



DETAILS	
Date	February 6, 2024
Time	3:15 pm
Location	CDC Room and Zoom

I. Attendance

ATTENDEES						
Chair	Elizabeth (Liz) Rexford					
Vice Chair	Peter Anderson					
Secretary	Haydee Ruiz					
Attendance	Member	Present	Absent	Member	Present	Absent
	Marci Espinosa		X	Karl Johnson		X
	Gina Wilson		X	Frank Becak		X
	Jeff Tix	X		Muna Saqer		X
	Matthew Tougas	X		Hector Weir	X	
	Joseph Reeve	X		Kenneth Grubb	X	
	Latasha Herndon		X	Amber Barbee	X	
	Melissa Moore	X		Jessi Snider	X	
	Justin Guidry	X				
	Haobo Yang	X				
Others Present						

II. New Business

DISCUSSION
<p>1. <u>Introduction of new members</u> Liz welcomed both Amber and Jessi to Faculty Council. Amber Barbee and Jessi Snider introduced themselves.</p>
<p>2. <u>Approval of Board of Trustee notes</u> Liz asked if there were any comments or changes to the January Board of Trustee notes. No objections were made. A motion from Amber Barbee, seconded by Jeff Tix, to accept the notes as written and to include them in the minutes was made. The motion carried with all in favor.</p>
<p>3. <u>Sugar Land lockers for faculty</u> Kenneth Grubb explained that many faculty members who teach at the Sugar Land campus do not have an office at Sugar Land, and need a space to store items. Due to the size and availability of the lockers in the faculty dining area, the faculty would like to request a locker that is a bit more substantial. Kenneth has approached Georgeann with the issue, and Georgeann is on board with the idea. Georgeann would like to get an estimate of how many lockers and where they would be placed. Kenneth will be reaching out to Division Chairs/Department Heads to get a count of how many</p>

faculty members teach at Sugar Land and do not office at the Sugar Land campus. Kenneth will then reach out to the faculty and ask if they would be interested in having a locker.

Georgeann stressed that the lockers would need to be cleaned out at the end of the semester, academic year, or once the faculty member is no longer teaching at the Sugar Land campus.

Kenneth mentioned that the lockers would be on a first-come, first-serve and not reserved by division or departments.

4. Faculty Compensation

Based on TK's presentation during the October meeting of Faculty Council and spring convocation, where WCJC's faculty salaries were compared to other colleges in the Gulf Coast consortium. It was agreed that the WCJC faculty is being underpaid and salaries are not keeping up with the competitive salaries of other colleges. This could be a reason why WCJC might not be attracting new faculty and existing faculty leaving to other colleges.

Liz asked the FC members if they could suggest possible avenues to explore in trying to close the salary gap or a means to make WCJC more attractive for new or current faculty members to continue serving.

Jeff commented that in TK's presentation, the tax base is not discussed. Jeff pointed out that the tax base in Wharton is unique, as there are no heavy industries in Wharton county, and could indicate where other colleges might be benefiting from.

Liz commented that a large part of WCJC's funding comes from the state, and there are colleges with smaller tax bases that are managing to stay competitive. A reason for the Richmond expansion is to possibly move into the Fort Bend tax base.

Peter commented that WCJC's salaries are in line with other colleges, it's the decline in longevity.

Liz commented that focusing on the amount of the steps could help the staff. Liz explained that each year it could be raised, as it can be budgeted every year. Liz pointed out that a step is not enough to cover the cost of living at the moment. She also stated this has been an issue that has previously been presented to the Board.

Kenneth commented that graduate steps could be an alternative, the steps are increased based on years served.

Merit-based salary increases was discussed. Kenneth pointed out that San Jacinto has a merit-based system, but discussed how the culture in San Jacinto is very competitive. Several other faculty members also expressed concerns about merit pay. Melissa questioned if merit-based increases would be tied to student evaluations.

