

FS AGENDA
Tuesday, March 23, 2021
4:00 – 5:30 p.m.

Old Business

- Roll call
- Approval of Minutes from February meeting
 - Tabled until quorum could be reached.
 - When quorum was reached, Mark Murray made motion to approve minutes with revisions. Tim Weber seconded. Motion passed.

New Business

- Update from Meeting with Interim President – Nathan England
 - The top topics were presented and discussed with President Plummer. Before the entire topic list is presented to the President's Office, Nathan requested that Senators review all topics and provide any feedback to Sylvia Flores prior to PDC and Academic Council meetings.
- Academic Calendar Update – Mark Murray
 - Mark is the representative for Faculty Senate. He reported that the Academic Calendar Committee had met once. He requested feedback from Senators, SBS, Liberal Arts, and NAH Faculty and asked Senators to spread the word. Will send follow-up emails. Deadline to submit feedback is March 31. Tentative meeting scheduled for April 9.
 - Some of the feedback given: that consideration be given to other belief systems given that we are a community with many belief systems. Mark said he would bring this feedback to the Academic Calendar Committee.
- Nominations and Elections Committee Update – Mark Murray
 - Deadline to submit nominations was March 22. He sent out emails asking nominees if they accepted or reject their nominations. FS President may need to appoint for Business, Public Safety, and Technology; Math/Science given there were not enough nominees. FS President will need to appoint FS Secretary since there were no nominees.

-Will send list of nominees to RAS for voting. Tentative planned election: April 5 through April 19.

- Salary and Benefits Committee Update – Aaron Wilson
 - Aaron reported that the Budget Office is proposing a 1.2 percent raise for full-time faculty next year in addition to regular step pay increases (pending Board approval). The committee suggested pushing for a higher percentage and may be discussed at an upcoming meeting with VP Elizondo. Aaron also presented information collected by members of the committee on lab compensations from other Texas community colleges. STC currently compensates non-clinical labs at 0.67 LHEs and clinical-labs at 0.8 LHEs. Compared to other large community colleges, this is below the average.
 - The Salary and Benefits Committee proposed that lab compensation be raised to .8 LHE for non-clinical labs and 1 LHE for clinical labs. Micah Bailey recommended to prioritize the lab compensation over the percentage raise.
 - Mark Murray made the motion to accept the recommendation from the Salary and Benefits Committee and bring forth to STC administration. Meherzad Mahmoudian-Geller seconded.
 - Discussion: Wendi Williams suggested the Committee also look at how labs are compensated at universities and other higher education institutions because of transfer equivalencies. Sylvia Flores mentioned the committee also looked at UTRGV rates.
 - Motion passed.

Nathan England moved to suspend the agenda and return to approval of minutes and then go to the “Pell for Prisoners” discussion before turning over the meeting to Mehrzad Mahmoudian-Geller. Mark R. Murray seconded. Motion passed.

- Safety Committee Update – Mehrzad Mahmoudian-Geller
 - The FS committee met with the college-wide committee on March 11. Mehrzad shared the agenda with the Senate. At the meeting, questions were brought up such as how social-distancing would be implemented if

the number of face-to-face classes was going to increase by fifty percent. No answer was provided by the college-wide committee. This will be addressed with VPAA to confirm a plan.

-At the meeting, discussions about vaccines at the various campuses were also held. Notice of the vaccine availability offered by the college needs to be improved. Mehrzad reported that there had been no discussion about the vaccines between the different campuses. She reported that Dr. Valerio was in the process of holding another vaccination clinic (possibly at Pecan); she did not know the number of vaccines that would be available, but hopes there are enough for those who like to receive the vaccination.

-Another issue brought up at the meeting was updating the College's current COVID-19 information page. Mehrzad showed the COVID-19 Dashboard that was shared at the meeting. She pointed out that the information was not categorized by the different campuses or buildings.

-Rolando Longoria made the following two motions:

Motion 1: Request that STC Administration inform STC faculty and staff of current COVID-19 vaccine efforts. Mehrzad Mahmoudian-Geller seconded.

- Motion 2: Have Senators present the COVID-19 Vaccine Sharepoint information page with constituents and department chairs

- Motion 1 was amended to vote for online by email (due to loss of quorum). Tim Weber seconded.

- Motion 2 was amended to vote for online by email (due to loss of quorum). Mehrzad Mahmoudian-Geller seconded.

Other Business

- Pells for Prisoners / Prison Program- Aaron Wilson

-Aaron presented the following: the \$3.2 trillion bill signed into law included a provision to restore Pell grant eligibility for all incarcerated individuals at both federal and state prisons. Due to take effect in July 2023 but possibly sooner. Only institutions with prison education programs would be able to award these grants. In Texas, these programs involve a contractual agreement between colleges and Texas Department of Criminal Justice. Many Texas colleges currently use the Second-Chance Pell Programs; these were awarded to colleges that applied to them.

-Aaron mentioned that STC could set up a prison-education program in cooperation with Texas Department of Criminal Justice. He invited Senate discussion and asked what support or concerns faculty members might have about offering such a program to present to STC administration.

-Micah Bailey moved to table the topic until another meeting. Aaron seconded. Motion passed.

Sylvia Flores made a motion to adjourn. Ana Riojas seconded.

Meeting adjourned at 5:37 pm.