

Teaching Academy Executive Council Minutes October 22, 2021

Members Present:

Courtney Meyers, Angela Lumpkin, Dominick Casadonte, Tara Stevens, Susan Tomlinson, Nancy Soonpaa, Karen Alexander, Feruzan Irani Williams, Mitzi Ziegner

Members Not Present:

Ali Duffy, Lisa Garner Santa, Suzanne Tapp, Patrick Hughes

Approval of Minutes:

Susan moved to approve the minutes from September 24, 2021; Dom seconded. The council approved.

Voting Protocol

Courtney distributed the updated version of the voting protocol for the final approval of changes and additions. The last two items that needed approval were Section 7 and the Points of Clarification. Angela moved to accept the final updates; Dom seconded. The council approved.

Addition of a DEI Statement to the DETA Criteria

The DETA committee suggested the addition of the following language to the criteria:

“How does the department integrate diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) into its curriculum and convey the importance of DEI to its students? Examples of relevant DEI activities and initiatives include standalone courses, learning objectives within courses, service-learning opportunities, in-class speakers, and assigned viewings/readings as well as extracurricular activities hosted or sponsored by the department to increase students’ awareness and appreciation of DEI.”

The council briefly discussed this addition and decided to not make any changes at this time. They plan to revisit the DEI statement after the selection in 2022. They don’t want to rush this and plan to ask the selection committee members the following questions regarding DEI after they review the 2022 applications:

- How do applicants already address DEI?
- Where are the gaps, how can we encourage applicants to address those?
- What examples could be included in appendix b?

Reflection on Fall Business Meeting

Tara shared about the discussion on self-reflection. She noticed that faculty had different ideas about what self-reflection was. Some mentioned they thought of it in a negative sense, that it was based on reflecting on emotions. However, Tara shared that her perspective is more positive and centers around reflecting on performance. She noted the need for a clear definition.

Angela mentioned that they are developing twelve new questions for self-reflection. Faculty could select four questions from this list and Angela noted that OPA allows departments to

customize the questions used in Digital Measures. Angela shared that her department is moving forward in this process. They formed a committee that defined teaching excellence, they created new self-reflection questions, and they developed three documents for peer observation. Her department plans to vote to make these components part of their teaching plan. Angela used the framework shared by Ginger Clark at the ATLC.

Courtney was pleased with the engagement at the meeting this year. She plans to talk with Lisa Low, who is chairing the committee for defining teaching excellence, to make a plan to moving forward in the spring.

Dom shared about the discussion on peer reviews. He noted the lack of training for faculty on peer evaluations of teaching. He also noticed that faculty viewed online evaluations differently from face-to-face evaluations. Someone in the discussion group had concerns about mandatory evaluations and preferred that those remain voluntary.

Recognizing Texas Tech Teachers

Susan shared that she hasn't been able to move forward on this project. Susan and Tara want to continue to work on this initiative and Courtney mentioned opening applications for an award similar to the Diamond Award from the spring. Susan would like to create a call for submissions so other faculty can contribute to this project in their own ways. Dom mentioned that the President and Provost should be made aware of this project since this relates to mental health of faculty.

Provost's Council

Courtney mentioned that the top item discussed in the October Provost's Council was concern for the mental health of everyone on TTU campus, and more specifically for students. Courtney asked the council how the Teaching Academy could support faculty and students through this time of burnout and disengagement. Angela mentioned that Katie Langford and Rob Stewart are both on this committee to address mental health. Dom mentioned that faculty were again given the option to move to a hybrid format and that more students choose online when it's made an option. Tara noted that the student disengagement crisis poses logistical challenges in regards to grades. Courtney mentioned the idea of hosting a workshop that could give faculty strategies on how to adjust assignments and to help students who are disengaging. Tara also mentioned sharing existing resources with faculty. Feruzan shared that faculty are also overwhelmed and may need advice for their own mental health, not just their students. Susan agreed and suggested talking about both student and faculty mental health in a workshop or even having two separate workshops. Mitzi offered to coordinate a workshop to discuss faculty burnout, similar to the one she and Suzanne led last year. Dom noted that students who started college last year grew accustomed to learning online and are not sure what to do now that everything is back face-to-face or hybrid. He suggested designing workshops specific to faculty titles.

Announcements

-The Lawrence Schovanec Teaching Development Scholarships applications are now open, and the due date is November 12th.

-The Departmental Excellence in Teaching Award applications will open on Friday, November 5th.

Provost's Council Meeting Notes- October 20, 2021

1. Mental health of faculty, staff, and students
 - Administration has appointed a committee to address these issues; chaired by Rob Stewart
2. Eileen Gioniodis, newly hired staff member in the Provost's Office
3. Pandemic Relief State Funding
 - Of the \$16.3 billion remaining from COVID relief funds from the state of TX, Texas Tech received \$72 million in tuition funding and \$50 million in institutional enhancement funds which will be used for preparation for AAU membership, academic excellence, student success, and research impact
 - Funding for about 13 new faculty positions – Joe Heppert introduced strategic plan for identifying these positions
4. Issues across campus with renovating facilities and modifying spaces for new faculty – pandemic-related lack of stock and back ordered materials – Advised to prepare far in advance for any needed renovations
5. Student Disengagement
 - Cathy Duran: Issues seem related to personal issues – students are in crisis, are asking for help and notifying professors – Student of Concern report have doubled over the past two weeks; possibly an additional probation period and need for basic mental health resources urgently needed for students
 - Provost Hendrick: There is a team working on actionable items; ideas due before winter break

Adjourn:

Courtney adjourned the meeting.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Molly Jacobs.