

**TCU Faculty Senate Meeting  
April 8, 2004**

**Minutes**

**Senators present:** Arnie Barkman, Art Busbey, David Bedford, Carolyn Cagle, David Cross, Lori Diel, Nowell Donovan, Sharon Fairchild, Blaise Ferrandino, Andy Fort, Sally Fortenberry, Rob Garnett, George Gilbert, Tom Guderjan, Jack Hill, Steve Levering, Suzy Lockwood, John Lovett, Ed McNertney, Linda Moore, Don Nichols, Dick Rinewalt, Magnus Rittby, Bill Ryan, Gene Smith, Carol Thompson, Jeff Todd, Peggy Watson, Melissa Young.

**Senators absent:** Chuck Bamford, Donnelle Barnes, \* Pam Frable, Jack Jones, Nadia Lahutsky, \* Ranga Ramasesh, Mike Sacken, Ellen Shelton, Bill Vanderhoof, Molly Weinburgh  
\*Excused

**Guests:** Chancellor Victor Boschini, Provost Bill Koehler, Dean Mary Volcansek, Vice Chancellor Carol Campbell, John Weis, Marco Lopez, Professor Melissa Canady, Anthony Oppermann, members of the Student House of Representatives Academic Affairs Committee.

Senator Blaise Ferrandino called the meeting to order. He explained that Chair Nadia Lahutsky was not feeling well and was unable to come to the meeting. Chair Ferrandino welcomed guests to the meeting.

**Approval of minutes**

The minutes of the March 4<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Senate were approved as presented.

**Old Business**

Senator Linda Moore reported on the Coalition on Intercollegiate Athletics. She explained that many discussions among committee members had been occurring online. These discussions concerned governance and recommendations to the NCAA. Committee members feel that the role of faculty in governance needs to be expanded. The focus of other discussions has been on communication between various groups that are involved in intercollegiate athletics. In addition, a new report came out regarding recruiting issues. Senator Moore also noted that during these exchanges, she realized that TCU's athletics program looks very good compared to other universities. We don't seem to have the same excesses and abuses that exist at other institutions and there is more emphasis on academics at TCU. In comparing graduation rates of athletes, TCU is doing much better than most.

Senator Andy Fort suggested that the Senate institutionalize asking TCU's Athletic Director at TCU to address the Senate. Senator Moore expressed the belief that

the more communication there is, the better for everyone. She pointed out that many people on campus now have outdated ideas about things that occurred years ago that no longer are happening. Communication would help alleviate many misconceptions about athletics at TCU.

Senator Rob Garnett asked Senator Moore to address academic advising of athletes. She answered that they had not yet addressed that subject in the COIA. She explained the advising procedure for athletes here at TCU. Senator Garnett remarked that he had heard that student athletes are pushed to take certain courses and professors. Senator Moore acknowledged that that might occur. She then pointed out that the athletic advising department is more concerned with eligibility and course requirements.

Senator Moore will keep the Senate updated on developments in the COIA. Senator Ferrandino then pointed out that Senator Moore had made an excellent presentation to the Academic Affairs Committee of the Board of Trustees while they were on campus.

### **Core business**

Senator Ferrandino asked Senator Ed McNertney to present the Social Sciences outcomes and action steps document for discussion and approval.

Senator McNertney reminded Senators that, at the last Senate meeting, these outcomes and action steps were returned to the Core Implementation Committee for further refinement. He explained that, since then, a great number of individuals were consulted. The resulting revised document is now being brought to the Senate for approval.

Professor Melissa Canady explained how the document had been re-worked. The committee addressed the two issues that were of concern: first was the perceived need to better express the bi-directionality between human experience and social processes; second was the implication that students will be able to use social science methodology. Senators felt that the outcomes implied too high an expectation of students' ability to use this methodology.

