

TCU Faculty Senate Meeting
Dec 01, 2005
Justin Board Room, Kelly Alumni Center

Minutes

Senators present

Joan Aker, Arnie Barkman, Donelle Barnes, David Bedford, Bonnie Blackwell, Art Busbey, Joe Butler, Carolyn Cagle, Dennis Cheek, Lyn Dart, Alan Dettlaff, Sharon Fairchild, Blaise Ferrandino, Juan Floyd-Thomas, Andy Fort, Sally Fortenberry, David Grant, Charles Hannon, Jack Hill, Jack Jones, Paul King, Nadia Lahutsky, Suzy Lockwood, John Lovett, Ed McNertney, Joel Mitchell, Linda Moore, Helen Morrison, Sheri Neill, Bob Neilson, C. A. Quarles, Dick Rinewalt, Mags Rittby, David Vanderwerken, T. J. Walsh, Dan Williams

Senators excused

Elizabeth Gillaspy, Steve Levering, Stuart Youngblood, Melissa Young

Senators absent

Jennifer Engler, Rob Garnett, Chuck LaMendola, Dianna Newbern, Don Nichols, Greg Stephens, Ranae Stetson, Becky Taylor, Carol Thompson, Molly Weinburgh, Keith Whitworth

Guests

Ross Bateman (TCU Skiff Reporter), Nowell Donovan (Provost), Megan Ferguson (Junior Ad/PR major), Brian Gutierrez (Vice Chancellor of Finance), Callie Salls (Junior Ad/PR major), Peggy Watson (Honors Director)

Chair Andy Fort called the meeting to order at 3:35. He welcomed guests.

Approval of minutes

The minutes of the 27 October, 2005 Senate meeting were approved.

Old Business

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

Senator David Grant addressed the Senate. He announced that a student forum was held on November 1st 2005. Senators Andy Fort, David Grant, Dick Rinewalt and Mags Rittby were in attendance. Provost Nowell Donovan attended as well. Senators Rinewalt and Mags Rittby made arguments against +/- during the student forum. Andy Fort and David Grant made arguments in favor.

A November 3rd 2005 meeting with the Registrar indicated that “grandfathering” in +/- is quite difficult given the computer system TCU uses. It was pointed out that the TCU catalog indicates TCU can change the grading system from the system under which the student started.

Senator Grant also met with Mike Scott regarding +/-’s effect on financial aid, etc. Senator Grant and Andy Fort met with the Provost’s Council as well.

Senators Arnie Barkman, Art Busby, and Carolyn Cagle asked questions of Senator Grant. One question concerned student perceptions regarding +/- . Senator Grant responded that the primary area of concern from the student forum was the effect on the number of 4.0 GPAs. A second question asked of Senator Grant was the possibility of some faculty choosing +/- while others assign straight letter grades. The issue of students who spend part of their career under straight letters and part under +/- was also addressed. Would there be discontent over the two different grading systems on their transcript?

New Business

1. Presentation on Budget (Vice Chancellor of Finance Brian Gutierrez)

Mr. Gutierrez addressed the Senate regarding likely TCU budget outcomes for fiscal 2007 and beyond. Outside consultants have indicated there is still room for tuition increases given the category of schools within which TCU falls. The Board of Trustees has indicated it would like to see spending out of the endowment fall to 5%. TCU is currently slightly above 5%. Spending out of the endowment will not rise markedly from FY 2006.

Mr. Gutierrez indicated a desire to see housing fees come closer to covering the full cost of providing housing. Currently, fees cover the cash flow aspects of providing housing but not all the accrued costs including debt service.

Regarding expenditures, Mr. Gutierrez indicated utility costs health insurance costs for TCU are rising at a relatively high rate. The CARES consortium has been quite successful at limiting the growth of health insurance administrative costs. Nonetheless, administration costs are a relatively small part of health care costs. Depreciation expenses are also increasing slightly. Most of the new capital projects are funded by new debt. Debt service will therefore, increase slightly.

