



**Wednesday, February 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2023**

**Regular Meeting with Dr. Kristin Spizzirri**

**Minutes**

A regular meeting of the Executive Council of the Faculty Association (FA) of Trinity Valley Community College was held in the conference room of the Athens Administration building with a call to order at 1:05 p.m. on Wednesday, February 22nd, 2023. The following were present:

- TVCC Vice President of Instruction Kristin Spizzirri
- Jennifer Hannigan
- Tom Sheram
- Jennifer Stephens
- Regina Clary
- Angel Martinez-Ellis
- Craig Lee
- Mike Young

**I. Safety and Security**

FA discussed the importance of safety and security on campus and the need for more AED's throughout the various campuses, especially in highly populated areas. Dr. Spizzirri said review of all emergency devices and procedures is needed and the functionality of AED machines is above all the most important. She stated that with the approach of TVCC's 10-year accreditation, the need to have everything up to date and working is vital. Faculty emphasized the need for training in CPR, First Aid, AED use, and active shooter response.

**II. Dress code**

The current dress code was discussed, particularly a request to allow faculty members to wear dark-colored jeans. Dr. Spizzirri noted a policy change in dress code would need to come from Dr. King. Business casual is the current policy. The lack of enforcement throughout the different departments was brought up and discussed. Dr. Spizzirri agreed there are inconsistencies in how the dress code is being interpreted across departments, whether academic or staff-based, and that more consistency is needed to make sure current policies are being effectively enforced. There are faculty members, she noted, who need to have different dress code requirements because of their role, but that those exceptions should be clearly communicated.

### **III. Recruitment**

Discussion was had regarding TVCC's recruitment model. Faculty expressed concerns that other colleges have more prolific advertising through web and social media channels than TVCC, and how that lack may be affecting recruiting events. In addition, ways in which registration could be made easier were discussed. One idea placed on the table by FA was for campuses to host a registration event on a Saturday, where students could come and get all of their application and registration questions answered and sign up for courses.

Specifically, the need for specialized recruiters in areas such as Health Science was addressed. FA noted that program-specific recruiters could be highly effective in various areas. Within specialized programs, particularly Health Science, faculty members are often working long hours and so finding time to recruit in addition to regular duties is problematic. Spizzirri said the concept of adding recruiters had not been discussed, but that TVCC has recently aligned the recruiting process in an effort to maximize efficiency in the recruitment process. Any addition to the recruitment staff would need to come during the budget planning process as a request for additional personnel.

### **IV. Purchase Orders**

FA noted multiple requests, both for supplies and for travel, have not been approved in a timely manner. This has resulted in faculty either not being able to travel as planned or not being able to purchase needed supplies while a certain price was secured. Dr. Spizzirri stressed that if a purchase order isn't moving through the system the original requester should not hesitate to make phone calls to determine where the request has stalled. She emphasized that purchase orders should be completed/approved within a week, never longer. She also noted that the business office has a schedule of what days certain items are approved, and so FA requested purchase order request timelines be posted so faculty members know when to submit their request in order to get items approved in a timely manner.

### **V. Request for Survey Results**

FA requested the release of the November 2022 Employee Satisfaction Survey. Dr. Spizzirri noted the results would be released as of Thursday, March 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2023. The survey results will be public online through the Institutional Research website. A suggestion was made that faculty be informed by Human Resources when the webpage is updated and that survey is released.

## **VI. Weather Day Concerns**

FA relayed concerns about how communication was handled during the recent bad weather event. Dr. Spizzirri noted she is aware of the issue and how communication could be improved during future weather events. When bad weather happens in the future, Dr. Morrison will be updated about class start times and be able to make late start decisions in the best interest of faculty, staff, and students.

She emphasized that if a faculty member misses class due to bad weather and cannot Zoom the class, the faculty member will need to put in an employee absence time request for their time missed. If an employee cancels class for any reason, she noted, that employee needs to submit an absence slip. Dr. Spizzirri stated that this can be looked at on a case-by-case basis and emphasized the importance of donating days when possible so that faculty members who do not have days available can still be paid for the time off. The policy regarding faculty absences needs to be clear and concise and will be addressed in future iterations of the Faculty Handbook.

## **VII. Teaching Awards**

A request was made for nomination for TVCC teaching and excellence awards to be reduced from 5 years to 2 years. Dr. Spizzirri noted that it is 3 years, so any faculty member who has been with the college for that amount of time can be nominated. She noted she was concerned about making sure award selection was efficient, especially as more awards are being added. Suggestions were made by FA to avoid issues, including creating a rubric, having the nominator explain in more detail the reason for a nomination, having HR spearhead award selection processes, or having the selection committee speak to immediate supervisors.

