

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL FACULTY SENATE MEETING

January 27, 2004, 3:30 p.m., in Cashion 303

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

Absent: None. Several Senators arrived late or had to depart early.

I. The meeting was called to order at 3:34 p.m. Senator Beck gave the invocation.

II. Purpose:

Senator Cox called the special session to discuss (a) a request by Mr. Will Davis, chair of the Regents committee charged with investigating faculty issues at Baylor, to release to President Sloan the confidential report originally prepared for and provided to Mr. Davis's committee by the Senate's Executive on October 3, 2003; (b) whether to request from Mr. Davis's the Provost's critique of that document; (c) whether to release the confidential report to the full Senate; and (d) future measures and priorities.

Before deliberations commenced, the Senate approved unanimously the following resolution, introduced by Senator Beck and seconded by Senator Stanley, namely,

"To commend the Executive Committee for their trust and integrity in their dealings with the Administration and the Regents."

III. Discussion Points

A: Faculty E-mail. On January 22 the Senate Chair requested that the Provost's Office distribute by e-mail to all Baylor faculty a message approved electronically by all Senators to the effect that the Senate and its Executive Committee had not "leaked" the confidential report to any unauthorized party. On January 27 the Provost's Office informed the Senate chair that the message would only be sent if the Senate agreed to include an attachment stating that neither the Provost nor Mr. Davis's committee had made the report available to unauthorized parties.

After a debate centering on the Senate's right to communicate freely and without censorship with the faculty, and after a considerably harsher motion was defeated by a majority of one vote, the Senate voted 26-3 to instruct each individual Senator to e-mail to her or his faculty "constituents" or "reporting groups" the originally approved text of the message by late Friday, January 30.

B: Document Release. After members of the Executive Committee had shared with the rest of the Senate details of the history of the confidential report, the separate agenda points listed under item II. above blended into a general discussion on whether to release the confidential report, to whom, how, in what version, and on what time schedule.

After the chair was encouraged to obtain, if possible, the Provost's critique of the report, debate concentrated for most of the rest of the session on a motion to instruct the Executive Committee to "release a complete, 'no names' version of the report to the Faculty Senate, the Regents, the President and all Baylor faculty within a week." In the end this motion was defeated by a vote of 9-19 (with 2 abstentions).

In its place a substitute motion was introduced that called for the Executive Committee to release a "complete, updated, 'no names' version of the report to all Regents within a week" and to allow, as before, all Faculty Senate members to read the report confidentially in the offices of members of the Executive Committee. This motion carried by a vote of 28-4.

In a final motion, approved unanimously, the Senate instructed its Executive Committee to prepare, with the assistance of selected other Senators, an interim report by the time of the Senate's February meeting on possible accreditation issues as suggested by the findings of the confidential report and other available information.

VI. The meeting was adjourned at 6:02 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Eric C. Rust
Secretary