

# Minutes, Baylor University Faculty Senate Retreat

**24 August 2013 • 8:30 p.m. • Hankamer School of Business**

Members Absent: Boyd, Cook, Johnston, Jordan, Madden, Morgan, Neubert, and Riemenshneider.

I. The morning session was called to order at 8:40 AM and opened with a prayer by Dr. Still, Faculty Senate Chair.

- Chair elect Patton introduced a series of speakers delivering reports to the Senate. The reports included:
  - President Ken Starr, who addressed the Senate regarding the upcoming vote on the Transition Agreement (TA) between the University and the Baylor Alumni Association (BAA), and impressed upon the Senate that “the conscience of a university is the faculty.”
  - Reagan Ramsower, Senior VP for Operations and CFO, who gave an overview of the financial status of the University, and emphasized the importance of meeting the goal of capping future tuition increases at 4%. He also noted that gifts to the University were up from 2012.
  - Josh Whelan, Associate VP for Human Resources, who informed the Senate that the University was moving towards implementing a policy to make Baylor a smoke-free campus.
  - Elizabeth Davis, Executive VP and Provost, who discussed the importance of shared governance and praised the Senate for its accomplishments last year, including its work on a Master Teacher policy.
- After a brief break, Senator Patton introduced a special forum on the upcoming vote regarding the Transition Agreement that would unite Baylor University with the BAA. The speakers were:
  - Richard Willis, Chair of the BU Board of Regents
  - Collin Cox, President of the BAA
    - Both men spoke of the existence of a new era of mutual trust and cooperation between two entities—BU and the BAA—that had a long history of harshness and distrust towards one another. Both were very confident that the TA and its

proposal for a Baylor Line Corporation were steps towards moving forward together and moving beyond differences of the past. Mr. Willis stated that passage of the TA gives alumni a formal mechanism for communicating with the faculty and with the administration, and Mr. Cox noted that the Baylor faculty represents one of the few independent voices to which both sides of the conflict listen. They also answered questions from various senators regarding the voting procedure on September 7<sup>th</sup> and other matters.

- Mr. Willis also took questions from several senators regarding other issues that pertained to the Board of Regents, including criteria for choosing future board members, upcoming physical changes to campus, and online education.

## II. After the morning session, the Faculty Senate reconvened in Executive Session

- The question was put to the Senate: should the Faculty Senate pass a motion supporting the Transition Agreement?
- Several members spoke in support of passing such a motion, including Senator Baker, who serves on the BAA Board of Directors.
  - It was noted that while the TA is not perfect, negotiations on covenants that would shape the implementation of the TA were ongoing and promising.
- Some senators asked whether support from the Faculty Senate would be viewed by members of the BAA as helpful or as an intrusion.
  - Consensus was reached that it would overall be valuable for this body to speak to the issue.
- There was also discussion about whether this was an appropriate issue for the Senate to speak on, and again the consensus was that the fallout and litigation from a failure to pass the TA would negatively impact the reputation of both the University and the Baylor faculty, and thus should be a concern of the Faculty Senate.
- Concerns were raised that a statement from the Senate might be published by the University in a way that could come across in a less than positive tone.
  - It was agreed that if passed, the Faculty Senate's resolution should be sent directly from the Senate to faculty members and to the press, instead of distributed via the University administration.

- A draft resolution was created and displayed for the entire Senate, and revisions were made to it. The finalized version of the resolution read:

**BAYLOR UNIVERSITY FACULTY SENATE STATEMENT  
REGARDING THE TRANSITION AGREEMENT**

The Baylor University Faculty Senate supports reconciliation within the Baylor family. Having recently met jointly with the Chair of the Board of Regents and the President of the Baylor Alumni Association on the nature and terms of the Transition Agreement, we believe that this agreement holds great promise for moving our university forward in unity and mutual trust.

In the unanimous view of the Faculty Senate, this agreement promises a structure that allows alumni to work more directly and effectively with the Board of Regents and the university administration while maintaining an independent voice in university affairs through the proposed creation of the Baylor Line Corporation and the continuing publication of the Baylor Line.

The Faculty Senate encourages all members of the Baylor Alumni Association to vote in Waco Hall on September 7, 2013 from 11:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. To check membership status or to become a member, go to <http://www.baylorline.com>.

- A motion to approve the resolution was made by Senator Baldrige, and was seconded by Senator Harvey.
  - The motion passed unanimously, with no abstentions.
- Following the vote, Chair Still adjourned the meeting.