

APPROVED MINUTES

ACADEMIC SENATE MEETING October 18, 2006

PRESENT: Mark Anderson, Poras Balsara, James Bartlett, Dinesh Bhatia, Duane Buhrmester, John Burr, Cy Cantrell, R. Chandrasekaran, David Daniel, Gregg Dieckmann, John Gooch, Gopal Gupta, Jennifer Holmes, Marilyn Kaplan, Robert Kischnick, Murray Leaf, Homer Montgomery, Ramachandran Natarajan, Shun Chen Niu, Simeon Ntafos, Ravi Prakash, Tim Redman, Liz Salter, Mary Urquhart

ABSENT: Gail Breen, Tom Brikowski, Jeff DeJong, Santosh D'Mello, Juan Gonzalez, Warren Goux, D.T. Huynh, Sumit Majumdar, Dennis Miller, William Pervin, Beatrice Rasmussen, Brian Ratchford, S. Venkatesan

VISITORS: Charlie Arnett, Priscilla Beadle, Basheer Benhalim, David Channell, Austin Cunningham, Kent Mecklenburg, Robert Nelsen

1. CALL TO ORDER, ANNOUNCEMENTS AND QUESTIONS

Robert Nelsen called the meeting to order. President Daniel arrived just after that and gave his announcements.

Next week, the new Vice President of Research and Economic Development will be announced. Amanda Rockow is the new Vice President for Public Affairs, and Susan Rogers is the new Vice President for Communications. Myron Salamon, the new Dean of Natural Sciences and Mathematics, started this week. The search will be started soon for the Vice President of Business Affairs. Dr. Daniel has committed to a new position, at the Vice Presidential level, for diversity, inclusion and equity. He hopes to finalize that in the coming weeks.

Dr. Daniel asked Dean Michael Coleman to talk to the Senate about midterm grades. Dr. Coleman said midterm grades have come in to his office. There are 693 freshmen who earned at least one "D" or "F" at midterm, which is half of all the registered freshmen at UTD. His advisor group is going to try and meet with all of those students. He pointed out that this is a very serious issue. Many of those 693 students earned less than a "C" on one or more classes. The underlying problem must be discovered, he said. His data showed great discrepancies between the same courses in different sections, for all schools and subjects. Part of the problem is course material, but part of it may be faculty involvement. Dr. Daniel added that the low midterm grades should be a concern, since the U.T. System Board of Regents is putting such an emphasis on graduation rates. Dr. Buhrmester said CUE is worried about the freshman retention rate and that students may

leave to attend other institutions where they might be successful. Discussion continued. No particular course of action was decided upon. Research will continue so various options can be established to reverse the problems.

Dr. Daniel said that we have a deficit in the operational budget around five million dollars. The enrollment this year was lower than was expected and that had an impact. Dr. Daniel and Provost Wildenthal are looking ahead at more moderate enrollment projections. They expect UTD to be back in the black next year, and to up from there in the following years. His administration is looking at the operational budget to see how costs can be cut back. UTD is not in a 'hiring freeze,' but is having a 'hiring chill.' If a position is vacated, it may not be filled if there is not a critical need. Several other situations contributed to the deficit. There was no funding from the state for salary increases, but Dr. Daniel felt it is important to give the staff and faculty at least a three percent increase in pay. Money was put into upgrading or replacing critical infrastructure, including emergency systems that were very outdated. Dr. Daniel is very positive about the future at UTD. He will not sacrifice safety, or fall back on commitments, or sacrifice the quality of teaching. His discussions with people who are involved with the Texas legislature say this coming year looks good for higher education. He sees no reason to not look ahead optimistically.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Dr. Leaf noted that minor non-substantive corrections were needed that did not require discussion. The Senate concurred. Kent Mecklenburg pointed out that Dr. Leaf had introduced Chris Dickson, the new Chair of the Staff Council, as "Cliff" Dickson in error. Robert Kieschnick said his name had been misspelled several times. Dr. Daniel called for a motion to approve the minutes as amended. The motion was made, seconded and carried.

3. SPEAKER'S REPORT

1. The committee annual reports are coming in. Dr. Leaf has asked Marilyn Kaplan to track down those remaining.

2. The Senate website has been updated, but some tweaking is needed. The committee chairs and vice chairs have been changed and some Senate minutes have posted. Dr. Leaf will be sending revised bylaws and some committee minutes to the academic secretary for posting. There is also a new version of the Senate handbook to be posted.

3. Dr. Leaf reported on the Student Life Committee. He attended a Student Government meeting, and feels that it would be helpful to have a representative from the Senate attend the meetings regularly, just as the Student Government President, attends the Senate meetings. Dr. Leaf talked with Donna Rogers, who thinks it is a good idea. He will talk with Basheer Benhalim, Student Government President, about it after this Senate

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meeting. Either the Speaker of the Faculty, the Secretary or an appointed representative will attend.

4. John Wiorkowski reports that the Ad Hoc Policy Calendar Committee has not met yet.

5 The Safety Liaison project has stalled somewhat. The original hope was that the Building Liaisons would be willing to also serve as safety liaisons in their buildings. Apparently, not too many of them are anxious to take on that duty. We are now looking for other individuals to take the positions.

