

Teaching Academy Executive Council Minutes

August 27, 2021

Members Present:

Courtney Meyers, Angela Lumpkin, Ali Duffy, Dominick Casadonte, Tara Stevens, Susan Tomlinson, Nancy Soonpaa, Karen Alexander, Feruzan Irani Williams, Mitzi Ziegner, Lisa Garner Santa, Suzanne Tapp

Members Not Present:

Patrick Hughes

Approval of Minutes:

Dom moved to approve the minutes from May 7, 2021; Karen seconded. The council approved.

Updates

Welcome New Executive Council Members

Courtney Meyers welcomed the following new members:

- Karen Alexander, College of Human Sciences, Family and Consumer Sciences Education
- Lisa Garner Santa, At Large Representative (College of Visual and Performing Arts, School of Music)
- Nancy Soonpaa, School of Law
- Feruzan Irani Williams, College of Business, Area of Management
- Mitzi Ziegner, At Large Representative (Associate Director, TLPDC)

Courtney asked the following returning members to introduce themselves:

- Ali Duffy (Chair Elect)- *College of Visual & Performing Arts, School of Theatre & Dance*
- Angela Lumpkin (Past Chair)- *College of Arts & Sciences, Department of Kinesiology & Sport Management*
- Dominick Casadonte- *College of Arts & Sciences, Department of Chemistry & Biochemistry*
- Patrick Hughes- *College of Media & Communication, Department of Communication Studies*
- Tara Stevens- *College of Education, Department of Educational Psychology & Leadership*
- Susan Tomlinson- *Honors College, Environment & the Humanities Program*
- Suzanne Tapp- *Director of the Teaching, Learning, & Professional Development Center*
- Courtney Meyers (Chair)- *College of Agricultural Sciences & Natural -Resources, Department of Agricultural Education and Communications*

Standing Committees

Courtney introduced the following standing committee members and shared each committee's role in the Teaching Academy:

Chancellor's Council Distinguished Teaching Award	<i>Executive Council Members</i> <i>Faculty Senate President (Katie Langford)</i> <i>Past Award Recipient (Dimitri Pappas)</i>
Lawrence Schovanec Teaching Development Scholarships Selection Committee	<i>Shane Blum (Chair)</i> <i>Leslie Thompson</i> <i>Erin Collopy</i> <i>Breanna Harris</i> <i>Claudia Coglisier</i> <i>Stephanie Jones</i> <i>Sanjaya Senadheera</i> <i>Dustin Benham</i> <i>Jenna LaFreniere</i> <i>Stacey Jocoy</i> <i>Michael Ryan</i> <i>Jo Langston</i>
Departmental Excellence in Teaching Award Selection Committee	<i>Kirsten Cook (Chair)</i> <i>Ron Milam</i> <i>Lauren Griffith</i> <i>Fanni Coward</i> <i>Stephen Ekwaro-Osire</i> <i>Aliza Wong</i> <i>Kristi Gaines</i> <i>Alyson Outenreath</i> <i>Narissa Punyanunt Carter</i> <i>Blair Williams</i> <i>Jeffrey Harper</i> <i>Sylvia Niehuis</i>
Teaching Academy New Member Selection Committee	<i>Malinda Colwell (Chair)</i> <i>Chance Brooks</i> <i>Beth Thacker</i> <i>Rashid Al-Hmoud</i> <i>Matt Hart</i> <i>Raymond Flores</i> <i>Michael Giesselmann</i> <i>Brian Shannon</i> <i>Glenn Cummins</i> <i>Blair Williams</i> <i>Karen Spears</i> <i>Lisa Low</i>

Courtney mentioned that the Departmental Excellence in Teaching Award Selection Committee and the Teaching Academy New Member Selection Committee will be facilitating two informational workshops this year regarding applications.

Vision for the Teaching Academy- Enhancing the Culture of Teaching

Courtney shared her vision for enhancing the culture of teaching this year and continuing initiatives that began last year. The Peer Evaluation Committee will continue and needs a new chair. The Defining Teaching Excellence Committee met over the summer and Lisa Low is being considered for the chair role.

The Student Evaluation Committee will be co-chaired by Suzanne Tapp and Michael Serra and includes a student from SGA, a faculty member from the APIDA, and the Provost Faculty Fellow. Suzanne shared that the committee reviewed research about evaluations to find the positive and negative outcomes. They also reviewed evaluation forms from other institutions. They are considering a question bank to allow for customization across departments and will propose changes in small steps this year.

The New Faculty Mentor Committee was successfully led by Ali Duffy last year. She noted it might be best for the committee to meet in spring or summer to prepare for new faculty in the fall. She suggested that representatives from each college could serve as members. Last year they paired faculty with similar ranks and disciplines, but they received feedback from new faculty wanting to choose mentors outside of their discipline. Courtney agreed to work with Ali to send an email to the Teaching Academy asking for someone to serve as a new chair and for volunteer mentors. Dom mentioned that the small group discussions at new faculty orientation were a great start and noted that mentor groups might be a good option to allow for more networking. Ali suggested group mentor meetings over coffee. Suzanne offered the TLPDC as a meeting space for groups.

