

Minutes, Baylor University Faculty Senate

11 December 2013 • 3:30 • Cashion 111

Members Absent: Neubert, Patteson, Walter, * Wood

The meeting was called to order at 3:30 PM by Senate Chair Patton, who also offered an opening invocation.

Senator Baldrige made a motion to approve the minutes from the November meeting, which was seconded and passed.

Chair Patton introduced Prof. Susan Bratton, Chair of the Diversity Committee, who addressed the Senate regarding an upcoming “faculty climate survey” to be conducted in order to assess the current situation at Baylor regarding diversity.

- The survey will assess information regarding gender, race, ethnicity, and disability diversity at Baylor.
 - Dr. Pedro Reyes, who will be in charge of the survey, added that there would be two separate surveys conducted, one for faculty and one for staff.
 - They will utilize similar surveys from other institutions, tweaking the language to fit Baylor’s culture
 - The committee hopes that the Faculty Senate will support the survey and encourage faculty to participate.
- Senator Harvey inquired whether the Senate could have access to the survey prior to it being conducted, and Dr. Bratton said that would be fine.
- Chair Patton also suggested that someone from the Senate be on the Diversity Committee, and Dr. Bratton agreed.

Chair Patton announced that the Senate committee on Service, discussed last month, was being formed and that Senator Beal had agreed to serve as chair of that committee.

* Suzy Weems attended in her place.

- Senator Newberry noted that the term “academic citizenship” was a more appropriate term to use than “service.”

Reports were received from several committees:

- Chair Patton reported from the Council of Deans
 - Reagan Ramsower gave a presentation regarding concerns about the increasing number of top-quality Texas high school students who are being recruited by schools such as Kansas and Oklahoma.
 - There is concern that Baylor is losing some of these top-tier students due to a failure on our part to fulfill our promises of one-on-one mentorship of undergraduates.
 - The renewed contract for head football coach Art Briles was discussed. It was noted that one of his primary requests was for better facilities for student athletes, such as a separate dining hall.

- Chair Patton also reported from the Parking and Transportation Committee.
 - He took the concerns raised by the Faculty Senate about scooters to them, and they are well aware of the issues raised and plan to address them.
 - Plans include forcing all students who drive a scooter on campus to get a license and take online safety training.
 - It was also announced that when new stadium opens, all on-campus parking will become paid parking and all students will have to remove cars from the parking decks.
 - Patton raised faculty concerns about effectively shutting down the campus on those days and how that might infringe on faculty who need to be in their buildings during those times.

- Senator Baker reported from the Staff Council.
 - The Council toured the BRIC facility, and the Council awarded its first scholarship.

- Senator Baker also reported on developments with the Baylor Alumni Association, noting that they passed a resolution that would change the BAA by-laws to allow electronic voting.

New Business

- Senator Hurtt had discussed the proposed changes to the calendar with constituents, who noted that the early registration benefit for children of faculty is used as a recruiting tool when bringing prospective faculty to campus, and therefore shouldn't be abolished.
 - Senator Still noted that the Calendar Committee was very likely going to retain early registration for faculty dependents.
- Senator Burleson asked about the Senate's position on online evaluations, especially now that the percentage of respondents continues to decline.
 - Senator Hurtt added that in order to get response levels back up to the levels they were at in the days of paper evaluations, faculty were having to resort to bribes of extra credit for students.
 - Concerns were raised by Senator Madden that the use of online evaluations could contribute to grade inflation.
 - Senator Beal stated that the response rates at the law school were particularly low, and that the school's request to be allowed to return to paper evaluations had been denied by the administration.
 - Chair Patton suggested that we invite the Provost to speak to the Senate and discuss the issue.

A motion to adjourn was made by Senator Riemenshneider and seconded by Senator Burleson, and the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by Joe Coker