Jessi commented on the possibility of offering 10.5-month contracts, especially for the faculty that teach in the summer. Liz commented that there are faculty that cannot teach during the summer, 10.5-month contracts can be articulated with Division/Department Heads, but the goal is for everyone to benefit from a salary increase. Liz also commented that this could be a burden for those who would need to find child care over the summer.

Liz asked the FC members to talk to their respective divisions and staff about possible alternatives and report during the March FC meeting.

5. Turnitin

Liz announced before the discussion that Michelle Betancourt is putting together a committee to look into alternatives to Turnitin. Michelle would like faculty from various departments to join the committee. FC members and faculty should email Liz if interested in volunteering, and Liz will forward the list to Michelle.

Matthew expressed how Turnitin is an integral resource of how student work is evaluated, and plays a key role in verifying student integrity and accountability. Although the English department is the largest department using Turnitin, and with the possibility of discontinuing Turnitin, the department has started discussing AI alternative methods. At the moment, no viable alternative has been suggested that offers the same qualities that Turnitin provides.

Matthew stated that cost should not be a concern for faculty, but rather an issue for the college. Additionally, Matthew expressed concern that cutting an integral program like Turnitin for cost-related concerns could have a snowball effect. The concern is that the college may use one cost to justify the loss of another, which can set a dangerous precedent.

Question: Are there any current viable options that will replace Turnitin? Are instructors going to integrate this into their current courses and test new features, how will it be tested before implementation?

- Matthew commented that different software has been presented but none offer the same capabilities as Turnitin. Liz commented that a test module would be provided but would not be implemented in any current courses. The VPs have asked DE to look for alternatives. Liz stated that the Turnitin committee members will need to look into viable options and report if there is software that can replace Turnitin.

Question: What is the timeline to review alternatives?

- Liz responded that it's a "tight" timeframe, the committee is yet to be selected, but the committee will start meeting within a couple of weeks.

Question: How many faculty members will be on the committee?

- Liz would like to see a diversity of faculty members on the committee, as not all faculty members will be looking at the same functions, and can provide justification if the new resources are viable.

If interested in serving on DE's committee, email Liz.

The following faculty members are interested in being on the committee: Matthew Tougas, Kenneth Grubb, Jeff Shine, Peter Anderson, Amber Barbee, and Jessi Snider. Several faculty members from other divisions have already volunteered to be on the committee.

6. Enrollment Issues between Campuses

Liz reported that several faculty members have expressed concern that students are allowed to register for classes on two different campuses. She reported that years ago at Student Success Council, it was decided that Banner would not allow students to enroll in courses that are on two different campuses, and have a window of only 10 minutes to move between campuses. Apparently, during the recent Banner upgrade, this caution went away and as a result has started disrupting classes, as students leave early from one class and arrive at their second course 10 – 15 minutes late. Other issues would be the safety of the student who needs to drive from one campus to another, faculty having their doors locked for safety reasons, disruption to other students and their learning, the impact on the student's grade as important announcements are given at the beginning of the course, and attendance grades. Liz shared these concerns with Mr. Martinez who said he would look into it. Liz asked for FC members who taught at either Richmond or Sugar Land to form a task force to meet with Mr. Martinez on this issue.

During the discussion, Melissa expressed that students are not enrolling in the correct college-ready math courses and stated she would like to be on the task force to address this issue as well.

A Task Force including Melissa, Joseph, and Jeff was established to meet with Mr. Martinez. The Task Force will report during the March meeting. Liz will send them the email exchange.

III. Old Business

DISCUSSION

1. Program Director, Department Head Summer Pay

Liz reported that FC officers were unable to schedule a meeting with Leigh Ann during December and January. Liz will reach out once Leigh Ann is back in her office.

2. Social Media Issues

Liz reported that FC officers were unable to schedule a meeting with President McCrohan. Liz will schedule a meeting and report back.

3. Faculty Bill of Rights

Due to the lack of interest from faculty, the Faculty Bill of Rights will be tabled.

