

FACULTY SENATE MINUTES

January 15, 2008
Room 303 Cashion
3:30 p.m.

Members Present: Senators Blackwell, Bowman, Boyd, Brown, Cannon, Cloud, Connally, Cordon, Diaz-Granados, Duhrkopf, Gardner, Green, Kayworth, Korpi, Lehr, Longfellow, Long, Losey, Miner, Myers, Ngan, Nunley, Pennington, Purdy, Rajaratnam, Rosenbaum, Spain, Stone, Sturgill, Supplee, Tolbert, Vitanza.

Members Absent: Senators Garner, Sadler and Talbert.

I. Welcome and Invocation

The meeting was called to order at 3:33. Senator Cloud offered the invocation.

II. Guests: President John M. Lilley Executive Vice President and Provost Randall O'Brien

President: I want to make one quick comment. I am happy to report that I think we are making progress in relationship between the Alumni Association and university. I think we can now focus more on collaboration. I am grateful for Bill Nesbitt's leadership and for him taking us in this direction.

Provost: I would like to say thank you for your support of commencement. We asked the Senate, the deans, and department heads to help us get a better turnout. We felt that this was important in showing respect to the graduates and the families. The turnout at the December commencement was excellent. We were happy to see that they had to bring in extra chairs for the faculty. It's a nice problem to have. I think the new manner, choosing one of the three to attend, is not going to be too onerous for anyone.

The President is now beginning his third year, and he would like to consider naming some master teachers. It seems like we have no criteria for this distinction. Whether it's done formally or informally, we would welcome some input on what criteria to establish. Also, we may be looking at naming a distinguished professor or two. We want it to be done in a way that would receive the applause of the university community. *President:* We also want to think about possibilities for other awards for scholarship, advising or mentorship.

A third point I want to bring up is the selection of the ombudsperson. I think we are very close to finalizing this process, but I will defer to the Senate Chair on this.

Another thing I want to bring up is comments from the Senate on the proposed faculty evaluation process. I want to let you know that we take these comments very seriously. We had four senators named to this committee, and they did outstanding work. Of course, it's impossible to develop a perfect instrument. We are open to refining the process further. Rather than responding to these comments right now, I think it would be better to come back at the next meeting with some ideas.

Senate Chair: The only other topic you may want to address is university honors day. *President:* The concept is to have one day when we celebrate university-wide achievement. I've seen this at other institutions and it seems to work well. There are so many names to call and other events at graduation, that doesn't seem like the right time to hand out honors.

Provost: We are looking into the possibility of employing a firm to read names at commencement. This is not just to help us get pronunciation correct, but there are also differences in volume. No decision has been made; we are just looking into it. *President:* Are you kidding? *Provost:* The president has not heard about this. We were going to report it to him on Friday. We thought it would be a good idea to pursue this possibility, but, as you can see, that idea has not been received very well. We have at least one dean who spends untold hours poring over the names and trying to get them right. It's not a lot of fun. *Senator:* This is just a knee-jerk response, but there's something lost if we out-source this. I would hate to see someone not connected to Baylor reading the names. *President:* At one of my former institutions, there were two people from the speech department who alternated doing this. This worked pretty well.

Senator: Randall, can you tell us where the Ombudsperson policy is in your office? *Provost:* I think all we are waiting for is the President's signature, but he just got it.

Senator: How's the tenure committee coming along? *Provost:* I received the report today. I did meet with them personally on Friday. There are 30 candidates for tenure this year. The tenure committee has completed its work, and I have the recommendations from the committee and the notebooks. The President and I will work through those and go from there.

Senator: Reagan Ramsower, Bud McGregor and Richard Amos have been very encouraging about the situation with compensation and benefits. I would like to compliment them. However, compensation and benefits remain an issue for all faculty and staff. I ask you to continue to focus on that as a priority. *President:* Reagan and I were just dealing with this subject. We have been looking at how our salaries by rank compare. *Ramsower:* We are trying to go on a five-year plan where we put some additional money into the raise pool. This plan started last year. The plan was to get us into a 3-2-2 in 10 years. *Senator:* Does this include lecturers? *Ramsower:* We are not modeling with lecturers, but they will be included in the raise pool. *President:* This is something we are concerned about and we want to keep making progress.

Anything we do there will be put out differentially. The Regents feel very strongly about that. It will never be across the board. *Senator:* I recognize and respect the merit issue, but, when our baseline is behind the curve, it seems like some kind of across-the-board consideration would be appropriate. I just ask you to please continue in this effort.

