Baylor University

Faculty Senate Newsletter

February, 2001

The **2000-01 Faculty Senate** officers and membership:

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Salaries, Benefits, and Security
by Jay Losey
Faculty Senate Chair

Salaries

On Wednesday, February 14, we in the English department learned from the chair that the base salary increase for full-time faculty members in AY 2001-2002 will be 2%, thereby freeing up merit pay to reward "productive" faculty. One day later, on Thursday, February 15, we learned from President Sloan during the faculty forum that salaries for Baylor faculty members are decidedly inferior to Tier 1 (top 50) institutions in the nation. This fact is significant because the president wants Baylor to become a Tier 1 institution before 2012. By the annual AAUP salary rankings, Baylor assistant professors' salaries are in the fourth quintile, associate professors' in the third quintile, and full professors' in the fourth quintile. Baylor has not seen a majority of its salaries in the third quintile in nearly a decade. There are many ways to interpret these disparate messages, but I'd like to urge the administration to increase salaries for full-time faculty so that we are competitive with Tier 1 institutions. I hesitate to speculate on the quintile rankings for instructors, lecturers, and senior lecturers, but my guess is that each group would appear in the fourth or fifth quintile.

I agree that merit pay should be determined by performance. But how will departmental chairs and deans measure performance? How are faculty members who have primarily teaching responsibilities (12 hours each semester) to be compared to faculty members who have reduced loads (9, 6, or 3 hours) and who publish extensively? Although "productive" may be determined in a number of ways, it would appear that in many departments those who publish will reap the merit-pay increases in AY 2001-2002. I don't believe such a calculation to be fair and certainly not within the "Baylor family" tradition. For every faculty member who receives a reduced load or release time, other faculty members see that professor's students added to their class rolls. Why should one receive merit-pay consideration and not the other? I urge chairs and deans to be cognizant of the sacrifice made by faculty members teaching a 4-4 load and to consider them as equally productive as "publishing" faculty.

Faculty members would be encouraged if the increased expectations were to be accompanied by salaries commensurate with those expectations. The president likes to use the phrase "ratchet up" in relation to publishing expectations; I'd like to challenge the administration to "ratchet up" salaries to meet the increased expectations for faculty members, especially tenure-track faculty.

Benefits

Related to salaries is the university's benefits package. One way for faculty members to accept lower salaries (fourth and third quintile) is to claim, "Well, we have a fantastic benefits package." But now faculty members are being told by the administration that all benefits are continuously under review. I've often rationalized my modest salary by believing that the university's contribution to my retirement fund and the post-retirement benefits would be compensatory. What if the university decides to decrease benefits? Will the senior administration compensate for any benefits reductions with proportional salary increases?

Rather than worrying about such a *quid pro quo* arrangement, I strongly encourage the university to do all that it can do to strengthen both salaries and benefits. We should not only receive Tier 1 salaries for all ranks, including instructors, lecturers, and senior lecturers, but also have the very finest benefits package available. Faculty members would like to have the current level of benefits increased and would also welcome a reduction of the 20 consecutive years of full-time service to qualify for full retirement benefits to 10 years. In addition, they would appreciate a policy to provide life-long medical coverage for faculty spouses whose wives or husbands precede them in death.

Several weeks ago, Marilyn Crone, Vice President for Human Resources, wrote in a widely distributed e-mail, "Recent *Wall Street Journal* articles noted the enormous reserves organizations must maintain to actuarially prepare for future liabilities related to post-retirement benefits and the changes being made to free up such reserves. Where is Baylor on this issue? We will be looking at post-retirement benefits to determine what they can and should be in the coming years." One opportunity in having benefits continuously under review is to search for ways to increase them. And if the administration reduces faculty benefits—for example, post-retirement health coverage—I can only agree with my colleague who recently quipped, "The university will have to make all faculty offices wheelchair accessible." We simply won't retire, which means that the university will have to pay full professor salaries instead of new assistant professor salaries.

Security

At the faculty forum on February 15, we also heard that President Sloan considers the faculty to be the single most important component of the university. As the faculty go, so goes the university. I agree with President Sloan on this crucial point. All our new buildings, all the millions and billions in the endowment, and our public relations campaigns are meaningless without an outstanding faculty—like the one now in place—to advance the mission and goals of the university. Nearly 700 full-time faculty members and 100+ part-time faculty members are teaching over 13,000 undergraduate and graduate students. We're preparing students to enter the business world, professional programs (such as law and medicine), and graduate programs, as well as other post-baccalaureate opportunities. Faculty members are clearly excelling in the four domains.

But what about the fate of our tenure-track colleagues? I worry that they are being asked to do more and more publishing (see the 1998 "Scholarly Expectations" document) while being expected to receive excellent student and peer evaluations, and demonstrate outstanding department, university, and community service, including involvement in a local church. The pressure on our tenure-track colleagues is immense. If we aspire to Tier 1 status, then we need to provide meaningful release time and reduced loads—in addition to those already available—to tenure-track candidates, just as we need to compensate adequately those faculty whose sacrifices will make such reductions possible.

We need to be humane in our expectations and to realize that Baylor University has not, at least until recently, been a major player in terms of faculty placing scholarship in peer-reviewed journals and presses. I support the endeavor to move into the top echelon (Tier 1 status), but also hope that senior administrators will consider a transition period as the university moves in that direction. Faculty members may crank out peer-reviewed journal articles and books if provided an opportunity and time; but not if they're required to teach 4-4 loads (or 100+ students per semester) along with all the additional expectations normally expected of a Baylor faculty member. Recently, I was told by a senior administrator that faculty can be excellent classroom teachers and excellent researchers and publishers. Everybody wants to see excellent classroom teaching and publications, but that expectation is unrealistic. Baylor University will have to decide—one way or the other—

what it wants to be. It can't be both without a more extensive overhaul of its academic program than anyone has so far proposed.

