

# THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT SAN ANTONIO

## SUMMARY MINUTES OF THE DEPARTMENT CHAIR'S COUNCIL MEETING October 9, 2013

**Those in attendance were:** Alistair Welchman (for Michael Almeida); Yoris Au; Edwin Barea-Rodriguez; Bruce Barnett; Mark Bayer; Rajendra Boppana; Janis Bush; Vince Canizaro; Susan Colorado; Mari Cortez; Alan Dutton; William Flannery; Robert Fuhrman; Waldemar Gorski; James Groff; Norma Guerra; Richard Hartley; Yilmaz Hatipkarasulu; Paul LeBlanc; Gregg Michel; Stewart Miller; Harry Millwater; Lalatendu Misra; Sandy Norman; Daniel Pack; Thomas Papagiannakis; Gail Pizzola; Joachim Singelmann; Martell Teasley; Raydel Tullous; Ken Weiher; Xiaohe Xu; Miguel Yacaman; Wan Yao; Yinlong Zhang

**Those absent were:** Michael Almeida (excused); Thelma Duffey (excused); Ann Eisenberg (excused); Mansour El-Kikhia; Gregg Elliott; Belinda Flores; David Frego (excused); Laura Levi (excused); Marita Nummikoski (excused); Anson Ong; Chris Reddick (excused); Tammy Wyatt (excused)

**Guests:** John Frederick; Julius Gribou; Sarah Leach, Rebekah Smith

### **Competency Testing**

*Joleen Reynolds, Director of Testing Services*

Ms. Reynolds discussed how CLEP exams (or “challenge-based” exams) are used by less than 4% of UTSA students on a yearly basis. One strategy of the GRIP is to utilize “competency-based” exams which would give students an opportunity at a lower cost to be able to test-out of classes and/or assist with graduating on time. If utilized efficiently, these exams would help students stay on track. She said that departments would be able to create some “discretionary” guidelines in order to avoid potential issues (such as timing of CLEP exams relative to class registration, etc.). The application of these exams also has the potential to ease the current issue of lack of classroom space and lack of faculty. The exams are offered on a credit/no credit basis so they won't affect students' GPAs.

### **QEP Survey**

*Rajendra Boppana and Barbara Millis, Teaching and Learning Center*

A survey was passed out to department chairs to measure their satisfaction with the QEP. The results were collected and will be assessed.

### **Proposed Guidelines for Peer Observation of Teaching**

*Alan Shoho, Associate Vice Provost for Academic and Faculty Support*

Dr. Shoho said he had been working with Dr. Rebekah Smith on revisions to the proposed guidelines regarding peer observations. He clarified that everyone undergoing a P&T review in the fall of 2014 will have to have evidence of at least one peer observation. The amount of peer observations conducted per faculty member is up to the department to determine. It is also at the department's discretion whether or not to include peer observations for CPE

reviews. The departments should make sure to include these decisions in their departmental guidelines. There is currently no specification regarding whether or not the faculty member acting as the observer must be tenure-track or not. The faculty member who is being observed will write a narrative based on the observer's report, which will be included in their P&T package. The goal of implementing these peer observations is to comply with the UT System's mandate, while placing more of a focus on faculty mentoring and coaching, as opposed to faculty evaluation.

## **Provost's Update**

*John Frederick, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs*

Dr. Frederick said that a committee has been formed to begin the COE Dean's search. He discussed last spring's commencement which was held at the Alamodome and some of the issues that arose. He said that for the fall commencement, there will be three ceremonies instead of two which should be shorter and help to alleviate some traffic issues. The first ceremony will be held on Friday, December 20<sup>th</sup> from 4-6pm. The other two ceremonies will be held the next day, Saturday, December 21<sup>st</sup> from 10-noon and 4-6pm. He asked the chairs to encourage their faculty to attend and said to come early, since students will start processing in 30 minutes before the start of each ceremony. Food will be provided to faculty, and reserved parking will be available. In addition, a shuttle will likely provide service from the Downtown campus.

Dr. Frederick said that the Conflict of Commitment/Conflict of Interest policies have been finalized by the UT System. He asked Dr. Smith to say a few words regarding these policies. Dr. Smith thanked the Provost and President for their support of faculty concerns and said that she expects a more reasonable policy to now be implemented. She said that a local policy for UTSA is currently being compared to the UT System's model policy. The timeline for implementation begins around November, since the UT System is asking for all reports to be entered into the main database by January.

Dr. Frederick discussed some of the academic policies that were assessed over the summer by the Associate Deans and members of the Faculty Senate. The majority of these discussions are still ongoing.

- The last day to drop a course is currently three days before the final exam. This date is expected to be changed to the 9<sup>th</sup> week of the semester.
- The university currently absorbs a penalty if a student withdraws with a federal grant. There has been some discussion about having a financial aid counselor meet with those students before they withdraw from a course.
- The number of times that students may repeat a gateway course is being considered. The Associate Deans have suggested only two attempts.
- One possibility for improving priority registration is to use it for anyone with over 60 credit hours and to base it on their current progress.
- Dr. Frederick and the Deans discussed the value of cross-listed courses. He said that it may be a good idea to look closer at the use of cross-listed courses.

Dr. Frederick said that chapter 2.10 of the HOP is currently being updated to reflect the promotion and tenure policy in a new format, and said that most of the policy's content is still the same.

**The next Department Chair Council meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, November 13, 2013 beginning at 3:00 p.m. at the Downtown Campus-BV 1.338 Assembly Room.**