

McLennan Community College

Faculty Council 2019-2020

MEETING DATE: The McLennan Community College Faculty Council met Friday, 3/6. President Ashley Cruseturner called the meeting to order at 10:32 a.m.

LOCATION: MAC 304

ATTENDEES: Amber Bracken, Andrew Clayton, Anna Iushchenko, Anne Merchant, Bob Ammon, Bonnie Sneed, Brian Johnson, Cynthia Wagner, Daelynn Copeland, Deanna Robinson, Debbie Williams, Deborah Focarile, Dennis Clark, Gail Woodward, Holly Towns, Ivanna Campbell, Jarred Hankhouse, Jim Terry, John Seawright, Justin Lawson, Kim McCoy, Larry Salazar, Michael White, Otsmar Villarroel, Paula Unger, Stacy Kuehn, Susan Spooner, and Yolanda Gonzalez

ABSENT MEMBERS: Amber Leibold, Amy Winslow, Bailey Cole, Helen Moore, Jessica Zbeida, Kelly Parker, Linda Ratliff, Marighny Dutton, Michele Davis, Scott Bryant, and Tammy Thompson

GUESTS: Laura Wichman, Director, Institutional Research, Jeff Martin-Moreno, Research Analyst, and Dr. Phil Rhodes, Vice President of Research, Effectiveness, and Information Technology; Dr. Fred Hill, Vice President of Instruction

MEETING MINUTES

- **ISSUE:** Call to order // The FCP called the meeting to order and thanked FC members for attending.

DISCUSSION: The FCP kicked off the meeting by speaking to the need for trust and trustworthiness. Referencing a recent book by Yuval Levin asserting a collapse of contemporary social institutions in our world, the FCP remembered a time in which he trusted Walter Cronkite without hesitation. This is not how most Americans perceive journalism anymore. Journalism today appears splintered into partisan, subjective, and agenda-driven camps. Levin offers journalism as an example of an institution not delivering on its promises (objective presentations of fact-driven news and information). And many observers worry that the institution of education cannot be fully trusted either. In response to this skepticism, perhaps we should ask ourselves if we (the college) are keeping our promises to our community. We produce people. Can our community trust us to

produce people ready to meet the needs of our businesses, schools, and other facilities? “What does a degree from MCC represent to our community? Is it meaningful? Are we promising the right things? Are we even aware of what we are promising? Are we delivering?” We must hold ourselves to high standards and constantly question whether we are meeting them. His encouragement to accept and live up to this trust served as a fitting introduction to the discussion of the QEP (Quality Enhancement Plan). “Godspeed to our IR colleagues who help us measure our progress in living up to our promises.”

- **ISSUE** Laura Wichman, Director, Institutional Research, Jeff Martin-Moreno, Research Analyst, and Dr. Phil Rhodes, Vice President of Research, Effectiveness, and Information Technology. QEP Topic Discussion

DISCUSSION: Laura introduced the process of QEP for MCC (slideshow available upon request). She reminded members that the last QEP was LEAP – the Learning Enhancement Adaptability Project. As an institution, we made great strides in that period. It is now time for a new QEP.

Laura then began discussing our student success metrics – course completion, developmental course completion, retention, and graduation. She presented the standard questions to consider when evaluating these areas:

- Is this an issue?
- Can we do better?
- What specific things (that we can control) can we change?
- Are there other issues we need to consider?

She added that online courses overall have lower success rates than F2F classes, including higher withdrawal rates. In fact, some students in F2F and/or online classes earn zero credits! This is concerning and an issue that needs to be addressed. Year-to-year retention for first time in college (FTIC) students is lower than expected and desired. In addition, the students who receive Pell who have earned no credits are twice that of non-Pell students (about 9 percent vs. 18 percent; for more information on this go to the Pell Institute website, which publishes valuable national data). College-ready students are earning more credits than those who are not college ready (not college ready = must take developmental courses). On the upside, more students are starting MCC college ready than in the past, which has been slowly increasing since 2015. VPIR Phil Rhodes interjected a macro-analysis comment that he thinks this change is happening because high schools are taking college readiness more seriously. Laura noted that how high schools define “college ready”

is not the same as how we define “college ready.” As we might expect, students with lower developmental needs earn more credits than those who have more development needs. When analyzing data on students who have developmental needs, a larger percentage are successfully completing their remediation during their first year at MCC, and this has been increasing since 2013.

Laura introduced retention and graduation data (her favorite!) to show our FTIC rate, which is steadily improving. The ultimate goal is to have our initial retention rate at 86 percent and our graduation rate at 60 percent. Examining the data by gender and ethnicity, there are significant differences between categories. Retention among Hispanic male and female students improves steadily. Rates for African American males continue to lag.

ACTION: Contact Laura Wichman or other IR staff if you have questions about student data.

