Spring 2019 Message from Faculty Senate President

Happy New Year colleagues. As the 2019 calendar year starts, I would like to extend my personal appreciation to you for your service to UTTYLER in various roles. As faculty, we at times under-estimate the power we have to influence eternity. An anonymous writer once said, “What a teacher writes on the blackboard of life can never be erased”. I concur with that sentiment that as teachers we change lives one student at a time. So looking back to 2018 and forward to 2019, your efforts had an influence as noted below:

1. Participated in in welcoming New Faculty at the orientation event. All new faculty were encouraged to reach out to colleagues so that adjustment to our campus culture is seamless.

2. Successful Strategic Plan Implementation workshop presided over by the President on August 23, 2018 (coincidentally, my birth date!). It was great having over 130 faculty members and some Deans of Colleges show up to participate.

3. Three very successful monthly meetings where various Vice Presidents and other unit heads highlighted their roles and functions, while inviting faculty to collaborate in enhancing student success, among other things. The presentation on the University Budget and Finances raised some issues, which moving forward we would invite the President to address. The creation of a University Budget Committee, with faculty senate representation, should endeavor to increase transparency in the budgeting process and funding of university projects to avoid inaccurate perceptions.

4. Finalization of the Work Load Policy that was forwarded to the UT System. Faculty Senate continues to urge the members to utilize the opportunity to generate workable and effective Work Load Implementation Policies at the departmental level that reflect the work of a faculty member. It is also an ideal time to re-visit the Annual Performance Evaluations and the T and P Guidelines. Please, interrogate the status quo and institute positive change.

5. I also thank the campus community, both faculty and staff for taking the Organization Culture Survey, where close to 40 percent of the campus answered the call to participate. We look forward to having an expert on campus on March 21, 2019 to walk us through the results and implications for the future of our Campus. Please, mobilize our colleagues to show up.

6. A proposal for College Councils with Faculty Senate representation was well received and adopted by various Deans and the University Administration. Senators, use the opportunity to voice faculty concerns.

7. UTTYLER Faculty were well represented at the FAC of the UT System and the Texas Council of Faculty Senates (TCFS). Participation at these fora led to amendments to our HOP pertaining to contingent faculty. The faculty senate will soon have a chance to review the proposed changes to ensure compliance with our expectations.

8. University Committees were appointed slightly earlier than in previous years. We continue to push that these committees be put in place early enough to allow them time to function as soon as the fall semester starts. In spring, we shall be expecting reports from each committee that is answerable to Senate.

9. In February 7 and 8, 2019, Mr. Tony Cucolo from UT System will be on campus to preside over workshops on leadership and mentoring. I urge College Senate Representatives to liaise with the Deans and Chairs to nominate faculty attendees, and academic advisors, for the session on Mentoring Students. This is scheduled for February 8, 2019 at 9 am (program to be circulated soon).

10. Collaborating with USAC on various activities to enhance intra campus relationships thereby creating a ‘homely feeling’ for all faculty and staff. We hope to strengthen faculty and staff relations even as we all strive to create a family environment for our students to thrive and flourish in their academic and life endeavors.

11. Last but not least, faculty continue to engage with the students, staff, administration and the community at large to drive the strategic priorities of our institution forward. My call is for everyone to engage and to play a part. As I have said before, let us strive to influence the future of our campus.

12. I am looking forward to another dynamic and productive spring 2019 semester. Remember that “If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together”.

Let us all go together so that we can go far. So together, we can go far in transforming the quality of our programing, operations, teaching, mentoring and enhancing the reputation of our Institution characterized by high student retention, graduation and career placement.

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