

# Faculty Senate Minutes

February 5, 2021

Virtual via Zoom

<b>Members Present</b>	Amanda Lester-Chisum, President Donald Abel, Vice President Robin Malone, Secretary Simone Buys, Parliamentarian Lavon Barrett Camille Nies Brant Davis Fiona Denge Bernardino (JR) Gonzales Bob Gustin Connie Haskins Sabera Muna appeared by Jessica Mitchell Bill Netherton Ray Newburg Janie Lane Dave Van Domelen Walter Webb
<b>Members Absent</b>	
<b>Guests</b>	<b>NONE</b>

<b>Topics</b>	<b>Discussion/Information</b>	<b>Actions/Decisions Recommendations/Timelines</b>
<b>Call to Order</b>	President Amanda Lester-Chisum called the meeting to order at 2:34 pm.	<i>NOTE: Meeting held virtually via Zoom</i>
<b>Approval of Minutes</b>	Approval of 12/4/2020 meeting minutes.	MOTION TO APPROVE: Dave van Domelen SECOND: Bill Netherton

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		YEA: All NAY: None
<b>President's Report</b>	On going discussion of COVID concerns	
<b>Vice President's Report</b>	No Report	
<b>Secretary's Report</b>	No Report	
<b>Parliamentarian's Report</b>	No Report	
<b>Guest Report(s)</b>	None	
<b>Questions</b>	Discussed questions received and responses. See Faculty Senate Questions Committee Report.	
<b>Elections</b>	No Report	
<b>Legislative</b>	No Report	
<b>Professor Emeritus Award</b>	No Report	
<b>Faculty Committee Appointments</b>	No Report	
<b>Mead Award</b>	Discussed process to identify qualified candidates, those who will participate in the selection process and the timeline indicating the process will begin in March.	
<b>Technology</b>	Discussed the challenges with Blackboard created by installation of updates.	
<b>Faculty Survey</b>	No Report	
<b>Hospitality</b>	No Report	

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<b>Instructional Technology</b>	No Report	
<b>Courtesy</b>	No Report	
<b>New Business</b>	<p>Discussion of faculty office hours and policies related to faculty hours; COVID concerns impacting faculty and students; discussions taking place during the weekly COVID Taskforce meetings; procedures to keep faculty and students safe.</p> <p>Mode of next Faculty Senate Meeting Discussion: Hybrid attendance allowing either in person or virtual participation</p> <p>Senators provided highlights on points discussed at the Board of Regents January 2021 meeting. Those items included but were not limited to bond money expenditures; relocation of Student Life office; First Responders Academy; real estate purchases.</p>	<p>Motion for Hybrid Meeting: Robert Gustin Second: Fiona Deng YEA: All NAY: None</p>
<b>Unfinished Business</b>	COVID discussions ongoing	
<b>Updates and Announcements</b>	(Discussion of various points, with alterations)	
<b>Meeting Adjournment</b>	<p>Next meeting scheduled for: March 5, 2021. Meeting adjourned at 4:43 pm.</p>	<p>MOTION TO ADJOURN: Bill Netherton SECOND: Simone Buys YEA: All NAY: None</p>

Recorder: Robin R. Malone, Associate Professor, Senator STEM

## **DECEMBER 2020/JANUARY 2021 QUESTIONS**

### **Report for Faculty Senate Meeting on 2/4/2021**

1. *Almost the entirety of the AC Town Hall held on October 15 was spent on a sales pitch for Prop A. I'm not opposed to Prop A, but if the Prop A presentation at the Town Hall was "just to give information," as we were told, shouldn't both sides have been presented? The screen in the presentation had the words "Vote for Prop A" at the top, which is clearly a one-sided partisan position. I'm concerned about the precedent this sets. Is it appropriate (or even legal) to promote specific political causes or candidates using college resources?*

**[Response from Mark White, General Counsel]**

The October 15, 2020 Town Hall was not meant to be a sales pitch for Proposition A. President Lowery-Hart prefaced the remarks of Jason Herrick with the statement that this presentation was only informational and did not constitute the College's opinion. This disclaimer was reiterated in the chat feature. However, when Mr. Herrick shared his screen, it did contain graphics that urged support for the bond referendum.

No college resources were used to prepare Mr. Herrick's materials. President Lowery-Hart made no partisan statement about the subject. No opposing views were invited to present because the College did not expect Mr. Herrick's presentation to be political, but rather factual.

