addition, a reiteration of what will be done are the following: review the current STC policy and e-mail it out to everyone and before the next meeting advise if additional policies are needed or keep it the way it is. To save time it can be expedited and get it done by the end of the year. Diane Teter requested information be sent to her to place on Blackboard and distribute via blackboard.

→Proposed Tuition, and Fee Adjustments for FY 2019-2020 will result in a possible increase of \$7 per semester hour. The board will look at the recommendation at tonight’s meeting to increase the tuition and this is the result of dual credit courses. STC is trying to overcome the school’s losses.

Comments:

-This is a “big deal” since it has been 15 years since tuition has stayed the same. Only fees have gone up but never tuition.

-Especially since this is an admittance of dual credits cost is placed “on the backs” of traditional students.

-It’s also because fall enrollment for dual enrollment will be more than 50%.

-Dr. Reid says we are not a high school but it is beginning to look like it.

→Remote attendance through Blackboard Collaborate if give 48-hour notice to STC Technology: If you are not able to attend the meeting you can check with STC Technology and you can attend remotely. Give them enough timing.

(Side note Nathan England asked for a list of senators who have missed more than two consecutive meetings. This information had been e-mailed to Faculty Senate President prior.)

Question: Mark Murray if meetings can be attended remotely through blackboard collaborate, if our meetings are supposed to be open to all faculty members, how come we have to give notice 48 hours ahead of time, shouldn’t all faculty automatically have access to it? Diane states she has never had that experience with them and has always been told that they require notice 48 hours in advance.

Mark Murray suggested that it can easily be resolved in which all faculty blackboard shell can be set up as a classroom site and faculty members can be placed as students and have access to it and click on it when we are having a meeting and join.

Blackboard shell will need to be reviewed to see if this is something that is already in place and requires set up on part of the “shell instructor.”

→OPOD announcement: there is going to be an open house for OPOD March 29th . All faculty are invited. The awards for faculty, you should receive this through general announcement. The only difference is that you cannot nominate yourself you have to be nominated by another person. There will be a new speaker and this is what OPOD has been asking for, if you have a speaker that you think would be advantageous to the college to let them know and they will bring them to speak.

Senate Roll Call: quorum met

Approval of Minutes from February 26, 2019 meeting – Sandra Ledesma: Minutes approved with corrections.

Old Business

→Faculty Senate Elections update - Mark Murray: Expressed gratitude towards Roy Escaname for his assistance and reminds that he termed out to serve in faculty senate and can no longer chair the election committee but will be willing to assist if needed. The two-week nomination ran and it appears there are enough nominees for most positions but now have to e-mail all nominees to ask if they accept or reject the nomination. The plan is to complete the task by tomorrow to make sure enough people who will serve for each division/enough senators. Two nominees for president elect were nominated unsure if they will accept. One for vice president and the biggest issue right now is there has been no vote for parliamentarian and secretary. As Mark is going through e-mails accepting or declining nominations if they would consider nominating themselves for secretary thus extending the nomination period a little bit for the secretary's position. This needs to get done as quickly as possible before contacting Rass.

→Constitutional Committee update – Mark Murray: After the last meeting it came up again that we have the issue of Diane Teter retiring and we do not have a past president on the committee and there could be issues with needing to break a tie and that can't be done with an even number of executive members. This was brought up with the Constitution committee and it seemed unanimous that we all thought that it would be in the best interest of the senate to add a parliamentarian and remove past president. It may also be more beneficial because it would make more people willing to step up and run for president elect for a four-year vs a six-year term. When we had the past president Faculty Senate was only on one year terms when first created and a past president was needed to show the incoming president what the duties were but now this has changed and not needed. That is the recommendation by the Constitution committee. The only issue the senate needs to decide on is, will they have the same responsibilities like the past president where they are the tie breaking vote or would they be full ex officio member who not only will be able to debate but have a vote in the executive committee? If modeled by the US Senate the one who should have the tie breaking vote is the president.

