TCU Faculty Senate Meeting
2 February 2012
3:30 – 5:00 PM
BLUU Chamber

Minutes

## Senators Present

Bob Akin, Ronald Anderson, Onofrio Annunziata, Arnie Barkman, David Bedford, Martin Blessinger, Jon Burgess, Cynthia Chapa, Brian Clinnin, Billy Farmer, Lynn Flahive, Greg Friedman, Sarah Fuentes, Misha Galaganov, Jeffrey Geider, Diane Hawley, Cara Jacocks, San-ky Kim, Ted Legatski, Carrie Leverenz, Steven Mann, Dianna McFarland, Ed McNertney, Stathis Michaelides, Linda Moore, Johnny Nhan, Hylda Nugent, Steve Palko, Katie Polzer, Jan Quesada, Ranga Ramasesh, David Sandell, 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, Jo Nell Wells, Dan Williams, Barbara Wood

## Senators Excused

Julie Baker, Rebecca Dority, Richard Estes, Tracy Hannah, Joddy Murray, Magnus Rittby, Michael Sawey, Stephen Weis

## Senators Absent

Bi Ying Hu

## Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chair Dan Williams at 3:36 PM.

## Welcome Guests

*Skiff* reporter Ryan Osborn; Cathy Coghlan, Tanisha Arrington, and Judy Groulx from the Evaluation Committee, Catherine Wehlberg from Assessment, and a Student Government Association representative.

## Approval of Minutes of December 1, 2011

The minutes were approved as amended.

**Old Business**

1.  Half-year reports from committee chairs:

    Arnie Barkman, Chair of the Committee on Committees (COC), explained that his committee oversees the rest of the Faculty Senate committees (twenty-four committees total – three research committees and twenty-one university committees).  This past fall, they conducted an orientation for new chairs.  Approximately thirteen chairs attended that session.  In the spring, they need replacements on committees for those who rotate off, resign, or retire.  Keeping in mind the need for a broad cross section (age, experience, length of employment at TCU, schools, departments, and so forth) of the university on each committee, they send out a survey at the end of February requesting individual interest in the various committees. Working with the Faculty Senate Executive Committee, they also make suggestions in terms of finding individuals who are willing to serve as Faculty Senate officers next year.

    The other main business of the Committee on Committees is dealing with changes that may need to be made regarding committee composition or the charges of the committee.  Barkman gave examples of changes from the Student Publications Committee and the old Faculty Grievance Policy.

    He also spoke of the work this past fall regarding the Mediators Committee.  Their charge needs to be changed to reflect the new system under which they will be operating.  Barkman then entertained a motion to accept the changes in the charge. He explained that these changes had the approval of the Committee on Committees, the Faculty Senate Executive Committee (FSEC), the Grievance Committee, and the Provost. It was so moved and seconded.  The only discussion was clarification that the document reflected wording changes suggested prior to today's meeting by Senator Friedman. The motion to accept the changes passed.

    Barkman stated that adjustments will need to be made to The Faculty Senate Handbook that refer to the old grievance policy.  Later this spring, changes will need to be made to the charge of the Intercollegiate Athletic Committee to bring the language more into form with that of the NCAA.

    He also explained that there are liaisons on the Committee on Committees who work with the chairs of the various committees if problems arise.  He also reminded committee chairs they will have reports due at the end of the year, reports of the committees' activities that will wind up on the desk of the Provost.

    Greg Friedman, chair of the Academic Excellence Committee (AEC), stated that he would give an overview of where the committee was on various issues and that, if senators have more detailed questions, they should feel free to speak to him directly after the meeting.  Issues being address by the AEC are:

1. GPA cutoffs for Merit Scholarships.  The committee is looking to even out discrepancies in those policies.  They have spoken with the scholarship committees involved and are currently waiting for some numbers to be crunched by Mike Scott, the Scholarship and Financial Aid Director, to make sure that these changes are monetarily feasible.
2. SPOTS (Student Perception of Teaching).  He stated that we would be hearing about that work in a moment from Judy Groulx of the Evaluation Committee.
3. The committee has been asked write a charter for the Core Review Committee.  The review will happen in 2013-14.  They have been working with the Core Director and hope to have a draft in front of the Faculty Senate soon.
4. They were also asked to examine the extent to which faculty members were getting credit for "partial teaching" activities such as team-teaching courses, doing independent studies, and supervising graduate research. This has been placed on the back burner by issue #5.
5. The issue of dual credit, as outlined by Ray Brown's presentation to the Faculty Senate earlier this year.  They are still working with Ray Brown's and Anne Van Beber's committee to figure out exactly what is going to happen.  They are leaning toward a system in which Admissions is a bit of a gatekeeper.  All this will be under discussion this spring.
6. The Plus/Minus Review Committee.  At the request of the Student Government, a special *ad hoc* committee will be looking at the plus/minus system of grading.  Their first meeting will be in a couple of weeks.

Paul Schrodt, Assistant Chair to the Faculty Governance Committee (FGC), stated that there are a couple of things that the FGC will continue to discuss in the Spring Semester.  They have started (and will continue to study) how the responsibilities get distributed between the various committees.  Some of the committees have a disproportionate amount of work in terms of the standing charges they face each year.  FGC has been asked to review the standing charges for each of the committees upon which the Faculty Senate members serve.  They will examine them to see if some of those charges need to be redistributed.

An additional responsibility FGC will review is "multi-source assessment" for academic administrators.  As they examined "360 Assessment" and ongoing assessment for faculty and staff, there has been discussion of multi-source assessment of administrators.  This discussion will continue.

Ted Legatski, Chair of the Student Relations Committee (SRC), stated that the work of SRC seems to be cyclical.  Two years ago the committee was buried under a lot of work; a few years ago, they did not have as much.  Last year they were extremely busy; this year, not quite so much.  Basically, as a liaison between some of the functions of the University and the student government, they met with Jackie Wheeler, the student body president, last spring and again in the fall to see if student priorities were still the same and if they had new issues to be addressed.  Those meetings were very productive.  SRC

then met with Vice Chancellor Kathy Cavins-Tull to get her vision and discuss some of the specific and standing charges for SRC and how they might better coordinate those. An SRG member was present at each of the Student House of Representatives meetings and reported back to the committee. As part of their liaison role, issues that arose from the meetings were passed on the Faculty Senate Executive Committee to see if they needed to be brought before the full Faculty Senate now or later. SRG will continue to meet with its constituents during the Spring Semester.

Carry Leverenz, Chair of the Tenure, Promotion, and Grievance Committee (TPG), addressed the Faculty Senate briefly. TPG has been working toward a report and recommendations on the way service is assigned and rewarded. Many faculty members filled out TPG's survey. The committee is working with that data, reviewing the statements about service that are already online, and hoping to have a draft that the Faculty Senate can look at later in the semester.

Chair Dan Williams stated that TPG will also look at the Faculty Appeal Policy (which needs minor tweaking). Stu Youngblood will be brought in to speak to the TPG Committee.

2. Teaching Evaluation Document/eSPOT/SmartEval Update

Judy Groulx of the Evaluation Committee stated that the Evaluation Committee developed and constructed the new SPOTs; the AEC reviewed them and offered revision ideas, and then the *ad hoc* faculty review panel met to achieve consensus on the categories and the final wording of all the items. She said they believe that by this point people should be less fearful of some of the upcoming changes. SPOT "malpractice" might decrease now that they have a new emphasis on triangulating evaluations of teaching so that student perceptions take a place among other ways to evaluate our teaching and courses. The Evaluation Committee is ready to propose a new, revised instrument that has been in development for over a year. The Faculty Senate has already passed a policy to allow for qualitative SPOT usage for small classes (four to seven students) when statistical validity gets ridiculous. Cathy [Coghlan]'s office has been working very hard with the existing online system and has found a better one that they hope to start using and piloting very soon. Groulx also stated that they had good news from Cathy's department that departments who elected to try the online system achieved fairly decent response rates. She continued by saying that research shows that these will dip – they did – a little bit, but nothing like what happened to them in the online SPOT experiment a few years ago. They have much better prospects of great student participation. That is one of their goals for the Spring Semester: to make sure that students understand how important it is to participate thoughtfully.