2. **When are classes open for faculty to begin preparation for the Spring21 semester? Can they be open for faculty before we leave for the Fall20 semester? If not, what is the earliest they can be opened?**

**[Response from Heather Voran, Faculty Development Coordinator; Instructional Design Specialists]**

*In answer to your first question, Blackboard classes for Spring 1, 2021 have been available in Blackboard since 12/5, as classes are always pushed to Blackboard 45 days before the first day of class. Spring 2, 2021 classes are not yet available, but will be pushed out 45 days ahead of the first day of Spring II classes.*

*Answering the second question requires some background and context going back to when AC first made the decision as to when the courses would be made available. I reached out to Pam Madden in our office suite, as she was the room scheduler for the Registrar's office at the time, and although I remembered some details I hoped she would help me remember more. She actually still has her notes from the meeting mentioned below:*

*When we first moved from Angel to Blackboard in 2013, the time span for classes to be available was set at 90 days before the first class day. Within the first year, it became apparent that this was too early due to the number of cancelled classes that ended up in Blackboard as a result of making them available that far out from the first class day. This was a problem for several departments for several reasons. Here are a few as recalled by Pam Madden and myself, who were involved in the process at the time:*

- *Cancelled classes ended up on the faculty lists of classes they were teaching. Although the cancelled classes were designated with a C for quick identification, faculty indicated that there were far too many courses listed, requiring them to scroll through a long list of classes to find the ones that were active.*
- *There was no automated process for IT to remove the cancelled classes from Blackboard in a batch. Each class had to be removed manually, resulting in hours of work for IT to manually remove hundreds of courses from Blackboard.*
- *The resulting number of cancelled classes with no content in Blackboard was so large that it greatly increased the cost of Blackboard to the college (we are charged by the amount of space our courses take up, not by the number of students).*

*There were other issues as well, but for these main reasons a meeting of Amarillo College stakeholders was called to determine a better time span for making Blackboard classes available. Present at the meeting were the Amarillo College CIO, VPAA, CTL Director, Room Scheduler, and representatives of Faculty Senate. This group determined that 45 days was long enough ahead of the start of class to allow time for faculty to prepare for the following semester, yet short enough to alleviate the majority of the problems listed above.*

*Please also keep in mind that because of this waiting period for courses to appear in Blackboard, CTL recommends for faculty to work in course development shells prior to each semester rather than the live course shell. If anyone needs CTL to create development shells for their courses, please complete a request at <http://bit.ly/devshellrequest>.*

3. Faculty wonder why faculty who are concerned about their safety--or the safety of their loved ones--need to keep office hours on campus at all, even if people are following the proper protocol. Very, very few students are coming up for face-to-face meetings. Many faculty are coming to campus, and seeing few if any students who need to visit with a teacher in her office. Has the college considered safer options for our faculty in terms of meeting with students?

*[Response from Russell Lowery-Hart, President and Cheryl Jones, Vice President of Human Resources]*

*At this point if there are faculty or staff that feel unsafe due to other staff members not complying with the college policies then they need to report them to HR. These reports will be kept anonymous, (stated by Cheryl Jones) He followed up with the fact that we have policies in place that need to be followed.*

4. *What happened to steps, as they're not on the "beeper" forms we had to sign over break.*

*I think the answer to this question if I understand it correctly is was there no step increase this fall. I am including Cheryl on this to add info if I don't get it correct.*

*AC is currently reworking the evaluation and merit process. Raises and steps were moved to align with the calendar year instead of your budget year. This allows for more a more concrete understanding of the money that will be available for raises. Giving raises in August before the budget is complete has*

always made the decision making hard. The pre-COVID plan was to move performance evaluations to fall and resulting merit increases or step increases to January.

I would add that given the current situation with COVID, reduction in fall enrollment and a possible cut in State funding, we're having to reevaluate step increases, and merit raises. We will evaluate our financial position in January and should be able to make a determination by then.

