

TCU Faculty Senate Meeting  
Jan 26, 2006  
Justin Board Room, Kelly Alumni Center

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**Minutes**

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**Senators present**

Arnie Barkman, Donelle Barnes, David Bedford, Art Busbey, Carolyn Cagle, Lyn Dart, Jennifer Engler, Blaise Ferrandino, Juan Floyd-Thomas, Andy Fort, Sally Fortenberry, Elizabeth Gillaspy, David Grant, Charles Hannon, Jack Jones, Paul King, Nadia Lahutsky, Chuck LaMendola, Steve Levering, Suzy Lockwood, John Lovett, Ed McNertney, Joel Mitchell, Helen Morrison, Sheri Neill, Bob Neilson, Dianna Newbern, C. A. Quarles, Dick Rinewalt, Mags Rittby, Greg Stephens, Ranae Stetson, David Vanderwerken, T. J. Walsh, Keith Whitworth, Dan Williams, Melissa Young, Stuart Youngblood

**Senators excused**

Joan Aker, Bonnie Blackwell, Dennis Cheek, Alan Dettlaff, Sharon Fairchild, Jack Hill, Linda Moore, Carol Thompson, Molly Weinburgh

**Senators absent**

Joe Butler, Chuck LaMendola, Don Nichols, Becky Taylor

**Guests**

Cathy Avila-Linn (Student Development Services), Nowell Donovan (Provost), Terrence Kennedy (Student Development Services) Talia Sampson (TCU Skiff), Peter Thompson (Student Development Services), Catherine Wehlburg (Director – CTE)

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Chair Andy Fort called the meeting to order at 3:33. He welcomed guests.

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**Approval of minutes**

The minutes of the 01 December 2005 Senate meeting were approved.

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**Old Business**

1. Update on plus/minus grading (David Grant)

Senator Grant addressed the Senate regarding the progress of +/- grading. The Academic Excellence Committee met with Mike Scott (Director of Financial Aid) regarding the effects of +/- on financial aid. Prior to this meeting, Mike Scott had contacted other financial aid directors regarding potential effects of +/- on academic scholarships and

financial aid. Mr. Scott did not foresee any significant changes to students' eligibility for scholarships and financial aid problems stemming from a switch to +/- grading.

The next task of the AEC is to draft a formal proposal recommending a particular +/- format. This proposal will likely come before the Senate in late spring.

2. Core program review (Ed McNertney)

Senator McNertney addressed the Senate regarding implementation of the Core Curriculum. Senator McNertney stated that the vetting committees are in full swing and can easily handle more proposals. He encouraged faculty to submit more proposals.

A handout describing a proposed assessment and review process for the Core Curriculum was distributed. The process is similar to the Academic Program Review process already in place. He overviewed the review process guidelines passed during the March 2004 Faculty Senate meeting. Among these was the establishment of an assessment committee as an official university committee. In addition, the Core Implementation Committee has drafted a proposal for program review guidelines.

A desired early step in the academic program review would be a self-study at the department level. The difficulty in this approach is that the core is not built around departmental units of study. Instead departmental "curriculum portfolios" may be used.

Ed McNertney reflected on possible future developments regarding the core. Among these is a process for developing and reviewing curriculum portfolios. For the HMVV Curriculum, as an example, the Faculty Learning Communities and Departments, plus any administration and academic support units, would work with the HMVV Committee to create a portfolio. The Program Review Committee would receive these portfolios, and create a Program Review Report. This report would then be passed to the Director of the TCU Curriculum over which the Faculty Senate has active oversight.

Senator Ferrandino stated that if this, or a similar process, is followed, SACS accreditation will be much easier. The question of the department's role in preparing the portfolio was asked. Senator McNertney stated that he hoped the process would be highly interactive without imposing an undue burden on individual departments.

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## **New Business**

1. Remarks by Keith Whitworth, Student Relations Committee

Senator Whitworth stated that there are students who are actively trying to revive implementation of a TCU honor code. TCU has seen "pushes" for an honor code before, however. It is yet to be seen whether or not this recent movement will go forward.

