

Faculty Senate Minutes

October 19, 2018

Senators Present: Ambrose, Babb, Bartlett, Burnett, Castillo, Clewett, Clifton, Curl, Davis, Franken, Karaganis, King, Kwan, Leitch, Lewis, Li, Meljac, Revett, Rollin, Seth, Seward, Wang, and Woodyard.

Senators Absent: Garcia, Ingrassia, Macdonald and Williams.

Substitutes: Teri Bingham for Garcia, Bruce Brasington for Ingrassia, Carolyn Ottoson for Macdonald and Tanner Robertson for Williams

Call to Order: Davis called the meeting to order at 12:17 pm in the Eternal Flame Room of the JBK.

Davis announced that the Pathways Conference on November 1 - 2 needs 30 judges. Anyone willing to serve contact Rex Pjesky.

Approval of Minutes: King made a motion to approve the Faculty Senate minutes of September 14, 2018; Clifton seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Guest Speaker: Dr. Walter Wendler, President/CEO, WTAMU

Topics for discussion came from three different sources: (1) the Senates four primary agenda items (merit raises, instructor promotion, alumni evaluations and the recent SSC workplace incident); (2) questions for Dr. Wendler sent by senators before the meeting; and (3) questions from the floor.

The first topic of discussion was merit raises and cost-of-living adjustments (COLA). Dr. Wendler reviewed the merit raise formula in his first year (half across the board; half merit). As he found out after the fact, this method was against the Faculty Handbook so it is off the table. This year there have been no merit raises. However, Dr. Wendler is looking into a mid-year merit raise. A 1% raise would cost \$650,000.

Enrollment is basically flat this year. Everyone is competing for the same students, many who are not college-ready. The elite schools have more scholarships to give than we do. Some sources are predicting that regional schools will lose 15% of their enrollments over the next ten to fifteen years.

We need to pursue different students because the number of eighteen-year olds is down. We also need to raise private money including endowed professorships. If departments did not have to pay for travel, money could go toward other things.

We need to target students typically not targeted – such as, transfer students and veterans. More specifically target transfer students outside the eighteen to twenty-two age range. Although there is a rapidly, growing student population of eighteen-year-old community college graduates through dual credit. The Dallas ISD projects by 2020 they will graduate seven-thousand students with associate degrees. We have to appeal to those students also. While being mindful of the changing environment. Many of the high school community college graduates display an opposite intelligence and income differential.

According to the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) – Washington DC, fifty-two to fifty-three percent of the college population attend ninety percent of the colleges. We are facing fierce competition for students.

We also need more intellectual activity for funding sources. To do that faculty need more time for intellectual activity. How do we get release time for researchers? We could buy more teachers but we must be careful of not having “suitcase” teachers. We could use more adjunct and graduate student faculty. Graduate student faculty as well as adjunct can be good teachers.

Davis and Wendler next consulted the list of questions sent prior to the meeting.

Question: Were you awarded a merit raise? And if so, did you accept it?

Answer: Yes and yes. Dr. Wendler said when he was a dean at Texas A&M his salary was the lowest at \$94,000. The administration did not like how that looked so they offered a salary increase in a year when others in his college were not getting raises. He turned the raise down. The next year they offered a higher raise, when others were getting raises also, he accepted it.

Question from the floor: Seward – Is the mid-term raise a guarantee?

Answer: Looking into it; asked about 1%. State is not increasing funding to higher education.

Question from the floor: Meljac – If it is hard to find money for faculty, how come it is possible to find money for administrative raises?

Answer: Dr. Wendler said the A&M System found the money for his raise. He does not know how they use their money.

The next topic was from the Faculty Senate Agenda: Instructor promotion

Dr. Wendler said it was his understanding that a proposal was sent to Provost Shaffer on how instructors could be promoted. Other than that, he does not know enough about the topic to speak further.

Senators from the floor noted that the deans are divided on topic.

Dr. Wendler said they have a three-hour meeting every Monday so he does not know what is taking so long.

Comments from the floor noted that the main problem was non-uniformity across the colleges.

Back to the Faculty Senate Agenda, the next topic was: Alumni evaluations (AE)

Davis gave Dr. Wendler some background on the current issues with AE, including some of this year’s P&T packages not including AE (see September 28, 2018 minutes for further detail) and Shaffer’s email about AE as part of the P&T package. (See Alumni Evaluations heading under Current and Old Business for text of Shaffer’s email.)

Dr. Wendler wants AE five years post-partum. In the AE, the alumni would identify the two best faculty in their major and fill out a survey listing each faculty members key attributes and strengths. By this time in their life, the alumni have both hindsight and experience. It would take a while to build the survey form; but after the survey development, the time would be minimal. When Dr. Wendler was a dean at A&M, they did three surveys: in situ, graduation check and five years after graduation.

Comments from the floor: Clewett – Most influential teacher might not be in a student’s major. Also, if adjunct/graduate in core courses then full-time faculty have no opportunity to make those impressions.

Dr. Wendler agreed with the validity of the comments. He also noted that research from the University of Hawaii found the best time to check on student perception of teaching quality is right before mid-term. The students were not tainted by grading but had formed perceptions of the teacher. He also mentioned that we could do more evaluations in-house.

The last Faculty Senate agenda topic concerned the SSC workplace incident and the length of time between the incident and statement (editorial) from Dr. Wendler.

Dr. Wendler began his discussion of this incident with a timeline of events.

In late July, an SSC employee discovers a noose in front of his workstation hanging from the 'N' on a "Zone" sign and notifies his supervisor.

Saturday, July 28 – Tadhi Hays notified the University Police Department. Officer Cole Tinsley documented the incident including taking pictures of the noose hanging from the door frame of the Zone Department.