Groulx then showed the Faculty Senate the new SPOTs and gave a bit of history as to how it evolved to its present state. The committee started with a great deal of research, looking at other universities, survey banks from all over the country, and books by

experts in SPOTs. After bringing all this information together, they brainstormed the categories that they believe make a construct of what is quality teaching at a university level. Within those categories, they brainstormed and drew upon their bank of resources to come up with questions that represented each category. After brainstorming, they let it stew a while, then revised it as a committee and sent it on to the AEC (Academic Excellence Committee). AEC looked at it and, little by little, it became clearer for them and they developed better wording of the questions. They took that draft before a group of students who piloted it and said they liked it a lot better than the current SPOTs. They thought it was fair and not offensive in any way. The questions seemed to read reasonably for them. Over the summer, they asked a panel of representative faculty from across the campus. These faculty members had been nominated by their department chairs. The names of the faculty members who had tried the eSPOTs were shown to the Faculty Senate. Groulx explained that they tried to get a good representation of all ranks, all different levels of experience, and years of teaching so that this would be a good representation of all of us.

The committee worked very hard from August through October (2011) to review the categories and to review each question as it aligned with their categories. They did this review independently, then came together as a panel and thrashed out a final consensus that said the instrument is ready to go. Groulx stated that they are not at the brainstorming stage anymore. It is ready to put in front of everyone on Faculty Senate and have there be more campus-wide discussion to make sure that this is a consensus-based and transparent process.

Groulx then proceeded to walk the Faculty Senate through the instrument that had been given to the full faculty when the agenda for the February Faculty Senate meeting was distributed.

When asked how many questions were in the instrument, Groulx stated that there were less than twenty and students didn't seem bothered by that. She explained there is also room for student comments in this instrument. When asked about the four-point scoring scale, Groulx said the literature is rather controversial as to whether a four-point or five-point scale should be used. A six-point scale, she continued, is probably not appropriate because we can't discriminate that finely. She stated that a four-point scale does force you to be either a little bit on the negative or positive side; a five-point scale allows for sitting on the fence (which she thought was not always that helpful). They will also allow for "not observed/not applicable" responses and, as we use the online system, this will fine-tune the instrument if there are too many occasions when that type of answer is used.

She concluded her presentation by saying these were the items in the instrument her committee is going to propose. Before turning over the presentation to her colleagues, there were questions from the Senate floor. [Q = question from the floor; A = Judy Groulx's response]

Q: Participation can decrease, but what happens to the ratings for people who are going up for tenure or promotion? Do scores go down? Is that fact or fiction?

A: Not necessarily, but some students feel safer about their evaluations when know they are totally assured of anonymity. That might occur. However, if there is a downward movement in general, the people looking at these numbers should realize that this is happening to everybody.

Q: So the administrators who are looking at those numbers will be educated to that? This is one of the concerns that comes from people who are up for promotion or tenure.

A: Absolutely. I totally respect that. But people do have to realize we are in transition. It's going to happen across the campus. One of the questions on the FAQ is what happens if student participation patterns or non-participation patterns skew my results. What we responded to in that FAQ is that student "buy in" is absolutely a key factor. We really need to work together to build a culture where everyone responds thoughtfully, not just the people who have a problem with the course.

Other questions: what types of information did the evaluation instrument hope to gather by specific questions and whether there is redundancy in the instrument, most specifically questions addressing a student's interest in a course. Other senators questioned whether a student's interest in a class, which may be a required class, is germane to evaluation and assessment. Groulx reiterated that this is simply the initial instrument and that as her committee receives input, the instrument can be adjusted.