Senator: I would like to ask if there might be some evaluation of the duties that are laid on department chairs. Our department has had some trouble attracting a chair candidate with this burden along with a research expectation. *Provost:* The answer is yes. We can consider this. Some of the larger departments will have an associate chair to help with these duties. We've asked the question: Do we need to look at a range of stipends depending on the size of the department?

Senator: Right now, a lot of people expect inflation in the next year. If differentiation means that some people get no raises as inflation speeds up, it means some people are getting a pay cut.

Senator: There has been a concern among some science faculty as to the portrayal of the university on the front page of our website. It seems there is no tier-one portrayal of the university in academics or scholarship. If a student is looking to come to Baylor as a graduate student, that website is probably not helpful. Who decides what to put on that website? There is tremendous exposure of student development. The scenes don't portray academic excellence. *President:* John Barry does. I'm told they have changed behavior so that the web page information and styles change as you are on it for more time. I hear your comments and I will take that word back. *Provost:* I'll put that on the agenda for the executive council on Friday. I've received feedback like this about our orientations. I'm told that other institutions focus more on academics and, at Baylor, it looks like you are going to have a good time. *Senator:* About our home page, I love the links. It's the images that don't really convey the academic side very convincingly. I think the content is just fine.

Senator: I believe one of our advertisements talks about a Biblically-centered education. Among the faculty, I think there's a distinction between an education in a Christian environment and a Christian education. There was some discussion that this might have been an advertisement placed by Friends of Baylor rather than the university.

III. Guests: Provost O'Brien
Reagan Ramsower, Vice President for Finance and Administration
Elizabeth Davis, Vice-Provost for Financial and Academic
Administration
Ruth Prescott, Vice-Provost for Internal Affairs
Bud McGregor, Associate Vice-President for Budget and Human
Resources

Provost: We have heard your concerns regarding the contract process. You are receiving a document that goes through the various steps of the process.

We want you to know that we think we have a process in place that shows we have been sensitive to your concerns. If this process is not satisfactory or does not answer your concerns, we are committed to going to a third party, a consultant, to help us resolve these issues.

Davis: There are two processes that I know you are concerned with, the annual letter of appointment and contracts for new hires.

For the letter of appointment process, all raises are calculated on salary spreadsheets. We send out an instruction sheet and a schedule for how the process will proceed. I have handed out a sheet like this to you, and we are offering a sequence of proposed dates for this process. For example, our goal is for contracts to be delivered on April 1. If we want to make this date, we have to start there and work our way backward to see when the other steps have to be done. The salary spreadsheets will need to be distributed on January 22. At that point, chairs are free to start figuring out their recommendations for their deans. Notice that, by policy, the chairs are to meet with every faculty member by February 15. Between February 18 and February 25, the chairs and deans will meet to discuss the recommendations. Last year, these were supposed to go to the Provost's office on March 2. The proposed date for this is now February 25.

Last year, we tried to schedule appointments between the Provost and the deans after the spreadsheets came in. Instead, all these appointments will be scheduled in advance. The plan is to highlight anything that's out of the ordinary and concentrate on those items. Once the Provost meets with the deans, these spreadsheets can go forward. Notice that there is no date proscribed by this policy for when tenure decisions will be made. However, results of these decisions do affect this policy. There was some discussion about the schedule for tenure decisions two years ago.

Davis: The plan now is to get the salary spreadsheets to Human Resources by March 3 rather than April 11. By March 25, Human Resources will deliver contracts generated by these salary spreadsheets. We have chairs reviewing contracts and delivering them to faculty by April 1.

To review, we are going to keep the basic process. We are going to schedule dean and Provost meetings in advance, and we are only going to review things that are out of the ordinary or if there is an appeal when the contract goes out.

Senator: You said that the contracts match what's on the spreadsheets. Why can't the deans and the chairs check this based on the spreadsheets and then we can distribute the contracts sealed. *McGregor:* What has occurred in the past is that, sometimes, a change has occurred after the last review. Human Resources has wanted to have one last chance to for the deans and chairs to review the final contracts. *Senator:* Has there been any thought to doing this electronically? *Davis:* We'd like to do this next year. There was some discussion about reviewing the contracts using PDFs rather than the final printed document. *Ramsower:* If the deans are willing to be accountable that

what's on the spreadsheet is accurate, we can do this with the spreadsheets rather than the final contracts. What happens is, we have people saying "I forgot to put something on the spreadsheet" at the last minute. You could also do this with PDFs of the contracts. *Davis:* How about if we take that idea back and talk with the deans about it.