Professor Canady explained that the committee decided to define what is meant by "methodology in social sciences" and to place this definition outside the outcome statement in a footnote. In the version circulated to Senators, this footnote appears at the bottom of the page. Senator Ferrandino explained that the footnote would be inserted inside the "Outcome" box. Discussion ensued on where to put the footnote on methodology. It was decided that it is better left as a footnote. Further discussion occurred on students' ability to use social science methodology. Professor Canady and Senator Garnett further explained the reasoning behind the proposed expectations. Senator Andy Fort moved that the Senate accept this document as presented. Dean Mary Volcansek explained the difference between this proposed document and what had been approved by AddRan College, mentioning that this was an improvement. A motion to approve the Social Sciences outcomes and action steps passed.

## **New business:**

### **Academic Excellence Committee**

Senator George Gilbert, Chair of the Academic Excellence Committee, distributed the report of the committee and summarized its main points. First, he pointed out that the committee spent a lot of time evaluating TCU admissions materials and how they portray TCU. Discussion ensued on the general atmosphere concerning academics at TCU. Discussion also focused on the freshman experience, freshman retention, and size of freshman class. This led to discussion about deferring the sorority and fraternity rush period. This was considered to be an important question. Senator Garnett explained that the committee had spoken with Associate Vice Chancellor Barbara Herman about deferred rush. She also had expressed concern about this issue; in her opinion, rush activities impact freshman retention negatively. Other universities have deferred rush. Both Senators Moore and Fort pointed out that several groups studied this idea in the past. The Chancellor had turned down a proposal for deferred rush at that time. Senator Fort suggested that the Executive Committee inquire into whether or not this is an option, before people invest a lot more time and energy working on it.

Senator Gilbert continued his presentation on the activities of the AEC. The committee recommends that students have some kind of academic experience outside the classroom, such as conducting research. Senator Cagle asked if the committee had discussed the topic of service learning. It had not, according to Senator Gilbert. Senator Ferrandino suggested that Senators read the report of the committee. He asked Chancellor Boschini to send it forward to the Vision in Action Committee in order that the recommendations not be lost and that they become part of the recommendations of the VIA project.

### **Academic Affairs Committee of the Student House of Representatives**

The chair of this committee, Anthony Oppermann, addressed the Senate. First, he explained the structure of the Student House and the role of his committee. Their goal is to establish a relationship with the Faculty Senate in order to communicate student opinions and concerns about academics to the faculty.

The first issue the committee worked on this year was the improvement of the advising procedure. Their second concern was academic integrity. Mr. Oppermann explained that they have also worked with the Academic Integrity Council. The Academic Affairs Committee would like to serve as a liaison between the Integrity Council and students. He also announced that the Student House had become a member of the Center for Academic Integrity, a national organization that several universities in the country also belong to. They believe that joining this organization will allow TCU to learn how issues of integrity are handled in other institutions and how TCU compares. Thirdly, Mr. Oppermann said that the students are very excited about the new Core and are interested in seeing what the new structure of the Core will be. They feel it represents an opportunity for the university to set the bar higher for academics and to elevate our academic standing. They would like to work with faculty committees dealing with the new core. Senator Ferrandino asked Mr. Oppermann to let the Core Implementation Committee know what is the best way of getting this information to students.

Senator Jack Hill asked if the students had talked about an Honor Pledge and if there are other ways the students are thinking of to strengthen integrity. Mr. Oppermann explained that the Honor Pledge is still in a preliminary stage. The original concept that was developed last year was considered a draft. Many questions will need to be addressed, which will be done next fall.

### **Eligibility for Senate membership**

Senator Ferrandino explained that some housecleaning needed to be done to the Senate Constitution regarding this issue. He gave the floor to Senator Garnett. He explained that the Executive Committee discovered that, in March 4, 1999, the Faculty Governance Committee recommended that faculty at the rank of Instructor or higher be eligible for membership in the Senate. For some reason, that recommendation did not get approved beyond the Senate. Nevertheless, Instructors have been serving on the Senate since then. The Executive Committee now proposes that we continue to allow Instructors to run for Senate this year, and that this change be officially passed by the Faculty Assembly this spring.