Chair Dan Williams interjected that the purpose of today's introduction to the eSPOT material was simply that – an introduction. The month of February will be spent gathering feedback regarding SmartEval and the instrument. Forty-five minutes of the March Faculty Senate Meeting would be devoted to an examination of concerns and comments. There will be upcoming meetings with the Provost's Council, brown bag lunches, meetings with departments that request them, and other forums in which concerns about specific aspects of the instrument can be discussed and addressed.

Groulx requested that senators read through the Frequently Asked Questions document that was sent to them prior to these discussion venues. Senator Clinnin made a suggestion that perhaps questions #3 and #4 should be flipped with questions #1 and #2 because #3 and #4 are fact-based questions and should come first. Groulx thought that was a good idea and said that was exactly the kind of input they hoped to receive and requested Senator Clinnin send this suggestion to the evaluation committee. It was also

requested of the senators that they forward the FAQ document to their colleagues in their respective departments.

> Q: The pilot did not use these questions, correct?

> A: That is correct. We've been practicing what it's like to have our students respond online, but we haven't used this instrument yet.

When asked about the editorial that appeared in the *Skiff* regarding student negative experience regarding SPOTs taking too long, Cathy Coughlan responded that she had spoken with the editor and the piece had been based on a faulty article and one student comment. The *Skiff* did a correction the following day.

Tanisha Arrington of the evaluation team was introduced to the Senate. She talked about the system (SmartEval) that was going to be used to administer the new instruments and gave the history of how the committee arrived at a decision to recommend this software. She also pointed out some advantages that SmartEval has: students can use cellphones to take the survey, SmartEval assures student confidentiality, real-time response rates are available, and SmartEval can truly be seen as a "faculty development" tool. She stated that the overall response rate on the trials with SmartEval was 71% overall, with some departments experiencing high response rates.

> Q: What is the current response rate with the paper SPOTS?

> Cathy Coughlan: About 85% -- in the mid-80s.

> Q: In the past, some of the written comments that were scanned were partially cut off. Is this an issue with SmartEval?

> Cathy Coughlan: In the case of SmartEval, they actually enter their written comments in a text box, so this is not an issue.

Groulx also stated that this system will not create inappropriate comparisons. We get to pick the comparisons, if we want comparisons at all. Also, there is no single question that asks, "Did this instructor do a good job?" The term "real time response rates" was clarified: an instructor only gets the number of people who have completed their SPOTs, not the actual data from the SPOT. Only after a response period is closed with the instructor get the information. In terms of timing of this information with grades, there is normally a two-to-four-week cycles of returning the information. These dates have not yet been determined for this instrument or SmartEval.

| | |
|---|---|
| Q: | Will the timeframe for the new SPOTs be basically the same as the current SPOTs, instructors administering them in the last few weeks of the semester and information coming from the SPOTS several weeks after the end of the semester? |
| Kanisha Arrington: | Pretty much.  In the case of SmartEval, we actually extend our survey cycle so instead of two or three months, maybe two or three week, maybe a four-week cycle to accommodate this new system.  With an eSPOT, a student actually receives an e-mail that instructs them to go to the portal.  So we need to make some accommodations for this new way of doing things, but it is not yet determined whether it is done in a three or four week cycle.  Last fall they did a three-week window. |
| Senator Barkman: | At this point, everyone does them at once.  Even in a three-week period, there may influences during that period that affect how a student responds …. projects, reports, exams, guest speakers.  How does that factor in? |
| Q: | Would Faculty have any input as to when their SPOTS could be started? |
| Comment: | We seem to lose a lot of control over this. |
| Judy Groulz: | We can make the window as wide or as narrow as instructors want to. |
| Question: | But there needs to be a consensus on this campus-wide? |
| Arrington: | There are some concerns as far as administrating this, but there are currently departments using different windows.  We would need to go into the system and see how complex it would be to administer with different windows for everyone.  We want to be able to honor these requests (for individual windows), but we have to go back and make sure we can accommodate that. |

Groulx explained that there seems to be some concern about students responding to a single stress in a class and stated that we all must work with students so they look at the big picture.

| | |
|---|---|
| Q: | Has there been any discussion about correlating these to grades and perhaps giving this information to deans?  There are concerns |

about anonymity of the students, but has anyone thought about this?  If the deans had this information, that might help them interpret the scores.

