

## MINUTES OF THE FACULTY SENATE MEETING

April 12, 2005, at 3:30 PM in Rogers 109

**Present:** Senators Baldrige, Boyd, Brown, Chonko, Cloud, Connally, Cordon, Cox, Diaz-Granados, Garner, Green, Hanks, Lehr, Mathis, McGee, McGlashan, McManness, Miner, Ngan, Norman, O'Brien, Patton (Chair), Pennington, Pinney, Robinson, Rosenbaum, Rust, Spain, Stanley, Sturgill, Vitanza, Wallace, Williams.

**Absent with notification:** Senator Purdy.

**Invited Guests:** Mr. Bill Brian, Chairman of the Presidential Search Committee of the Board of Regents; Dr. Reagan Ramsower, Acting Vice President for Financial Affairs, CIO, and Dean of the Libraries.

**I.** The meeting was called to order at 3:34 PM. Following the Chair's welcome Senator McGee offered the invocation.

**II.** The minutes of the Senate's March 2005 meeting, distributed earlier by e-mail, were unanimously approved.

**III. Mr. Bill Brian, Chair of Regents' Presidential Search Committee.**

Mr. Brian, after briefly reiterating the overall search process and its likely timeline, indicated that he and his committee want primarily to listen to the various constituencies on and off campus to determine the criteria a successful candidate for the position of President would need to bring to the job. For the next hour he invited comments and suggestions from the assembled Senators and took notes for himself and to share with other members of his committee and possibly with the Advisory Committee as well.

More than a dozen Senators offered insights and suggestions for Mr. Brian and his committee. A prominent subject was the need to bring intelligent healing to the campus and to reestablish trust and open communications between the administration and the faculty. The faculty in their majority are hurting and continue to consider themselves disenfranchised and excluded from the kind of shared governance in academic and educational areas that is standard at leading universities. Baylor's policies and procedures must mirror openness, fairness, and professionalism, and avoid both favoritism and retribution against dissenters. The present polarization on campus must yield to honest dialogue and opportunities to involve broader segments of the Baylor constituencies in decision-making. The new leadership must have both courage and compassion to carry this through.

Many comments touched on Vision 2012 and the need to reexamine its central features and priorities in light of the experience of the past few years and of Baylor's resources, present and projected. Several Senators stressed the need to

restore to Baylor its own, historically unique trajectory in higher education as opposed to efforts to import or clone the management and philosophical arrangements at certain evangelical institutions elsewhere. This may call for a review of the present curriculum and the possible downscaling of programs whose academic viability may be questionable or its overall desirability a matter of debate.

Senators made it especially clear that they desire a strong academic as Baylor's next president. Such an individual would enjoy far more respect than someone whose reputation rests on accomplishments outside higher education. Knowledge of the way universities function should be a central criterion for the selection of Baylor's next leader. After all, education is the university's primary concern, and its next president needs to understand and appreciate this fully.

Senate Chair Jim Patton assured Mr. Brian that the Faculty Senate is already in the process of helping fix a broad range of problems, for example the personnel policy manual in cooperation with the staff members of the Provost's Office. The new president would be able to count on such cooperation in the future as long as core values, such as academic freedom, remain untouched.

Mr. Brian thanked the Senate for its many suggestions and left the proceedings at 4:35 PM to a round of applause.

#### **IV. Dr. Reagan Ramsower.**

At the Senate's invitation, Dr. Reagan Ramsower updated the Senate on financial and enrollment matters and answered questions from the floor. He stressed that he would enjoy the privilege of addressing the Senate more often than has been the case in the past.

With already 2,800 deposits, enrollment for Fall 2005 looks encouraging. Baylor plans to exercise a "soft close" for freshmen admissions around April 15. After that date students would require an SAT score of 1210 or higher to be considered. The discount rate is currently slightly below the figure for last year. The number of National Merit Scholars comes in at some 10 percent above last year's.

Dr. Ramsower characterized next year's budget as prudent and conservative. Future budgets will pay more attention to maintenance and replacement costs as well as reflect a more sophisticated hiring process. It is acceptable and indeed expected if some university units are running in the red as long as they are balanced out by others running in the black. Such phenomena are quite typical for non-profit organizations. Asked whether he is bothered by the overly aggressive "spin" of financial information by certain university officials, Dr. Ramsower pointed to the different audiences at whom such information is typically addressed. Within the university community, he maintained, clarity and straightforwardness should always prevail.

Dr. Ramsower concluded his remarks at 5:20 PM to a round of applause.

## **V. Committee/Liaison Reports**

Due to time restraints, all committee and liaison reports were postponed until the next meeting or will be sent out by e-mail, except for enrollment management. Senator Stanley offered information in addition to the data revealed by Dr. Ramsower. Retention figures for the spring semester look better than for the previous year. The leading causes for students failing to stay are poor grades, dissatisfaction (one way or the other) with Baylor's religious expectations, requirements and practices, and social isolation. Some 293 provisional students have put down deposits and are expected to attend summer school this year.

## **VI. New Business.**

**A. Senate Officer Election.** A committee consisting of the current Senate Chair, Chair-Elect, Secretary and Publicity Officer will be joined by Senators Chonko, Diaz-Granados, Purdy and Wallace to draw up a slate of officer candidates for the 2005-2006 academic year. This slate (plus any additional candidates nominated from the floor of the Senate) will be voted upon at the May meeting.

**B. May Meeting.** Plans are to convene the next Senate meeting on May 2 at a time earlier in the day so that all remaining business for the current academic year can be attended to in good order.

## **VII. The meeting was adjourned at 5:38 PM.**

Respectfully submitted,

Eric C. Rust  
Secretary, Faculty Senate