Faculty Senate Minutes

April 8, 2008
Room 303 Cashion
3:30 pm

Members present: Senators Blackwell, Bowman, Boyd, Brown, Cannon, Cloud, Connally, Cordon, Diaz-Granados, Duhrkopf, Gardner, Garner, Green, Richard Edwards (for Korpi), Lehr, Longfellow, Long, Losey, Miner, Myers, Ngan, Nunley, Pennington, Purdy, Rajaratnam, Rosembaum, Sadler, Spain, Stone, Erich Baker (for Sturgill), Beth Willingham (for Supplee), Randy Wood (for Talbert), Vitanza.

Absent: Senator Kayworth and Senator Tolbert.

I. Welcome and Invocation.

The meeting was called to order at 3:35 p.m. Robert Cloud offered the invocation.

II Guest: Executive Vice president and Provost Randall O'Brien

Provost: Good to be here. I know there are questions regarding the tenure decisions and that you realize there are some aspects of those that can't be discussed due to privacy concerns. Probably two hours and fifty minutes of our meeting with the Senate Executive Committee were devoted to tenure issues. I have a few other matters to discuss before answering your questions:

1. The deans were evaluated in the spring of 2007. Those evaluations were carefully considered and in some cases faculty members in particular colleges were consulted. Holding new evaluations in spring 2008 seems impractical, since there hasn't been enough time for deans to make recommended improvements, so their next evaluation will be in the fall semester 2008. Department chairs are evaluated on staggered three-year cycles, and deans have been told to tighten up that process. The Board of Regents evaluates the President and Provost every year.

2. We're working on increasing graduate student stipends. Baylor's are well below those at schools like Princeton, Duke, and Vanderbilt. We have finite resources, but we will begin by raising stipends at the rate tuition increases (6.5% this year) or better.

3. Next year's freshman class is currently projected at 3050 students (last fall's was 2750). This could rise to 3200, but that seems unlikely. Steps will be taken to add more freshman classes, as needed.

4. Provost yields to **Pattie Orr, Vice President for Information Technology and Dean of Libraries**. Online "phishing" for ID information

through bogus websites is increasingly sophisticated. Security firm hired by Baylor created a replica Baylor website and asked 60 BU students to answer a phony survey for FERPA information. Twelve of the sixty provided their Bear IDs and passwords. If you have suspicions about anything you receive online, contact the HELP desk.

5. Announcement of the second Distinguished Scholar Lecture, by Charles Talbert, Religion.

6. Annual faculty evaluation forms will now be initialed by the department chair and dean, but not the Provost. Since appeals (of raises, etc.) go to committees which then make recommendations to the Provost for final decisions, it seems appropriate that he not endorse the original evaluation.

7. Fourth, and final, mentoring session for new 2207-2008 faculty (on Research, Publication, Teaching and the Tenure process) will be held today.

Senator: What was the number of tenure candidates this spring, 29 or 30?
Provost: 30.
Senator: Is it correct that in the cases of the twelve turned down, three of those decisions confirmed the recommendations of departments and/or the Tenure Committee, and nine reversed those recommendations? Provost: Your numbers are incorrect, but I have to be careful about what I say, due to privacy concerns. Senator: President Lilley said last year that there shouldn't be any "surprises" for candidates when they came up for tenure. Were these candidates aware that they were in trouble, and had they been informed of their shortcomings throughout the process? Provost: Several were "surprises", and if the overall goal was "no surprises" it clearly was not achieved. Not all of the decisions should have been surprises, though.
Senator: How do we avoid this in the future?
Provost: I realize that changes can't help the candidates this year. We all realize that we are talking about families and careers. It is important to understand that decisions to deny tenure are made with a sense of remorse. Eleven of the twelve candidates (who were denied tenure) have asked for the reasons. They had eleven days to do this. The administration had two weeks to reply, and has. The candidates then have thirty days to ask for reconsideration, and four of those eleven have, so far. Some merely ask to be reconsidered, and some submit additional materials. The President and Provost review these. There have been reversals in the past. How do we improve the process? It's best not to see this as something the administration should do. We have to have faculty input, and discuss this at the summer deans' retreat.