- **ISSUE:** Updates on proctoring RFP, PD protocols, evaluation matters, 8 weeks, and adjunct colleagues

DISCUSSION: The FCP reported that the proctoring RFP (request for proposal) is moving forward. Jodi Tindell, Director of Purchasing and Auxiliary Services, received all the RFPs and our ad hoc committee of FC and other stakeholders are reviewing them. The FCVP reported that a soft launch is scheduled for this summer with a full rollout envisioned for fall. He and the FCP stressed that the college is currently treating this matter very seriously and we are definitely making progress. **UPDATE:** In the aftermath of our COVID-19 protocols, the college revisited proctoring solutions with heightened enthusiasm. Elaine Fagner, FCVP, and FCP met repeatedly with principals including Dean of A&S Chad Eggleston (the VPI’s appointed liaison on this matter), IT, CTL, Jodi Tindell, Paul Hoffman, Natalie James, and VPs Hills and Canham. Using information gleaned from the RFP and a post-event faculty survey, the college entered into a new short-term agreement with Proctor U. We continue to monitor the situation for short-term fixes as well as a long-term solutions.

The FCP addressed PD protocols and expressed gratitude to FC member and librarian Gail Woodward for offering improvements to the policy language as well as the guidance to the policy. Language changes to the policy are referred to the Policy Committee. We expect to recommend those changes at the next FC meeting in April. Suggested changes to our guidance document are accepted and implemented. **UPDATE:** Huge Kudos to our VPI and Deans, who will credit our work over the past two weeks (as well as our ongoing efforts) to transform our classes and serve our students online as FULL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMPLIANCE FOR ACADEMIC YEAR 2019-2020. Stay tuned for

details on how to file for this credit.

The FCP stated that Evaluation Matters continues to be organized and updated by FC members Amber Bracken and Jessica Zbeida, and they are doing a great job. The process is going well.

The FCP said that the evaluation of 8-week classes and related processes continue to be reviewed and tweaked. Improvements should be in place before the fall semester begins. He affirmed that administration is committed to making everything better and that many issues arose that had not been anticipated.

The FCP addressed changing the number of times adjuncts are paid during long semesters and reported on a productive conversation with the President about this matter. He is optimistic that with more review, these problems will be addressed. He affirmed the FCVP felt the same way.

ACTION: Stay tuned for updates on all of these issues.

- **ISSUE:** Workforce Advising Task Force

DISCUSSION: According to the FCP, this issue has received lots of attention and hard work, and we are on track for solutions. Important changes are on the horizon. FC helped to establish a new committee to address WF concerns. Tamara Culver, criminal justice professor and program director, agreed to lead this task force. Other members will include Paul Hoffman, other student support personnel, various program directors, and other WF faculty. He reported that Tamara will be focusing on solutions to persistent WF advising issues. Tamara plans to work on this over the summer and will present the findings before the 2020 winter break. The FCP added that there is a great desire for the WF committee to be a standing committee and that faculty will have the opportunity to vote on it this spring.

ACTION: Vote on this latter issue when you receive the email ballot.

- **ISSUE:** Policy Committee – Attendance and Drop Policy Discussion

DISCUSSION: The FCP reported that many faculty members have been reviewing the attendance policy survey results and discussing them with their colleagues. He expressed a desire to develop a new attendance policy today. The Attendance Policy Committee chair reported that the policy was rewritten to reflect the positions conveyed in the survey responses (see attached Power Point slide, courtesy of Andrew Clayton).

FC member and last year's FCP Andrew Clayton reported on last week's meeting of the

Faculty Council Student Services Liaison Committee. He said that two major goals emerged from the faculty responses: 1) To withdraw students who never attend class BEFORE the census date, which will be designated on the transcript as a W; and 2) After the census date, an Fx designation would be given to students who have not attended at least 60%, which will be assigned toward the end of the semester. The FCP said that after a discussion with Herman Tucker, FC strongly recommended that students must agree to terms and conditions as a requirement for withdrawal in order to demonstrate they understand what they are doing. He also specified that students will not be dropping themselves –faculty will still process the drop.

The FCP affirmed that the most important part of this change – *the slam dunk* – is that students will understand what they are doing when they withdraw from a class. That is, they will understand the larger repercussions of their actions.

After much discussion, due to time constraints, FC decided to postpone any vote until the next meeting but voiced a consensus on four items:

- Attendance Policy Consensus #1: **Faculty will withdraw all non-attending students from their courses before the Census Date each term.** The exact deadline for the withdrawal will be determined at a later date.
- Attendance Policy Consensus #2: **Students, in consultation with their instructor, will be completely responsible for withdrawals after the Census Date.** It will no longer be the job of the instructor to drop students for non-attendance. While the instructors will continue to execute the drop mechanically via WebAdvisor, actual drop decisions will be the product of student initiative in consultation with their resources such as academic advisors, their instructors, and a digital confirmation that the student viewed, understood, and agreed to the ramifications of withdrawal.
- Attendance Policy Consensus #3: **Students who permanently stop attending class at any point in the semester after the Census Date will receive an Fx for the course.** Faculty may still use discretion in determining whether a student who has missed more than 25% of a class deserves an F for the course.
- Attendance Policy Consensus #4: **Faculty will designate students Fx in WebAdvisor sometime after the 60 percent mark but at least two weeks before the end of the regular semester** so as not to create a deluge of Fx calculations for the Financial Aid Office at the end of semester deadline.