[Response from Becky Burton, Associate Vice President-Academic Learning and Cheryl Jones, Vice President of Human Resources]

*I know the Faculty Senate has been asked about student privacy guidelines in relation to situations where instructors are recording their classes that show the students in the class and often include their audible personal replies to controversial discussion questions, Real Talk, etc. Often links for these class recordings are posted in a form where they could be copied, pasted, and shared on social media, etc., revealing students' identities and personal comments. This appears to have some FERPA issues, especially if students have invoked the Privacy Act. I think we should give instructors guidance on this issue so they can at least be aware of it and tell students it is against AC policy and FERPA rules to share class recordings outside of the class. I think sharing FERPA guidelines in general in relation to emails, online classes, remote delivery would be helpful!*

5. I would like to propose an idea for Faculty Senate to bring forth to Amarillo College regarding student ID's. As an instructor, I've come to realize that students are using photos from their younger years or from their high school years for their ID cards. Also-some photos can be dramatically different from the student's current physical appearance (e.g., dramatic weight loss/gain)

At times, I have trouble identifying my students in class against their current picture on the roster sheet...*I see them every day!* If I have difficulty identifying my own students, what does that say about those who ask to see the student's ID on occasion (e.g., to take an exam)? Being unable to identify a student should also raise safety concerns.

I would like to propose that Amarillo College implement a policy that any new arriving student must have their picture taken during their enrollment process. Thereafter, a new picture, hence ID card, will be required every 3 years or at a minimum of every 2 years.

[Response from Bob Austin, Vice President of Enrollment Management]

Here's the College's current policy regarding student ID's

*Student identification cards (student ID's) are provided free of charge and are available to all students enrolled in academic classes. The Student ID displays the student's name, ID number and photograph. New students are encouraged to obtain an ID upon registration and retain their cards for the duration of attendance at Amarillo College. ID cards are required for access to some campus services. Please contact the AskAC Center on any Amarillo College campus to report a lost or stolen ID.*

Considering the fact that student ID's are not currently "required" for all, I don't believe that we have a compelling reason to force some students to periodically update their photos. Perhaps an easy

solution would be for faculty members who notice that a photo may be dated to simply ask the student to update his or her photo. As noted in the current policy, there is no charge for replacement ID's.

Please let me know if there are any other concerns that I can address.

6. I just read the Globe-News story on Sharpened Iron Studios (<https://www.amarillo.com/story/entertainment/local/2020/08/01/sharpened-iron-studios-prepares-for-future-faith-based-productions/42489001/>). As a Christian, I am glad to see that someone wants to make faith-based entertainment that is not "cheesy." However, I'm really confused about Amarillo College's "partnership" with the studio. The owner of the studio says, "We are not here to just be another studio. We have a very specific calling, a very specific mission" --and that mission is clearly an evangelical Christian one. So, here are my questions:

--What exactly is Amarillo College's role in this "partnership"? What are we getting out of it? Are the studio and its teachers SACS accredited? Who do they answer to? Will they be working with our theater and mass media departments?

--Will an AC student who is not an evangelical Christian feel at all comfortable at Sharpened Iron Studios? Would we have ever made a similar partnership with, say, an orthodox Muslim company that wanted to make movies and TV series intent on spreading the good news of Muhammad's message?

[Response from Mark White, General Counsel]

1. *Amarillo College and Sharpened Iron Studios have agreed to work together to establish, promote and operate the Amarillo College School of Cinematic Arts. The parties will collaborate in the development of appropriate curriculum, certificates and degrees for all aspects of a film production company in accordance with the standards and procedures promulgated by AC, the THECB and SACSCOC. Amarillo College will select and appoint the faculty. Some of the faculty may also be employed by Sharpened Iron Studios, a for-profit movie production company. The classes and labs will be taught primarily at the Downtown Campus.*

*As part of the agreement, Sharpened Iron Studios will spend a minimum of \$8 million to improve the southern portion of the Downtown Campus while Amarillo College will retain ownership of the property. In return, Sharpened Iron Studios will be a lessee of the space and operate as a movie company. Because this will be a conservatory-style film school, the students will have direct interaction with actors, actresses and opportunities to work with other film companies. The intent is that the school will complement, rather than compete with the Matney Mass Media Program and our Theatre Department.*

2. *SIS will be required to abide by all applicable AC policies with respect to activities on AC premises or held in connection with the film school curriculum. Your last question calls for speculation in that the college has never been offered a similar partnership with a company that you have described. But yes, it is incumbent upon Amarillo College - which is both lawfully and morally committed to non-discrimination practices at all levels of its governance - to equitably consider all proposals that have the potential to favorably impact and empower the institution.*