

Faculty Senate Minutes 20 April 2012

Call to Order: Gary Byrd called the meeting to order at 12:17 p.m. in 11 JBK.

Senators Present: Ambrose, Anwar, Bartlett, Byrd, Castillo, Crandall, Drumheller, Jafar, Johnson, Kuennen, Landram, Parr-Scanlin, Pendleton, Rausch, Rosa, Severn, and Vizzini

Senators Absent: Alex, Ward, and Wilson

Substitutes: Nancy Cartwright for Bigham and Laura Waight for Loftin

Approval of Minutes: Byrd and Anwar amended the campus parking, evaluation of administrators, and tenure and promotion process sections in the minutes of the 6 April Faculty Senate meeting. Rosa made a motion seconded by Vizzini to accept the minutes as amended. The motion passed unanimously by those present.

Faculty Senate Elections: The following Faculty Senators volunteered to help conduct elections of new Senators during College meetings:

BUS – noon, 24 April – Ambrose and Byrd

ESS – 11:30 a.m., 1 May – Drumheller and perhaps Loftin

NHS – 9 a.m., 3 May – Anwar and Byrd

ASE – 10 a.m., 3 May – Byrd and Parr-Scanlin

FAH – 11 a.m., 3 May – Anwar and Byrd

Regents' Professor: Byrd and Pendleton contacted three of the four faculty members Faculty Senators nominated to be considered for Regents' Professor, and Byrd will contact the fourth nominee. Nomination packets are due at WT by 18 May. Faculty Senators will vote by ballot in the Cornette Library until 24 May. Selection criteria will be included with the packets. The name of the one faculty member selected by vote of the Faculty Senators will be forwarded to Dr. O'Brien who will report to The Texas A&M University System by 1 June.

Update on WT Ombuds Officer: Nine instances of problems were brought by WT faculty members to Byrd during his two years as President of Faculty Senate. Eight of the problems have had okay to successful resolutions for the faculty members, and the other problem was brought to Byrd this week. Dr. O'Brien is credited for his vision for proposing an Ombuds Officer for WT. WT still is awaiting final approval. An Ombuds Officer will be selected later.

Parking Issue: Byrd discussed with Dr. O'Brien parking and loss of faculty importance. The parking issue represented to Byrd another step where faculty at WT are losing importance little by little, as seems to be occurring throughout the United States. Byrd reported Dr. O'Brien wanted to continue emphasizing the importance of faculty. For

example, Dr. O'Brien said Calvi will be introducing former President Clinton for the speech on 24 April.

Faculty Evaluation of Administration:

Byrd thinks some faculty had qualms about faculty evaluation of WT administration. Faculty need assurance of confidentiality, that the process is done in a valid way, and that results will be used. Anwar said transparency and accountability prevent problems. Faculty Senate improved the evaluation process this year. Byrd will send a broadcast e-mail to all faculty explaining the changes in the evaluation. Ambrose said each Senator should talk to each faculty member in his department to assure faculty complete the evaluation. Byrd hopes for greater participation by faculty.

Issues with confidentiality of the evaluations have been resolved through multiple meetings with Gary Kelley. Faculty Senate will open the evaluation envelopes in an open meeting of Faculty Senate, and there now is no way to trace an evaluation back to a faculty member.

Each department head and all of his/her superiors will receive in aggregate form results of the Scantrons and comments provided by all faculty from that department who participated in the evaluation of administration. At each level, the evaluations by faculty will be given in aggregate form to the administrator and all his superiors up to the university president. Byrd hopes faculty feedback will be taken into account for evaluation of administrators.

Byrd proposed a resolution that inserts checks and balances. Rosa questioned comparison of student-faculty versus faculty-administrator evaluations. Drumheller suggested not comparing evaluation of administration to the CIEQ but thinks evaluation by faculty should be part of merit consideration for administrators.

Severn proposed rewording the drafted resolution into two parts – that faculty evaluations of administrators should count for merit consideration and that evaluations of administrators should count comparable to the CIEQ counting in evaluation of faculty. Vizzini motioned to accept the resolution as revised by Severn. Landram seconded the motion. The motion to accept the resolution as amended by Severn passed unanimously by those present.

Resolution Background – The Faculty Senate commends the initiative to examine the weight and role of using CIEQ data for annual merit consideration and tenure/promotion decisions. The Faculty Senate recognizes the importance of student evaluation of faculty as part of the essential data for these decisions. In order to increase participation of faculty in the evaluation of administrators, the Faculty Senate had recently worked with the Office of Institutional Research to improve procedures of how faculty evaluations are collected and processed.

Resolution – Therefore, the Faculty Senate calls on the President to ensure that the data from Faculty Evaluations of Administrators are used in annual merit decisions for academic department heads, associate deans, deans and the Provost.

Further, in those annual merit decisions, the Faculty Senate calls for the Faculty Evaluations of Administrators to carry a significant weight, one that is comparable to the weights assigned to the student evaluations of faculty performance that are obtained from the CIEQ surveys.

Financial Information on the University: Faculty Senate has not been able in three years to obtain financial information on WT. Bob DeOtte chaired the first committee for this purpose. Karyn Friske and Byrd worked to obtain financial information the second year -- Rick Johnson initially gave access to that information, but later the information could not be accessed. Last year Byrd served on the WT financial exigency committee and received no information. The Program Review Committee was not provided information this year. An outside consulting group was brought in by Dr. O'Brien this year to assist in making this kind of information more readily available, but no information has been obtained yet. Byrd has officially requested information from Rick Johnson and Gary Barnes. No information has been obtained yet. How funds are used should be transparent. Rosa suggested a new accounting system is needed. Accounting for how WT funds are spent should tie in with Lean Six Sigma. Byrd, Parr-Scanlin, and Vizzini will word a recommendation and send it to Senators to review before sending it to Dr. O'Brien to disclose financial information by a specific date for Faculty Senate to advise WT faculty in their role of shared governance.

Discussion on Whether Faculty Should Be Tenured to Serve on Faculty Senate:

Byrd asked whether Senators thought faculty members should be tenured (except for special circumstances) to serve on Faculty Senate. He said Faculty Senate needs to deal with tough issues but wants to be sure non-tenured faculty are comfortable and their tenure is not endangered. In the past, several presidents of Faculty Senate have not been tenured. It was reported that the current Dean of the College of Business wants faculty to be tenured to serve on Faculty Senate. To change requirements for Faculty Senate membership would require a vote of WT faculty.

Severn was opposed. Laura Waight said there would not be shared governance if any faculty member were excluded from serving on Faculty Senate. Bartlett commented that Senate experience is priceless for learning about the processes at WT.

Being tenure-track was suggested, but professional librarians also serve as Senators. Anwar suggested a faculty member not be elected to Faculty Senate until after the third-year review. It was reported that being tenured to serve on Faculty Senate varies by university. The discussion was tabled until next year's Faculty Senate.

WT Campus Beautification Committee update: Nancy Cartwright reported that plants were planted on campus on Saturday, 14 April. WT is applying to be recognized as a national tree campus. A war memorial is desired for the WT campus. Nancy said to watch for announcements and help plant and participate.

The meeting adjourned at 2:08 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Bonnie B. Pendleton, Secretary

These minutes as written were approved unanimously on 3 May 2012.