A motion from Matthew Tougas, seconded by Kenneth Grubb, to table the Faculty Bill of Rights was made. The motion carried with all in favor.

IV. Extended Cabinet Items

DISCUSSION

1. Agenda Items for November Extended Cabinet

Liz mentioned that the following topics will be placed on the February Extended Cabinet agenda, and asked if any member wanted to add additional items. Members did not have any additions.

- a. Update on Richmond Renovations
- b. Update on Webpage – Emphasis on release date
- c. HB8 Response Plan

V. Other Items

DISCUSSION	

VI. Action Items

ACTION/DISCUSSION ITEMS FOR THE NEXT MEETING	OWNER	DUE
Email Liz if interested in volunteering for Turnitin committee	FC Members	asap
Banner Task Force to meet with Mr. Martinez	Moore/Reeve/Tix	Feb./March
Banner Task Force to report to Faculty Council	Moore/Reeve/Tix	March
Follow-up on step increases	FC members	March
Schedule a meeting with LAC and President McCrohan	FC Officers	March
Provide materials to Banner Task Force	Rexford	Done

VII. Adjournment

ADJOURNMENT	
1. The meeting adjourned at:	4:28 pm
2. Signature Approval:	Elizabeth (Liz) Rexford

Board of Trustee Notes: Jan. 23, 2024 Meeting

1. Quorum established. All Board members present, President McCrohan absent due to illness.

2. Minutes of previous meetings approved, no citizen comments.

3. Special Items:

- Board Evaluation Committee: Dr. Urbis stated that during the upcoming Board retreat the Board will exam Board goals as determined by SACs and by the Board itself. Dr. Allen and Chairwoman Rod will lead this discussion. The Board will also review the Board Overview that President McCrohan is preparing.
- Strategic Visioning Committee: Mr. Pope reported that the committee met with the Foundation and the consultant to update the current documents. They revised and revisited the specific goals for all four campuses. The updated documents will be discussed at the Board retreat. He reported that the “networking in the Richmond area” is progressing.

4. Presentations:

- Dr. Allen presented an update on the Information Technology Reliability Plan. She stated that the plan is on track and that the first priority of improving the college infrastructure is progressing well and that the college still had some grant money to fund the next phase of infrastructure improvement. She also stated that college is doing a great job with our partners on cyber security. Another goal is to complete and inventory of what is available on all campuses and compose a refresh plan. Part of this will be tied to great use and training on the Banner system as well as making sure cybersecurity is up-to-date. As the infrastructure improves there may be less need for certain IT personnel these savings may help defray some of the costs.
- THECB Conference: “Leading Texas Future” two Board members (Macha and Metcalf) attended this conference. Both stated that it was helpful and

they believe the THECB members were somewhat responsive to concerns about the new funding system.

5. Reports:

- VP Kocian provided the December Monthly Financial Report. He reported that no state appropriations were received during the month. The revenues over expenditures for the month were \$11 million. However, once the cost for the Fine Arts building roof is factored into the expenses, the net revenues over expenditures is \$6.6 million.
- Cynthia Ward presented the quarterly investment report. Overall the college's investments in all funds are doing well.

6. Consent Agenda: The consent agenda was approved with no items removed for discussion. Items on the agenda of note include:

- Updates to TASB manual.
- Academic Affairs: Approval of Degree Works, Approval of title change for Dual Credit Coordinator to Dual Credit Director, Approval of revised salary for VPI Secretary.
- Technology and Enrollment Management: Approval of RockIT for phase II of network infrastructure. WCJC awarded grant for \$250,000.00
- Personnel: Two new English instructors have been hired at temporary full-time instructors. These instructors are Catherine Shoppa and Adriana Free. In addition two members of the IT Department Oscar Canno and Pisal Var received a change in title/assignment. Jenna Bothell was hired as full-time college recruiter.

7. Meeting adjourned with no Executive Session needed.