

Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes

September 12, 2007

Attendance:

Dan Formanowicz – Chairman	Bill Crowder - Economics
John Priest – Engineering (Chair Elect)	Peggy Swanson – Finance/Real Estate
Toni Sol - MODL (Secretary)	Ken Price - Management
Richard Mark – Accounting	Kamesh Subbarao – Aerospace Engrg.
Sia Ardekani – Civil Engineering	Leonidas Fegaras – Computer Science
Kambiz Alavi – Electrical Engineering	Andrew Ortiz – Art & Art History
Rhonda Dobbs – Criminology & CJ	Chyng-Yang Gang - Communication
Laurin Porter – English	Joyce Goldberg - History
Mark Ouellette – Linguistics	Aimee Israel-Pelletier – Modern Lang.
Samuel Savage – Music	Lewis Baker - Philosophy
Raymond Eve – Sociology	Joe Kongevick - Theatre
Merlynd Nestell – Earth & Environment	Michaela Vancliff - Mathematics
David Jorgensen – Mathematics	Suresh Sharma - Physics
Perry Fuchs – Psychology	Joe Guy - Architecture
Mary Lynn Crow – Education	David Stader - Education
Sharon Judkins – Nursing	Norman Cobb – Social Work
Maria Martinez-Cosio – Urban/Public Affairs	Tom Ingram – Communication
Gerald Saxon – Library (Ex Officio)	

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 2:38 p.m. by Senate Chair Dan Formanowicz.

Approval of Previous Minutes: Motion and second was made to approve the minutes from the 4-11-07 meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

Remarks by the President: I want to take an opportunity to introduce you to someone you already know, but is in a different role this academic year. To my right is Ron Elsenbaumer who has been our Vice President for Research for almost four years. I had asked Ron to serve as Interim Provost this year with Dana Dunn's decision to return to the classroom. Ron will have a few comments to make after I mention a couple of things and then we will open it up to your questions.

Let me start out by saying that in terms of the Provost position, as you know, we are going to do a nation search for Provost. We will consider internal and external candidates. I have appointed a committee. Some of those committee members are in this room. I brought a list of the members and will distribute copies to you. This will be available on the web. Co-chairs of this committee are Beth Wright, Dean of Liberal Arts; and John Priest, who is your Chair Elect. Dan is also a member of the committee. We have an excellent committee. We had our first meeting yesterday. Everyone was given an update of our goal and what the timetable is. I think that the goal is to find the best possible provost in as short a period of time as we can. What I told the committee yesterday is that my model for that position would be Dana Dunn who served with great distinction for the last few years in that role. We are going to begin putting together a position description and the position will be posted within the next ten days. We have appointed

a search consultant, Orbach and Associates, to work with the committee. They are a very experienced firm and have done provost searches before including, most recently, the University of Michigan provost search which yielded our Executive Vice Chancellor Terry Sullivan who is now in that position. They have also done a search for us just recently. They worked directly with us in the search for Vice President for Human Resource. The process is about to begin and there will be a period of time where people will be able to candidates and the hope is that the committee will be able, before the end of this semester, to review the top applicants and we will get to the point where we have finalists. I hope there will be anywhere from three to five finalists and there will be an opportunity for faculty, staff, and students to meet those finalists. The search committee will help assess and evaluate those finalists and ultimately make a decision. I hope during the spring semester. John Priest is a co-chair of the committee. Would you like to make any comments?

Chair Elect Priest: I think you pretty much summed it up. I would say in approximately two weeks we will have the job description finished. It will be sent out to the entire faculty. Certainly, if you know a good candidate, there will be instructions on who to contact. We want to have as many contacts as we can.

President Spaniolo: I just want to say that I appreciate the willingness of everyone on the Search Committee to serve in this important regard. I think it goes without saying that this is the most important search that we have done in the last few years. The other thing I want to mention just as a matter of information is for those of you who may have been gone this summer. You may have read about the fact that we are making plans to do some drilling on campus for natural gas. We talked with the Senate last spring about our plans to sign a lease with a firm that does natural gas drilling. That has been approved here as well as at the Board of Regents. There has been a lot of less than complete information floating around. For anyone who has questions about what the status of the process is and where we are, we have continually asked questions that we are updating on the website. I would say that we have tentatively selected one site to do initial drilling on campus. That is over near the Continuing Education building. There are a number of procedures that still need to be completed and studies that are ongoing. We don't have a timetable. It is possible that we may begin drilling before the end of the semester, but we don't know. When we do know, we will give plenty of notice. We held a public meeting during the summer to talk about our plans. When we know more about what our timetable will be, we will be doing a forum on campus so that everyone can understand and ask questions. Our plans are to drill in the initial setting and then we will assess that for a few months before we go any further. There are a number of people who are residents in the community surrounding campus who have been very concerned about what might happen. I want to be open as to what we are or are not doing. I will say for those who ask why is this important to the University try to take advantage of natural gas in the Barnett Shale below campus, the short answer is it offers an opportunity for significant revenue to the University over an extended period of time which would significantly benefit our faculty and students. It will strengthen the financial underpinnings of the University. I'm going to stop there and Ron has a few things to mention. Then we will open it up for questions.

