

College Council Minutes

9 October 2007

12:00 P.M.

Present: Dr. Melynda Nuss; Dr. Joel Pagan; Dr. Dahlia Guerra; Dr. Peter Dabowski; Ms. Sylvia G. Castro; Dr. Dave Martinez; Dr. Virginia Davis; Dr. Jeff McQuillen; Dr. Aje-Ori Agbese; Dr. Caroline Miles; Dr. Mónica Díaz; Dr. Rebeckah Hamilton; Dr. Stella Behar; Dr. Amy Hay; Dr. Chris Keller; Dr. Carrie Hoffman Spell; Dr. Nalda Báez; Dr. Dan Knight.

Visitors Present: Dr. Danika Brown; Dr. Michael Weaver.

I. Missie Hernandez spoke concerning the COAH Major's Fair, which will be held Thursday 1 November 2007 from 11:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. A Major's Fair Committee is forming to ensure that the college is adequately represented. Each department is asked to supply one faculty member to represent it during each hour of the COAH Major's Fair. The COAH has 6 departments to represent and will receive 3 tables at the Major's Fair. Council members discussed whether additional tables could be obtained for the college departments as well as a table for student organizations.

II. Election Results: New Members. Dr. Nuss introduced new representatives: Dr. Amy Hay, representing the Faculty Senate; Dr. Aje-Ori Agbese, representing Business Affairs; Ms. Sylvia Castro and Mr. Jose Canales, student representatives; Dr. Carrie Hoffman, Non-Voting Faculty Representative; Ms. Maria Rios, staff representative; and Dr. Nalda Báez, adjunct faculty representative. She also noted that Dr. Mónica Díaz has been elected Chair Elect. Rolando Serena, Graduate Student Representative, was absent.

III. Old Business.

a. Dr. Nuss reminded members to ask their departmental chairs to make space for College Council reports as a regular part of faculty meeting agendas.

b. Dr. Nuss announced that the College Council will receive feedback on the implementation of the COAH Merit Policy. Feedback may be received verbally through informal discussions, but important concerns should be noted and presented to the College Council.

c. The Council will renew its initiative to have all departments update their handbooks (or create handbooks where they do not currently exist). Communications and History and Philosophy have both updated their departmental handbooks. The English Department is in the process of updating its handbook, and History and Philosophy is developing minor policy amendments to reflect the creation of an Assistant Chair's position and of specific program coordinator positions. Representatives from Art, Music, and Modern Languages were asked to determine the status of their departmental handbooks.

d. Open Forum for Discussion of the Flexible Core. The College Council is sponsoring one forum on Wednesday 10 October and another on Thursday 11 October. At these meetings, Dr. Greg Gilson (and possibly Dr. Ed Cameron or Dr. Stella Behar) will be on hand to provide background information about the history and development of the current proposal. Dr. Danika Brown noted that the final vote will, however, be whether to accept or oppose the proposal as it is, not whether to modify it in any way.

IV. Dean Guerra's Remarks.

Dr. Nuss then introduced Dr. Dahlia Guerra, Dean of the College of Arts and Humanities, who spoke to the College Council about college goals for the 2007-2008 academic year (and beyond). Dr. Guerra first spoke about three issues concerning the entire university: the mandated University of Texas system requirement that degree plans be reduced to 120 hours; Provost Sale's plan to compare tenure and merit policies and procedures across the university in the hope of making them more uniform; and the call for new on-line courses, proposals for which must be submitted on the required template by 15 October. Dr. Guerra then addressed her goals for the college. Her remarks covered many issues, among them the following: to create a community of collegiality; to promote a student-centered learning and research environment; to recruit outstanding new faculty members to meet our projected growth; to enhance opportunities for international study and exchange; to expand the college's graduate programs; to promote research and development; to create new programs; and to "market" the college and its programs within the university and the wider community.

Dr. Guerra elaborated upon each main goal, discussing actions already taken to meet those goals as well as future plans. These will be briefly summarized below.

