

Faculty Meeting 14 April 2020

Meeting held via Zoom.

Attendance: Tiffany Culver, Dan Foley, Edison Moura, Sam Garcia, Maria Gear, Thomas Matula, Miriam Muniz, Michael Ortiz, Sarah Roche, Gina Stocks, Audrey Taylor, Wesley Wynne, Kevin Young.

Called to order: 3:40 PM

Approval of Minutes

- Motion to approve, seconded. Carried unanimously.

Old Business

Adjunct pay issue: Would like it raised to competitive levels. We believe there has not been raised in a decade, meaning effectively we have been getting paid less and less each year for summer classes.

New Business

COVID-19 Response

- Ortiz: I have heard back from several regarding how things are going. It sounds like people have made use of the support through Sam Houston State University, and I have heard good things. How well have you been able to adapt? Your students? What should we be doing differently? Open discussion.
I'm teaching 6 classes, which is a lot. I am using Zoom. It has been pretty seamless – in some ways better than the classroom (not because Zoom is awesome, but because we have big problems in the classroom).
- A: (1) Some universities are getting ready to hold fall classes online. It seems a real possibility. What is the university doing or thinking about doing for students without laptops or without internet? I have had trouble with students having to write an essay on their phone. I cannot require the students, who thought they would have access to computer labs, to write on a computer. I have a number of students not doing well because they lack equipment. We do not have a good long-term solution.
- B: Most have a cell phone available.
- A: True, but writing on a phone is not a solution.
- B: But if they can afford an expensive phone, why not a cheap laptop?
- C: I had one student who dropped because of technology limitations.
- D: The bookstore might be able to help, providing laptops in a financed fashion.

- E: We also have to consider that they may have childcare needs. It is not simple.
- F: We need to publicize sooner rather than later regarding how fall semester will be handled.
- A: They did say they are preparing for fall to be in person, but it is very unpredictable.
- Ortiz: This semester we just had to do whatever we could to make it work, but going forward we may need to set clear expectations. It sounds like everyone is doing all kinds of different things. I don't see how it is sustainable.
- D: Being on distance ed committee, we have wrestled with minimum requirements for distance ed. There is a statement for online courses, but we are revisiting it.
- Ortiz: One thing with a teleconference vs online is that I have them for a set time and can expect them to be together at that time. With online the expectations of being there at a certain time are relaxed.
- F: Summer has already been decided – it will be all online. We will not be utilizing the campuses over the summer.
- A: For the education folks, are we getting an extension from the certification board people? We were on probation for accreditation.
- G: No, everything is due May 31. The things they are asking us to do are mainly documents. We are not able to improve upon our pass rate right now because the testing companies are not testing. We are not sure how long that will be in effect.
- H: One student is in Mexico without internet, and that is an issue.
- G: I am having success in Zoom, some things better than teleconference. I am getting a lot of participation. I am able to manage it with my students. My undergrads want to meet two days per week. It is a connection to the outside world.
- E: I like that their names are there in Zoom so I can call on them individually. The only thing I had to totally revamp was my assessments – I am using essay-only now.
- A: At least half of my students have mentioned that technology limitations are making it difficult. I have not been able to hold live discussions, because so many students could not participate.
- J: I have not used Zoom – just transitioned to Blackboard discussions. I have had a handful of students with serious technology issues. I think by the time summer comes we can probably find ways to help the students who are having problems.
- D: Do we want to invest more money into teleconference equipment if Zoom might be a better way to connect?
- Ortiz: Before the apocalypse, I heard from Dr. Kibler that they were looking at getting large sums of money for each campus. But he has also floated the idea of transitioning to using Zoom more than traditional classrooms. I personally feel like it is not a replacement – I still want a real campus – but it is something to think about. What we are doing now in response to a crisis has been floated as an idea for what we should be doing permanently. If we want to push for a campus with actual resources for students, now is the time for us to think about why we need things like that.
- D: Also think about hybrid classes where you may meet only once or twice per semester in person.

- K: My big concern is our students getting short-shrift. Other universities aren't going to transition to online-only in the future. It deprives students of the college experience. To be honest, I'm impressed hearing about the success some of you are having. I also worried that demands on students would not let them attend. I have one class in EP I was concerned about and did not go the route of having them show up at a specific time using Zoom, but it sounds like you are not having too many problems.
- Ortiz: I am having good success. Fortunately I have a little document camera I can use at home. I am uploading the class discussions to YouTube.
- G: I have had students say they appreciate having access to the course recordings. Some are going back and watching things multiple times to understand.
- Ortiz: Frankly, we ought to be able to offer recordings when we do teleconference.
- G: I use a headset, which really helps isolate my voice from background noises.
- F: I'm pretty sure the junior college loans out laptops. I have not heard anything about us loaning laptops.
- K: To be optimistic about potential trouble with expenses, you can get tremendous deals on used electronics at pawn shops.
- D: You can order refurbished computers from WalMart for less than \$200.
- K: We have always expected Pell Grants to cover education costs – maybe they can be applied to technology costs.
- D: Companies that provide services also partner with universities to provide discounts if we reach out to them.
- Ortiz: How has OIT support been for you all?
- J: I have wished students could get Blackboard support after 6 pm. They are highly stressed, caring for kids, sharing limited resources with their children, working, etc.
- K: Sam Houston will give 24/7 support starting in fall. George Hernandez has been very helpful. Two of my students have had trouble with online forms – they don't work well on their phones. I have notified George and admissions.
- E: We have never had a discussion about pass/fail option that many universities are doing, or eliminating final exams.
- Ortiz: I sent an email about things Dave Gibson was doing, such as improving wifi. He said there is money for our students. I will suggest to him purchasing laptops that students can borrow or rent or seeing if we can do this through SWTJC. I will also look specifically into overload pay. Anything else?
- K: We ought to verify there is a need for loaning laptops before purchasing them.
- C: I just forwarded a survey done on all campuses about student needs. Apparently the psychology faculty in Alpine were charged with putting together a survey. Take a look at it!
- Ortiz: Institutional Effectiveness is also sending out a survey.

Meeting adjourned at 4:27.