Faculty Senate Meeting
September 2, 2004
Minutes

Senators present: Joan Aker*, Arnie Barkman, Donelle Barnes, Joseph Butler, David Cross**,** Sharon Fairchild, Andy Fort, Sally Fortenberry, George Gilbert, Elisabeth Gillaspy, Gene Smith, Peggy Watson, David Bedford, Carolyn Cagle, Dennis Cheek, Alan Dettlaff, Blaise Ferrandino, Rob Garnett, Charles Hannon, Jack Hill, Jack Jones, Paul King, Nadia Lahutsky, Steve Levering, Suzy Lockwood, John Lovett, Ed McNertney, Joel Mitchell, Linda Moore, Don Nichols, Robert Nielson, Carol Thompson, Bonnie Blackwell, David Grant, C.A. Quarles, Ranga Ramasesh, Dick Rinewalt, Magnus Rittby, Bill Ryan, Ellen Page Shelton, Ranae Stetson,* T.J. Walsh, Molly Weinberg, Dan Williams, Keith Whitworth, Stu Youngblood, Melissa Young,

*excused

Senators absent: Tom Guderjan

Guests: Catherine Wehlburg, Bonnie Melhart, Carrie Leverenz, Chancellor Boschini, Leo Munson, Janelle Stecklein (from the *Skiff*).

Chair Blaise Ferrandino called the meeting to order at 3:30 PM and welcomed guests. He explained the contents of the packet of information that was handed out to Senators at the meeting. He noted that the Student Relations Committee charges were being distributed because those that were mailed to the Senators in advance of this meeting contained the wrong list of charges.

Approval of minutes

The minutes of the May 6, 2004 meeting were approved.

Old business

1. Discussion of Honorary degree eligibility criteria

        Chair Ferrandino explained that a concern about the eligibility of individuals nominated for an honorary degree came up last spring. This concern focused mainly on whether or not full-time employees of the university are eligible. He asked Past-Chair Nadia Lahutsky to lead the discussion on this subject. Senator Lahutsky first pointed out that no action or motions about this issue will be made at this meeting. The purpose of our discussion is to get the sense of the Senate on this question. We should consider the issues before nominations for Honorary degrees come forth this year. Senator Lahutsky explained that during last year's deliberations about the nominations, there was disagreement as to whether people currently employed by TCU should be eligible for Honorary degrees.

The current criteria states that "former faculty or staff" are eligible, but it is not clear whether this statement is meant to exclude current full-time employees.

Senator David Grant said that a few years ago, the statement "former faculty" was understood to exclude currently employed individuals. Discussion continued, with the general feeling that full-time employees should probably not be eligible and that a statement clarifying this should be written in the criteria. Further discussion dealt with the purpose of granting honorary degrees, which is to honor someone from outside the university and to bring recognition to TCU in the larger, external community. Senator Fort requested information on the practice in other universities. Senator Lahutsky closed the discussion saying that the Executive Committee will seek further information and bring it back to the Senate.

2. New Core Curriculum update

    Chair Ferrandino gave the floor to Senator Ed McNertney. Senator McNertney presented an update on the TCU Core Curriculum first announcing that the "new" core curriculum is no longer called "new," henceforth it will be called simply the TCU Core Curriculum. He then outlined the work of the Core Implementation Committee over the summer. Approximately 100 courses have been received for HE &E approval and 12 for the Essential Competencies curriculum. The committee worked very hard and made good progress this summer. Senator McNertney explained that the CIC has created a new element to the committee in the form of College Liaisons, committee members who will help faculty in the various colleges and schools with course proposals. He drew attention to the committee charge (found on the handout distributed to Senators), which is the continuation of the Roadmap, and includes various things that still need to be done.

    Senator McNertney then explained another handout he distributed, which represents the work of the HMVV committee. This committee was also extremely busy this summer. Committee members developed a Website that has submission forms, examples of courses approved, meeting dates, and other information that people will need to submit courses for HMVV approval. They have approved 14 courses and six more have been submitted. The committee has met with departments and educational support staff. Senator McNertney also noted that committee members are available to meet with colleges, departments, and help with whatever people need.

    He opened the floor to questions. Senator Linda Moore stated that some people are confused and aren't sure what the core is yet. They are not certain what they need to do. Senator McNertney answered that such people should ask the committee any questions they may have. Senator Lahutsky suggested that faculty talk to their department chairs and that if anyone is confused, they should contact the CIC committee. Senator David Cross reported that his department recently had a meeting with a core committee member, which the department found extremely helpful, eliminating much confusion.