1. Creating a Community of Collegiality. The college promotes shared and transparent governance. The College Council plays an important role in linking individual departments with the college administration. Programs have been introduced to create faculty mentors for new faculty. All college departments have been encouraged to update or create departmental handbooks. Plans are under way for a series of brown bag luncheons within the college. Thus far, several departmental open houses have occurred, and plans are under way for three more during the 2007-2008 year. The first, sponsored by the Music Department, will occur on 8 November from 5-7 p.m. The second, sponsored by the History and Philosophy Department, will occur on 21 February from 5-7 p.m. The third, sponsored by Modern Languages Department, will occur on 3 April from 5-7 p.m. Each will be followed by a concert at 8:00 p.m. During the open houses, each department will present a brief program about its activities followed by a faculty social.

2. Promoting a Student-Centered Research and Learning Environment. Thus far the College has sponsored or is planning academic conferences and competitions. Faculty members are encouraged to conduct research and to present that research at academic meetings and to publish it in academic journals; news of presentations and publications

may be posted on the college website. Faculty are also encouraged to collaborate with graduate and under-graduate students, introducing them to research methods and encouraging them to pursue publication of outstanding work.

3. Recruiting New Faculty to Meet our Growth. A university-wide initiative is under way to recruit well qualified faculty to meet the expanding number of students taught at The University of Texas – Pan American. Several departments within the College are currently conducting searches to fill a number of vacancies and newly created positions. One position particularly noted by Dr. Guerra is a newly planned digital performing arts position.

4. Promoting International Experience and Outreach. Many COAH faculty take part in programs sponsored by the Office of International Programs and take students throughout the world. The College will be well-represented during International Week in November, and a trip to the Forum in Monterrey is planned for 27 – 29 October.

5. Expanding our Graduate Programs. Graduate enrollment increased 28% this year. A graduate recruitment fair will be held in February and a graduate student research conference in April 2008.

6. Promoting Faculty Research and Development. Faculty members are encouraged to pursue external funding for research projects, and the college now has a grant writer, Tony Casas, in residence. The number of external funding proposals submitted by the college doubled in 2006-2007 from 10 to 20; several of these have received grants, among them proposals initiated by Dr. Glenn Martinez, Dr. Mark Noe, and Dr. Sonia Hernandez.

7. New Program Developments. Several new minors and on-line programs (including an on-line M.A. in E.S.L.) have been created, among them an interdisciplinary minor in Hispanic Media.

8. Marketing the College. A variety of initiatives are under way to publicize the college and to build stronger links between the college and the wider community. These include the following: establishing a television studio that would showcase talent within the college; building FESTIBA into an event as widely publicized and attended as HESTEC; establishing a South Texas Cultural Center; possibly recruiting a major historical association to our campus; and promoting service-learning opportunities. A College Calendar has been created, and, as previously noted, a college website now exists to detail college activities. Dr. Guerra provided additional details on plans for FESTIBA (to be held 24 – 29 March 2008); for the South Texas Cultural Center; and for service-learning programs. Dr. Guerra also noted that she was meeting shortly with Congressman Hinojosa to discuss his initiative to promote reading.

Following Dr. Guerra's remarks, the floor was opened for questions. Dr. Mónica Díaz asked what, from Dr. Guerra's perspective, the College Council should be doing. Dr. Guerra indicated that the council should act as a liaison and support system, linking

together individual departments and fostering communication both horizontally and vertically within the college. Dr. Guerra then asked what she could do to assist the College Council. Suggestions included reminding departmental chairs to include College Council Reports on their agenda; informing the College Council of pertinent issues discussed within the Council of Deans; and distributing information about how many departmental programs are above the newly designated 120-hour limit.

IV. The meeting adjourned at 1:00 p.m. Discussion of evaluating the Dean, Assistant Dean, and Associate Dean, and of reviewing the College Governance Policy, was put off until the November meeting.