



TVCC Faculty Association Executive Council

Friday, March 1st, 2024

Regular Meeting Minutes

A regular meeting of the Executive Council of the Faculty Association of Trinity Valley Community College met in the conference room of the Athens Administration building with a call to order at 9:15 a.m. on Friday, March 1st, 2024. The following were present:

- TVCC President Dr. Jason Morrison
- VP of Student Services Dr. Philip Parnell
- Jennifer Hannigan
- Tom Sheram
- Jennifer Stephens
- Mike Young
- Regina Clary

I. Phone Issues

Vice President of Information Technology Services Dave Gibson was present and introduced himself, Eric Hood, and Zach Kennedy. The faculty highlighted issues with the new phone system, including login problems, delayed voicemails, and the elimination of important numbers (such as the main number to the Palestine campus). The issue of phones ringing or messages coming through on classroom displays during class was noted.

Mr. Gibson said IT is aware of some of the phone system issues and is working to make changes. As for the classroom display issue, he noted that if a faculty member will schedule themselves as “not available” during class times it will silence the Microsoft Teams notifications. Zach Kennedy said faculty and staff members should put in a ticket any time they have a problem. The ticketing system can help IT discover and solve widespread issues. Mr. Gibson emphasized the IT Department is available to help any faculty or staff member who has issues with technology.

Faculty also asked about the email to certify Spring 2024 rosters. Some faculty did not receive that email when it was sent. Mr. Gibson noted there was an email outage around that time and the issue shouldn't reoccur.

II. Policy Updates

Discrepancies between the Faculty Handbook and Board Policy were addressed. Dr. Morrison suggested forming a group to compare the Handbook with Board Policy to make sure the policies in the Handbook are accurate. He also noted that he would like to see future versions of the Faculty Handbook in alignment with the upcoming Strategic Plan.

In addition, a change in the policy for deciding faculty pay was discussed. Currently, a faculty member's salary for a course is calculated based on the enrollment of the class after deregistration (often the Friday of the first week of class). This can result in faculty pay decreases because class enrollments often drop the first week as students make schedule changes or are deregistered for nonpayment. This has particularly affected classes that drop below the number to make or classes taught "by the head." Faculty members will agree to teach a course that has not made based on the enrollment the Friday before classes begin. However, the salary for that class is not calculated until the next week, meaning a faculty member can be teaching a course for a significantly lower salary than what was decided.

Associate Vice President for Academics Erica Richardson was present for this discussion and noted that in future semesters the above policy will change. Faculty will still work with their supervisor to view their final course schedule the week before class begins. If the course enrollment changes after classes start, the faculty member's salary will not decrease from the agreed upon amount. If, when the official census is done after the 12th class day, the enrollment has increased then the faculty member's salary will increase accordingly. This will also be true for courses that have made the Friday before the semester begins and then drop below the number required to make the first week. Those faculty members will still receive a full class salary. The goal, said Dr. Morrison, is to ensure a faculty member's salary doesn't decrease once they have agreed to teach a class.

Richardson also noted that classes are being reviewed regularly to try to reduce the number of courses that would need to be taught "by the head."

III. Budget Issues

Faculty discussed processes for TDCJ budgets and other budget-related concerns. Issues with accessing budgets and inconsistencies were noted, particularly in regard to instances when several people need to work out of the same budget. Also, some faculty members were notified about the need for 24-25 budget requests only days before the deadline. Dr. Morrison noted that the notification issue was largely due to the personnel transition in workforce and that both issues will be addressed by Rich Crosby.

IV. VPI Hiring Process

The group discussed the Vice President of Instruction (VPI) hiring process, outlining the remaining steps and timeline involved. The first committee has narrowed the field to eight candidates, and those names have been passed on to a second committee. That group will soon be conducting interviews and narrowing the field to three finalists. The final candidates will visit campus and will partake in open Q&A sessions. Dr. Morrison ensured that all feedback will be considered. The expected start date for the VPI position is June 1st.

V. Learning Frameworks

Faculty discussed the optimal timing for students to take Learning Frameworks and the class' potential benefits in learning study processes. Concerns arose about students falling through the cracks and delaying enrollment until their later semesters. Dr. Morrison proposed that shifting to faculty advising could help address these issues, particularly as Learning Frameworks is mostly relevant to AA and AS students. The board also discussed how to incorporate advising and counseling sessions for certificate courses, since students in workforce programs also need effective studying and learning tools.

VI. Communication

Faculty in some divisions are receiving early communication regarding their overload amounts, while others are not being notified until their overload pay has been entered into the system. Dr. Morrison said that it will just take a little communication to make sure all division chairs are communicating major items at the same time.

VII. Other Items

Concerns were raised about TDCJ representation and voice, both on Faculty Association and in general. Dr. Morrison led a discussion about the current issues with TDCJ. The program is in need of serious repair and Dr. Morrison said he is dedicated to improving TDCJ education and rebuilding the relationships that have degraded during the past few years. But, he noted, it is going to take some serious work and dedication to make sure TVCC is serving those students well.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:36 a.m.