6. The Facilities Hotline is working. Dr. Leaf said there has not been as much input as he hoped, but he believes it will pick up. There is a link to a high-resolution aerial photograph of the campus. The idea is that this will provide the opportunity for people to submit ideas for the campus beautification project. This way the community will be able to voice concerns and comments.

7. The campus re-opens after the winter break on January 3, which is the first Wednesday of the month, when Council has their usual meeting. In their November meeting, the Council agreed to meet on January 10, one week later. Therefore, the Senate will meet on January 24, instead of January 17.

4. U. T. SYSTEM FACULTY ADVISORY COUNCIL (FAC)

The FAC had a long discussion of the salary and tenure issues at the U.T. Galveston Medical Branch, including about an hour with the Chancellor and another with the Vice Chancellor for Health. UTMB is about \$140 million in the red. The President and most of the senior administrators have tendered their resignations. Some of the tenured professors have had their pay reduced, while others have been released from their jobs. The Texas Faculty Association has been involved, as well as lawyers. This brings up the question of the meaning of tenure and the association of tenure with salary for the UT system as a whole.

According to faculty representatives from UTMB, when the Chancellor and the Vice Chancellor for Health Affairs had visited the UTMB campus, they had told the faculty that tenure was not a guarantee of salary, and that tenure position could be terminated. The FAC was very concerned about this. particularly the representatives from the academic campuses. It turns out, however, that medical faculty salaries do not have same basis as for straight academic faculty. Salaries have different components, including state funds, contracts for research, practice income, and "bonuses." Up until three years ago, the U.T. campuses had no standard nomenclature or policy for this. Contracts often differed in different units on the same campus. Dr. Shine has been trying to establish more consistency and uniformity by requiring each campus to develop a "compensation plan." At U.T. Medical Branch (U.T. M. B.), this was evidently done with very insufficient faculty input. The UTMB problems therefore highlight the importance of good Academic Governance, and good communication between faculty and administration when working out difficult problems. Relatively poor academic

governance has been normal across the medical campuses. The FAC now seems to recognize that this needs to be remedied, and that they should take a more active role in the process.

One of the subordinate issues in the U.T.M.B. discussions was post-tenure review. UTMB faculty complained that “deadwood” faculty who not pulling their weight were not being held subject to the policy that it was designed for them. Instead, the administration was making cuts arbitrarily, without faculty guidance or input, which often hurt or led to the departure of faculty that were actually highly productive.

Regarding insurance benefits, the Blue Cross/ Blue Shield HMO is being discontinued.

In a separate action, the FAC reaffirmed wording that had previously passed recommending amendments to Regent’s Rules to strengthen Academic Governance oversight of the sections of the campus Handbook of Operating Procedures (HOP) that pertains to areas of faculty concern, and to ensure that procedures for searches for top administrative positions would be specified in the HOP.

The FAC also discussed the issue of an Ombudsman at each campus. It has decided to leave this to the campuses; no system-wide position is called for.

FAC will be looking at Distance Learning and how it affects Intellectual Property concerns.

5. ACADEMIC SENATE COMMITTEES ’05-’06 ANNUAL REPORTS

Dr. Leaf asked for Senate permission to alter the agenda order and proceed with the annual Committee reports. The Senate concurred.

5A. Scholarship Committee Report

Dr. Elizabeth Salter, the Chair of the committee, gave the report. She explained that the Committee had been working on revamping some of the timelines and procedures for granting scholarships. Previously, the scholarships had been announced retroactively. This made it hard for students to know what other financial aid they should apply for, and, thus, would lose out on other funding. The committee restructured the timeline so that scholarships would be awarded before the beginning of the fall semester to help reduce financial need. They brought several proposals to the Senate for their approval, including:

1. Award as many scholarships before the fall semester as possible,
2. The committee should meet in the fall, the semester, and especially the summer; this also means that committee members must be able to meet in the summer,
3. A “FAFSA” should submitted if financial need is part of the criterion in the scholarship,

4. Scholarship monies be award as equitably as possible, since a large number of applicants apply for advertised awards,
5. Those decisions of the scholarship committee are final, and not subject to inquiry from disgruntled students.

Dr. Leaf called for a motion to accept the report and approve the proposals, which would then become bylaws of the Committee. Liz Salter made a motion to accept, Marilyn Kaplan seconded the motion, and it carried.

5B. Committee on Qualifications of Academic Personnel Report

David Channell gave the CQ report. The Committee has been very busy, although there were no major issues. They dealt with twenty-seven internal reviews, including tenure and tenure-track. CQ concurred with the Ad Hoc committees and the Deans on twenty-five of those cases. There were two cases in which the CQ disagreed with the lower-level reviews. The Provost agreed with CQ on twenty-three of the twenty-seven cases. In three of these, CQ decided the candidate was qualified, but the Provost disagreed. Of those three, there was one that CQ and the Ad Hoc committee felt that the candidate would be better qualified the following year, but the Provost overrode their recommendation. One surprise was to discover that, according to the policy, the Provost is supposed to review the cases in disagreement before the letters went out. Dr. Channell was very surprised since he has been serving on CQ for many years. Provost Wildenthal was also surprised.