Wednesday, August 1 – Nancy Hampton contacted Stan Pena and Randy Rikel about the incident.

Saturday, August 4 – Randy Rikel received police report of incident including documentation and photos.

Monday, August 6 – Stan Pena notified WT HR to let them know the incident had been turned over to SSC Corporate HR office for investigation on July 30.

Wednesday, August 8 – The perpetrator of the incident dismissed by SSC.

Dr. Wendler noted that we can say immediately we do not want the person on campus. In addition, we have to determine if there is a Title IX violation.

Tuesday, September 11 – The media contacted Campus Communications who said what they could about the incident but primarily directed the media to SSC as it was their incident. The media did not contact the president's office for comment.

Dr. Wendler contacted the NAACP prior to September 11. The NAACP wanted some time to think about the incident and their response.

Saturday, September 22 – An article appeared in the Amarillo Globe-News about the incident.

<http://www.amarillo.com/news/20180922/noose-left-at-workplace-on-wt-campus>

After the article came out, Dr. Wendler talked to some of the African-American alumni. The alumni already knew about the incident through the NAACP. Dr. Wendler also called Chancellor Sharp.

On Sunday, September 23, Dr. Wendler wrote a letter to the editor of the Amarillo Globe-News. Chancellor Sharp read and approved of the letter after one change. The NAACP were also good with the letter and posted it on their website.

Monday, September 24 - SSC representative from North Carolina came to WT to promise to do better. Since the SSC perpetrator thought it was just a joke, it is clear they have work to do.

Tuesday, September 25 – Dr. Wendler posts his response to the WT community because of the Amarillo Globe-News article. <http://www.wtamu.edu/news/letter-to-the-editor-from-dr-walter-wendler.aspx>

The response from SSC was good in dealing with the perpetrator. As with any employee matters, SSC had to go through their own procedures and policies. An A&M System attorney told Dr. Wendler that if the incident was with campus employees, we might still be working on dismissing the perpetrator because of free speech.

Through this incident, Dr. Wendler discovered that he negotiates the renewal of the SSC contract. He believes the employees of SSC need to have a better relationship with us. We are on the same campus but in many ways, we are worlds apart.

For his final topic, Dr. Wendler asked senators for comments on WT 125. With no further comments or questions, Dr. Wendler left.

Current and Pending (Old) Business

Merit raise – nothing new to report beyond Dr. Wendler’s comments above.

Instructor promotion

Dr. Shaffer has the draft proposal from last year’s Faculty Senate. Currently he and the deans are not in agreement. Ingrassia sent Davis the proposal. Davis will send the proposal to the faculty senators. According to Davis, WT has 456 faculty members with 159 tenure and tenure-track. That leaves 297 faculty employed as instructors, adjuncts, etc. As representatives of all faculty, we need to keep pushing this issue.

Alumni Evaluations

Committee Chair Clewett presented changes to the Faculty Handbook. Summary: When the VPAA notifies faculty of the need to prepare Promotion and Tenure folders, the VPAA also notifies the Director of Institution Research of faculty eligibility for Promotion and Tenure. Both notification dates are May 1.

Clewett next presented a Faculty Senate Resolution that the Faculty Senate president or designee attend open Promotion and Tenure meeting, held prior to May 15, to tell junior faculty their responsibilities in the Promotion and Tenure process.

Finally, Committee member Ingrassia is writing a letter to J. Hampton to close the loop and make sure communication is complete. Specifically, the letter informs J. Hampton what processes have taken place in regards to his request for information about Alumni Evaluation. The letter also includes concerns about current students completing alumni evaluations.

Clewett made a motion to accept the change to the Faculty Handbook; Meljac seconded. The motion passed unanimously

Clewett made a second motion to resolve as written in second paragraph of this section; Revett seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Before leaving this section, Davis addressed the prior discussion (see September 28, 2018 minutes) regarding some current P&T packets not having alumni evaluations. As requested at the September 28th meeting, Davis contacted Dr. Shaffer about these packets. Dr. Shaffer responded as follows:

There was considerable confusion this year about whether alumni evaluations were required or not and I know that some faculty and department heads did not request them, for whatever

reason. As you know, the deans believe that these are of limited value and have recommended that we abandon them. We did not do so because Faculty Senate indicated support for including them, as you note below. We can discuss this when I meet with the Senate, but my sense at the moment is that the deans are not fixated on eliminating them without the go-ahead from the Senate to do so.

Davis asked if the lack of alumni evaluations has affected anyone. No senator responded; however, the two senators who originally reported the matter were absent.

Electronic elections

Nothing new to report. Committee plans on meeting.

Workplace incident

Dr. Wendler discussed the incident in detail today. The Committee drafted a resolution to present today but decided to withdraw the resolution as it stands. The Committee remains active particularly in the area of SSC's service to the University.

New Business

The TX Council of Faculty Senates is meeting soon and asked attendees the following question: What are your senate's primary issues of concern? The following emerged as the main concerns.

- Inconsistency among colleges caused by deans but everyone evaluated on same resources
- Instructor promotion and representation

At an Academic Leadership Council, department heads asked Davis why we want alumni evaluations.

Answer: How do we know if our teaching is effective? – By surveying students who now have the benefit of additional life/work experience.

Upcoming Schedule

November 2 – Guest: Dr. Wade Shaffer, Provost/VPAA WTAMU

November 6 – (Tuesday 1:15 – 1:45) TAMUS Board of Regents Vice Chairman Elaine Mendoza

November 16 -

November 30 – James Webb, Chief Information Officer WTAMU

The Faculty Senate meeting adjourned 1:46 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon Burnett, Secretary

Minutes approved at November 2, 2018 Faculty Senate Meeting