Senate Chair: Have any other errors been identified, like why some faculty have received the wrong contracts? *Davis:* At this point, I have heard about one that I think this has happened to, but I don't have any information. I'd like to see us handle all of this electronically and eliminate the paper contracts, but, right now, that's not what we're talking about.

Senator: Has there been discussion about password security on the spreadsheets? *Davis:* I don't think so.

Davis: Next, I want to talk about the hiring process. A new system, BearQuest, is going to let us track where a project is. It has different routes that a request may take. Previously, every contract went through the same eight approval steps. This system will let us skip steps that don't apply to a particular contract. Also, both Naymond and Randall will be able to sign off on faculty hires. We are going to be very particular about collecting faculty file information. A complete faculty file will include a prospect interview form, a CV and official transcripts indicating the highest degree earned, a statement of church membership or a statement of faith and three letters of reference. A contract will not go out unless we have all this information. We need to start collecting this as soon as we start trying to bring a candidate to campus. At the time of a hire request, we will need only a faculty credentials form and the signatures of the tenured faculty members.

There was some discussion about whether all faculty members are required to sign and how to handle situations where some faculty members protest a hire or are unavailable to sign. There was some discussion of how this process could be refined. There were objections to complete elimination of tenured faculty signatures from the process.

There was some discussion about department's ability to conduct a vote for new faculty hires. The President and Provost pointed out that voting within the department is acceptable for regular faculty hires. For chair, dean and other administrative hires, faculty are not to hold a vote or to rank candidates. In the case of a chair or dean, we don't want the new hire to come into a situation where it is common knowledge that they were not the first choice.

Senator: This seems like the worst policy we have. I don't understand why you don't want the complete results of our deliberation on a new hire.

Provost: We do want this information; we are just trying to get it in a way that allows peace to prevail. We have asked departments not to vote or rank in the case of chairs or deans. It does make sense to me that you can write a narrative on our candidates, then I think I can tell who you want. Give all the information you can. We think that, on some cases that might divide departments, it's best to avoid a vote. This has happened before.

Davis: On the topic of faculty signatures, you need to communicate to me what the situation is. If you have signatures of all faculty who were there for the meeting, then you need to indicate that on the form.

Senator: You said that you have had to hold paperwork that is incomplete. Did you communicate this back to the departments? *Davis:* Yes. What we are trying to do now is make sure most of the things we need are done in advance.

Davis: Background checks will be done after the campus interview. These should be completed by the time we are ready to make a hiring decision. There was some discussion of the process for conducting the background checks and communicating the results back.

Davis: Under the new process, Office of General Counsel will only review contracts with non-standard addenda. This will include things like promising, in perpetuity, that someone will only teach at particular times. The Provost's office will track the request to hire, as will Human Resources, especially as we get down near the end of actually producing the contract.

I want to run through two example hires to help you understand the process. In one, candidates were interviewed on Dec 6 and Dec 12. On the 19th, the Provost finds out which candidate the department wants to hire. Background checks have already been done. Signatures of tenured faculty had not arrived yet, but Naymond approved it pending the receipt of these signatures. The draft of the contract was prepared on the 20th and mailed on the 21st. There were only two days between the time the department decided who to hire and mailing of the contract.

Another example was given with more interruptions in the process and the candidate who was the first choice decided he or she was no longer interested in the position.

Senator: How long should it take to schedule an interview after we request it? There was some discussion of the process for setting up these interviews, how this process has been improved and how it is expected to work.

Provost: I want to say again that we work according to these policies. If we need to change these policies, then we can.

IV. Approval of Minutes

A **motion** to approve the minutes was made by **Senator Longfellow** and seconded by **Senator Myers**. The minutes were approved without opposition.

V. Old Business

A. Faculty Contracts and Letter of Appointment Process

I think the presentation we had was productive. Are there any other comments?

Senator: I was concerned when the wife of the Vice President for Student Life was hired without a search and when they found out that the development vice president was eminently qualified and hired without a search. One way to interpret this is, if you find someone who's really outstanding, you need to make an offer to them quickly. It seems like we should be able to be this quick when we have a faculty member we need to hire quickly.