The Attendance Policy Committee will be meeting one more time before the new policy is

finalized.

ACTION: Please review these points of agreement and make sure your constituents are on board.

- **ISSUE:** Compensation Committee

DISCUSSION: The FCP submitted the Compensation Committee's report to the FC, which is requesting a 2.9% COLA (cost of living adjustment) increase for the 2020-21 academic year. An FC member seconded the motion and then the FC supported the report unanimously. **UPDATE:** FCP requests we reconsider this action. Before he sends this report on to the VPI, the FCP asks that you confirm with your constituents that this action reflects our post-COVID-19 sentiments.

ACTION: None at this time. **UPDATE:** Please poll your constituents on this issue.

- **ISSUE:** Bookstore Committee

DISCUSSION: This committee didn't meet in February because TCCTA conflicted with their meeting. They will report to FC at the April meeting.

ACTION: None at this time.

- **ISSUE:** Elections Committee

DISCUSSION: The chair of the Elections Committee stated that this committee's next meeting is 4/3.

ACTION: Be on the lookout for the election ballot email in April.

- **ISSUE (NEW):** Shredding Bins (Andrew)

DISCUSSION: Andrew Clayton asked the VPI for shredding bins to be added at various locations on campus so that faculty do not have to store exams and papers until Shred Day.

ACTION: Dr. Hills will be taking this into consideration, so stay tuned for more updates.

- **ISSUE: Question Time with the VPI.** Vice President of Instruction Dr. Fred Hills answers your questions.

DISCUSSION: Dr. Fred Hills opened his presentation addressing COVID 19 and the local health worries. He is extremely concerned about student trips and their safety. He wants to be judicious and plan well so that they will be able to return to campus. Trips are not being randomly cancelled and all concerns are being considered. The Spanish trip to Costa Rica was cancelled because of the potential hazards. Administrators are prioritizing the health and safety of students, faculty, staff, and the community. The Leadership Team is following all of this information closely. They are committed to not overreacting but they are also committed to being on top of all the latest information and acting wisely and decisively.

Next, the VPI addressed the issue of 8-week classes; about 30 percent of our students are enrolled in at least one 8-week class. He stressed that this is still a work in progress and is being tweaked we gain more experience.

A FC member asked about the Insight system and reported that a recent experience with it was confusing and problematic. He asked if a different system would be more effective. Other faculty members reported successes with Insight. Dr. Hills stated that the school will be adopting a new system in about a year called Slate. This system should be a big improvement. They are working to make Insight as user friendly as possible in the meantime.

A FC member stated that in discussions with many other faculty members across campus, many need more details about inclusive access with textbooks before committing to go that route. Dr. Hills responded that a pilot will be run this summer, which should help to eliminate any unintended problems. Dr. Eggleston is leading this charge. Dr. Hills stressed that administration is not promoting the adoption of cheap books just because they are cheap. Quality is still extremely important and that for some classes, inclusive access is not a reasonable option. The college supports the option that is best for your department and takes into consideration what is best for students.

The FCVP asked which study abroad trips have been cancelled. Dr. Hills reported that at this point only three have been retracted – the engineering Italy trip, the Australia trip, and the Costa Rica trip.

An FC member asked about INRW and inclusive access. Overall, about 99 percent of those who teach these sections are adjuncts, and she wondered how this would affect them. Dr. Hills promised to look into the matter.

An FC member asked Dr. Hills about the number of commercials that are being added to YouTube and the expense of the premium subscriptions. She wondered if it would be

possible to get educational accounts for the school to save on these expenses. Dr. Hills said that he would look into this.

An FC member asked about increasing the length of time that desktop and classroom computers “go to sleep.” The FCP reminded FC that Mike Searight promised us when he addressed us in November that he would look into resetting the sleep default (which he did). The FCP noted that the computer had not gone to sleep in the thirty minutes VPI Hills had been speaking (but he could not vouch for all the faculty in that same interval). Dr. Hills said that he would discuss this request with Mike Searight.

ACTION: Bring any questions you may have about any campus issues to your FC representatives.

The FCP adjourned the meeting at 12:30 pm. | Next Meeting of Faculty Council: April 3

Paula Unger, Faculty Council Secretary

Abbreviations: FC = Faculty Council | FCP = Faculty Council President | FCVP = Faculty Council Vice President