

Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes

January 30, 2008

Attendance:

John Priest – Chairman	Raymond Eve – Sociology
Toni Sol - MODL (Secretary)	Rasika Dias - Chemistry
Tom Ingram - Parliamentarian	David Jorgensen - Mathematics
Dan Formanowicz	Perry Fuchs - Psychology
Ishfaq Ahman – Computer Science	Joe Guy – Architecture
Chyng-Yang Jang – Communication	Mary Lynn Crow – Education
Desiree Henderson – English	David Stader - Education
Johanna Smith – English	Mary Weber – Nursing
Mark Quelette – Linguistics	Cheryl Anderson – Nursing
David Castro - Music	Maria Martinez-Cosio – Urban/Public Affairs
Lewis Baker – Philosophy	Sharon Judkins - Nursing
	Gerald Saxon – Library (Ex Officio)

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 2:33 p.m. by Senate Chair John Priest.

Remarks by the President: President Spaniolo welcomed us to the spring semester noting that we were expecting great things and it was starting off with the weeklong celebration of Spike Lee and his work. There would be various events and encouraged everyone to attend, He spoke about the recent opening of the Student Activity Center and the opening of Phase II on March 28th. The utilization is high and we have an outstanding new facility. The president spoke of a news item of interest that took place right at the end of the semester as classes were ending. President Spaniolo explained, “The Board of Regents held a special meeting in early December and adopted a resolution which imposed a tuition increase cap on all the UT institutions at 4.95% for this year, the 08/09 year, and the 09/10 year. This happened right after we had been going through a campus planning process. We have a tuition review committee composed of 23 members including faculty and staff. Administration has been working with the committee – reviewing proposals, etc. at a much higher rate. We are in the process now of preparing a draft of a proposal to send to UT System that will fall within the guidelines that were adopted by the regents. We are going to try to preserve some of the same principles that were involved in the original tuition proposal. We are now in the dialogue stage. Regents will meet at a special meeting on the 26th of March to review all tuition proposals for the UT System schools”. He then said that he will keep the senate posted and nothing was going to happen in terms of an official action until March. Administration is trying to preserve the forward momentum of the institution and respect the guidelines that the Regents established on tuition increases.

Remarks by the Provost: Provost Eisenbaumer pointed out that February 1st is the fourth anniversary of President Spaniolo’s tenure here and we should take pride “in the accomplishments and transformations that have occurred on campus in that time”. He then reminded the senators of last fall’s UT System’s request to provide an enrollment

management plan. That plan was submitted on January 15th after a few revisions and it is currently under review. The next item the provost mentioned was the move to review the various conflict of interest policies that there are various places on campus in view of standardizing them. He will be requesting our thoughts on this matter in the future. The last thing the provost brought up was current tenure and promotion process. He commented on the quality of the faculty here at UTA. The process was almost completed and that they were in the process of wrapping up all of those notifications.

Senator Martinez- Casio inquired about the status of the gas drilling and the provost's search. President Spaniolo replied that two wells were drilled in the location near the Continuing Education building and a third well would be underway soon for an eventual total of six in this location. However there will not be any actual production until late spring or early summer. "We won't have any data until we begin producing natural gas in a few months. The Provost search is progressing. We have a good committee and some strong prospects. There will be some initial interviewing being done soon. My hope is that we will have a decision by the first of April."

Senator Fuchs asked for comments on the Special Events Center.

President Spaniolo said that he hoped he would have an announcement of a proposal by the end of the academic year. He pointed out the potential usage of such a center and "when you visit universities comparable to ours in size; you will be hard-pressed to find a university that doesn't have some kind of facility that accommodates multiply kinds of events".

Sustainability Project: School of Urban Affairs Assistant Professor Jeff Howard made a presentation reviewing the new sustainability project and the plans to put a system in place on the campus. He invited everyone to attend the next meeting on this subject on February 19th. <http://blog.uta.edu/sustainability/about/>

Approval of Previous Minutes: Due to the fact that the minutes were not distributed, approval was postponed.

FAC Report from Austin: Past Chair Formanowicz reported that the FAC met in December. One of the biggest topics of conversation was that there were four regents due to be replaced. Three of those four have been replaced. There is an ongoing issue that was talked about that involves the health campuses and has to do with a practice plan that is being put in place by the UT System. The other major proposal on the table right now is one to add a faculty regent. That is a proposal that has to go to the legislature. The Promotion and Tenure Review Process is almost done at the university level. This year there were 28 cases. His job as the Senate observer is to make sure there aren't any process issues that come up and they proceed as they should. This year there are two issues that have come out one of which he cannot speak of yet. The other is the same as every year; there is a problem with letters of recommendation. Every year there are letters that candidates submit that are from collaborators, mentors, etc. The Handbook of Operating Procedures makes clear that those sort of letters are not allowed. Fortunately, in every case in which that happens, the candidate had enough letters that these could be disallowed and the case could go forward. He then encouraged the senators to go back to the departments and tell them to consult the HOP when preparing a promotion dossier.