Provost Koehler reminded the Senate that, if this were part of the Senate Constitution, it would have to be approved by the Board as well. Senator Ferrandino explained that the changes proposed by the FGC earlier would be brought before the Faculty Assembly this April. Unless there is an objection, the elections this year will consider Instructors to be eligible. There were no objections. Senator Fort asked when the slate of new officers for next year would be proposed. Senator Ferrandino said that the Committee on Committees is still working on it and it will be done as soon as possible.

### **Announcements**

Senator Ferrandino announced that the first meeting of the HMOVV Committee took place last week. The membership of the committee was completed with the additions of Professor Richard Estes in Fine Arts and Professor Theresa Gaul in the English Department.

Professor Melissa Canady gave an update on the Faculty Survey on Student Engagement. As of this morning, there has been a 41% response rate. The survey closes April 30; she encouraged all faculty to answer the survey if they have not already done so. Discussion then ensued concerning the mechanics of the online survey. Professor Fort pointed out that there would be a different result depending on whether professors choose to answer the questions based on their introductory courses or on their higher-level courses. Professor Canady stated that there should be a way to identify whether faculty are evaluating a lower level or an upper level course.

Senator Ferrandino also announced that the Core Implementation Committee had a very good discussion with the Registrar about the Core. They believe that the new Core may completely change the advising process. He reported that Pat Miller is very enthusiastic about the new Core.

## **Future Changes in Health Care Plan**

Senator Ferrandino next gave the floor to Vice Chancellor for Finance, Carol Campbell, and John Weis of Human Resources to speak to the Senate about changes in the TCU health care plan. Vice Chancellor Campbell gave background information on the rising cost of health care insurance, noting that all educational institutions are having difficulties with cost increases. For about a year, TCU has been investigating the possibility of joining a consortium of universities for providing health care insurance. She and John Weis have met with the member schools of the Independent Colleges and Universities of Texas (ICUT) to discuss the formation of a health care consortium. In this type of arrangement, TCU would be part of a consortium of Texas universities, who would pool their insured populations in order to economize on health care costs. Currently, TCU is self insured with a relatively small number of insured people.

Much has been accomplished in the investigation and development of this plan. TCU anticipates beginning its participation in January 2005. Vice Chancellor Campbell spoke about the many advantages of being in this consortium. Specific issues that are still being worked out include: the design of the plan, the specifics of deductibles, co-pays, etc., and eligibility criteria, including post-retirement benefits. Finally, the pricing of the plan is still being worked out.

Vice Chancellor Campbell stated that it is already evident that joining such a plan will result in immediate savings. It will necessitate changing health care providers. Nevertheless, they were extremely pleased to discover that there will be very little change in the network of providers; in fact, they showed that the new plan is a 99.7% match with the current providers. There will also be a dental plan. As soon as the plan is concluded, there will be many informational meetings for all employees. VC Campbell also mentioned that the university Retirement, Insurance, Benefits committee has already endorsed the idea and it has been presented to the Staff Assembly. It will be presented to the Cabinet. VC Campbell answered questions.

John Weis took the floor to describe the specifics of the arrangement. He explained that TCU has chosen Corporate Benefit Services of America to be the Third Party Administrator (TPA). The plan would be called CARES (Collegiate Association Resource of the Southwest). This TPA is the largest in the nation with 30 years of experience. They had the lowest quote on administrative fees, as well as an excellent record of claim service. They have given TCU a 25% performance guarantee and they have a record of 99.6% accuracy on claims payment accuracy. This is a much higher guarantee than what we currently have. He offered Senators a handout that summarizes the main points about the new health plan.

Senator Ferrandino thanked Mr. Weis and VC Campbell and adjourned the meeting at 5:15PM

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon L. Fairchild