For tenure-track faculty going through the tenure-review process, I'm happy to report that the senior administration has agreed to give timely notification of tenure decisions. The plan is to notify all tenure candidates between March 15 and April 1. This notification will be separate from the contract letter, thus delinking the tenure decision from the issuing of contracts. For those of you going through the tenure-review year, I know how anxious you must be. I want to conclude these remarks by wishing those of you going through this process my congratulations and my best wishes for a successful review. You represent the future of this university and have also borne heavier expectations than many of your predecessors on the faculty. Once you receive tenure, you will be expected to add to your accomplishments as a tenure-track candidate; but you will have a life-long appointment and, I'm certain, will be productive faculty members for decades to come.

Strategic Issues for Finance & Administration

by David R. Brooks
Vice President for Finance and Administration

There are a great number of challenges that face Baylor University in the days and years ahead. The very face and character of higher education is changing before us. Since arriving on campus August 15th of last year and assuming full-time responsibilities as Vice President for Finance and Administration on October 1st, I have been working to familiarize myself with Baylor University and the unique opportunities we face as we look to the future. The University, under the leadership of President Sloan, is in the midst of casting a ten-year vision for Baylor in 2012, and there will certainly be a number of operational, financial, and technological implications that our strategic plan must address if we are to realize this vision. I have been asked to outline my thoughts on some of these issues and will attempt to do so herein.

One issue that I am sure is at the center of many faculty members' attention is the issue of faculty compensation and merit pay. The recruiting of outstanding new faculty members and retention of existing outstanding faculty members will certainly be a key part of the ten-year vision for Baylor. In order to accomplish this, we must continue to allocate increasing resources toward overall faculty compensation. However, I am a proponent of a merit compensation plan that pays for performance. In order to accomplish the long-term objectives of the University, we must determine the quality and amounts of teaching, scholarship, and community building that will move the University toward these objectives and then differentiate increases in compensation accordingly. This type of merit pay program should encourage greater achievement by existing faculty and assist in the recruitment and eventual hiring of outstanding new faculty members. The success of such a plan is contingent upon the establishment of clear performance objectives and the courage to differentiate compensation between those who accomplish the objectives and those who do not.

I fully realize the implications of the implementation of a compensation program such as this. The University must, and will, fund higher overall faculty compensation levels in order to achieve our vision for having a more outstanding faculty.

A related area pertains to the strength of our endowment. It is our long-term objective to have the endowment and overall investment portfolio of Baylor University contribute a greater percentage of the annual operating budget in the years to come. In order to accomplish this, the University must continue to not only raise new gifts to the endowment each year, but manage and invest the resources of the University more successfully in the future. In the next few weeks, I will be recommending to the Board of Directors of the Baylor Foundation and to the Board of Regents of the University a new structure and plan for the management and investment of the endowment and our overall investment portfolios. This proposal will call for a more aggressive asset allocation and new methods for investing these allocations. The importance of greatly increasing the endowment and investment portfolios cannot be over-emphasized.

At the same time, we are beginning an in-depth study of Baylor's tuition rate. Tuition revenues account for approximately two-thirds of Baylor's current fiscal year operating budget. There are competing interests in the need for continuing increases in revenue to accomplish our ten-year vision and the important priority of keeping tuition as affordable as possible for future students. Increases in future tuition rates must be consistent with this long-term vision and the mission of the University.

The Finance & Administration division of the University is also responsible for maintaining existing facilities as well as the planning and construction of new facilities. There are also many challenges ahead in the real estate area. While the Umphreys' law school building and the Truett seminary building are coming along well, we have pending projects for the Mayborn museum complex and a Panhellenic building. Construction of a new science building is a matter of considerable urgency, as are numerous remodeling and renovation projects on our existing facilities. While the above-mentioned projects are the most often cited real estate projects, there are considerable needs for additional parking garages, on-campus housing, and land acquisition for future expansion. I am in the early stages of developing a comprehensive plan for addressing these and other facility needs.

As is the case with all institutions of higher education. the information and technology issues for Baylor are dramatic. While I will leave the details and specifics of plans in this area to Dr. Ramsower and his outstanding staff, there are some overall views that I offer for your consideration. First, it is critical, in my view, that the University has one comprehensive vision and strategy in this area. This area will consume a large amount of financial resources in coming years and it is critical that the stakeholders of the University have confidence that we have one overall vision for the University and that we are not expending resources on competing or non-aligned strategies.

Secondly, while we must have a centralized vision and gatekeeping process, the application of our strategy must be as decentralized as possible. Meeting the needs of the faculty and their departments, the students in their classrooms and libraries, and the administration and staff in their respective areas is certainly the underlying reason for having a strategy.

Lastly, the information and technology area must seek to enhance the long-term vision and mission of the University. Investing in cutting-edge information and technology is not an objective in itself, but rather a means of enhancing the achievement of our academic and community building vision.

In conclusion, the finance and administration division will work diligently to be problem-solvers and creatively assist the University in overcoming any obstacles that stand in the way of achieving our vision of greatness for Baylor University.

Faculty Senate Meeting Dates
All meetings scheduled for Cashion 303 at 3:30 p.m.

March 20, 2001
April 17, 2001
May 8, 2001

President's State of the University Address
Barfield Drawing Room, Bill Daniel Student Center
3:30 - 5:00p.m.

Wednesday, April 18, 2001

Faculty Senate Website

http://www.baylor.edu/~Fac_Senate/senatehome.html

The Senate website has minutes, meeting dates, membership, and other important information. Please send suggestions to: buddy_gilchrest@Baylor.edu.

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