

Minutes
Liberal Arts Council
November 6, 2019—2 p.m.

Presiding: Dean Mary Brennan

Present: Council members: Audwin Anderson, Manda Anderson, Susan Day (recording), Beth Erhart, Ken Grasso, Craig Hanks, Lucy Harney, Paul Hart, Bill Kelemen, Yongmei Lu, John Mckiernan-Gonzalez (late), Aimee Roundtree, Vicki Smith, Chad Smith

Guests: none

Absent: Angela Murphy

The minutes of 10.23.19 were unanimously approved by a vote of the Council on a motion by Dr. Grasso and a second by Dr. C. Smith.

Dean Brennan discussed strategic plan updating (mid-cycle updates for current plans). Updated department plans (using track changes) are due to Dean Brennan by the beginning of February. These plans are updates; chairs are asked to look at their prior plans and decide what should remain in their plans or what should be added. Text book prices (open source, eliminate costs, electronic books) are among the Academic Affairs priorities that should be addressed in the plans. “Hot new fields” (programs that will be attractive to students) should also be included in COLA plans.

The proposed conference call with Austin Community College was discussed. Dean Brennan asked for one-page summaries of courses that could be taken at ACC that would allow a student to efficiently transfer to a COLA major at Texas State. Texas community college enrollment increased by less than one percent (.35%). Twenty-nine of fifty-three Texas Community College districts recorded a decline in their fall 2019 enrollment. Specific pathways for transferring to Texas State are requested by community colleges. Chairs noted the difficulties created by field of study processes demanded by the Coordinating Board. The discussion concluded with Dean Brennan noting that the Advisory Council will meet, and the advisory supervisors will meet with affected departments to clarify field of study.

Dean Brennan revealed that the Texas State budget is tight, in large part because the State has decided that only a 2.65% (down from [a requested](#) 3.95%) tuition increase can be implemented next year. There will be no faculty or staff raises next year. We are in a “holding pattern.” Dean Brennan charged chairs and directors with strategically thinking about how to protect COLA programs, especially those with fewer or declining majors. Next year (2020) is a “count” year. We must be prudent about our classes, with no small class reports. Being prudent will mean reducing the number of summer administrators, scheduling classes that will fill, and efficiently using our faculty. Dean Brennan forcefully stated that the faculty must be told about this shortfall, because we have to face this reality. We must manage our departments and College to be as resourceful and financially pragmatic as possible. We must strengthen existing programs. Allowing students to know about the value of our majors and the cordiality of our faculty are steps that can be taken to be proactive. President Trauth’s budget presentation will be circulated when it is released. Chairs offered many observations about the consequences of no raises and an unhappy faculty.

Around the table

Dr. Roundtree reminded chairs that event announcements should be posted on departmental social media.

Dr. Lu noted that the Annual GIS Day will be November 14 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. in ELA 344.

Dr. Anderson announced a Thursday, November 14, presentation by Debangana Nanerjee exploring her art and poetry at 11 a.m. in Brazos Hall. The presentation is entitled “My Home Like River.”

The meeting ended at 3:34 p.m.