

College of Liberal Arts
Chairs/Directors Meeting Notes
September 15, 2020

1. Spring schedule

Students had complains this semester, because most of the classes didn't have a time to meet. However, the faculty were asking them to meet at a certain time every week. This made the students upset and some of them had to drop some of their courses, because it conflicted with other courses.

The biggest issues they saw was that they were penalizing students if they couldn't meet with the professor at a time not previously agreed upon on the schedule.

- The Chairs wanted to ensure all the classes had times for the spring semester to help the students and avoid issues.
- The Dean asked everyone to ensure all of their classes for the spring have a timeframe to meet with students.
- Someone asked if the university was going to allow F2F courses. The Dean was not completely sure, but he thinks that Doctoral classes should be able to meet F2F, since they are small classes.

2. College awards

A request to bring back the College faculty/staff awards came up and they believe this is important to have this type of recognition to motivate our staff and faculty.

- Everyone agreed that the awards should start again.
- The Dean mentioned that a committee was needed to start the awards. He said that it could be a combination from the old committee and few new members. He also added that it was important to have equal representation for everyone in the college.
- The Dean mentioned that maybe there was no need to limit the awards to only one person. If we have more than one person doing an outstanding job they all should be recognize.
- Dr. Jayasuriya clarified that the awards were suspended, but not eliminated. She will be sharing some of the information she has to start the committee again.

3. Student border crossings

Although a student had a letter from UTEP stating that she was an employee and student, she was detained for passing through the Senti line at the border. The student was fortunate that Dr. Nunez was in her office and was able to help; at the end the student was released, but she was scared because they were threatening with taking her visa away.

- The response of the upper level was that the university has a great relation with the CBP, so they don't think there is an issue. This attitude concerned the Dean and our faculty, because there are several students that have had similar issues.

- The Dean asked Arturo, if the university could provide an official letter to students, staff, and faculty to avoid this from happening again. He is checking on this.
- It was decided that everyone will be reporting these incidents to be able to ask the upper management to do something to help the UTEP community.
 - One of the professor mentioned that this was a civil right and human right issue. And that this was abuse of power from some of the CBPs officers.

4. Library

The library has been moved back to the Provost office.

- There will be a new system to submit requests for the needs in the departments. There will be a library council that will be responsible for reviewing and approving the requests from the departments.
- The Dean asked for the college to have at least one representative from each one of the divisions in the college.
- Several Chairs mentioned that it was important for the college to have equal representation, since their research has been affected by losing access to databases.

5. Associate Dean Issues

Crystal Herman mentioned the funding that is available for proposals to support the Jewish population in El Paso. An email was sent out regarding this funding.

Dr. Jayasuriya reminded the Chairs about Tenure and Promotion. She mentioned that candidates' access to their folders on One Drive was removed on August 31st. On September 1st the Chairs were given access to the candidates' One Drive folders. She also mentioned that she sent an email with specific guidelines on the process (including pandemic protocols) they need to follow.

- Due to the pandemic, departmental committees can meet virtually, but they need to make sure that departmental deliberations are not recorded.
- Additionally, when they need to vote, they can use QuestionPro to ensure all the votes are confidential. They can reach out to Luis Zuniga in the Provost's Office to help set up voting on QuestionPro.

Dr. Jayasuriya talked about Post-Tenure Reviews--she mentioned that everything was through Digital Measures this year.

- She specified that she and Estella do not have much information on the Digital Measures process, since it is being done by Didier Hernandez and Tami Keating.
- If there are any questions, send an email to Didier and copy her and Estella.
- She also asked Chairs to keep track of any issues with the new system, so that the College can advocate for improvements in the next cycle.

Dr. Morales

- She announced that the New Faculty Orientation will be on September 24th.

- She also mentioned that the CoLA Research Committee released the Racial Justice Subcommittee Mission Statement and invited everyone to take time to read it.
 - <https://www.utep.edu/liberalarts/research-committee/racial-justice-subcommittee-mission-statement.html>
- She will be sending an email to all the corresponding parties on the IRB process.
- She announced that there will be several Dean's Lecture Series through the semester and asked everyone to attend.

Dr. O'Hearn invited everyone to submit any information on awards or recognitions received by the Faculty or departments. Since, it is important to share the accomplishments from our faculty. He also mentioned that the writer Daniel Perez is always looking for new information for his articles. The Dean announced that Dr. Cote from Creative Writing received a prize.

6. PARs

Dr. O'Hearn mentioned that they will be using the last Workload Policy they had worked on and he will be sending them an updated copy of the policy with small changes.

He said that every department will have to create their own workload policy and it should include guideline on how every faculty will be evaluated.

He mentioned that he was surprised by the reaction of many of the faculty for the PARs. He said that this has been the first institution, where he has faculty appealing their evaluation rate. He stated, that assumed that his word had more value/weight than an evaluation.

- For example, he had told faculty that they are doing great. But they came back and ask him why they got a 3 on their evaluations.
- He explained, that he reserved the 5 for outstanding work. Such a person that had 5 articles published or a book published.
- He said that he started with a 3 a based and that based on the "real product" from the faculty he went up. He said that real product was publishing, not submitting a paper or having a contract for a book. Since, those often didn't go through.
- He mentioned that PARs will be moving to Digital Measures and when talking to Dr. Jayasuriya they mentioned they need to create a template that covers everything. He said that he was willing to have a committee to make this possible and have a well structure PAR system.

Some of the comments from the Chairs were that he was not taking into consideration all the extra hours our faculty is working due to the lack of resources and enough faculty support. Dr. Castaneda mentioned that his faculty are working more than 40 hours, around 80 per week. He said that this is the only way they can keep up with their classes, research, and additional duties.

Others mentioned that for them it was important the evaluation received from their peers. That they take seriously the feedback they received from them. One of them mentioned that, there were faculty members that felt demoralized by the evaluation rates.

Several also mentioned, that there aren't enough resources to support faculty. That the Dean and upper management are asking them to do research, but they are supported with resources to make it happen. One of them mentioned, I have a new tenure track faculty, but my budget for travel and expenses stayed the same.

Dr. Nunez said that there are many faculty struggling to stay focus, dealing with mental health issues, and trying keep their families safe and stable due to the pandemic, therefore, when they received the evaluation made them stress more. She mentioned that some of them started to think that they needed to look for a new job.

The Dean mentioned again that he never thought he was going to get this reaction from the faculty and that he never intended to demoralize people. He said that no one should be worried. As far as he is concerned, the PARs don't have much weight.

He added that he would be organizing a Town Hall for the faculty.