Students from the Student House of Representatives addressed the Student Relations Committee regarding a January “mini-mester”. The students did not have a fixed model in mind although a two-week, for credit, semester seemed to be the default. Senator Whitworth took a straw poll regarding who might be interested in teaching over the winter break. Four senators responded in the affirmative.

Senator Greg Stephens responded that, in some cases, there are already winter break classes. Many of these are study abroad. Others are 1½ hour courses taught on campus. Senator Rittby asked if the registrar’s office had any feedback regarding this. Senator Whitworth responded that the discussion had not gone that far.

Finally, Senator Whitworth indicated that the SRC is looking at how better to incorporate academic rigor and academic contact the “first year experience”. This is not limited to, but primarily revolves around, orientation.

2. Remarks on Service learning (Cathy Avila-Linn)

Cathy Avila-Linn (Director of Service Learning) addressed the Senate regarding service learning. A handout describing the activities of the TCU Center for Community Engagement and Service-Learning was distributed. Ms. Avila-Linn began by describing what service learning is not. The primary goal of service learning is not designing a program in which students get credit for service activities. Instead, service learning’s primary goal is to incorporate service activities into classes as a learning tool. Service learning, while not appropriate for every class, can be effective in many classes. A stream study used in a geophysics class (at another university) was described as an example.

Currently, Cathy Avila-Linn and the TCU Center for Community Engagement and Service-Learning are funded by Student Affairs. Her office received a Vision in Action grant. Her office also has some “mini-grant” funds to assist faculty in developing a service learning component in their courses. Her plan is to form an (ad hoc) committee and solicit faculty participation on the committee. In addition, she is trying to create an on-line “resource library” demonstrating service learning activities at TCU.

Senator Sally Fortenberry asked how and why Cathy Avila-Linn came under Student Affairs rather than falling under the academic side of administration. Ms. Avila-Linn stated that she thought it was mostly timing and luck of the draw. Further, she stated that there were advantages, in terms of contacts, to where her program is.

Senator Ferrandino asked for more information regarding Ms Avila-Linn’s role in helping faculty develop and incorporate service leaning into their courses. She replied that one of her primary roles would “brokerin~~g~~.” Her office can go between community agencies, etc. and the faculty member.

Senator Carolyn Cagle asked if TCU was a member of the Service Based Learning compact. Ms Avila-Linn stated that TCU is a member. Senator Cagle stated that in the

past, she and others developed a service learning oriented course but had great difficulty getting it approved. She asked if there was a possibility that service learning courses could be vetted as part of the new core. Senator McNertney stated that he saw no problem as long as the course satisfied the requirements of the vetting process.

3. Remarks by Suzy Lockwood, University Budget Advisory Committee

Senator Lockwood reported on the University Budget Advisory Committee. The UBAC met in early January. At that meeting, a budget proposal was presented. Among the developments is a proposal to allow departments to manage more project money directly. Developing an assessment method to evaluate the use of these funds is in process.

4. Provost Nowell Donovan

Provost Donovan briefly addressed the Senate. TCU is investigating the possibility of developing a relationship with a university in Cholula, Mexico.

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## **Announcements**

1. Faculty Assembly on Advancement (3:30 pm, Thursday Feb. 16<sup>th</sup>, Moudy 141N)

2. Common Reading Program (Andy Fort)

Senator Fort stated that the upcoming Common Reading Program is an opportunity for faculty to participate in orientation and molding the “first year experience”. In many ways, this is a pilot program. Many faculty have expressed the desire to see more academic contact and content in orientation. This program will, in effect, test whether there is enough faculty support to actually do this.

The common reading discussions will be held during orientation and will come with a \$100 stipend. 64 faculty are needed, 76 if transfer students are to be offered participation. Sorority rush has been moved to later in the day to accommodate the session.

In March there will be faculty, staff, and student discussions with Richard Light, author of Making the Most of College: Students Speak their Mind.

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The meeting was adjourned at 4:50 pm.

John Lovett  
Secretary  
TCU Faculty Senate