Provost Search Update: Senate Chair Priest reported that the Provost search is on schedule.

Remarks by the Senate Chair, on ongoing business, reminded the senators to encourage their colleagues in their respective departments to fill out the online survey asking about our priorities if we do get additional funds from the gas drilling.

Senate Chair Priest has the intention of forming an ad hoc committee to look at parking policies. There are a number of student lots that are not often full and faculty or staff are not allowed to park there.

Senator Ahmad and Senator Martinez-Cosio brought up the number of disabled parking spots and their location and the number of students who use the faculty lot. There are a large number of students that park in faculty/staff lots who have permits and wondered if they were GRAs

Senate Chair Priest reminded the senators that the parking decision for GRA's and GTA's is made by the department. He then said that his concern was that if there is no parking for a faculty member and other lots have openings for students why a faculty member could not park there and use the space.

Past Chair Formanowicz stated that they were continuing to follow-up on why we can't order permits on line and the students can.

The subject of the **Faculty Survey – Internet Link** was discussed. Senate Chair Priest asked if “what we are proposing better or worse than what we are currently using?”

Past Chair Formanowicz replied that the senate set up an ad hoc committee last year to look into alternatives for our currently used evaluations. He said, “We sent the web site out several times to the senate. I have received minimal feedback. It is time to make a decision on whether or not to go forward with the proposal on changing what we are doing to the Provost. A number of units supplement the current forms with lots of additional information. That is extremely helpful. Quite frankly, all the material those people sitting at that table have available to them are the summaries from those forms that we use.” The average scores are often all they have and it tells them very little. “We are doing a disservice to ourselves by using this particular evaluation system. There are two reasons to do this. One is to help us with our teaching. The other has to do with promotion and tenure. I think this is a step. We have to continue to look at what we are doing in terms of evaluating. There are a lot of units that are doing peer evaluations. I am not suggesting that you move in that direction. That is very helpful in addition to what we have here. There are units that add questions to that survey. The question is whether to go forward with this. If we decide to move forward with it, we put together a proposal that will go to the Provost.”

Senator Smith expressed her disapproval of the proposed form.

Past Chair Formanowicz replied that this is the one that the ad hoc committee determined was the most likely possibility right now. It is a reasonable tool and widely used throughout the country. It is in use right now on a trial basis in the QEP pilot programs. By the end of this semester, we will have two semesters of information from those classes. Some information will be available on the results of the trail at the end of

this semester and the Provost and Deans can evaluate the results. The feedback so far is that students in those courses like it better.

Motion and second was made to take the proposal to the Provost.

Senator Dobbs wanted to know if the university would be compared and scored relative to other universities.

Past Chair Formanowicz: “Part of the summaries you get from the Idea Center is they give you comparison as to how you fall with other universities within the system. That can be perceived as both a strength and a weakness. UT San Antonio has been using this. The major criticism they have was that some universities they were being compared to were inappropriate”.

Senator Dias thought that the proposed form was much better than what we have. However it was very long. The students will not take time to complete the form.

Past Chair Formanowicz explained that there are two versions – the short form and the long form and the proposal is for the shorter version.

Senator Baker: “Is this going to become something where a different kind of student is evaluating a different kind of teacher getting a result that is thought to be comparable to what our student is saying about our faculty and that becomes part of the recruiting process?”

Past Chair Formanowicz: “It is confidential information. We receive information about our institution and a limited number of other institutions. I think we can identify who we want to be compared to. The folks at the Idea Center and at any place who puts one of these out will tell you that these forms and information gained from these forms should not be used to make employment decisions. For the faculty member, there is a separate form – the Faculty Information Form. It is relatively short. You identify the learning outcomes and the students get to answer questions about the learning outcomes. It says in the form itself, “Not all of these may apply to the course you are currently taking.”

Senator Martinez-Cosio inquired if the proposal would come back to the senate.

Past Chair Formanowicz replied that he thought so. “ It will have to go to the Provost. I am not sure there is a set process. We talked about it going to the Provost and the Provost would take it to the Dean’s Council. We have not talked to the Deans or the students about this.”

Senator Crow pointed out that this evaluation form was centered on student learning and fit in with the Active Learning QEP project.

Senator Baker called the question. Motion to move forward passed.

Past Chair Formanowicz said that the Senate Chair Priest and he would present the proposal to the Provost

New Business:

Senator Ahmad brought up the faculty and staff fee for use of the Activity Center and the steep increase of that fee. The fee for students has not increased. Service is absent and has to be brought to someone's attention.

Senate Chair Priest agreed that there were problems and would look into the matter.

Senator Dias: How many applications for the Provost position are internal?

Senate Chair Priest: I can't say. We are confidential for another couple of weeks. At that time the final candidates will be revealed. The committee will recommend four to six people and the President makes the decision.

Old Business: None.

Committee Reports: None.

With no further business, meeting was adjourned at 3:45 p.m.