## **VIII. Zoom Issues**

A request was made regarding the possibility of upgrading Canvas to improve access to video capability. A concern was also expressed about showing minors in Zoom videos when in-class recording happens. Dr. Spizzirri said having a minor in a Zoom video is covered by a media release each student signs when coming into TVCC's programs, so when using Zoom or HyFlex with dual credit, students can be shown. Dr. Spizzirri said she wasn't familiar with whether Canvas could be expanded to handle video capacity but would explore the issue further.

## **IX. TDCJ Issues**

This item was tabled until Friday's regular meeting.

## **X. Census**

Confusion with the spring 2023 census was discussed. Several faculty members completed the process early because the census window was open over the weekend. Dr. Spizzirri said the weather concerns caused a problem with the spring census and that the process is improving now that Colleague is fully functional. FA also expressed concerns with the short time frame given for the 8-week 1 courses. They asked for the census to be open overnight in future semesters, if possible, because faculty need time to complete the process.

## **XI. Evaluation Policy**

Last year, the faculty finalized their recommendation to board policy on faculty evaluations. Policy changes are made in the spring, so FA asked for an update on the timeline to request the change. Dr. Spizzirri said now would be the time to request a change in policy and encouraged FA to submit the policy request forward to Human Resources.

## **XII. Overload Pay**

Discussions of inconsistency and faculty seeing overloads at different times in the calculation process was discussed. Some faculty are seeing their overload pay amounts before they are finalized in My Cardinal Connect, while others are seeing their overloads only when the amount is loaded into the MCC system. Dr. Spizzirri said faculty members should be seeing the amount from their division chair when preliminary calculations are made. She noted she would work with division chairs and leads to make certain that faculty see their overload calculations before the payroll deadline. She did note that the deadline for payroll in spring is much quicker than in fall, in order to give faculty as few pay periods as possible without overload pay. A brief discussion was also held regarding class limits, which Dr. Spizzirri said will go back to 12 in fall 2023. There will be new challenges in how overloads are calculated once TVCC goes to 8 weeks, Dr. Spizzirri noted, and a group of faculty and administrators are working toward building a system that is equitable.

### **XIII. Add/Drop**

In an earlier meeting, a discussion was held regarding extending the add/drop deadlines to help students who are enrolled in the wrong courses. The decision was made by administration to not extend the add/drop process. However, should a student need to be moved after the add/drop date, requests can be handled on a case-by-case basis.

### **XIV. Adjunct Communication**

FA stated a request that adjunct faculty be included on all emails and any needed meeting that includes all faculty. Dr. Spizzirri noted that should be occurring, but that in the future division chairs would be instructed to make sure essential emails are issued to everyone in each department.

### **XV. Communication Issues**

A discussion was held regarding issues with communication between faculty and administration. Some faculty are concerned that emails are not being returned and that delayed timing of important communication is resulting in information being relayed too late. Specifically, key items such as graduation ceremony times, the academic calendar, and changes in processes are not communicated in a timely manner. During the discussion, reasons for the lack of communication were discussed, including administrators with heavy schedules and recent changes in job responsibilities. TVCC is going through a period of heavy change, and those changes are not always communicated down to the faculty level. Dr. Spizzirri agreed communication can be improved, and that the academic leadership team is planning to discuss improving communication in detail this spring.

### **XVI. Morale issues**

FA and Dr. Spizzirri held a lengthy discussion regarding change exhaustion and its effect on faculty morale. Included in the discussion were rapidly changing processes (specifically the new home page and Start Here module layout that were released very shortly before the start of the semester), concerns about the 8-week model, the recertification process (specifically concerns that performance-based models are emulating k-12 education and not the current higher ed model), and concerns from faculty who do not come from K-12 education that the current recertification favors faculty who have education training and minimizes those who do not have formal training in education.

FA noted that morale has been a conversation for several years, but there is no hard data to identify the exact reasons for morale issues. FA will be working to lead a task force over the coming weeks, with the goal of working to build quantitative data that indicates whether low faculty morale is a widespread issue and identify the specific causes of low morale.

## **XVII. 8-week transition**

FA relayed several concerns regarding the 8-week transition and course recertification. Specifically addressed were buy-in for the 8-week transition, confusion regarding what is needed for recertification, why horizontal alignment is needed within departments, concerns that with the new requirements courses will begin to feel “cookie cutter,” and whether master shells are a requirement or a suggestion. Also, inconsistencies in communication regarding the recertification process were discussed.

Dr. Spizzirri reiterated that tools are available for all faculty to transition to 8-week through Distance Education. She also noted that whether a course goes to the 8-week model is in the hands of each division. Also, Dr. Spizzirri explained that some departments may have a departmental shell and faculty may then add their voice to it should they choose, but that departmental shells for courses are not a required part of the 8-week transition or the recertification process.

## **XVIII. Other items**

The meeting was adjourned at 4:15 pm.