The New Student Mentor Committee was successfully led by Dom Casadonte and last year there were seventeen committee members. He noted there is a strong need for mentors for first year students and first time in-person students. Last year they sent a welcome letter, had brown bag sessions, and one-on-one mentor sessions. Courtney agreed to work with Dom to send an email to the Teaching Academy asking for someone to serve as a new chair and for volunteer mentors. Courtney shared information about the need for a future committee on Department Teaching Plans. These plans would be something each department could customize to fit their unique situations and Courtney would like to form a committee to develop plans soon.

Fall Events

Courtney mentioned the New Member Induction Ceremony coming up on September 17th. She encouraged the council members to attend.

The Burns Conference will be held September 30-October 1st and Noah Finkelstein will be the keynote speaker. Suzanne shared that this was originally planned to be a face-to-face conference but now a hybrid format is being considered. There is a possibility that it could shift to virtual only. Courtney noted that the fall business meeting on October 1st may need to be virtual too.

Chancellor's Council Distinguished Teaching Award

Courtney reminded the council that they are all serving on the selection committee and that the application is now open. The committee will include Katie Langford and Dimitri Pappas and the

committee will review all applications after October 8th. The selection meeting is scheduled for October 22nd.

Discussion

Angela asked if Kirsten Cook had met with the DETA committee to discuss making updates to the procedures that were proposed last year. Courtney mentioned she would reach out to Kirsten. Dom asked if there was a committee of mentors for graduate students. He noticed a specific need for graduate mentors because of the unique and difficult role they have on campus. Courtney said she would reach out to Kristi Gaines about a possible collaboration.

Susan noted that faculty are under pressure this semester because of the increase in COVID cases and unclear guidance. She would like to draft a statement of support for faculty addressing the difficulties of this semester. Tara offered to assist with drafting the statement. Susan and Tara agreed to present their draft to the council so everyone could vote on the statement before releasing it on behalf of the Teaching Academy. Susan and Dom recognized the need to share advice with faculty on how to address issues related to COVID. Courtney asked Tara if she would be willing to facilitate “coffee hours” for faculty to discuss the difficulties and share best practices.

Suzanne shared that the future Executive Council meetings will be offered in-person and on Zoom and that the group would move to a larger room to allow for social distancing.

August Provost’s Council Meeting Notes

This was Provost Hendrick’s first meeting. We discussed three main things:

- **COVID-19 Updates**
 - TTU is monitoring cases on campus and the surrounding community daily. Will be publishing the university’s dashboard soon and updating it throughout the week.
 - He mentioned we are “constrained about the tools at our disposal” because there is no mandate for vaccines and facial coverings.
 - TTU will continue to advocate for vaccines and increase access to those.
 - The main goal this fall is retain in-person instruction and minimize transmission. Extracurricular in-person activities are not a priority if there is an increase in cases.
 - If students are exposed to someone with COVID-19, they do not have to report. If students test positive for COVID-19, there is a reporting process. Contract tracing will happen for those who report.
 - Genevieve Durham DeCesaro asked for language to use on materials for events held in indoor spaces such as theatres to inform patrons about the risk.
 - Kathy Duran explained the Dean of Students is being notified when a student reports a positive test. They will then notify associate deans to send information to instructors of record. Student Health is issuing a letter that can be provided to instructors.
 - Provost Hendrick said they are working on more consistent messaging to encourage masks.
 - There was some discussion about staff change or duty reports and the need to be flexible, humane, and generous when considering those requests.

- We should continue to prioritize face-to-face instruction and will consider requests to adjust modality on an individual course basis.
- **Big 12 issues**
 - Provost Hendrick provided a brief update because although it seems like an athletic concern, it does have impacts on other aspects of the university. This is an issue of policy, funding, and recruitment of students, faculty, and staff. He said President Schovanec continues to work through this and some will depend on how soon UT and OU leave the conference.
- **Provost Hendrick's priorities moving forward**
 - Diversity and Retention
 - Emphasis on faculty/staff hires and working to foster diversity and partner accommodations.
 - Be proactive in keeping people here instead of countering once they already have an offer to leave.
 - Be more strategic in how these decisions are made – instead of on a first-come, first-served basis.
 - Outreach/Engagement
 - Improving how we evaluate and incorporate in P&T and merit decisions. “Service” does not fully encompass the work that is being done.
Mentioned the Raiders Engaged database.
 - Improving communications on academic side
 - Engaging more with deans, unit leaders, and community to tell the stories of the university. Will be adding staff to provide some leadership on academic side. Wants to do more to engage and encourage feedback.

Adjourn:

Ali moved to adjourn the meeting; Dom seconded. The meeting adjourned.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Molly Jacobs.