

TCU Faculty Senate Meeting
1 March 2012
3:30 – 5:00 PM
BLUU Chamber

Approved Minutes

Senators Present

Bob Akin, Onofrio Annunziata, Julie Baker, Arnie Barkman, David Bedford, Martin Blessinger, Jon Burgess, Cynthia Chapa, Billy Farmer, Greg Friedman, Jeffrey Geider, Tracy Hanna, Diane Hawley, Ted Legatski, Steven Mann, Dianna McFarland, Stathis Michaelides, Linda Moore, Joddy Murray, Johnny Nhan, Hylda Nugent, Steve Palko, Katie Polzer, Jan Quesada, Ranga Ramasesh, Magnus Rittby, David Sandell, Michael Sawey, Chris Sawyer, Marie Schein, Paul Schrodt, Krista Scott, Alan Shorter, R. Eric Simpson, Gloria Solomon, Loren Spice, Janet Spittler, Gregory Stephens, Michael Strausz, Maggie Thomas, Angela L. Thompson, David Vanderwerken, Stephen Weis, Dan Williams, Barbara Wood, Qiao Zhang

Senators Excused

Brian Clinnin, Richard Estes, Lynn Flahive, Sarah Fuentes, Cara Jacocks, Carrie Leverenz, Suzy Lockwood, Ed McNertney, Jo Nell Wells

Senators Absent

Ronald Anderson, Misha Galaganov, Bi Ying Hu

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chair Dan Williams at 3:35 PM.

Welcomed Guests

Chancellor Victor Boschini, Provost Nowell Donovan, Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs Kathy Cavins-Tull, Dean Demitris Kouris (Science & Engineering), Dr. Judy Groulx (Chair of the University Evaluation Committee), Evaluation Committee Members Kathy Coghlan, Lyn Dart, and Tanisha Arrington, SGA President Brent Folan, SGA Representative Jennifer Villyard, and *TCU Daily Skiff* Reporter Ryan Osborne

Announcements

Senator Diane Hawley encouraged the Senate to complete the survey evaluating the Writing Center. Even if individuals are not directly involved with the Writing Center, the staff would appreciate input. The survey will take less than three minutes to complete the survey. Hawley closed her remarks stating that the survey will help in evaluating TCU services for accreditation purposes.

Chair Williams stated that a campus-wide faculty/staff picnic is scheduled for Saturday, March 31st. In the past there has been a faculty picnic. This year is the first time the Faculty Senate has worked with the Staff Assembly to sponsor a full campus event. So far there has been strong response. Please keep the date open and come if you can. There will be music, food for provided for all who attend, and free tickets to the baseball game for the first two hundred people to respond. There will also be different

kinds of carnival-like amusements.

Approval of Minutes of February 2, 2012

The minutes were approved as amended.

Resolution

Williams brought a resolution to the floor initially suggested by Senator Linda Moore and endorsed by the Faculty Senate Executive Committee:

The Faculty Senate commends Chancellor Victor Boschini, Provost Nowell Donovan, Vice Chancellor Kathy Cavins-Tull, Vice Chancellor Tracy Syler-Jones, TCU Chief of Police Steve McGee, Athletic Director Chris Del Conte, and Football Coach Gary Patterson for their forthright, transparent, and timely response to the arrests made this February. They brought respect to TCU during a difficult time; they demonstrated their deep commitment to the mission of the university; and they strengthened the national regard for our institutional integrity. Their obvious concern for the well-being of all students allowed TCU to garner approval across the region, state, and nation for their handling of this unfortunate situation. The Faculty Senate appreciates their efforts.

The resolution was moved, seconded, and approved by the Faculty Senate.

Provost Donovan thanked the Senate on behalf of the people listed in the resolution and gave a special word of thanks to Vice Chancellor Kathy Cavins-Tull for her efforts.

Old Business

Chair Williams proceeded to the topic of eSPOTs and the instrument of evaluation. He stated that Dr. Judy Groulx had revised a couple of portions of the document to reflect faculty input. In an effort to frame the discussion, Williams stated that, at some point and in some way, eSPOTS are in our future; it is up to us to figure out what is best for us at this time. The current proposal will be put forth as two resolutions, though they obviously overlap. The first consideration will be whether we use SmartEval, the software the Evaluation Committee has recommended. The second consideration will be the actual instrument used for the eSPOTs.

Williams said there are a lot of questions that have to be considered. The first consideration is the proposed adoption of SmartEval over the current software Class Climate. SmartEval has so many capabilities; there will need to be some considerations as to how it will be used. He reminded the Senate that concerns raised by faculty members had been collated by Secretary Alan Shorter and distributed prior to this meeting.

As a preface to Dr. Judy Groulx's remarks, Chair Williams stated there were two main areas of concern that had been voiced: 1) how SmartEval was going to be used and 2) the rate of return.

Groulx stated that they (the Evaluation Committee) have worked very hard to pull together all the issues had been submitted or raised. As the concerns fell into easily definable categories, she presented a document that explained how concerns can be addressed side by side with the concerns themselves.

