

Teaching Academy Executive Council Minutes

March 30, 2021

Members Present:

Angela Lumpkin, Courtney Meyers, Bob McDonald, Mitzi Lauderdale, Carla Lacerda, Patrick Hughes, Susan Tomlinson, Suzanne Tapp

Members Not Present:

Ali Duffy, Brie Sherwin, Dominick Casadonte

Approval of Minutes:

Mitzi moved to approve the minutes from February 26, 2021; Courtney seconded. The committee approved.

Discussion:

Lawrence Schovanec Teaching Development Scholarships

Angela reminded the council that in 2020, those who received scholarships were able to receive the funds through payroll if their conference was cancelled or postponed. Angela proposed that this be allowed this year since one recipient has already notified that their conference was postponed.

Angela asked Molly to assist in keeping record of those who receive the funds through payroll. Suzanne suggested following up with the 2020 recipients to check on the status of their conferences. The committee approved this proposal. Angela requested that the 2021 recipients be asked to notify the TLPDC when they attend their new conferences.

Bylaws Update

Angela continued the discussion from the previous meeting about adding language to the bylaws to address a committee member being absent from the committee due to death, retirement, leaving the university, etc. Angela shared a document containing the suggested edits to Article 6. The following language is the proposed addition to 6.3:

“If any committee member is unable to complete a three-year term, the College’s member(s) on the Executive Council will conduct an election for a replacement Teaching Academy member who will complete the unexpired term of service on this committee.”

The council also discussed adjusting Article 6 to address representation for the Vet School and other remote campuses and smaller units (Costa Rica Campus, Waco Campus, University Programs, Library, Architecture in El Paso, etc.). Mitzi suggested adding an “at large” category to allow for better representation from any of these currently unrepresented units.

Angela asked if any members from the Lubbock Campus who were already part of the Teaching Academy transferred to the Vet School. Molly and Suzanne checked and clarified that no current faculty at the Vet School are in the Teaching Academy.

The Diamond Award was also discussed. Suzanne suggested adding it to the bylaws. Courtney asked if the selection committee would be considered an ad hoc committee or standing committee. Susan noted that the Diamond Award should be a special award for 2021 to recognize the work faculty have done during the pandemic. She shared that the honor could be diminished by making it annual. In this case, the committee should remain ad hoc. Courtney moved to amend Article 6.3 with the proposed language; Mitzi seconded. The committee approved and the motion passed. The council will continue to discuss the other issues in Section 6 at the next meeting.

Departmental Excellence in Teaching Award

There was a clerical error with the DETA committee and the chair who served Spring 2021 was not a member of the Teaching Academy. That chair will not be making a report. Angela requested that the council consider the recommendation from the DETA committee:

- Can a member of a Teaching Academy Standing Committee recuse him/herself when their department submits an application? (see OP 10.20 Conflict of Interest)
- Eligibility for Departmental Excellence in Teaching Award—how is a department defined, such as the Honors or an academic program?
- How much should the proposed use of the \$25,000 award be weighted?
- What if a tie in the Olympic scoring occurs?
- Selection of a chair for 2021-2022

Courtney stated that it is a conflict of interest for a committee member to make a selection if their department submitted an application. Angela asked how the committee would handle multiple committee members recusing themselves. Courtney suggested that the committee member could find a substitute for that year. Susan noted that she was part of the decision to use Olympic scoring to counteract bias, but it does not fix the problem. She stated that we should be careful dealing with conflicts of interest and committee members should recuse themselves. Mitzi asked if recusal could apply to all standing committees or just the DETA committee. Angela noted that members do recuse themselves for the Chancellor's Council Distinguished Teaching Award because the applicants are individuals. However, the DETA committee deals with departments, not individuals. Bob was concerned about smaller colleges who wouldn't be able to select a substitute. He suggested having "at large" members for this occasion. Angela suggested that the council think on these ideas with discussion to continue at the next meeting.

Angela brought up the question of how department is defined for DETA. She shared that the award broadly accepts applications from all units, not just departments. Mitzi remembered this coming up in her college in the past. Susan shared that we should be as inclusive as possible and that the protocol language should be adjusted to make the inclusivity clear. Angela asked if the award needs a new name.

Susan shared that the use of the award funds should not be weighed as heavily. Angela noted that her department received conflicting feedback about use of funds each year they applied.

Angela noted that the committee chair needed to be selected for the next year, and she plans to email the continuing members of the committee to make a selection.

Angela asked the committee to continue thinking about these points so that discussion can continue at the next meeting.

