



PRAIRIE VIEW A&M UNIVERSITY

A Member of the Texas A&M University System

28 March 2014

Dear President Wright:

On 2/26/2014, two members of the Faculty Senate's Committee on Committees, Drs. Hooper (chair) and Nojeim, met with Provost Thomas-Smith to discuss several issues that had come to light as their committee gathered information on the University Academic Council as part of the its larger review of shared governance on campus. On almost every point of discussion, the provost expressed agreement with the senators and helped to develop a plan of action (outlined below) that the Faculty Senate asks that you consider for recommendation to the Office of Academic Affairs. This plan of action is designed to ensure that the PVAMU faculty are truly the stewards of the university's curriculum as mandated in SACS Accreditation Principle 3.4.10 ("The institution places primary responsibility for the content, quality, and effectiveness of the curriculum with its faculty"). The issues discussed with the provost were as follows:

- 1) The UAC bylaws stipulate that faculty representatives to the UAC may be either appointed by the dean or elected by the faculty of their respective colleges. The Faculty Senate believes that elections are more appropriate for representing the will of the faculty on the UAC and has offered to help the deans organize such elections.
- 2) The term limits mandated by the UAC bylaws are not currently being observed. The Faculty Senate believes that this limits the influx of faculty (and other) perspectives into the UAC as well as the outflow of curriculum expertise back into the various colleges.
- 3) The UAC bylaws establish a faculty majority on the Council (10 out of 18 seats), but there are currently two administrative members and one staff member on the Council whose seats are unaccounted for in the bylaws (see the full membership breakdown in the attached Appendix). This effectively removes the faculty majority on the UAC, which the Faculty Senate believes runs counter to the original intention of the UAC as a faculty-led governing body as well as to SACS Accreditation Principle 3.4.10.
- 4) Associate deans are currently allowed to serve as faculty representatives on the UAC even though the Dean's Council is provided with two seats of its own on the Council. The Faculty Senate believes that no one above the rank of Department Head should be allowed to represent the faculty on the UAC.
- 5) The Faculty Senate believes that the UAC minutes should be regularly posted online to ensure full transparency and the free flow of information and perspectives on curriculum issues.

ACTION PLAN

With the help of Provost Thomas-Smith, the Faculty Senate has put together a set of action proposals for the Senate itself and for the Office of Academic Affairs. Outlined below are the specific action proposals that we request you to recommend to the Office of Academic Affairs.

- 1) The Senate requests that the UAC refrain from considering any adjustment of its bylaws until its membership is brought into full compliance with the existing bylaws (see Issues 2, 3, and 4 above).
- 2) The Senate requests that the Office of Academic Affairs provide, on an annual basis, full membership and attendance records for the UAC. These records would be provided to the chair of the Senate's Committee on Committees to help that committee perform its function of ensuring that faculty interests are adequately represented on university governance bodies like the UAC. If the Dean's Council accepts the Senate's offer to organize annual elections for faculty representatives to the UAC, these records would need to be provided on a schedule that would allow for such elections to be adequately organized. They would also be shared with the Senate's Elections Committee.
- 3) The Senate requests that the Office of Academic Affairs take appropriate steps to ensure that the term limits outlined in the UAC bylaws are strictly observed. This should include informing current UAC members who are serving at the end of their term limit, or beyond, that their service will be concluded after the current academic year.
- 4) The Senate requests that the Office of Academic Affairs take immediate steps to ensure that those Council members whose positions are not explicitly accounted for in the UAC bylaws (see the attached Appendix) do not exercise a vote on any Council business after the current date (3/24/14).
- 5) The Senate requests that once the UAC, after its membership has been brought into full compliance with the existing bylaws, consider amending its bylaws to stipulate that no one above the rank of Department Head can serve as a faculty representative to the UAC.
- 6) The Senate requests that the Office of Academic Affairs take steps to provide for the posting of UAC minutes to its website by the end of the current academic year and on a monthly basis thereafter.

This action plan was formally adopted with an almost unanimous vote (only one vote against) by a Faculty Senate quorum on 3/21/14, and I present it to you in the hope that it will receive your full support moving forward.

With Sincere Gratitude and Respect,

Dr. Clement E. Glenn
Speaker of the Faculty Senate

APPENDIX: UAC Membership

Membership Breakdown According to Language Pulled Directly From UAC Bylaws:

The membership of the University Academic Council shall be constituted as follows:

- One member of the regular, full-time University faculty from each school/college **appointed by the dean or elected by the faculty at that college or school.**
 - 1) Agriculture and Human Science
 - 2) Arts & Sciences
 - 3) Juvenile Justice & Psychology
 - 4) Business
 - 5) Engineering
 - 6) Education
 - 7) Nursing
 - 8) Architecture
 - 9) University College
- One member of the regular, full-time University faculty who is a member of the Faculty Senate and who has been elected or appointed by that body to represent the Faculty Senate on the University Academic Council (UAC).
- The Director of Admissions. **[This position is currently unfilled on the UAC.]**
- Two student members to be elected annually by the Student Government Association;
- Two college deans to be elected by the Council of Deans.
- One professional staff member . . . to be appointed by the President from the staff of Student and Enrollment Services. **[This staff member serves as the co-chair of the UAC.]**
- A member-at-large to be appointed by the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs.
- The Associate Provost and Associate Provost for Academic Affairs. **[This administrator serves as the chair of the UAC.]**

Current Voting Members Unaccounted For in Bylaws:

- Dr. Don Byars, Associate Provost for Enrollment Management
- Dr. Kay Norman, Director of Diagnostic Testing and Disability Services, Office of Student Affairs
- Ms. Traci Chernosky, Professional Staff, Office of Academic Affairs

Observations:

The UAC bylaws specify a faculty majority of at least 10 out of 18 members (the member-at-large could be either faculty or non-faculty). Under current practice, the Director of Admissions is not included on the UAC but three non-faculty voting members are included contrary to the language in the bylaws. This brings the faculty representation to 10 out of 20 members, removing its majority on the Council.