Groulx:     It's probably against FERPA (Family Education Rights and Privacy Act) Regulations.

Coughlan:   It was stated that it couldn't be done at the individual level, but it perhaps could be done at the aggregate level.

Senator Friedman suggested that people go to the website and examine SmartEval.  He said that one of the beauties of this program is how you can "slice-and-dice" your own data.   It not only keeps track over time of your trends, but also can keep track of the kind of student response in order to know what kind of grader the student is.  For example, it "knows" that a given student tends to give great or harsh ratings.  It can also tell you if this is a student who is discriminating; does he/she give all fives or all ones, or is this someone who varies their response question by question?  You can see all sorts of things like this at the online demo.

Chairman Williams said that he really didn't want to shut down important discussion of this topic, but that the meeting did need to move on.  He urged the Faculty Senate to look at the materials and the website, then talk to their colleagues.  It is very important to speak with them because there is a lot of concern about eSPOTs.  He also noted that it is crucial for the Faculty Senate to get the word out that eSPOTs are only one part of teaching evaluation.  We want to send out the instrument, the FAQ about eSPOTs, and the final drafted policy on teaching evaluation which specifically articulates the 30% formula.  eSPOTs are no more than 30% of the total teaching evaluation formula.  We are trying to start departmental discussion about teaching evaluation and not just eSPOTs.  Senator Legatski asked Williams if he thought this would be in effect for 2012 or later.  Williams responded that the Provost has given his consent that this can go out, so he assumed it would be in place for next year.  However, it really depends upon departments, because we are asking departments to evaluate what they are doing now and, if necessary, make recommendations to conform to these principles.  He stated that ultimately it is up to our departments.  This evaluation of teaching document will be distributed with the new SPOT instrument and the FAQ sheet.  It all has to go out at once.  They are tied together.

Senator McFarland stated that, as senators, we don't have to defend anything.  We can simply be sharers of information, then collectors of concerns.

As a potential administrator, a senator asked who would decide what the remaining 70% of teaching evaluation should or would be.  Senator Shorter responded by giving the rationale of the best practices list, the second half of the evaluation of teaching document.  A department can decide which practices best suit its needs.  Judy Groulx referenced a presentation that Jeff King from the Koehler Center for Teaching Excellence made regarding many other methods of

information gathering that can be used to evaluate teaching.  That PowerPoint presentation is probably still available through the Koehler Center.

For clarification, Senator McNertney asked if SPOTs can be 0% of an evaluation. Williams said that a department could possibly make that choice, but he didn't think that the Provost would accept that.  Senator Shorter brought forth that The Faculty/Staff Handbook states that student evaluations must be part of the teaching assessment process.  But it could be something other than eSPOTs.  However we are required to elicit student evaluations.

Judy Groulx and her evaluation team were given a round of appreciative applause.

New Business
Executive Session: Discussion of Honorary Degree Nominations

At this point in the meeting, the Faculty Senate moved into executive session in order to hold discussion regarding honorary degree nominations.  During this session, the Faculty Senate discussed, considered, and accepted the recommendations of the Executive Committee.  The majority voted "aye," three to five individuals voted "nay," with one individual abstaining.

Following the executive session, Chair Williams spoke briefly about SmartEval, stating that it is really amazing and sophisticated in the amount of information it can generate.  He also reminded the Senate to spread the word to their constituents that eSPOTS are to be only one part of teaching evaluation.

In a closing remark, Senator McFarland asked Senator Leverenz to confirm that over three hundred faculty members responded to the Tenure, Promotion, and Grievance Committee's survey on service, an uncharacteristically high response.   Leverenz said that number is correct.

The meeting was adjourned by Chair Dan Williams at 4:42 PM.