

Teaching Academy Executive Council Minutes September 24, 2021

Members Present:

Courtney Meyers, Dominick Casadonte, Patrick Hughes, Tara Stevens, Susan Tomlinson, Nancy Soonpaa, Karen Alexander, Feruzan Irani Williams, Suzanne Tapp

Members Not Present:

Ali Duffy, Angela Lumpkin, Mitzi Ziegner, Lisa Garner Santa

Approval of Minutes:

Dom moved to approve the minutes from August 27, 2021; Suzanne seconded. The council approved.

Departmental Excellence in Teaching Award Committee Update

Kirsten Cook, the DETA selection committee chair, joined the council to give a report of the committee's work to update the voting protocol. He gave an overview of the questions brought to the council last year and the changes that were approved. He brought up two proposed changes that still need approval. The first is that item 7 should be broken into three subitems because it addresses three different awards. The second is the weighting of the application materials. The committee had varying perspectives on how heavily the use of funds should be weighed. They proposed 50% for the narrative and 50% for Appendices A and B combined. This will allow for flexibility so that each committee member can decide the value of the use of funds since it is included in the narrative. Kirsten also proposed language regarding diversity, equity, and inclusion to add to the criteria. Tara suggested that the statement needs to be refined to fit in with the other criteria. Dom shared concern about the wording of the statement giving some departments an advantage over others. Patrick and Karen agreed and stated that the wording should be adjusted to allow for the unique structures of varying departments. Patrick suggested looking into increasing the award money. Courtney asked if there was an OP for DETA that would need to be updated. Dom responded that there is not an OP that includes the criteria. The council agreed with the proposed changes but decided to wait to vote in October after everyone had more time to consider the changes.

Fall Business Meeting

Suzanne, Patrick, Nancy, and Dom volunteered to lead breakout rooms at the fall business meeting. There will be three groups based off responses from three topics Courtney outlined in a recent survey about teaching evaluation

Recognizing Texas Tech Teachers

Susan shared that she and Tara wanted to find a way to show support for faculty during COVID. The goal is to highlight and recognize in a positive way what teachers have done, either in their personal lives or the classroom. Susan and Tara would like to create an archive of stories to act as a time capsule and are considering written and oral formats. Suzanne mentioned a "Humans of New York" format and the possibility of adding photos with the stories. Dom mentioned doing it

in an interview style, similar to “StoryCorps” format. He also suggested starting with the Diamond Award nominees.

Courtney asked Susan to put together a proposal and develop a committee to work on this project. Susan said she would reach out to TTU Press as well. Tara mentioned appealing to the academic angle of keeping an oral or written history to draw more interest.

Courtney asked to continue the Diamond Award in some form. She would like to have a similar award for faculty that isn’t necessarily related to COVID but that recognizes excellent teaching in a way that is non-evaluative. Dom agreed and liked the idea of a real time award. Susan noted that faculty could be recognized with the award in class to make it more public.

Updates

Courtney gave updates about the upcoming events:

- Burns Conference- September 30th, 3:30-5:00 and October 1st, 10:30-12:00
- Chancellor’s Council Distinguished Teaching Award selection meeting on October 22nd from 1:00-2:00
- DETA Virtual Information Sessions- September 22nd at 10:00 and October 7th at 2:00.
- New Member Virtual Information Sessions- October 18th at 12:00 and February 3rd at 2:00.

Provost Council Meeting Notes

Sept. 21, 2021

COVID update

Dr. David Edwards shared an update about COVID-19 for the Texas Tech Community. Some of the key points he shared were:

- Hospitals and ICUs are full. Many patients with COVID pneumonia are in their 30s and 40s. Over 95% of those at UMC were not vaccinated.
- The positivity rate for testing on campus has declined from 35-40% to 13% in the recent week.
- Continue to have contact tracing for those reported in the Texas Tech system
- Share an update regarding the recent FDA decision regarding booster shots. Recommended for those 65 and older. The CDC advisory committee is recommending a 3rd dose for those in certain careers such as healthcare workers and teachers. The recommendation regarding teachers may impact the Texas Tech community.
- He noted that vaccine hesitancy remains a concern but emphasized that having the vaccine will provide more protection than just having recovered from COVID. It’s still important for people to be vaccinated. Those aged 18-29 have the lowest vaccination rate.
- Testing at Texas Tech will switch from TDEM to Curative starting Monday, Sept. 27. The testing will be at Sam’s Poolside near the Leisure Pool. This will be available for all students and faculty/staff. It is a self-collected nasal swab test with results in 24-48 hours.

Raiders Safety - Noel Sloan

Noel shared that September is campus safety awareness month. She has a committee working on achieving three goals in a number of ways.

Goals:

- Promote and embrace shared responsibility.
- Create a safe campus for all of our community

- Consider all dimensions of safety (mental and physical)

Tenure Clock Extensions

Dr. Rob Stewart discussed the topic of potential tenure clock extensions due to COVID-19. These have been done in the past and he gathered input about whether these should be granted for another year.

Key points:

- Faculty members can propose another year extension even if they received one last year.
- The extension is not required; individual faculty can decide if it is necessary and will complete the request process.
- Will work on messaging to send to departments about how to consider the packets when they may have an extra year (or two) in the review materials.
- Need to clarify that this can be taken in addition to pausing the tenure clock for maternity and/or FMLA leave.
- Dr. Hendrick said this would not be an either/or if they had maternity or FMLA leave. They could still do that and the tenure clock extension.

Some remaining questions:

- How does this work with continuing appointment?
- Does this relate to situations of 3rd year review where they were not given a positive review. Does this extend the opportunity for development?
- Can someone in the middle of the review process right now decide to take this additional time?
- How might this impact timelines for 3rd year review?
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Enrollment Growth

40,666 – another record year, increase in graduate enrollment

Largest freshmen class ever enrolled at TTU

- Most academically talented group
- Increased first-generation college students
 - Freshmen class has 1,991 FGC students out of 6,677 (29%)
- Increased percent of Pell eligible students

Transfer student numbers have declined, but this is a nationwide trend and something they expected.

It was stated that this is a larger class and more at-risk so we need to work on retaining these students

Final Comments

Dr. Hendrick said some messages on alternative and social media are not accurate – seems to be related to DEI efforts.

Adjourn:

Patrick moved to adjourn the meeting; Karen seconded. The meeting adjourned.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Molly Jacobs.