    Senator Ferrandino pointed out that everything does not have to happen at once; we need to be ready for one entering freshman class, and the committee thinks we already have enough courses approved for fall 2005. He remarked that the main "point place" now is in the colleges. They need to be working on the Essential Competencies and the HEE courses. Senator McNertney encouraged Senators to refer their colleagues to the

committee if they hear of any confusion and questions. Examples of courses already approved can be found on the HMVV website. Senator McNertney explained that most of the committee's time this summer was spent working on the HMVV web page; they are now going to work on the CIC web page. He stated that the committee asked various colleges to send them lists of existing courses that had been approved for the former core, to see how they might qualify for the new core. He also pointed out that the colleges would determine how to approve, or vet, courses for the core. Some will use the college curriculum committee.

Next, Senator Ferrandino made two announcements. First, he explained that the Senate would adjourn at 4:40 and reconvene in another room in the Kelly Center in order to hear the Vision in Action update by the Chancellor, as indicated on today's Agenda. The reason for the move was that Chair Ferrandino invited Department Chairs to attend this VIA update. They were invited because of a concern that faculty stay informed of what is going on with the VIA. Since Chairs are those who will have to do the "nitty gritty" of the VIA recommendations, Chair Ferrandino thought they were the ideal group to be included at this meeting. With these two cohorts – the Chairs and the Senate—at the meeting, we can feel fully confident that faculty are informed of the VIA developments. Despite this move, the Senate will adjourn no later than 5:15PM.

Secondly, Chair Ferrandino announced that the Executive Committee worked with the Provost during the summer to bring to reality the notion of having a director or coordinator of the Core. Senator Ferrandino was very excited to announce that the position of Coordinator of the Core Curriculum has now been established. This is an especially exciting development, because the person will be a direct report to the Senate and to the Provost. This is a dream come true because it makes it clear that the curriculum is central to us and also confirms the faculty's attachment to the implementation and support of the core. Office space and an administrative assistant will be provided. The position will start off as a one-year position (due to budgetary issues this year). It is envisioned that the position will actually be a two or three year position. The position assures faculty representation and participation in core curriculum matters. Senator Ferrandino and the Executive Committee are extremely pleased about this development.

New business

1. Introduction of Senate Committee Chairs:

Chair Ferrandino announced that the Executive Committee met this summer with each Senate committee chair individually to discuss and craft the charges of each committee. We had a final meeting and "party" at Sharon Fairchild's home a week ago with all of the committee chairs and the Executive Committee. It was an excellent meeting in which we discussed a number of substantive issues about which we both argued and laughed. Chair Ferrandino informed the Senate of a new approach to the committees and their work. We are aiming to get committees to work together more, especially since they have a number of issues in common, in their charges. We would

also like the committee chairs to function almost as an advisory committee to the Executive Committee. This empowers chairs to involve us in the process early. It will also allow some flexibility with the liaisons structure. The committees can carry on their work, even if the liaisons are not present, because the chair is representing the Executive Committee. Therefore, when we want to know things, the Chairs can come to the Executive Committee meeting. Liaisons can and will still meet with their committee, but we want the chairs to have this new role.

Senator Ferrandino then introduced each Committee Chair, as well as the Senate representative in the Coalition on Intercollegiate Athletics (COIA), Linda Moore, and Senator McNertney as the Chair of the Core Implementation Committee and the HMVV committee. Chair Ferrandino called attention to the statement of the responsibilities of Senators, distributed to Senators earlier. He stated that we need the active participation of Senators very much, their attendance at Senate meetings and committee meetings is very important. This is an exciting time for the Senate, with a new administration that listens to faculty and is open to faculty governance and we must take advantage of the new opportunities this gives us.

2. Motion from the Executive Committee regarding Computer Competency outcome of the core curriculum:

Chair Ferrandino read the background statement distributed to Senators. As he read, the word "literacy" was replaced throughout the statement by the word "competency." After reading this explanation of the need to make an adjustment to the Written Communication II outcomes and action steps due to the concerns of SACS, Chair Ferrandino placed the following motion on the floor:

The TCU faculty Senate shall have one-time authority, on behalf of the Faculty Assembly, to make an amendment to the TCU Core Curriculum.

