

Faculty Senate Minutes 11 November 2011

President Gary Byrd called the meeting to order at 12:20 p.m. in 11 JBK.

Senators present: Alex, Ambrose, Anwar, Bartlett, Bigham, Byrd, Crandall, Jafar, Johnson, Landram, Parr-Scanlin, Pendleton, Severn, Vizzini, Ward, and Wilson

Substitutes: Amy Anderson for Yvette Castillo, Anand Commissiong for Dave Rausch, and Lisa Davis for Collette Loftin

Approval of minutes: Vizzini amended the minutes of 28 October 2011 that Dr. O'Brien wants to "ensure" objectivity for the third-year review. Vizzini made a motion seconded by Wilson to approve the minutes as amended. The motion passed unanimously.

Update on Program Review Committee: Byrd said the entire Program Review Committee met the morning of 11 November. Information on WT programs is being reviewed by subcommittees to report how central each program is to the mission of WT. Recommendations by subcommittees will later be reviewed by the entire Program Review Committee that will forward recommendations. Byrd is on the subcommittee reviewing academic programs on campus.

Feedback on third-year review: Faculty Senators obtained feedback on the third-year review from faculty in their departments. Senators discussed the purpose of the third-year review. Qualifications of faculty being reviewed are ranked as outstanding, excellent, etc., but there was discussion whether the third-year review was too formalized. Some Senators thought less feedback was needed or there should be a mechanism for response. It is unclear what "sufficient progress" means when faculty are working on large projects. Jafar asked for a definition of 'independent' evaluations.

The tenure and promotion process currently does not require an external member on the committee nor feedback from all tenured faculty in a department, but the third-year review does. Colleges differ on whether the third-year portfolio should be evaluated by the college or only the department. Faculty for third-year review currently are not evaluated at the university level. Anwar said perception at the department level can differ from opinions by people outside a department. An external review forces someone outside the faculty member's discipline to see if they agree with the departmental opinion. Several Senators favored review at the university level, but others said the college level was more in touch with departmental faculty. It was suggested that perhaps the dean would be an appropriate person for the review if the college committee does not evaluate the portfolio. Jafar said 5.2.7 was incorrect that review by the college committee occurs after the dean's review.

Severn suggested starting the review during the second semester of the third year to allow time for faculty to make up deficiencies such as few publications. Bartlett said changing the timeline for the third-year review to differ from that of the tenure and promotion timeline would create more work for reviewers multiple times per year. Faculty have been told that the current time for the third-year review is because of Texas A&M deadlines.

Feedback on learning outcomes: Byrd said Dr. O'Brien is chair of a state committee to examine learning outcomes and wanted WT faculty feedback for a draft he is preparing for use statewide. The Coordinating Board has been checking performance outcomes and could use learning outcomes to measure performance and university funding. There was discussion on how to measure learning outcomes, in what courses they might be included, and whether the university mission statement will be updated. Anwar suggested adding lines under each proposed learning outcome to apply to different disciplines. For Article 3, Anwar said he teaches business ethics after which students are supposed to be ethical, but WT cannot change someone's background and behavior in only 16 weeks; perhaps the learning outcome should state only that students should know ethics. It was suggested to reword "Upon graduation, students will be able to communicate to a diverse audience" to "Students will be able to communicate clearly and coherently." Byrd will check with Dr. O'Brien to learn where WT feedback on universal learning outcomes will be used.

Update on Faculty Senate subcommittees: Byrd will meet with members of the Faculty Senate subcommittee on faculty evaluation, mentoring, and retention and get started.

Ambrose reported the Faculty Senate subcommittee on faculty teaching loads and graduate assistants discussed release loads, teaching/GAs, and summer courses. The subcommittee created a resolution on summer teaching. The subcommittee thinks full-time faculty should be given first choice over part-time instructors whenever possible, especially for college-level courses. Dr. Hallmark will be asked how the break-even point for determining numbers of students in summer courses was determined, how money for summer courses was divided to departments, and how summer courses were assigned.

Bartlett and Pendleton reported the going green and saving money subcommittee met twice. The members are working with environmental groups on campus and discussing having an Earth Day for campus. WT already has a number of environmental measures in effect that should be marketed to prospective students and faculty.

The Faculty Senate subcommittee on cost analysis of WT administration, academics, and athletics met once. The subcommittee is trying to obtain information from Rick Johnson to compare WT administrative costs versus those at other universities in Texas and learn how the state report was compiled.

Dr. Hallmark will be asked to meet with Faculty Senate on 2 December to discuss the third-year review and summer teaching. By Friday, 18 November, Faculty Senators should send Byrd questions for Dr. Hallmark.

The meeting adjourned at 1:43 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Bonnie B. Pendleton, Secretary

These minutes were approved on 2 December 2011.