New faculty positions are being budgeted. The University Compensation Advisory Committee is investigating mechanisms to allocate salary and benefit increases.

More support is planned for the new capital campaign (i.e. soliciting donors). TCU is investigating the idea of professional management of its endowment. This model has been successful at other institutions.

Questions were asked Questions of Mr. Gutierrez by Senators Arnie Barkman and Nadia Lahutsky. One question involved the size of TCU's endowment. Another question was in regard to likely/possible tuition increases. Mr. Guitierrez was also asked whether TCU is committed to increasing financial aid roughly in step with tuition increases. He indicated that TCU is committed to this.

2. Presentation on Honors Program (Honors Director Peggy Watson)

Peggy Watson addressed the Senate regarding the TCU Honors program. The number of students and the selection process was overviewed. Steps are being taken to make the honors program even more rewarding to qualified students. Early registration, honors housing, and the honors study abroad program are just three specific examples. Retention among those in the TCU honors program increased from approximately 86% in 2000 to over 91% in 2004. The largest jump, 2003 to 2004, coincides with three changes. The first is the expansion of honors student housing. The second change is increasing the amount of information on the Honors program during summer orientation. Finally, changes were made in how Honors students are advised.

Peggy Watson indicated that the current model under which the Honors program operates is close to being "maxed out". A proposed new model was passed out to the Senate. Dr. Watson encouraged Senators to offer more honors programs.

Areas of concern in the Honors program include class sizes that approach 45 students. Another item of concern is limited availability of faculty to teach the honors courses despite much faculty interest. A lack of support and recognition appears to underlie much of this. Finally, a more active and coordinated program for recruiting students at the national level is desirable.

3. Remarks by Provost Nowell Donovan

Provost Nowell Donovan spoke to the Senate. He announced that background checks will now be done on job candidates interviewed at TCU.

Dr. Donovan announced that Spring graduation will come back to campus instead of the Fort Worth Coliseum. A split graduation will be used. Business, Education, and Science & Engineering will have the 10:00 am commencement. All other colleges, including Brite Divinity, will be at 3:00 pm.

In other announcements, the ad hoc committee on summer course compensation recommended a tiered compensation system based on enrollment. There will likely be two tiers. The committee also addressed measures to increase course offerings and incentivize students to take courses at TCU rather than lower quality institutions.

A re-organization of the International Studies program is underway. TCU is taking applications for a faculty member to head this on a part-time basis.

The results of the VIA internal grant program was discussed. The Provost pointed out that these grants are a unique way to promote campus-wide involvement in VIA.

Annual reports of each college, along with a list of all publications by faculty, will be made available. The issue of measuring and fairly compensating workloads among faculty is also being addressed.

The Brown Lupton Center will largely be reserved for faculty offices and classrooms. The Honors Program will get a central and visible presence in Brown Lupton. Jarvis Hall will also likely become academic space.

Senators Nadia Lahutsky and Linda Moore, asked questions of the Provost. One question was how chairs can and should handle student requests to take summer courses at other institutions.

4. Committee on Committees motion regarding the Animal Care and Use Committee (Sally Fortenberry)

Senator Fortenberry introduced a motion, shown below, to change the size of the Animal Care and Use Committee. The rationales for this motion are included in this motion. The motion was passed by voice vote.

Resolved, the size of the Animal Care and Use Committee shall be increased by 2 faculty members.

Rationale:

- 1. To ensure the required quorum will always be met when meetings are called as dictated by the federal guidelines governing the Animal Care and Use Committee*
- 2. To assure the chair of the committee and all other faculty members on the committee that workload will be manageable so that proposals are reviewed in a timely manner*
- 3. To provide a committee that is composed of a majority of faculty members*

Passed by the TCU Faculty Senate, Dec. 1, 2005

The meeting was adjourned at 5:04 pm.

John Lovett
Secretary
TCU Faculty Senate