The Interim Provost, Ron Eisenbaumer, then introduced himself and spoke about encouraging the ongoing open dialogue between the Provost's office and the faculty mediated by the chairs. He then discussed the three reviews of administrators that are scheduled for this term before moving on the the question of Texas Senate Bill 1231 concerning setting the maximum number of student drops at 6 withdrawals over the student's academic career. Language is being written and will be sent to faculty to include on their syllabi. The Interim Provost then spoke about

criminal background checks for new faculty hires and that we should be aware that the job candidates must be made aware of this fact. The floor was then opened for questions.

Questions for the President & Provost:

Senator Judkins: You said new faculty, not those who are already here.

VP Elsenbaumer: It is mostly adjunct faculty. People with whom we have less contact over the long-term.

Senator Judkins: Just so everyone knows, in the School of Nursing, we all have to have background checks. We cannot take our students to any agency in the Metroplex without them. So, we are all good.

Senator Porter: Is it appropriate to ask who the three Deans are coming up for review?

VP Elsenbaumer: Santos Hernández, Phil Cohen, and Jeanne Gerlack. Any other questions?

President Spaniolo: Dan mentioned the Special Events Center and what the status of that is in view of a story in the paper this summer quoting Rusty Ward, Vice President for Business, who said we would have a proposal to go to Austin sometime this fall on putting the Special Events Center in the “south forty.” The comment was made during an “off-the-cuff” way to get our opinion on the gas drilling. It was not meant as an official statement on behalf of the University or the President. I tried to tell the reporter for the Star Telegram that Rusty’s comment was one of his own aspirations and not the views of the President. He still put it in the paper. The truth is that we are working very hard. I hope to have a proposal for the Special Events Center sometime in the next few months. We are not ready to disclose the details yet. We haven’t officially announced the location. I think the “south forty” parking lot was the original preliminary location. We are looking at a couple of possibilities. The bottom line is sometime during this academic year, I hope that we have a proposal that we can make for the Special Events Center.

Remarks by the Faculty-Senate Chair: I don’t have a lot to say. I do want to talk a little bit about the Faculty Advisory Council. The Regents meeting in August is the opportunity the FAC to make their presentations to the Board of Regents. This summer two presentations were made. One was on problems dealing with recruiting and retention of faculty. Another has to do with alternatives to successful alternatives to the graduation rate formulas that are currently used. The two worked very nicely together. One was from M. D. Anderson on retention and recruitment. I put the presentation together on faculty recruitment and retention and alternatives to graduation rate formulae currently in use. Both are available on the Regents website in the agenda books. I can tell you that both presentations were received very well by the Regents. In fact, the Regents have asked for additional information about the graduations rates. Basically, what we are trying to do is educate the Regents on the fact that in order for us to be competitive, we have to do something about recruiting and retention. This issue is not completely clear to Board of Regents who think UTA is competing with Dallas and Houston. They don’t understand the national and international nature of recruitment. That is part of the reason we went after this. The other thing we wanted to do is talk to them about how that dovetails nicely in recruiting success.

The taskforce put in place after the Virginia Tech incident has formed a Behavioral Intervention Team. It is designed to deal with problems with students or problematic students whichever way you want to put it. We will have a speaker to present this probably next meeting. It will deal with pertinent information about where we can go and what we can do. It is intended to head off

problems with students and things of that nature. I don't want to go into a lot of detail. I will give you more about it – probably at the next meeting. The Safety Taskforce is primarily involved in nuts and bolts issues of safety on campus. One of the other things we talked about at this last meeting is looking into options on interior door locks. There are lots of issues involved including all sorts of safety issues. You should be aware that the taskforce is taking the job seriously. I think behavioral intervention is something you need to know about.

Senator Alavi queried Senate Chair Formanowicz on his presentation on recruitment and the policy of bringing in well known academics. The Senate Chair clarified that the presentation was about recruitment and retention. The presentation focused on the importance of not only recruiting but how to retain people and keep them here. Senator Alavi suggested that the income from the gas drilling might be used to help with this issue.