B. Comments Regarding Faculty Evaluation Forms

I gave out a handout listing the comments that have been made regarding these forms. Are there any further comments? I will forward these to Garland and Davis. If there's anything else, send it to me.

C. Ombudsperson Update

We asked Randall in our Monday meeting where this was. We had some other questions about administrative support and the provision for a stipend. The concern has been that a stipend might encourage someone to take the position for the wrong reason. In the policy, the compensation is in the form of course reduction and summer salary.

For the staffing, the provost didn't have a problem with using provost office as administrative help. With respect to both staffing and compensation, if the workload is greater than anticipated, then these can be increased.

Supplee: One thing that was changed when this went to Office of General Counsel was the vote required when duties were reassigned. Originally, this was 2/3 vote of the Faculty Senate and it was changed to a majority. There was some discussion about the importance of this change.

D. Committee on Committees

We will meet this Saturday. There are now 40 committees on the list. Committee on Committee members will be responsible for filling the appointments and to update or create the description of these committees. Each member will have two or three committees that they are responsible for.

VI. Committee/Liaison Reports

A. University Curriculum Committee (Myers)

It looks like we have consensus for an Undergraduate Curriculum Committee, so that will go to the Provost. After this happens, the University Curriculum Committee will remain to look at other issues like graduate curriculum. Creation of the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee was the first priority for this committee.

Senator: Is there not a grad curriculum committee? *Myers:* There is, but it only considers some programs. We are looking at a committee that could cover the whole university.

C. Enrollment Management (Sturgill)

D. Physical Facilities (Brown)

Senate Chair: Both the enrollment management committees and the physical facilities committees are expected to be reconstituted. We will continue to have a liaison relationship with the other committees that are making these decisions.

There was some discussion of the makeup of the physical facilities committee. There were some concerns about faculty losing a voice in decisions like development of the campus master plan.

There was some discussion of parking on campus and failure to enforce until the start of the semester and difficulty of finding a space before an 8:00 class. *Senator:* There are some spaces that are restricted 24-hours a day. It seems like you should make a case that you need spaces like this. *Senator:* It might be worthwhile to talk to the President about the master plan and faculty input. Every time we see this plan, we see this idea of a car-less campus and it seems like we raise the same concerns every time. *Senator:* Can we request a report from the parking consultant? *Senator:* Can we also request a report from the branding survey? *Senator:* If you have to go back and forth taking visitors around campus, it's difficult if you don't have a parking space you can come back to. It would be nice if we could have a temporary sign that could reserve a space for a day.

F. Associate Professors (Blackwell)

Diaz-Granados: We are working on a recommendation. A draft was sent out this afternoon. We hope to have something by the next Senate Executive Committee meeting.

H. Liaison Reports

i. Council of Deans (Cordon)

Did not meet this month.

VII. New Business

A. Criteria for Ranks of Master Teacher, University Professor, and Distinguished Professor

Is there interest in the Senate taking up this issue? There were several responses that the Senate should be involved with this. *Senator:* We should

see if there is anything available in Dr. Reynolds' office on this. *Senator:* If we are invited to give input, then we should. However, we all know that teaching has become second or third in the things that are considered necessary here. *Senator:* I think this is something we need to maintain for precisely this reason. *Senator:* Maybe we should also develop a process by which faculty could be recommended for this.

Senate Chair: I suggest we establish a committee to work on this issue. Senators **Supplee**, **Brown** and **Cordon** volunteered to serve. Senator **Longfellow** offered a **motion** to establish a committee to develop the criteria for promotion to the ranks of Master Teacher, University Professor and Distinguished Professor. The **motion** was seconded by Senator **Gardner** and passed unanimously.

B. University Honors Day

We were invited to appoint someone to serve on a committee to establish a university honors day. There was some discussion about the need for this type of event and of similar events. *Senate Chair:* We'll put this on the agenda for next month.

C. University Website

Is there anything we need to discuss about this? *Senator:* I am happy with how they responded to my question earlier. I think this has been a concern of a lot of faculty, but it has not been voiced. *Senator:* I think it would be good to provide samples of what seem to be professional websites.

D. Election Commission

Sturgill: We need two senators and two from elsewhere in the university to serve on an election commission for the spring 2008 election. Senators **Longfellow** and **Purdy** volunteered to serve. As these are both in the College of Arts and Sciences, Sturgill will find two other faculty members from elsewhere in the university who are willing to serve.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:09.

Respectfully submitted,

David Sturgill
Secretary