

Faculty Senate Minutes
Dr. Meljac
27 October 2017

12:15 Call to order: Ambrose.

Motion to approve minutes of two sessions ago: Debutte moves, Meredith seconds.
Approved.

Bill took stuff from drop/pass discussion to Wade Shaffer. Dr. Shaffer says it is a good start. Skeptical of T and T language approval by deans. Deans will send counterproposal.

President will come to Dec 1 meeting. He wants to talk about core curriculum, we (the Faculty Senate) don't necessarily. Bill thinks we need to talk about not discouraging people coming in as freshman.

IT committee: cell phone option, etc., about DUO. Not many options to choose from. By rule of A&M system, so we can't do anything about it. James Webb asked to send someone to us about things coming up about DUO. Research group established by James Webb should be attended by someone of this body in terms of discussing special use. Use of instruments in science and tech may not work because it's working on old systems. System law is important to tech. Question poses is whether or not we should invite James Webb next meeting? Committee suggests we work with IT instead of playing against IT, because IT is trying to play catch-up. We ought to have Webb at the next meeting to share what's on our mind versus what's on IT's mind. There is a general agreement on these terms. We could have Webb come to a meeting to discuss what faculty needs usability-wise, and then hear what IT says. Ambrose will invite for next meeting. Mandate came from the A&M system and we were last system to implement it. No movement because of system pressure.

Instructor Promotion: Brian absent, no information.

Ombuds: select Byrd or Rogers as Ombuds? Discussion—Gary Byrd's comments considered impressive. Both, though, have a lot of experience. Byrd seems to be in on ground floor of forming position in the first place. That experience would serve us well. Ambrose reminds that prior to Ombuds "independent" position, Faculty Senate president served as Ombuds. Either would be good. Vote by secret ballot decided. 13-6 for Byrd.

Minnie Piper: no nominations found. Due next meeting, or no one will be sent up.

Merit Raise Formula: Ambrose, should we form a committee? President visit was step one. Heard a "near apology." Rationale requires deliberation. Ashley reminds us that we want to discuss this as a whole group and not a committee. President didn't think it had too much variance as to reflect enough merit, but the 50-50 doesn't quite seem right. Would be nice to see

the contrasts of systems. We have no data to see the change. Looking side by side on screen would be helpful, so we'll do that. Senate looked at Dr. Shaffer's original notes. Question posed is "who defines merit?" Current system has been heavily flushed out with a lot of thought, given the amount of detail and weights. Across the board raises questioned. Do we want to go through a long process of taking what we have and changing it just to suit the philosophical idea of the president? Dr. Pinkham said the new system helped her personally, so some of us may have gotten a bump and others not. We were asked to consider this as a body, however. Do department heads or supervisors currently have the power to distribute raises as the president says? Prescribed in handbook what supposed to do. Each did according to funds possible to the dean/provost/etc. pools. Not sure if department heads have extra money to put above and beyond the formula. Reluctance to have merit prescribed by president. Ambrose: "All boils down to what Ashley said: what is best for us individually?" Pinkham: thought the deserving of merit was decided by department head, which appears to be the consensus of the thought. We may have to get information from department heads. We may need a sub-committee to get data for informed analysis. Ambrose can get information from Dr. Shaffer. Meredith: does the current system really recognize truly outstanding performance? Pinkham: no idea what anyone gets but the individual. A lot of subjective nature. Changing the formula may not change that. The numbers presume to inform correctly, but this may not be exact? We must remember that "most outstanding" is in the plural form, but is open to interpretation. Do we do one like the handbook and the other as to who is the most outstanding, is what Ambrose wonders. President Wendler suggests folks who score on the APS are basically getting the same thing: "Everyone passing gets some money, but the A student is getting the extra." No cut off as to what "most outstanding" means, so the individual who decides this becomes subjective in her/his role. The Senate can get the aggregation of the scores, so we can see what people were at the score levels and what the merit increase was. Still, that depends on who is doing the scoring. We can ask IR for this. We have to see that data. Unless we see that data we can't make a decision, and we have to assume the President is seeing this. One threshold on score and one based on percentage is suggested. A lot of inflation, a percent-based system would sort this out. Is the President suggesting too many people lumped together and a few should really be recognized. He said 50% reached most outstanding. Bill should get some more information before we decide and continue discussion. Seems like president and Dr. Shaffer should speak with deans and department heads, and we shouldn't have to do this. President should tell supervisors to "quit giving 3.8s!" Meredith motions to get information from direct supervisors and deans. John seconds. Motion passes.

ESS committee selection: 9-8 Janet over Dave

NHS committee selection: Kuhlmann no longer here. Trisha Brown unanimously elected.

Definition of collegiality: Harry Houston suggested we define this. We have in the APS the selection of collegiality. Supervisor decides and give reasons as to why not if why not. Ambrose says this is opening a can of worms. Do we want to set up a definition? What context? For Ombuds—the problem is that people come there for this problem. Good luck quantitating that because it is subjective. Seems impossible to meet 100% of the time. How do you quantify?