Mark puts up for vote to remove the past president and add a parliamentarian and quickly look for someone to run for parliamentarian. Rick Reitinger moves the motion and Nathan England seconds the motion. Unanimously approved

Question: by Nathan England if we don't get nominees when we get into a new senate...Mark Murray states that at the retreat the president will have to nominate and the senate confirm.

→Faculty Salaries – Bruce Griffiths: in the meeting attended with Dr. Petrosion proposals are submitted. There are two factors that come into play in faculty salaries. One is your degree and the other is your years of services known as the steps. The first steps are the greatest gaining 2.5 % each step and then at some point it fades off to 2% then again at 1% when you get to 30 years. This will cap the faculty member after a certain amount of time.

Spread sheet handouts were provided with the salaries paid. Error in the spreadsheet identified. Comparison of the largest community colleges salaries were presented. STC is ranked at number 9.

Dr. Petrosian stated the board wanted to provide a 3% increase but what that means with the steps will average at 2% so we probably will get a step plus 1% which is what we got last year and the year before that.

Comment: Mark Murray states, this is what we keep getting and that means that staff gets 3%, Administrators get 3% and if you have a Masters +30 or a PhD you get less than 3%. You get 1%. It seems that those who earn \$100,000 they receive an extra \$3,000 and yet if you earn 30,000 you get 900 why are those earning less being punished and those who earn more being rewarded? However, what is a problem when Administrators who are making the \$100, 000 are getting the three grand but Ph.D's are not. If we were treating all employees the same way we treat faculty on this step process then it would be fair. What is not fair is that other staff or administration does not have this step process like we do. Concerns were expressed on the language used of frontloading pay for younger people to get a good start but originally it was about the spread.

→Kinesiology Statement – Linda S. Jackson/Francisco Ortiz: The statement was provided and uploaded via blackboard for consideration and present and have the senate decide if this was a good statement. It was agreed upon the final wording below after the verbiage "on site" was removed and approved. the following is the revised support statement:

Kinesiology Facilities Support Statement

Challenge: All STC Faculty have a dedicated workspace/facility for their workspace and have equipment available to achieve maximum teaching opportunities with student interactions and optimum instructional contact hours including laboratories.

Mark Murray moved to vote to accept the “Challenge” statement and eliminate the word “on site” Mehrzad Mahmoudian- Geller seconds the motion. All in favor. Motion carried.

New Business

→ Mehrzad Mahmoudian- Geller: just a reminder about feedback about the academic calendar the deadline is Monday April 1st. everything is posted on blackboard. Please provide your feedback.

→Rick Reittinger: Recently HR sent out an e-mail in regards to how many years of service you had and received phone calls from faculty questioning why their years of service showed they had only been with STC for 7 years even though they had been there for 10 years. Two people hired at the same time and one getting credit for 6 years of service and the other 9 years. What is going on? There seems to be some inconsistency in what they are reporting. In 2015-2016 this issue had been addressed because full-time temps were not being recognized for their years of service. Recent e-mail from Brenda Balderas, HR director she says these emails that went out were not solely faculty recognition but all employees recognition of full time service including full-time temp. So those years of service should include all those years of full-time temp so long as there was not a break or a gap in the amount of years served. But apparently a lot of faculty are getting years of service without the inclusion of that time served as a full-time temp. So one of the things that needs to be found out is why are their discrepancies and inconsistencies in what they are reporting to the faculty for their years of service. This will affect the salaries and

retirement and if on TRS retirement and if you lost 3 years that is 7.5% less on your retirement. Brenda and Laura Raquena were contacted by Rick Reittinger on this issue and the response was, "they would check into and let you know later." Since 2016 these criteria had been reviewed and Cabinet. HR will be going campus to campus and this would be a good opportunity to send faculty to this to talk to HR about the discrepancies. Will follow up on this again.

Meeting Adjourned 5:04 p.m.

Mark Murray motioned

Roy Escaname second the motion

Motion carried