Senator: How long should administrative reconsideration of cases take?
Provost: As short a time as possible, perhaps one or two days. Senator: Will we know the results by the next Senate meeting (May 6)? Provost: Yes.
Provost: Do candidates have to ask why they were denied tenure? Provost: Yes. The initial letter states yes or no. Candidates must ask for reasons. Time for the administration to review requests for reconsideration has already been scheduled (at the end of the thirty day period). Senator:

Were these decisions the result of some "breakdown" at the departmental level? Will we know? Provost: No. Discretion and privacy concerns mean we won't discuss the details of individual cases. Senator: How can departments do better? Provost: That will be the subject of a comprehensive review. Senator: What do you review in the reconsideration process? Provost: If new materials are submitted, those have to go to the Tenure Committee. If not, the President and Provost review the notebooks, look for human error. Of course, the meeting of the Tenure Committee could prolong the process. Senator: The last sentence of the letter announcing a negative decision is "Thank you for your interest in Baylor University". That's insensitive and insulting. Provost: We can do better than that. It sounds as if that line was taken from the form letter declining a candidate for hiring.

Senator: Can the Provost interact directly with the chair and tenured faculty of departments to rebuild documents listing expectations without trying to completely objectify the process? Provost: Yes. I totally agree we should.

Senator: I think chairs should be evaluated annually, like deans. Provost: OK. A good idea. Senator: In the mentoring sessions for new faculty, a segment on "collegiality"
(with a clear definition) is needed. Provost: OK. That makes sense.
Senator: Letters denying tenure should be specific. Provost: There are litigation concerns involved. The letters address categories, not details.
Senator: Departmental requirements and standards for tenure were requested, drawn up, reviewed, vetted, and revised for up to four years. Candidates were trying to meet these requirements.

Senator: Could we have more information on the refinancing of Baylor's debt?
Provost: Some of the previous financing was at adjustable interest rates, though these were initially 3.5%. Our new arrangements lock in refinancing at 5.5% over thirty years. Reagan Ramsower did a very good job on this.

Senator: Back to the question of tenure decision "surprises". Were candidates who were told they were proceeding satisfactorily toward tenure misinformed? Provost: I recognize the state of shock, sadness, even anger people feel. The process is always open to improvement. Recommendations have been reversed (both pro and con) in the past.
The number of denials this year is new. The process does not stop at the department, dean or Tenure Committee. The President makes the final call. Baylor has always done it this way. In trying to apply and implement 2012, we need to ask, how do we get there?
The Baylor family needs to be in conversation about this. When nine of twelve candidates have four or fewer publications, we need to establish the number and quality expected for publications, the selectivity of journals, the role of co-authorship. All decisions this year were made "through the lens of 2012". If this is where we are, and this (2012) is where we want to be, how do we get there?

III Guest: Pattie Orr, Vice President for Information Technology and Dean of Libraries, **Sandy Bennett (Lecturer, Information Systems), and Parker Short (Academic Affairs/Student Government).**

First matter: Student government would like to know if Blackboard can carry class syllabi for students to consult when registering for classes. This can be done. It can be voluntary, and posting would be temporary. Should faculty opt in to such a system or be able to opt out?

Senator: Syllabi are often prepared just before classes start--they can't be available in time for registration. Answer: Students would just look at current courses, not those for the next semester. Senator: Students are just looking for the easiest courses. Why should we help them? Answer: This would be easier for faculty. There would be fewer requests for information about classes. It would provide more information than the catalog entries. The system under consideration (a Blackboard site is projected) would add a "syllabus" link to the Blackboard course menu. It could be open to students by default, or faculty could enter their syllabi themselves and decide whether to provide access. Senator: If faculty wanted to conceal their syllabus, they could put it in "Course documents" or "Information"? Answer: Yes. Senator: Syllabi vary in length and the types of material they contain. Answer: Faculty can post whatever they wish to.

