

Faculty Senate Resolution on the Failure of Shared Governance at Baylor University

Whereas, shared governance between the faculty and the administration is a fundamental principle in higher education and supported by every key association related to academia, including, but not limited to, the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges, the American Council of Education, and the American Association of University Professors; and

Whereas, as part of shared governance within a university, the faculty is primarily responsible for decisions pertaining to faculty status, including appointments, reappointments, decisions not to reappoint, promotions, the granting of tenure, and dismissal; and

Whereas, the faculty at Baylor University, at the direction of the Office of the Provost and through the actions of the various departments in 2002 and 2003, developed written statements that define scholarly expectations within each department and school, and these statements were subsequently discussed and revised in consultation with the various deans and the Office of the Provost prior to final approval by the Provost; and

Whereas, candidates for tenure during the 2007-08 academic year had for several years used the written departmental guidelines to determine whether they were making satisfactory progress towards tenure, and the departments and schools themselves had also used these guidelines to advise prospective tenure candidates whether they were making satisfactory progress towards tenure; and

Whereas, the current version of the document titled Tenure Policy and Procedures at Baylor University (BUPP 704, approved by President John M. Lilley on January 6, 2006) refers explicitly to the departmental expectations as part of the material reviewed by the University Tenure Committee; and

Whereas, neither candidates for tenure, departments, deans, nor the University Tenure Committee were informed by the President or Provost that these departmental guidelines provided insufficient minimum standards for scholarly production prior to the time that tenure candidates filed their notebooks and departments and schools voted on the candidates' applications for tenure; and

Whereas, the President and Provost at some point during a de novo tenure review process determined that at least some of the written departmental guidelines for scholarly expectations were insufficient; and

Whereas, the President and Provost, in an exercise of their own judgments, determined that the scholarship of a significant number of the 30 candidates for tenure in 2007-08 was insufficient and thus denied tenure to 12 of these candidates; and

Whereas, at least some of the decisions of the President and Provost apparently conflicted with recommendations from the University Tenure Committee; and

Whereas, standards in academia provide that the President and Provost should "concur with the faculty judgment except in rare instances and for compelling reasons which should be stated in detail"¹; and

Whereas, after requesting information about the number of candidates who were recommended for tenure by the University Tenure Committee but denied by the President and Provost, the Faculty Senate received neither the information it requested nor information providing reasons why the President and Provost chose not to concur with faculty judgment; and

Whereas, the Faculty Senate categorically rejects the conclusion that either the President or the Provost is in a suitable position to question the quality of scholarship in each academic department and effectively substitute his own judgment for departmental judgment on issues pertaining to faculty status; and

Whereas, the Faculty Senate emphatically decries the implications of the President's public assertion that he trusts and/or has confidence in only certain unnamed departments and deans; and

Whereas, the President and Provost have indicated that there will be substantial revision of the tenure process and departmental guidelines, engendering widespread faculty concern that the resulting expectations will be less objective and less useful in evaluating and advising untenured faculty in the probationary period, and

Whereas, the fallout from the denial of tenure for 12 of 30 tenure candidates during the spring semester in 2008 and the statements made by the President and Provost subsequent to those decisions has resulted in a sudden and severe decline in faculty morale at Baylor University.

Now, therefore, be it resolved that the Baylor University Faculty Senate immediately calls for the following:

(1) That the University through the President and Provost immediately restore shared governance by adopting policies designed to ensure that the faculty is primarily responsible for decisions pertaining to faculty status, including appointments, reappointments, decisions not to reappoint, promotions, the granting of tenure, and dismissal; and

(2) That the University through the President and Provost ensure that candidates for tenure and promotion are assured due process, including guarantees that the candidates are judged fairly on criteria that will not cause unwarranted surprise for either the candidates or their departments; and

¹ 1966 *Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities*, formulated by the American Council on Education, American Association of University Professors, and Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges.

(3) That any revision to the tenure policy and departmental guidelines employ departmental faculty as the primary authority with respect to scholarship expectations, and that the effort favor more rather than less objective criteria, and

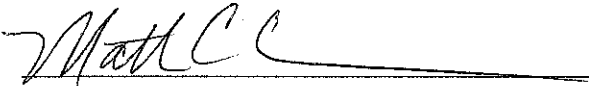
(4) That the President and Provost resolve to implement changes in the tenure policy on a schedule that permits each faculty member to be made aware of and prepared for the expectations that will be in effect when they are evaluated for tenure or promotion, and

(5) Where the President and Provost have developed a lack of trust in deans and chairs, they resolve to work with the relevant schools and departments to make their concerns clear and to restore trust so that the integrity of faculty evaluation, tenure and hiring decisions is not compromised; and

(6) That the University through the President and Provost take immediate steps to repair the damage to faculty morale and to restore trust between the faculty and the President and Provost.

Be it further resolved that should the University through the actions of the President and Provost fail to satisfy these requests, the Faculty Senate will take steps to request an external review of shared governance from an appropriate professional association within academia. The Faculty Senate will also determine which additional steps to take in light of the response to this resolution.

Considered and approved at the May 6 meeting of the Baylor University Faculty Senate.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Matt C C", is written over a horizontal line.

Matthew C. Cordon
Chair, Faculty Senate, 2007-08