

TCU Faculty Senate Meeting
Oct 27, 2005
Justin Board Room, Kelly Alumni Center

Minutes

Senators present

Joan Aker, Arnie Barkman, David Bedford, Art Busbey, Joe Butler, Carolyn Cagle, Lyn Dart, Jennifer Engler, Sharon Fairchild, Blaise Ferrandino, Juan Floyd-Thomas, Andy Fort, Sally Fortenberry, Rob Garnett, Elizabeth Gillaspay, David Grant, Charles Hannon, Jack Jones, Paul King, Nadia Lahutsky, Steve Levering, Suzy Lockwood, John Lovett, Ed McNertney, Joel Mitchell, Linda Moore, Helen Morrison, Bob Neilson, Don Nichols, C. A. Quarles, Ranae Stetson, Becky Taylor, David Vanderwerken, T. J. Walsh, Molly Weinburgh, Keith Whitworth, Stuart Youngblood

Senators excused

Donelle Barnes, Bonnie Blackwell, Jack Hill, Carol Thompson, Dan Williams, Dick Rinewalt, Mags Rittby

Senators absent

Dennis Cheek, Alan Dettlaff, Chuck LaMendola, Dianna Newbern, Sheri Neill, Greg Stephens

Guests

Ross Bateman (TCU Skiff Reporter), Nowell Donovan (Provost), Don Whelan (Vice Chancellor for Advancement)

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

Approval of minutes

The minutes of the 29 September, 2005 Senate meeting were approved.

Old Business

1. Update on Core matters (Ed McNertney).

Senator McNertney addressed the Senate regarding the new core curriculum (the Core). A handout was distributed with the names of the Faculty Learning Community facilitators for the Heritage, Mission, Vision and Values (HMOVV) part of the Core.

The handout also contained a fact sheet concerning the Faculty Learning Community and what it does.

2. Report on the October 11, 2005 Joint Assembly on Retention (Keith Whitworth)

Senator Whitworth addressed the Senate regarding feedback received in the recent joint assembly on retention. The feedback indicated that a major factor in a student's decision to remain at TCU is a feeling of connection, both academically and socially, at TCU.

The most surprising result, according to Senator Whitworth, is concern about the quality of advising. Students appear to want more and/or better life and career advising from faculty. The need to fill the social gap for those outside the Greek system also came up frequently. Other comments include a desire for better mentoring and "locked tuition".

Senator Whitworth took questions from Senators Blaise Ferandino, Rob Garnett, Linda Moore, and Bob Neilson.

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

Senator David Grant announced a student forum on this topic Tuesday, Nov. 1, at 6:00 pm in the student lounge. He then presented summary data from the Academic Excellence Committee's survey on 12 peer schools. All use more than the 5 "straight letter" grades that TCU currently uses. Senator Grant described data from Senator Bob Neilson's ex post conversion, from straight letters to +/-, of grades in his recent chemistry classes. The sample size was quite large. The class GPA fell, but only slightly.

Chair Andy Fort announced he would be addressing the Board of Trustees Academic Excellence Committee on November 3rd regarding +/-.

Senator Linda Moore asked what the next step is. Senator Grant replied that the Student Forum was the next step.

4. Update and discussion on University Compensation Advisory Committee

Chair Andy Fort turned the floor over to Senator Blaise Ferrandino. Senator Ferrandino reviewed the history of the draft for the committee. The Faculty Senate Executive Committee and the Staff Assembly Executive Committee discussed the need to have a committee that would address both benefits and compensation issues. Drafts were proposed with the goal of having something to take to the respective bodies for advice and consent. The draft was complete by late summer.

Senator Ferrandino passed the floor to Chair Andy Fort. Senator Fort told of meeting with the Chancellor in late September after the September Senate meeting. The

Chancellor decided to institute the new UCAC committee quickly to have this in place prior to this year's budget cycle. The membership is basically that of the former RIB committee. Chair Andy Fort stated that the committee could be considered a pilot committee in place for one year and subject to further review, advice, and consent. He stated that the committee's membership had changed slightly from that of the Retirement, Insurance, and Benefits Committee. He further commented that, with the exception of this year, the committee would have the same appointment process as any University committee.

Questions and comments were taken by Senators Carolyn Cagle, Sally Fortenberry, Nadia Lahutsky.

New Business

1. Faculty Governance Committee report and discussion (Nadia Lahutsky)

Senator Nadia Lahutsky presented the Faculty Governance Committee's work addressing Article II, Section 2 of the Faculty Senate by-laws. This section deals with the apportionment of senators. A proposal for consideration was handed out along with a break-down of representation by unit under the current and the proposed scheme. Highlights of the proposal include:

- i) dropping the requirement for a minimum number of seats for each units (the 1 senator per 11 faculty would remain), and
- ii) eliminating the at-large Senate seats, and
- iii) having a smaller Senate (as a result of eliminating the at-large seats).

Senators Renae Stetson, Robert Garnett, and Juan Floyd-Thomas, all of the Faculty Governance Committee, took the floor at various times to speak in favor of the proposal. An argument for dropping the minimum number of seats for each unit was to reduce the burden this places on small units trying to fill their seats. A rationale for a smaller Senate comes from research indicating smaller groups (approximately 4 to 7 individuals) result in the most individual participation.

Questions and comments were taken by Senators Sharon Fairchild, Blaise Ferrandino, Andy Fort, David Grant, Paul King, Nadia Lahutsky, Ed McNertney, and Linda Moore. Most of the discussion revolved around the proper size of the Senate and the at-large positions. A straw poll regarding the elimination of at-large seats was taken. A majority of those who voted in the straw poll, and a plurality of all senators, indicated they were in favor of eliminating the at-large positions. Not all senators participated in the straw poll, some indicating a need for further information.

Senator Nadia Lahutsky indicated that the Faculty Governance Committee would continue an e-mail discussion with the Faculty Senate.

2. Presentation by Vice Chancellor for Advancement Don Whelan

Vice Chancellor Don Whelan addressed the Senate. He described TCU as having a small group of core, high value, donors. However, these donors appear to be suffering from “donor fatigue”. There is a need to expand the base of high value donors. Vice Chancellor Whelan discussed the need to increase incentives for the academic deans to solicit giving. Part of this may involve increasing the emphasis on restricted giving.

Vice Chancellor Whelan informed the Senate that a regional development program is being produced. The goal is a more focused and steady fund-raising effort in large, regional bases. The current focus of the Development Office is to determine which of TCU’s fund-raising priorities, within the University’s strategic plan, should receive the most fund-raising focus.

Questions and comments were taken by Senator Joan Aker, Art Busby, Sally Fortenberry, and Linda Moore. Many of these questions revolved around the means and extent to which faculty can be involved in the fund-raising process. Vice Chancellor Whelan stated that the development office should take steps to educate and involve faculty. He asked that faculty go through the Development Office to make sure they are speaking with “one voice”. Provost Nowell Donovan added that each unit has a liaison to the Development Office.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:06 pm.

John Lovett
Secretary
TCU Faculty Senate