One other issue for CQ this year is providing the committee with files for review earlier in the spring. That is for new hires, as well as reviews for tenure and tenure-track. The possibility of files being posted electronically for files that can only be reviewed in the summer. Dr. Leaf said that the process would be researched.

Dr. Leaf asked for a motion to vote on accepting the report and the committee's recommendations. The motion was seconded and carried. He asked for a motion to accept the electronic posting of files for review. The motion was seconded and carried.

5C. Committee on Core Curriculum Report

Mary Chaffin was the Chair of the committee this year. Among the major activities was to reclassify many of the courses that were established when UTD began admitting first and second year students. Many of those were not really lower level course material. The committee is finishing work on assessing learning outcomes on classes in the summer session.

Dr. Leaf asked for a motion to vote on accepting the report. The motion was seconded and it carried.

6. UNDERGRADUATE REPEAT POLICY

This is a catalog item. It originated in ECS but has been extended to a general policy by CEP. The purpose is to limit the number of times a course can be repeated for credit. The state will only fund two enrollments in the same course. After that, the university covers the amount of dollars usually covered by the state formula funding. Dr. Cantrell said this policy is consistent with most of the other higher education institutions across the state, including U.T. Austin.

Dr. Leaf asked for a motion to approve the policy as circulated. Cy Cantrell made the motion, Jennifer Holmes seconded it, and it carried.

7. UNDERGRADUATES DECLARING A MAJOR, CATALOG ITEM

Currently, there is no policy saying when a UTD student has to declare a major. This policy will require that every student must do so when the student reaches 52 credit hours.

Dr. Leaf asked for a motion to accept the recommended policy. Cy Cantrell made the motion, Mary Urquhart seconded it, and the motion carried.

8. GRADUATE GRADING SCALES, CATALOG ITEM

Graduate Dean Austin Cunningham explained that this policy is to put some “granularity” in the grading scale for graduates. There needs to be more distinction between grades. The policy will not include an A+ or C-. CEP thought that an A+ may be considered honorific. If the student is doing work that would render a C-, he/she should consider dropping the class again, or working much harder to pass the course.

After discussion, Dr. Leaf asked for a motion to approve the policy. Cy Cantrell made a motion to approve the policy, Bill Pervin seconded it, and it carried.

9. POLICY MEMORANDUM 87-III.25-48, COMPLETING PROCEDURES FOR A GRADUATE DEGREE

Dr. Cunningham explained this revision is an upgrading of the current language reflecting the conversion of the Doctor of Chemistry degree program to a Ph.D. program by eliminating the word “practicum” and referring only to “dissertation.” It also adds the title of “Research Professor” to the faculty who can serve on the

Supervising Committee. It also changes certain dates for filing in order to allow oral examinations to be conducted at more convenient times.

There was discussion regarding the possibility of submitting a dissertation electronically. It was agreed that there are not now sufficient security precautions in place.

Dr. Leaf asked for a motion to accept the revisions. Cy Cantrell made the motion, Bill Pervin seconded it, and it carried.

10.. POLICY MEMORANDUM 96-III.21-70, TEACHING EVALUATION POLICY

This policy allows faculty to write a paragraph describing a class's learning objective, and how it is achieved, in their annual review. This would satisfy SACs requirements for class evaluations.

Dr. Leaf asked for a motion to accept the policy revision. Cy Cantrell made a motion to accept the policy revision, Robert Kieschnick seconded it, and it carried.

11. INCLUSION OF SACS "LEARNING ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES" IN ANNUAL REPORTS

This is to satisfy the SACS requirement that UTD is continuously looking at ways to improve student learning. Dr. Nelsen explained the new section that has been added to the Annual Reports of Professional Activities and Accomplishments. This new section requires the faculty member to provide: 1) a narrative that summarizes what assessment actions were taken during the year, 2) a short account of what had influence on those results, and 3) actions the professor will take to improve student learning.

Dr. Leaf asked for a motion to accept the inclusion of "Learning Assessment Activities." Jennifer Holmes made a motion, Cy Cantrell seconded it, and the motion carried.

12. SCHOOL OF ARTS AND HUMANITIES BYLAW REVISIONS

The revision states that Arts & Humanities will allow a representative of the Graduate Student Association to attend the A&H Executive Committee meetings.

Dr. Leaf asked for a motion to approve the revisions. Tim Redman made a motion to accept the revisions, Mark Anderson seconded it, and it carried.

13. TURNITIN.COM USING WEB CT DEMONSTRATION

Dr. Kaplan also gave a demonstration of how to use Turnitin.com to check for plagiarism in a student's work. It can be accessed through Web CT.

14. ADJOURNMENT

There being no other business, a motion was made and seconded to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed.

APPROVED: _____
Speaker of the Faculty

DATE: _____