



TVCC Faculty Association Executive Council

Friday, September 8th, 2023

Regular Meeting

Minutes

A regular meeting of the Executive Council of the Faculty Association of Trinity Valley Community College met in the board room of the Athens Administration building with a call to order at 9:03 am on Friday, September 8th, 2023. The following members were present:

- TVCC President Dr. Jason Morrison
- TVCC Vice President of Instruction Dr. Kristin Spizzirri
- TVCC Vice President of Student Services Dr. Phillip Parnell
- Jennifer Hannigan
- Tom Sherman
- Jennifer Stephens
- Regina Clary
- Craig Lee
- Mike Young
- Angel Martinez-Ellis
- Michelle Whittenberg

I. Priorities for 2023-24

A discussion was held regarding Faculty Association priorities for the year, specifically regarding to faculty and campus culture. Since this was the first meeting of the Executive Council with Dr. Morrison, the meeting began with introductions. Dr. Morrison discussed his philosophy for working at TVCC and emphasized the need for various aspects of the campus to come together under the common goals of moving the institution forward and helping students. He began by stating that he was excited and wants all faculty to be excited as well.

Everyone on campus plays a role in making sure students succeed, he noted, and we are all equal and have a purpose to positively affect the lives of students. The landscape of community college education in Texas is changing. With new requirements from the

state, he said TVCC's priority is no longer headcounts, but is now the success and retention of students. He is ready for TVCC to fulfill its potential and hopes the rest of the campus community will join him in helping the college move forward.

He noted that he believes in empowering people to do their jobs and in keeping them accountable, just as he is accountable to the Board of Trustees. Dr. Morrison noted that he believes in giving TVCC leaders the resources to fulfill their job duties, provided they are operating within the vision for TVCC: student success.

Dr. Morrison noted that it's a new time for TVCC and that if we work together and have a positive outlook it will benefit the institution. While there has been lots of change and more is to come, he added, many outdated practices are not conducive to where we are going and what we are doing now. Dr. Morrison shared how faculty are uniquely placed to positively affect TVCC by focusing on what's best for students.

II. 8-week process

A common roadblock pertaining to the 8-week process has been inconsistency in communication, said faculty. Communication was discussed, both as it pertains to the 8-week implementation and to how it affects TVCC overall.

1. Confusion regarding the separation between 8-week implementation and course redesign: Dr. Spizzirri stated that the two are not identical and to ask questions if clarification is needed on the process. Course redesign is needed before the change to 8-week semesters, she noted, but questions related to planning for 8-week courses may not be related to course redesign. For 8-week or course redesign, faculty should contact their division chair, Distance Education, or a faculty mentor.

She added that if faculty disagree with a piece of their course redesign review there is an appeals process in place. First, faculty should discuss with their reviewer. Then, if a consensus cannot be reached, Distance Education should be brought into the conversation. As a final step if the issue cannot be resolved, faculty can appeal to Dr. Spizzirri. Not every suggestion made on a course needs to be taken as a mandated change, said Dr. Spizzirri. For example, she noted, there was a suggestion made during her course review that was discussed and not implemented after a discussion with Distance Ed.

The question was asked if courses would be two days a week or four after the transition. Dr. Spizzirri said regular 3-hour courses would be two days a week for a longer block than is currently in place. Most lab courses will be lecture two days

and lab the other two days.

2. Communication processes: Whenever something impacts faculty there is a great need for it to be communicated effectively. Faculty said that who should communicate what information is sometimes unclear, resulting in confusion. All faculty should know what is important and what is needed, and clear communication will allow that to happen. Dr. Spizzirri shared that the division chairs are the direct communication link between administration and faculty and mentioned various trainings have been hosted recently to help the instructional team, including the division chairs, understand the communication process. Most information to faculty should be coming from the division chairs and any issues faculty members have should go to the division chair first and then follow the appropriate chain of command if needed to ensure the issue is addressed.
3. Clarification on process for certification: It was voiced that faculty are the content experts, and it is for this reason faculty need to have a voice in each of their courses. Dr. Spizzirri explained by saying the end goal is that each course should be unique and that another professor shouldn't be able to put their name on any course because the expertise of the faculty member should be integrated into every redesigned course. She noted that the course redesign document given to faculty at inservice this year is the guideline for redesign. However, she said, the main goal for courses are really to make sure faculty expertise is clear and the students are able to understand the course objectives and what they need to do to be successful in each course. Dr. Spizzirri said additional faculty course reviewers have been added to make the process smoother and that Distance Learning will be hosting meetings throughout the fall to answer questions and help with the process.

III. Registration

There is a need for students to be aware before classes begin if the location of one of their classes has changed or if a class has been cancelled. Faculty asked Dr. Parnell to investigate if texting could be used to send that information to students a few days before classes start. Dr. Parnell explained students receive several communications leading up to the first day of classes through texting, social media and other platforms. He stated he would look into whether texting a student's course schedule could be added to the communication list.

A suggestion was also made to have the class schedule for each building in classrooms for easy access during the first days of the semester. Also, faculty asked for the discrepancy that sometimes occurs regarding building names on schedules be addressed.

Sometimes buildings will have more than one name, particularly in Athens (for example, the Gibbs Building is also the Academic building or the A building), which can cause confusion for students. Faculty asked if the name on the schedule could match the name on the building front.

Faculty also asked for clearer communication when a student is deregistered and then re-added to a class. It would be beneficial for faculty to be consulted to make sure a student can still be successful, especially if that process occurs after the first full week of classes.

IV. Other Items

- 1.** A question was asked about how often TSI testing is available. TSI testing can be completed anytime at any campus. Students need to make an appointment with any of the campus testing centers.
- 2.** Faculty asked why Fall Break was changed from Monday/Tuesday to Thursday/Friday. After making inquiries, Dr. Spizzirri said the schedule was changed to make way for the 8-week transition. In future years, those days will be the break between the 8-week 1 and the 8-week 2 semesters.
- 3.** Faculty expressed concerns that significant changes are often made to programs or teaching spaces without faculty input. It was agreed by administration and faculty that those who oversee programs and spaces will be given input before major changes are made.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:48 a.m.