Evaluation and career advancement? What do we have in black and white? Nothing. Are we supposed to define that? To clarify for Ombuds? We have an obligation to entertain this notion. We ought to clarify this. At one time, it was part of P&T deliberations. The comment comes up that it is on the APS. You can mention it in P&T, though, so it can be there. There is nothing to tally. Only spoken when there is contention. Harry gives examples: displays positive attitude about work; supports colleagues; encourages colleagues in work projects and teaching; handles positive criticism; accepts feedback; positive communication; mutual respect for colleagues in and outside of work. Seems pretty precise. We can evaluate based on this. We can quantify it that way. Pinkham: "used as club! Do not rock the boat! There is protection to having a definition." If we define this, what will it do for Harry? Nothing. Why is this not already a definition for Harry? Harry said he got this out of articles he read. He wants a definition. We ought to have one, really, especially if we are being evaluated on it. If there is proofs positive, you must have proofs negative. Meredith: "works well with others with examples and then everything on that list." Yes or no, and reasons are supposed to be given if no, but some don't do that. This appears to have been before the form three years ago. Positives and negatives would give someone something to work on. Sometimes in contentious departments it is best to be quiet, and that might be considered collegial in some departments and not others. Not certain a written definition will resolve conflicts. But it can define what parts of collegiality are at stake. All seems white and black ethics. We can get information from department heads on this, and they want it to go away. If you are junior faculty and you get "no," you need a reason. Given a "no" with an explanation is not enough. Sometimes new faculty try to stay away from already split faculty. If we do not have a definition, how do we protect themselves from joining a group? Putting trivial stuff on paper would show the black and white of the issue. If faculty member does not meet with students, this would be more serious than going to a mixer. Ambrose: but the form allows for this being said. Lack of definition results in a problem then. If Harry comes after a term of service and says this is an issue, it must be an issue. If it was taken care of by being written in a policy, then isn't it the Ombuds' job to work with this. If there is a problem, going to the Ombuds would be a small population that gets in this situation, so why make this a written definition? For example, research for T&P wasn't cooperative, so was he not collegial? Does one then consider that not collegial? To make rules is dangerous for this reason. Too many restrictions. Check with the department and get reference from senior faculty members. This would be the way to go? Ambrose thinks why give administrators more ammunition to use against you? Provost Chapman started this conversation and we got nowhere, but we did get it on the new form. Raise counter-question: if we can't make it formulaic, then why have it? Prior Faculty Senate said it did not want collegiality on it, but the prior dean demanded it, so if it were there then it'd be a yes or no and they had to give reasons. Ambrose suggests we remove it since we can't quantify it. We need to know how it is being used and should it be used. It has come up before, so the list by Harry is a good defensive tool. It falls under professionalism, so it is on the rubric. If it's redundant, then it doesn't serve a purpose. Motion by Meljac to leave it as it is on the APS. Meredith seconds. Motion passes.

Administration's raises given, privileged parking (only president's council should have reserved spots, also stickers not on cars noticed), number of administrative positions increased, faculty

salaries versus other universities, number of faculty leaving, raw data on G drive but have to be on ELS to see it. All information is on the report online. Ambrose says this was looked at previously, and if we looked now, what are we going to do with it? Ambrose says there may not be able to do much. Pinkham: “if we are asked to look at reduced requirements for P&T for admins, we ought to look at this.” Meredith says we have to look at the statistics across the board. Ambrose asks which we should look at. Data is already available for much of this. Parking is a different issue. Not sure what we can do. What is the point? Do we entertain to a point of concern or are they just curiosity? Faculty leaving might be a good thing to look at, especially if the salaries are low, including recruitment—it’s all in the report. Provost asked for all of the ELA to do this and a complete study was done and report was published and presented. With a new administration may be more receptive to parking. O’Brien dictated the parking. Wendler is open to discussion. Parking committee will deal with new parking issues—a proposal was made. What is the parking problem?

Pinkham: Gary Byrd asks us to look into why students do not buy required text books for classes. Psychology polling its own classes. Financial issues are a concern. Isn’t this a syllabus issue? Yes. Do we just let them not pass? Well, they come back at you! If they don’t buy the book, they don’t pass. Seems tied in part to the athletes, according to Byrd. What would we do with that number? We can’t force the hand of the students. Affects retention rates. How do we force to buy the books? We can’t. Detailed lectures and recommended text books are a way to deal with this, but perhaps for harder classes it’s different. Students are adults. Ambrose says, “it’s up to you to tell the student.” This may not be a Faculty Senate problem. Open book tests attempt to solve this.

Dr. Debutte reviews the questions posed at last meeting:

1. A study on the retention rate of faculty at WT over the past ten years
2. A study on how the number of administrators have grown since 2005, compare to the numbers of administrators prior to 2005
3. An audit request on the merit raises of administrators compare to the merit raises of faculty for 2017
4. A study on how reserve parking is given to administrators and who determines the need for a permanent reserve parking place for a title?
5. An additional study on why the salaries of WT (in all areas except administration) are so low in comparison to similar position in the A&M System, how can we improve this area?

Motion to adjourn: Meredith.

Seconded by Everyone.

End 1:37