



Friday, November 3rd, 2023

Regular Meeting Minutes

A regular meeting of the Executive Council of the Faculty Association of Trinity Valley Community College met in the board room of the Athens Administration building with a call to order at 9:04 am on Friday, November 3rd, 2023. The following were present:

- TVCC President Dr. Jason Morrison
- Jennifer Hannigan
- Tom Sheram
- Mike Young
- Jennifer Stephens
- Regina Clary
- Craig Lee
- Angel Martinez-Ellis

I. Structural Changes

Jennifer Hannigan opened the floor for recommendations on how the flow of communication could improve. Angel Martinez-Ellis discussed the need for a clearer policy and communication procedures for issues that may arise. Tom Sheram shared concerns regarding TVCC's development of a practice promoting within but not preparing employees adequately for the responsibilities of their new positions. Dr. Morrison iterated his role as interim for all things academic and noted that several of the issues regarding communication are being addressed, but that real change will take time. He added that he believes people should be empowered to perform their functions effectively, but that accountability is also key to a successful college. He noted that he has been meeting with division chairs to set up continuity between departments and to make sure communications processes flow more efficiently.

Dr. Morrison also noted other areas where key discussions are taking place. He specifically noted the college's financial aid provisional status with the Department of Education. Because of that status, which is based on actions that took place several years ago, TVCC is working toward making sure census and financial aid processes are within compliance. He also said professional development is being reviewed and more conversations will take place about making professional development relevant for faculty. In addition, he discussed some of the ways that TVCC is working with area industries to develop programs to meet our area needs.

II. Disciplinary Policy

In response to faculty concerns, Dr. Morrison said he is building a taskforce involving faculty, staff, and administration to help develop clear disciplinary policies. The current disciplinary policies need updates to avoid ambiguity. He agreed clear structure is needed to address employee disciplinary procedures. The goal, he noted is to ensure employee privacy and to protect both employees and supervisors by creating clear expectations.

III. New Programs

Faculty asked for a clear process when it comes to proposing and developing new programs. Dr. Morrison noted he would investigate a program flow chart to aid in creating new and innovative programs and adding courses. He noted that those who are considering proposing a new program will need very specific guidelines. Any new program must address a significant market or academic need, not conflict with other programs, and be able to be self-sustaining.

IV. Visitors to Campus and Facility Use

A brief concern was expressed involving those who set up on campus to promote organizations and political viewpoints. Faculty expressed concerns that those who video faculty and students should have clear guidelines and clearance from campus security. This item will be discussed further at a later date.

V. Facility Needs

Dr. Morrison said that all issues of significant importance may be emailed to him. A School Dude request should also be created for any issue that arises. He is in the process of adding a Vice President of Facilities Management to the administration, said Dr. Morrison. As soon as that person is on board, he noted, a complete walkthrough of all campuses will take place and all facilities needs will be added to a prioritized list. He discussed a few projects currently in the planning stages for the Athens campus, such as drain and sidewalk replacement near the Gibbs Building, drainage issues, replacement of the front sign, and hot water in the Gibbs building restrooms.

VI. Morale Committee

Jennifer Hannigan and Tom Sheram updated the group on the recent meeting of the Faculty Morale Task Force. Future faculty association agendas will include several suggestions that were discussed by the morale committee for consideration. In a general discussion regarding morale, Tom Sheram shared the need for more awareness and conversations about the role of the college in the community, understanding “our why” when it comes to serving students, and awareness of TVCC’s rich history and traditions. Faculty also emphasized building more “buy-in” through understanding of community impact as well as how the college helps students.

During its recent meeting, the morale task force also discussed building a more caring campus culture and how faculty can do more to meet student needs. Jennifer Hannigan said the Morale

Task Force will be asking departments at spring inservice to discuss ways faculty can improve culture. Dr. Morrison said he would like strong suggestions that can be tied into the college's strategic plan, which will begin development in Spring 2024.

The Morale Task Force also suggested revamping professional development with an emphasis on discipline-specific progress and general professionalism. They also suggested looking at the scheduling process to make sure it is effective and streamlined.

Dr. Morrison explained that he would like to see the strategic planning process address several of the topics suggested recently by faculty, such as organizational structure, disciplinary policies, professional development, and campus-wide morale. His goal, he noted, is to have a strategic plan that is faculty and staff developed and driven and that empowers the campus community to grow and develop TVCC.

VII. Evaluation Policy

A change in the faculty evaluation policy has been suggested by the Faculty Association and submitted for approval. Dr. Morrison had some questions on the wording in that policy and shared his questions with the group. Under the current proposed policy, a faculty member will be evaluated annually for the first three years of employment and then every three years after the third year of employment. He asked that the Faculty Association Board clarify what happens following disciplinary action. The group agreed that a significant disciplinary action, such as being placed on a PIP (Personal Improvement Plan) will trigger a restart of the process. To clarify, if a faculty member is under a PIP, that faculty members will be evaluated annually for three years before going back to the every third year rotation. The policy proposal will be revised and sent back to Dr. Morrison for board approval.

VIII. Other Items

Internal business was discussed on the details around faculty association spending 10% of the budget on Walmart gift cards for student needs. More information about that expenditure will be presented during the Faculty Association general assembly in January.

Dr. Morrison added that building security is being addressed. Specifically, he noted, there is a need to lock some entrances to keep traffic flow more secure. Some buildings, he noted, have numerous entrances and there is a need to control where the general population enters a building. In order to take more precautions when it comes to securing buildings, he said some entrances will be locked. Information will be released regarding what entrances will be unlocked during regular hours once campus security has evaluated a building.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:25 a.m.