Friday, November 22nd, 2024

Regular Meeting with Dr. Morrison Minutes

A regular meeting of the Executive Council of the Faculty Association of Trinity Valley Community College met in the conference room of the Athens Administration building with a call to order at 8:59 a.m. on Friday, November 22nd, 2024. The following were present:

- TVCC President Dr. Jason Morrison
- VP of Instruction Dr. Spencer Wagley
- VP of Student Services Tammy Denney
- Tom Sheram
- Jennifer Stephens
- Angel Ellis
- Sam Austin
- Valerie Holmes
- Jenny Cooper
- Deanna Frye
- Sam Smith

I. Faculty Workload/Time on Campus Policy

The need for faculty availability to meet the needs of students across campuses was emphasized. Discussions included equitable workload distribution, balancing faculty morale, and prioritizing student needs. Suggestions included defining the number of days required on campus and offering additional afternoon classes, potentially for sports cohorts. House Bill 8 highlights the importance of maximizing faculty availability. The board policy of 37.5 work hours per week was referenced, with a suggestion for at least 5 on-campus hours. AVPs are drafting updated policy language and will provide further updates.

II. Improve Chain of Command Communications

Concerns were raised about hosting speakers on campus, emphasizing the importance of balancing academic freedom with institutional policies as a state-funded college. Discussions included avoiding the perception of campaigning and ensuring events are conducted with decency, common sense, and without a call to action. The need for policy clarity on academic freedom was highlighted, referencing the Faculty Handbook and national guidelines. It was suggested that speakers present balanced perspectives to address fairness in publicly funded institutions. A recent freedom of information request related to these concerns was acknowledged, and further review of relevant policies is ongoing.

For more information:

TVCC - [Public Information (Open Records) Requests](#)

AAUP.org - [Center for the Defense of Academic Freedom](#)

III. Hiring Practices and Transparency

Transparency in hiring practices was discussed, specifically regarding the appointment of a new Vice President. It was clarified that the president has the authority to promote internal candidates who are the best fit for the position and align with the college's vision. The decision prioritized maintaining stability and building on the interim appointee's success. The process adhered to legal guidelines, and any further questions can be addressed directly. An apology was extended to anyone who felt affected by the decision.

IV. Uniform Process for Monitoring Athlete Attendance and Grades

Efforts are underway to address inconsistencies in how athletic teams track attendance and grades. Developing a uniform process will ensure consistency and fairness across all teams. Plans include working with coaches to understand their current methods and identifying a balanced, manageable approach. Suggestions included using an Excel spreadsheet, like the dual credit grade-check system, to streamline the process. Volunteers have committed to meeting with coaches and vice presidents to discuss and implement a standardized system.

V. Addressing Classroom Technology Needs

A need was identified for more electrical outlets or desks with built-in plugs in classrooms, as most students use electronic devices due to Inclusive Access or OER textbooks. It was noted that classroom furniture also needs updating. To address these concerns, a sampling of classrooms will be reviewed to assess power load and identify potential solutions, such as adding wall plugs, reconfiguring desks, or utilizing power boxes. Further evaluation and planning are ongoing.

VI. Developing a College Policy for AI Use

As AI tools become increasingly prevalent, the need for a college policy on their use has been identified. Discussions highlighted the importance of acknowledging AI's role in education while promoting responsible and ethical usage. Suggestions included incorporating AI education into the curriculum to teach students how to use it effectively. Volunteers will research policies from other institutions and collaborate to draft a policy tailored to the college's needs.

VII. Water Fountains with Bottle Filling Capabilities

Questions were raised about the installation timeline for water fountains with bottle-filling capabilities in the Tech Building and on the Terrell Campus. It was noted that these installations are being phased in and not completed all at once. If a fountain is not working properly, a work order should be submitted, and emergency replacements can be prioritized as needed.

VIII. Other Items

A clear definition of "HyFlex" is needed as soon as possible.

On Monday, the Department of Education will address an agenda item to finalize a settlement offer regarding issues dating back to 2017. The settlement includes a $3.9 million payback ($2.5 million miscalculation, $1.4 million for lack of communication, and $500,000 for an additional error). Advocacy efforts will continue to challenge provisional status, which has hindered progress. The settlement amount is viewed positively compared to potential alternatives.

Participation in the Caring Campus initiative was discussed. This program identifies standout individuals on campus and leverages their strengths to support others, fostering a positive culture and enhancing the educational experience.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:27 a.m.