Second matter: Proposal to add photos to the online faculty directory. The current ID card photos would be used. Faculty could have new photos taken without charge. Faculty could opt out (as they do now with addresses and phone numbers). They would only be available to people who can log on to the system. There will be publicity to alert faculty who want new photos taken, perhaps in May. Senator: Will this eliminate the (printed) faculty facebook? Answer: Although many photos in the facebook are out of date, this proposal is to provide an additional resource, not replace an existing one.

IV. Guest: Nancy Chinn, Chair, General Education Task Force

(Written report not distributed. Chair apologizes and promises report will be emailed to senators)

Brief summary of work of Task Force, which has identified four competencies to be evaluated as part of ongoing assessment plan for SACS. Student essays will be read for evaluation in May. Faculty will be needed to read essays. The Task Force will end at the conclusion of the 2007-2008 school year, but this assessment process has to be ongoing.
Decision needed on who will evaluate the annual assessments.

V. Guests: Chuck Cullen, Chris Krause, Shelley Deats (Parking Services)

Executive Summary--Parking and Transportation Strategy distributed.

Report on the results of the online parking survey. There were 2600 respondents, with 1300 of them faculty and staff.   Most common complaints were need for more parking spaces, better lighting of lots, and more enforcement of parking regulations.

There are currently 1400 faculty parking spaces and 6360 student spaces on campus, with 2600 more at the Ferrell Center.

Proposed changes for this summer:
1. Create 100 new faculty parking spaces.
2. Backing into parking spaces will be OK.
3. Reduce visitor parking from 13 to 7 lots.
4. Repair parking lots.

Executive Summary also contains list of parking fees to cover cost of maintaining parking lots and garages, including proposal for annual parking fees for faculty and staff.

Senator: Proposal for faculty fees is offensive--why now? Answer: Parking costs have to be covered. Senator: Fees will be particularly burdensome for poorly paid staff. Fees don't guarantee spaces. Answer: Various options can be considered. Summary suggests
$200 surcharge to guarantee a space. Senator: This is just a further reduction of faculty benefits. Your study compares Baylor with schools with much higher faculty salaries.
Answer: We're taking down your responses. This isn't a quick fix, and any changes will be the result of a slow process. Responses from all of the groups we've addressed have been similar. Senator: What's the problem with parking now? Answer: This is a new survey by a new agency. Senator: Why isn't parking funded like other costs--heating, air conditioning, building maintenance--out of the general budget? Answer: Parking is treated as an "auxiliary service" which must pay for itself.

VI. Approval of Minutes.

A **motion to approve** was made by Senator Duhrkopf and seconded by Senator Stone.
The minutes were approved unanimously .

VII. Old Business

A. Tenure Decisions.

Chair reported on Executive Committee meeting with President and Provost.

A **motion** to adopt a statement of concern written by Dr. Steve Sadler (Religion) and distributed to senators was made by Senator Cloud and seconded by Senator Purdy.
After general discussion, a **motion to table** was made by Senator Cannon and seconded by Senator Duhrkopf. The motion passed with two abstentions.

Senator Duhrkopf moved the adoption of the following **motion** (to be communicated to the President and Provost) and was seconded by Senator Long. It was adopted unanimously.

The Faculty Senate expresses its deep concern on what appears to be a

failure of shared governance and requests information regarding the number of candidates who were denied tenure in opposition to an affirmative vote by the University Tenure Committee.

B. Committee on Committees Update

The Committee on Committees report for 2008-2009 is nearly complete. The chair expressed his thanks for those who have worked on it.

VIII. Committee/Liaison Reports

IX. New Business

The meeting was adjourned at 6:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

David Longfellow
Acting Secretary.