In order to address subject of low student response rates, Groulx said that we must ensure that the system helps students participate. An instructor can even have students bring their smartphones or

laptops to class and fill out the eSPOTS, similar to the way paper SPOTS have been administered in the past. She was glad representatives from SGA were at the Senate meeting. She stated that we will need to work with students to let them know the purpose of the eSPOTS; if students realize that feedback can strengthen teaching, they will respond. Groulx cited the experience of faculty members who have already tried the eSPOTS as evidence that students respond.

Senator Chapa gave an example of a colleague (at another university) who clearly articulates to her students how the evaluations shape the teaching of her course and gives examples of specific feedback and the direct adaptations she made to improve the course as a result of that feedback.

In response to a question, Cathy Coghlan stated that if midterm feedback was requested, the university would not use SmartEval to do this; alternative software, however, could be used.

Discussion continued regarding response rates (the patterns of initially lower response rates followed by higher response rates), automatic system reminders for students, and the ability to administer eSPOTS during class via smartphones or laptops. When asked about students needing to bring smartphones or laptops to class, SGA President Brent Folan joked that you won't have to ask ... students already have them in the classroom.

At this point of the discussion, Chancellor Victor Boschini joined the meeting. Chair Williams reread the resolution (above) that was approved by the Faculty Senate.

Discussion continued with a multitude of individual concerns and statements regarding eSPOTS and SPOTS in general. Key topics were as follows: the adjustable timeframe in which they can be administered, the validity (or lack of validity) of student comments, the amount of documents paper SPOTS generate at TCU (over 98,000/year), and the assumption that this instrument would be an evolving document that could be adjusted in the future to address issues that might arise from the proposed questions. The evaluation committee will have a systematic review within two semesters.

Eventually the matter of endorsing SmartEval as the software system for eSPOTS was placed in the form of a motion and was seconded.

Senator Palko asked if the Faculty Senate had ever voted to eliminate paper SPOTS and use eSPOTS. Following Senator McFarland's comment of eSPOTS being "green," Provost Donovan said he would take responsibility for eSPOTS and that he had suggested that this is the way to go. He also said that if the Senate wished, there was nothing to stop it from taking a vote to do away with the paper SPOTS. While going "green" was one consideration, the major reasoning behind moving to electronic SPOTS was to be more efficient. It would also provide an opportunity for more and fuller participation in the evaluation of teaching and present an opportunity to work on a new set of questions for the instrument that was more relevant. Cathy Coghlan stated that one of the reasons for the change to eSPOTS was in order to maintain student anonymity; the paper system did not provide that. She has had student feedback in that regard.

Further discussion revolved around the lack of a campus-wide survey of students regarding eSPOTS, details of the two pilots that have been run with SmartEval, considerations of running two evaluation systems simultaneously, tenure and promotion issues with a change in evaluation instrument for SPOTS, and other similar topics.

Senator Friedman, in an effort to set a context for the issues being discussed, stated that the Faculty Senate has spent the last year and a half talking about the proper place and use of SPOTs, keeping in mind that these numbers are just a portion of teaching evaluation. He urged the Senate to set aside some of the numerical issues and move on to an instrument that gives more student anonymity and more faculty flexibility. Chair Williams reminded the gathering of the white paper sent out last year stating that no more than one third of an instructor's evaluation of teaching should be based on SPOTs. He also stated that there will be a need for the work of the evaluation committee to continue addressing concerns that may arise with the implementation of this system.

Eventually the endorsement of SmartEval was brought to a vote. There were 30 ayes, 3 nays, with 4 senators abstaining. The endorsement of SmartEval as the software program for eSPOTS passed.

The next consideration was that of the actual instrument to be administered through SmartEval. Dr. Groulx stated that the committee reordered some of the questions in response to feedback. Senator Legatski said that the issue, in his opinion, was "Is this instrument better than what we have now?" There was also discussion regarding the four-point and five-point scales. A straw poll was taken regarding preference between the two systems, with the vast majority of senators preferring the five-point scale.

Eventually the endorsement of the new instrument was brought to a vote. There were 46 ayes, 0 nays, and 3 abstentions. The new instrument was endorsed.

Chair Williams said there will be further discussion as to how to proceed and that input will always be highly desired. Three more departments will pilot SmartEval next semester. There has been no specific date set for implementation of eSPOTs through SmartEval.

New Business

Chancellor Boschini began his presentation by thanking the Senate for the resolution passed at the beginning of the session. He then discussed highlights of the recent meeting of the TCU trustees. Much of the information has been made available through his February 2nd email to the campus community with the subject heading "TCU's Vision for the Future." Elements upon which he focused included new scholarships, the continuation of transforming the physical campus, fundraising efforts, application numbers, and other elements of the strategic plan *Vision in Action*. (The video distributed to the campus community can be found at <http://www.youtube.com/user/TCU?feature=mhee#p/u/6/K-4p5FLG3nE> .)

Following Chancellor Boschini's remarks, Chair Williams entertained a motion to adjourn. It was so moved, seconded, and voted upon, with the meeting adjourning at approximately 5:10 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Alan Shorter
TCU Faculty Senate Secretary, 2011-2012