Chair Ferrandino explained that there were two concerns about whether or not this motion was needed: first, if we bring the second motion, we are already taking on the authority. The second concern was why do it on behalf of the Faculty Assembly, why not actually bring it to the Faculty Assembly. He further explained that he wanted to make this a point of discussion because he did not want to set a precedent for changing the Core without the proper procedures in place. The floor was opened to discussion. Chair Ferrandino asked Professor Bonnie Melhart to explain what she had done to convince the SACS committee that TCU students are getting the appropriate computer skills. She stated that the SACS committee insisted we have a more concrete way of demonstrating that our students are being taught computer skills. Professor Melhart had considered inserting such outcomes in the sciences portion of the core, but since there is already language in the Written Communication II outcomes that addresses computer competency, it was agreed that this was the more appropriate place. In fact, the new outcomes are actually an expansion of what is already in Written Communication II outcomes. Professor Melhart added that her report to SACS is due September 22 and that she will be sending it out around September 15. If the proposed changes have to go to the Faculty Assembly, she won't be able to say that the computer literacy is in the core.

Therefore, she hopes the Senate will approve this change today so that she can at least indicate in her report that it is on its way.

Chair Ferrandino asked that the discussion be focused on the motion on the floor, pertaining to procedure. He pointed out that we are not adding anything because of an outside agency; what is being motivated by SACS is the more clear articulation of what already exists in the core document. Senator Paul King stated that he felt the Senate has the authority to make amendments to the core; he favored approving the motion. Senator David Grant opposed the motion; he felt that it is meaningless because if we vote to do it once, we can vote the same thing at a future date. In his view, the first motion causes more problems than it solves. Instead, he suggested that the Senate defeat the first motion but approve the second one. He felt that the Senate has the authority to make this minor change, and if there is great opposition among the faculty, we can deal with that later.

Senator Carolyn Cagle asked if the conversation (with SACS) about computer competency was known last spring, during the development of these outcomes. Senator Ferrandino said that it was not. He restated that the second motion, making changes to the Written Communication II outcomes, is technically a change, but that it is really a more explicit statement of what was already in Written Communication 2 outcomes. Senator Ferrandino asked the opinion of the Senate as to whether the Senate can act on behalf of the Faculty Assembly. After further discussion, it was agreed that the Senate could act on behalf of the Assembly, without specifying it in such a motion. As a result, Chair Ferrandino asked to withdraw the first motion. There being no objection, the motion was withdrawn.

3. Motion to amend the outcomes and action steps of Written Communication II.

> **The TCU Faculty Senate accepts the amendment to the outcomes and action steps portion of the Written Communication II competency as specified on the attached document.**

Chair Ferrandino opened the discussion by reiterating that this proposed change would be announced to the faculty but that in approving this change, we will be acting on behalf of the Faculty Assembly. He clarified the proposed wording regarding computer competency, pointing out that we are only voting on the fourth learning outcome indicated in italics.

Senator King expressed concern that SACS would be dictating what technical skills should be learned. Chair Ferrandino agreed that we would not want to allow that, but he felt certain that these outcomes were already the intention of this portion of the Core, before SACS came into it. Senator King expressed reservations about identifying the skills since certain computer competencies that are essential today will be soon outdated. Professor Melhart pointed out that we do need to satisfy SACS, since they accredit us. In any case, they do allow us to say what the basic computer skills are. Professor Carrie Leverenz mentioned that she and other English department faculty agreed to add this outcome because their courses are already doing it. All the written communication 2 courses meet the proposed outcomes. Further discussion ensued on the need to state explicitly what we are already doing and not allowing SACS to determine

our curriculum outcomes. Senator George Gilbert proposed striking the word "standard" in the third action step so that it reads as follows: *"Students will use word processing software to produce and format texts."* The motion, with this change, passed unanimously.

The Senate was then asked to adjourn in order to reconvene in a larger room to hear Chancellor Boschini's update on the Vision in Action initiative.

VIA Update

Chancellor Boschini began the session by announcing that Professor Ed McNertney had been named to the new post of Coordinator of the Core Curriculum. He emphasized that there is a need for one individual to oversee the remaining work left to implement the core, and that there should be someone to shepherd the core now and in the future.

Turning to the update on the Vision in Action initiative, Chancellor Boschini stated that he wants people at TCU to know that planning will make a difference. He believes in continuous, not "episodic," planning. This is the reason he hired the consultants, Kaludis and Associates to work on this initiative. In addition, he expressed his desire that the eventual strategic plan be heavily faculty-driven while being inclusive of staff, students, and community. Professor Leo Munson then took the floor. He explained that the bound report, *Synthesis of VIA Strategy Group Position Papers*, represents an outline of the subjects to be discussed at the symposium to be held on September 11. He outlined the structure and aim of the symposium. The next step in the process will be the School and College plans. He also pointed out that the facilities master plan would also take place this year. The final report of the Vision in Action Committee will be presented in April.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:15.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon L. Fairchild
Secretary