

## MINUTES OF THE FACULTY SENATE MEETING

December 9, 2003, 3:30 p.m., in Cashion 303

**Present:** Senators Abbott-Kirk, Brown, Cloud, Connally, Cordon, Cox (Chair), Dunn, Gilbreath, Green, Hanks, Haynes, Lehr, Mathis, McGee, McGlashan, McManness, Norman, Patton, Pinney, Purdy, Robinson, Rust, Spain, Stanley, Sturgill, Tatum, Mark Taylor (for Baldrige), Wallace, Weaver, Williams, Wilson, Young.

**Absent with notification:** Senators Beck, Ngan.

**Present for part of the proceedings:** Dr. Greg Benesh, University Ombudsman.

- I. The meeting was called to order at 3:34 p.m. Senator McGee gave the invocation.
- II. The minutes of the November meeting, distributed earlier by e-mail, were unanimously approved.
- III. **Old Business**

**A: Small Group Meetings with President Sloan.** Senators originally slated to meet with President Sloan on November 25 will join the two groups of Senators scheduled to meet with him in the spring semester.

**B: Ombudsman's Relationship to Faculty Senate.** Upon invitation by the Senate Chair, the University Ombudsman for Faculty, Dr. Greg Benesh, laid out his considerations why he should become an *ex officio* attendee of Senate meetings. After reporting on the nature of the cases brought before him so far, Dr. Benesh argued that his regular attendance would (1) enhance his ability to learn about important issues involving faculty; (2) allow him to judge matters before him with greater fairness and balance by enjoying timely and first-hand knowledge of faculty concerns and views; (3) parallel his standing invitation to attend meetings of the Council of Deans; and (4) make it easier for him to help resolve issues that overlap with Senate business. After answering questions from the floor, Dr. Benesh left the meeting at 4:05 p.m.

Following discussion and straw votes on several compromise proposals, Senators agreed that the present arrangement should continue. Under its terms, guests such as the Ombudsman may be invited on a case-by-case basis by the Senate Chair if specific agenda items suggest their presence to be appropriate or desirable. In disagreeing with the Ombudsman's proposal, Senators stressed, among other points, that (1) the Ombudsman is not chosen by the faculty but serves at the pleasure of the administration; (2) the confidentiality of Senate discussions could be compromised by the Ombudsman's prerogative to initiate inquiries on any

matter that comes to his attention; (3) questions have arisen over how the Ombudsman gained access to a recent confidential report the Senate has given to a committee of the Regents; and (4) the Senate Chair's judgment can be trusted in deciding when the Ombudsman's presence at Senate meetings would be beneficial both for him and the Senate. The Ombudsman will also receive a copy of the minutes of all Senate meetings as soon as approved.

Throughout their discussion Senators emphasized that Dr. Benesh's personal integrity is beyond question, and that their decision grew solely from general concerns over matters of confidentiality, practicality, and precedence.

**C: Report of the Ad Hoc Committee on Faculty Expectations/Evaluation.**

After making minor changes in the wording of the report, which had been distributed earlier by e-mail, the Senate endorsed it unanimously upon a motion made by Senator McGee and seconded by Senator Norman. The Senate thanked Senator Robinson and his committee with a round of applause for their fast and thorough work. The report will now be forwarded to the Provost as representing the faculty's proposal on how to replace the defunct A/B classification system.

**D: Ray Wilson, Master Teacher.** The Senate extended its congratulations to Senator Wilson on his recent designation as a Master Teacher.

**E: Medical Benefits Task Force.** Senators Lehr and Pinney (co-chairs) presented a preliminary report of the Medical Benefits Task Force. Following the presentation, numerous Senators lamented not only the decline of benefits despite higher premiums, but also the apparent unfairness with regard to the setting of the top contribution categories. Senator Williams invited attention to the fact that faculty who do not teach in the summer are classified in the same premium category as those who do teach since contributions are calculated on a ten-month salary basis. This situation has been explained to Vice President Crone who agrees that it is indeed unfair. Other Senators stressed the absence of an official maternal leave policy for faculty, the uncertainty surrounding benefits for retirees, and the urgent need for a strategic compensation plan or package for all faculty. A full report by the task force is expected in the spring.

#### **IV. Committee/Liaison Reports**

**A. Faculty Committee on Academic Freedom, Responsibility and Environment** (Senator McGlashan, chair): No report.

**B. Faculty Committee on Enrollment Management** (Senator Stanley, chair): Freshman applications and admissions continue to run ahead of 2001 levels. While the number of deposits is ahead of last year, the low deposits to admissions ratio is a ground for worry. Additional provisional students may be accepted and enrolled in the spring. Based on their classroom experience, Senators expressed grave concerns over a proposed policy change that would drop the TOEFL

requirement for international students in favor of acceptable scores on the verbal part of the SAT/ACT.

**C. Faculty Committee on Physical Facilities** (Senator Beck, chair): No report.

**D. Faculty Committee on Student Life and Services** (Senator Wilson, chair): No report.

**E. Liaison Reports.**

**A: Athletic Council** (Senator Dunn): The Council continues to be impressed with Baylor's new Athletic Director. Faculty response rates for the two student athletes' academic progress report mailings this fall have been 73 and 50 percent, respectively. While impressive, these rates could be higher and Senators pledged to encourage the faculty at large to cooperate fully with the Athletic Department. Baylor has hired a second compliance officer with a law degree. An on-campus indoor athletic practice facility is in the talking stage.

**B: Staff Council** (Senator Brown): No report.

**C: Personnel Benefits and Compensation** (Senators Ngan/Williams): No report.

**V. New Business**

**A: Lecturers.** Senator Tatum reported that the Provost assured attendees of a recent crowded meeting of the local AAUP that lecturers will continue to be a part of Baylor's faculty. Dr. Jeffrey said that there is "absolutely zero chance that lecturers will be phased out." Moreover, "there is almost a zero chance that the number of lecturers that we have at the university will be reduced." As for Senior Lecturers, Dr. Jeffrey asserted that they should view themselves as having job security: "Let me make sure that we understand each other. I've said that Senior Lecturers, people who rise to that level, end up having a kind of *de facto* tenure, which I do not dispute. And I think we need to couch our language about Senior Lecturers in such a way that they are seen by themselves and by others as having a very high order of job security." Dr. Jeffrey went on to outline his view that there should be a more intentional and systematic process to promote Lecturers to the rank of Senior Lecturer, a process that would include, he suggested, third and sixth year reviews.

The Senate welcomed the Provost's remarks. Several Senators expressed concern about the evenness of the proposed evaluation process for lecturers, especially in their sixth year. The situation will be monitored closely.

**B: Due Process.** A Senator has requested that the Senate look into a case involving the possible denial of due process. The issue was put off until January.

**C: Chair's Report on Council of Deans Meeting (December 3).** Typically about one third of all faculty searches are unsuccessful. In the future, the tenure process will likely include reviews by external peers. The administration is now less concerned about Baylor's ranking by *US News & World Report* than about the excellence of individual schools and departments. The Provost expressed his displeasure about faculty who cancelled classes on the day(s) before the official Thanksgiving break. For now, the new Department of Statistics will function as a freestanding, separate unit directly under the Provost. The reasons for this arrangement were characterized as "political."

**VI.** The meeting was adjourned at 5:34 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Eric C. Rust  
Secretary