Updates:

Teaching Evaluations

Suzanne gave an update on the progress of the teaching evaluation process. She reminded the council of the workshop she attended with Angela, Courtney, and Ken Griffith. Based on examples from other institutions, the plan is to use a triangulated approach using peer evaluations, student evaluations, and self-reflections on teaching. One emphasis has been on self-reflection and encouraging departments to adopt the customizable questions in Digital Measures. The ATLC focused on teaching evaluations with presentations by Emily Miller and Ginger Clark. Now, phase two involves meeting with other stakeholders and President Schovanec. The Senior Vice Provost Rob Stewart is very supportive of expanding the ways we evaluate teaching. Courtney is leading a sub-committee that will define quality teaching. This definition could be used and customized by departments. They are also considering the questions asked of student in their evaluations. They would like to partner with other groups on campus to adjust the questions based on research and to focus this on the learner's experiences. They would also like to create a TTU framework for teaching plans. They will be using examples from other institutions and adjusting them as needed. This will be a long-term project in an attempt to transform the campus teaching culture. Suzanne shared that Ginger Clark has invited TTU to share this process with their campus. Bob mentioned adding this factor to award qualifications and shared that the Rawls College has created four new financially substantial annual awards to recognize teaching excellence.

Diamond Award

Courtney thanked Susan and Tara for joining her on the ad hoc selection committee. They are still establishing a rubric to award to up to 15 applicants. Suzanne shared that there are currently twenty-eight applications. Courtney plans to borrow ideas for selection from Raiders Who Rock. The committee plans to meet in the next week. Angela thanked the committee members for volunteering. She shared that this award will not carry a cash prize, but recipients will receive an acrylic award.

Peer Evaluations

Courtney plans to get each of the sub-committees back together. The sub-committee for online peer reviews presented at the ATLC. The sub-committee about defining quality teaching will have an opportunity to present later this semester.

Notes from the Provost Council meeting on March 22nd, 2021

New Faculty Orientation Proposed Changes

Suzanne Tapp shared a brief history about how New Faculty Orientation had evolved since the Teaching, Learning, and Professional Development Center (TLPDC) began conducting it in 2009, such as including a resource fair with about 65 TTU offices, a half-day workshop provided by the Teaching Academy, and a question-and-answer session. Feedback from new faculty identified three key concerns that Suzanne mentioned—too much information to absorb in a short time period, a desire for more in-depth information about dealing with student disability issues and using Blackboard, and New Faculty Orientation filled two days prior to the start of the fall semester when this time was needed for other duties. Given past changes and feedback, Suzanne shared several changes being considered for New Faculty Orientation in 2021 and asked for feedback about these:

1. Begin contacting new faculty through email in May or June with information about syllabus development and access to and use of Blackboard.
2. Provide online resources, such as how to obtain parking and identification cards, access and use Blackboard, and use Digital Measures.
3. Offer self-paced, virtual sessions through Cornerstone for EEO, FERPA, and NCAA compliance.
4. Offer optional face-to-face benefits session for new faculty in different categories.
5. Provide face-to-face Blackboard training sessions.
6. Offer a Teaching Academy session about what to do on the first day of classes.
7. Require a half-day session a week prior to Faculty Duty Day with an emphasis on faculty getting to know each other and hearing from the President, Provost, Chief Diversity Officer, and Vice President for Research and Innovation.
8. Offer during the fall semester sessions on handling student issues, a disciplinary variety of sessions about seeking and obtaining grants, and information requested by new faculty.

Feedback comments

1. Would the TLPDC be able to handle these expanded offerings? (Suzanne responded that it could)
2. How would requiring a session prior to Faculty Duty Day work without compensation and with varying academic calendars in the School of Veterinary Medicine, School of Law, and maybe regional sites?
3. Could the TLPDC travel to the School of Veterinary Medicine or offer a virtual alternative to the required session?
4. Would spreading out New Faculty Orientation lead to concerns about comments about preferring it be held prior to start of fall semester?
5. Could all sessions be recorded and/or be offered with alternative times? (Suzanne respond that these could be done)
6. Make a booklet with all information provided, place all information on the TLPDC website, or develop an app?
7. The General Counsel's Office wanted to be included.

Fall 2021 Scheduling Planning

Rob Stewart emphasized that the Registrar's Office is working diligently to reassign classrooms to accommodate the decision for 100% capacity in fall classrooms, starting with classes with enrollments of 60 or higher. The goal is to place classes in classrooms as they had been scheduled previously including in the buildings associated with academic units. He asked for feedback or questions.

1. Would classes with limited enrollments, such as in music, be allowed to continue due to social distancing needs—Yes.
2. Could academic units offer courses in the best possible modality, using things learned during the pandemic—Yes.
3. Would students with documented medical issues need to be accommodated with online options—Yes.
4. Could the start of preregistration be delayed if all classroom re-scheduling was not completed—Yes, if needed; would need to revisit over the next few days.
5. Everyone was reminded that if lectures are recorded, they must be captioned.
6. If online courses move a degree beyond the 50% limit, then the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board would have to be notified.

Update on School of Veterinary Medicine

Guy Loneragan shared a brief update on the School of Veterinary Medicine. Over 700 potential students began the application process. After reviewing applications and interviews, offers were extended to 71 students—56 have accepted, 5 turned down the offer, and 10 have not yet responded. The construction of facilities is on schedule for summer completion. A diverse faculty of 28 has been hired with hiring continuing.

Adjourn:

Angela adjourned the meeting.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Molly Jacobs.