

Minutes
TCU Faculty Senate
7 November 2002

Members present: Information missing

Members absent: Information missing.

Chair Watson convened the session at 3:38 PM.

The October minutes were approved unanimously.

The Chair presented a short history of the efforts towards a faculty conflict resolution policy and then introduced Senator Sacken who spoke on the current draft of the Faculty Conflict Resolution Policy (CRP). Senator Sacken's brief and good-natured historical summary underscored the amount of time that has been spent on this.

Senator Sacken noted that the proposed mediation process does not usurp the authority of administrators since mediation is not arbitration and there is no final decision (as would be reached by an arbitrator). Administrators can accept, reject or modify any mediation agreement. A mediation committee does nothing permanent, final and complete. A mediation panel is not an arbitration body and therefore its actions take nothing away from the Provost or Chancellor.

Provost Koehler said that section IIC is unclear on, 1) what constitutes faculty versus staff grievance, and 2) when each policy applies. He wanted to know if Faculty were really willing to be controlled by Staff guidelines since this involves non-academics in faculty mediation. Human Resources (HR) administers the Staff CRP and he wanted to know if faculty would be happy with disputes being mediated by HR. Koehler suggested that faculty would be well advised to have a policy that is parallel to the Staff CRP but is more heavily faculty driven.

Senator King said that the understanding of the TP&G committee was that a faculty policy similar to that of the Staff CRP would be accepted by the administration so that the draft policy deals with tenure and promotion. He suggested a two-track system. Anything dealing with tenure and promotion would be covered by the draft Faculty CRP and anything else would go to HR. HR would deal with other faculty grievances with mediators that are trained and certified. The role of mediators in all Faculty and Staff problems is the same, to facilitate communications between two parties so they can reach a decision. Mediation is not arbitration

Senator King pointed out that faculty members are already being pulled into HR mediations when faculty and staff have problems. He thinks that trained mediators do not need to be exclusively faculty members since they don't actually make any decisions. Senator King said this was not a concern to him but he knows it might be for others. Currently faculty do not have the right to expect work-related mediation and if TCU is forced to go to faculty-related legal disputes then it would look better if we had already dealt with these internally through mediation in HR. At the very least such a policy puts the Faculty on an equal footing with Staff.

Senator Lahutsky said that section IIB should apply only to tenure and promotion. Currently its language applies to additional problems and she suggested that language should be focused on just tenure and promotion.

Senator Woodward asked how the policy would address academic freedom disputes involving, for example, a chair and a faculty member. Senator Sacken noted that section IIB explicitly discusses matters of academic freedom.

Senator Sacken asked the Provost why the Faculty should need a parallel policy if it deals with disputes that could be handled by HR. Provost Koehler said he is concerned that staff would be involved in a faculty mediation problem. Koehler feels we need such a policy, but wanted to know why HR should be involved.

Senator Fort says he supports the notion of using the existing Staff Conflict Policy for Faculty, since the current policy is the product of much community building on the part of very good minds. He thinks we should use it and then deal with problems if they develop.

Senator Sacken feels that the Faculty GRP should not be limited to tenure and promotion but that we should have a policy that is also related to work conditions. Senator King said the current draft is phrased as is because of matters of academic freedom, tenure and promotion. If an umbrella policy is considered, then the Faculty Senate needs to understand that any policy we develop must account for staff-faculty interactions. Currently staff can file grievance against faculty, but the reverse is not true.

Senator Sacken suggested that we communicate with the Staff Assembly and see if their document can be modified. He also noted that IIC is dropped, then IIB becomes the scope of this document. All work related disputes would be handled interfaculty and IIC could be discarded since it deals with specifics of tenure and promotion.

Senator Nichols suggested that removing the parentheses in section IIB would clarify the document.

Senator King said he was not sure that IIB covers everything, but Senator Sacken said that it could cover more with some minor editing.

Since a motion to adopt the revised policy had not been made, the draft was returned to committee for additional tweaking, with the assumption that a motion to accept the revised policy will be introduced in a future Faculty Senate meeting.

Chair Watson introduced Bob Seal, Library Director, who gave the Senate an update on the Library. Bob mentioned the following points:

- The Library is looking for a new automated system since the current software is no longer supported

- In mid November a new reading room dedicated to the Gearharts will be dedicated.
- The Information Commons is a big success, especially with the movement of the HELP desk to the Library. Also the Computer Lab has been extended.
- Over the summer the music library listening facility was upgraded with state of the art equipment.
- The Bistro continues to do well and is a big pull for faculty and students.
- The Library is much busier than it used to be, due to many factors.
- The Library has been nominated (externally) for a prestigious national award for excellence in libraries.
- Electronic resources continue to complement the current print resources. The Library now has 1325 full text electronic journals, access to more than 20 thousand titles through databases and over 20 thousand electronic books on line
- This spring the Library will conduct a user survey that can be compared to similar surveys in other academic libraries.
- Big changes in state support of telecommunications for state schools may result in the loss of many services. The library, along with other academic libraries, is lobbying for the adoption of a tax on cell phones to keep from losing state support of the telecommunications infrastructure.

University Finances

Vice Chancellor Carol Campbell gave a presentation on the state of university finances.

After the presentation Senator Fort asked her about how much money was used to subsidize athletics. VC Campbell said she was not aware of the exact amount but that it was in the millions.

Reading Frogs

CHHS Associate Dean Linda Moore and Julie Graber described the Reading Frogs program and noted that she is the only faculty participant in the program. She expressed the hope that faculty we get more involved in the program.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:15 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Arthur B. Busbey, Secretary