

FACULTY SENATE

April 9, 2008

UC-215

Attendance: Wayne Jones, Dell McLain, Dennis Miles, John Allen Hendricks, Ken Elder, Michael Kalam, Lawrence Silver, Margaret Avard, Jane Elder, William Fridley, Lucretia Scoufos, Judy Williams, Jennifer Hicks, Vicki Hudson, Ed Hobbs, Diane Dixon, Charles Matthews, Mike Morris, Larry Prather, Patrick Reardon, Chris Moretti, Bruce Johnson, and Shannon McCraw.

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 3:02 pm.

Approval of the Minutes: The minutes from the March 12, 2008 meeting were approved.

Special Guests:

President Michael Turner and Executive Vice President Larry Minks visited with the Faculty Senate. President Turner explained he had met with each academic department and was beginning to meet with staff. He noted these meetings were important to begin "cultivating strong relationships" and so he learns "where people spend their lives."

President Turner began by addressing the projected financial picture for AY 08-09, noting the legislature is discussing a stand still appropriations for higher education. He further noted the need to begin seeking external funding because we cannot continue to rely on state appropriations. He explained that Keith Baxter is the new Athletic Director and will be charged with external fundraising for athletics. External fundraising for athletics will mean there is more money available for the general budget, faculty, and maintenance. He also stated that the new Director of Advancement, Kyle Stafford, has the same charge.

President Turner also stated that Oklahoma is experiencing fewer high school graduates, while north Texas is experiencing an increase in graduates; and that Durant is growing at 8.2% population growth. He concluded stating that we must capitalize on this new growth and begin to leverage our scholarship dollars in such ways that increase the university's attractiveness to north Texas students. Dr. Turner also noted that we need to more fully develop our university's outreach to "capture pockets of people" who are experiencing mid-career changes or who are "empty-nesters."

President Turner explained that the University would celebrate its centennial soon. He thanked Dell McLain for his creating the Centennial logo that was unveiled at Oklahoma's Higher Education Day.

Dr. Minks then addressed the Faculty Senate. Dr. Minks further elaborated on the budget picture noting the university would take a conservative approach to budget projections to avoid the surprises of previous years, while also meeting the Regent's requirements to grow the university reserves.

Dr. Minks explained since January 2008, seven new full-time faculty members have been hired, new positions have been posted, and the university would move toward more proactive search processes – transferring away from the soft/hard concepts that have been utilized previously.

He explained that salaries are one of the six major areas of current consideration. He further explained that issues of equity and market conditions need to be considered and decisions would be data driven.

In addressing assessment/student learning, Dr. Minks explained the processes are under consideration, but noted that we cannot avoid the reporting requirements. He also stated there had previously been "problems in timing" and that there are areas for "process improvements" so that faculty can "look at feedback," and "reduce drag."

Dr. Minks also addressed the issue of tenure and promotion explaining that previously the system lacked consistency. He noted that decisions to overturn a tenure and review committee must be supported by "objective-factual data." He further explained that worksheets were being considered/developed to ensure "fairness" and "consistency." He explained that worksheets were intended to encourage a "shared concept" for teaching, research, and service and that "training is the key to objectivity" and we must "recognize differences exist between departments and disciplines."

In addressing online course, Dr. Minks stated that his "role is not to tell departments how to teach," because "the locus of strength is at the departmental level." He noted departments must consider which courses fit Internet

delivery best. He further suggested developing innovative workshops on teaching to “refresh and reinvigorate teaching” is important – “for those who want to take part in such workshops.”

William Fridley asked about online caps. Dr. Minks explained that enrollment caps should depend on the individual course and course level and the decisions should be made at the departmental level and by the academic deans.

Vicki Hudson asked whether there would be pressure to offer online courses. Dr. Minks suggested that students prefer hybrid courses, but there is no mandate that courses be made available online. He indicated, however, that we needed to be flexible in our course offerings. Dr. Minks also explained that departments should work with the Distance Learning Council to ensure that courses remain “fresh” and are reviewed annually. He concluded saying the university “should not use the Higher Learning Commission as a club” and we need to be able to prove the same level of quality in an online course as in a face-to-face course.

Jennifer Hicks inquired into adjunct faculty teaching online course and the loss of quality control that this creates. Dr. Minks explained that quality should be a departmental concern; that online course must be controlled, otherwise they will get out of control and quality may slip.

Diane Dixon added that the impression is that there is a rush to join SREB. Dr. Minks explained the university needed to be cautious, ensure quality, and not rush.

Vicki Hudson inquired about the new paperwork on budget planning. If there is no new money, why are we adding paperwork to the budget process? Dr. Minks stated the university needed to move toward formalizing the budget process. This process is a first step in affording university officers the opportunity to see the whole budget picture – identifying where we are currently – planning for capital equipment – and to ensure appropriate planning for the future.

President Turner explained that the Dean’s would have a larger role in budgeting in the future; increasing accountability and affording a more representative financial picture. Dr. Minks concluded that budget planning worksheets will be “high-learning” tools to see what the university is doing and what money is needed to ensure quality across programs.

Committee Reports

Executive Committee: No Report

Committee on Committees:

Diane Dixon sought approval of a ration system for the committee structure (5:3:2; 4:2:2). (Vicki Hudson – Patrick Reardon; unanimous).

Diane then noted this approval would necessitate a change to the Constitution on the composition of the ~~committee structure~~. (Vicki Hudson – Patrick Reardon; 17-2; affirmed).

Faculty Senate

Planning: No Report

Personnel: No Report

University Affairs: No Report

Budget: No Report

Old Business: Wayne Jones stated the campus proposal opposing guns on campus was approved and had been sent to Representative John Carey and Senator Jay Paul Gumm.

New Business: None

Adjournment: This meeting was adjourned at 4:30 pm. (Prather – K. Elder; Unanimous).

Respectfully submitted: Dr. Shannon McCraw, Faculty Senate Recorder