Senate Chair Formanowicz then proceeded to committee reports that he expected to be brief. Some of the committees were active over the summer. He reminded the committee chairs that were present that the committees were charged last spring and have ongoing projects. The Equity committee was active this summer and Senator Porter reported that the case that was brought before the committee was successfully settled and the issue resolved.

Senate Chair Formanowicz mentioned that along those same lines, an issue that the senate needs to talk about is one that can be described as hard third year review and non-renewal. Non-renewal of a contract following a hard third year review does not offer the same opportunities as non-renewal after not being promoted to associate professor, who would have one more year before leaving. Senator Porter stated that the senate hearing procedures were unwieldy and needed to be revisited.

Senate Chair Formanowicz then brought up the issue of background checks and who would be subject to them. Most of the problems in this area arise from last minute hires. Chair Elect Priest added that we need to look at who will see the results of background checks as well and what weight the information gathered would have.

The discussion then turned to the academic administrator reviews and the questionnaire that is used for evaluation. Chair Elect Priest suggested that a committee needs to talk to people who have been on a review committee and that the people on the current review committees have never done one before. He requested that if anyone who had been on one of these administrator reviews had any feedback that he would appreciate it. The senate then moved on to New Business.

New Business:

Survey – John Priest: I was in a meeting where we were conversing about the Barnett Shale monies and what could be done. One of the things that came out is that a lot of faculty have different ideas of priorities. I would like to determine whether or not we should do a faculty-wide survey of how we would spend the money. Is it parking, raises, beautification, scholarships for students, etc. It would be a non-binding survey. I would like to see if there is any interest in doing it. The results may come out very diverse. If we think it is beneficial, one of the committees could work out something. I would appreciate your thoughts.

Senator Alavi: I think it is a great idea. However, it depends on how you word a survey. I would propose that this body would come up with some ideas ourselves and communicate that to the faculty.

Senate Chair Formanowicz: John and I talked about this last summer. There is sort of a preliminary list that he and I tossed back and forth. Maybe what we should do is forward that to the members of this faculty. If you have ideas of things for addition, they can certainly be considered.

Salary Raises – Senator Porter: I brought this to Dan's attention at the request of a member of our department. I don't know what it's like in your college, but in the College of Liberal Arts, when one is promoted from associate to full, the stipend that is added to the salary is \$2,000. This is not very big compared to other peer institutions. If you work it out over twelve months after taxes and deductions, it comes up to a couple of hundred dollars, maybe, a month. I know one member of my department who was very qualified to go full and willing to do all the paperwork, considered the couple of hundred dollars as a disincentive. The question was could we appoint a committee to look into whether those raises are uniform across the University from college to college and how can we compare with peer institutions. We all know that salaries in Texas are much lower than they are across the country. This might be a way to attack, at least, a piece of the problem with the hope of some action being taken because it would involve a huge influx of funds.

Senator Stader: It may even include the jump from assistant to associate and tenure-track. You may want to consider that also.

Senate Chair Formanowicz: We can toss that to committee, as well. The last thing under New Business is that Ray Eve emailed me about two different parking issues. I'll speak to one and let Ray speak to the other. The question is why the students in my department can go online and get their stickers by mail and we can't. The standard answer was that campus mail is not secure. The first question asked about that was why do they send pay stubs through campus mail. I talked about this with Ron Elsenbaumer. What I am going to do is talk with John Hall about that and see if we can figure out why this is done. The students don't have to stand in line, but we do.

Senator Eve expressed his frustration with the parking sticker delivery system and with parking availability in general. Even if one does have a sticker, often it is impossible to find a space that one has paid for after 9 am in the faculty lots. He asked if there is not something that can be done with regard to this issue. Senator Marks responded that this is a long-standing problem and data was available on the gradual reduction of faculty parking by 60% over the past ten years and if anyone wanted access to it, he would make it available.

Senate Chair Formanowicz replied that answer you will get to that is the increase in cost is related to maintaining the lots. He also pointed out that UTA parking fees are lower than at other UTs.

Different ways of running the faculty lot were proposed and discussed by Senator Ardekani, Senator VanCliff, Senator Eve and Senator Martinez. Senator Dobbs pointed out that it is one thing to mark off specific areas at specific times and quite another thing to enforce it.

Senate Chair Formanowicz proposed that John Hall come and talk to the senate about parking issues.

Old Business –

Senare Chair Formanowicz: Last year we formed sort of an ad hoc committee to look into doing something about the teaching evaluations that we currently use. Everybody seems to be very unhappy with it. We didn't really get much done over the summer. We are still in the process of making it very clear that the current instrument we use is useless. It is useless to us and it is useless to the folks that are evaluating us.

Announcements: None

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