

## Faculty Senate Minutes

November 2, 2018

**Senators Present:** Ambrose, Bartlett, Burnett, Castillo, Clewett, Clifton, Curl, Davis, Franken, Ingrassia, King, Kwan, Leitch, Lewis, Li, Macdonald, Meljac, Rollin, Seth, Seward, Wang, Williams and Woodyard.

**Senators Absent:** Babb, Garcia, Karaganis, and Revett.

**Substitutes:** Malvika Behl for Garcia and Liang Chen for Babb

**Call to Order:** Davis called the meeting to order at 12:16 pm in the Eternal Flame Room of the JBK.

**Guest Speaker:** Dr. Wade Shaffer, Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs

### Topic # 1 – Possibility of Four-day a Week Class Schedule

Dr. Shaffer asked for comments/ideas on university class days that would help solve the problems students are having making it to classes on time from/to the AG Complex. Shaffer stressed the need to make a decision because the Fall 2019 schedule comes out soon. Shaffer also stressed the need for a certain amount of uniformity across colleges; University cannot have every college doing their own thing. As part of this topic's discussion, Shaffer provided the following information:

1. The lack of sidewalks and crosswalks contribute to the problem.
2. WT has the lowest space utilization (SU) in the state – Classroom = 42; Labs = 58; minimum 75.
  - a) Monday to Friday classes from 7 am to 2 pm with 50 spaces in the room have 100% utilization.
  - b) Universities that make higher SU scores, use the whole day.
  - c) One-fourth of our students are online.
  - d) If a course is offered before 8 am or after 4 pm, students will choose online instead.
  - e) In general, MWF, 8 am, and afternoon classes are hardest to fill when other options exist.
3. The following types of courses (other than AG) are in the AG Building: SES, psychology, astronomy and other sciences.
4. Another option is to lift ban on noon classes. This option is not popular with anyone.
5. Fridays could be used for labs.

Senators advanced the following ideas/comments:

Seward – Keep the current MW, TH schedule. Change the MWF schedule to the same start times as two-day a week classes but keep 50-minute classes now with longer breaks (Math and Engineering already do this). MWF classes usually suffer from low enrollment on Fridays. Many MWF classes are hybrid and only meet MW with other activities on Friday.

Clewett – TX Physics Consortium courses all start on the hour between 10 am and 2 pm MWF and TTh. Class lengths are 50 and 75 minutes, respectively. Since courses are broadcast to/from other campuses, don't have other options.

Dr. Shaffer asked faculty to continue sending ideas to his office. Dr. Shaffer is also meeting with student government, Monday, November 5<sup>th</sup>.

## **Topic # 2 – Teaching Loads for Full-Time Faculty with Research Expectations**

Discussion Item to Dr. Shaffer: Faculty are under increased pressure to win externally funded research and maintain graduate programs, all while having higher teaching loads.

Dr. Shaffer said he would love to offer 3/3 teaching loads to all tenured and tenure-track faculty. If all faculty agreed to increase class size, 3/3 teaching loads might be possible. With some courses having extensive writing/hands-on requirements, this might be difficult to ask of everyone. COB went to a 3/3 teaching load by increasing class sizes. Before using this model for everyone, we might want to look at how stressed their faculty is.

Dr. Shaffer is willing to look at a proposal for 3/3 teaching load for tenured and tenure-track faculty. How many more faculty would we need? If more faculty are not possible, we could look at the teaching/research/service combination. Faculty who win external funding should get class release time similar to that for faculty doing administrative work.

Clewett wondered how reduced teaching loads would affect instructors. According to Dr. Shaffer, instructors typically teach 15-hours per semester. He would prefer instructors have a 4/4 teaching load. He fears if we load the teaching on part-time instructors WT looks more like a community college than a university. In addition, it is difficult to find part-time instructors in certain fields.

Ingrassia asked if we have the classrooms to increase class size. Dr. Shaffer said the AG Complex had bigger classrooms and existing smaller classrooms could be combined to make bigger rooms. If we move to bigger classes, it is important to stay mindful of the student-to faculty ratio. Students choose us because of the smaller class size. Our largest class size is 110 – 120.

Dr. Shaffer acknowledged the differences in pay and resources between colleges but at the same time pointed out that each department has its own T&P policies based on the resources between departments/colleges. Those standards were put in place by the faculty in each department. If the standards are out of whack, go back to the department. Most departmental standards are eight to ten-years old and should probably be revisited.

## **Topic # 3 - Are the department heads and Associate Deans on record as to what they count towards your teaching load?**

Dr. Shaffer said this is not currently done in all departments. Institutional Research (Jarvis Hampton) tried to prepare a report on teaching loads and couldn't get needed information. By the end of the year, department heads and other supervisors should have published guidelines for counting hours.

Differential pay is done at the departmental level; it can't be done at the Provost level.

## **Topic # 4 - Instructor Promotion**

Dr. Shaffer said there is still resistance in Deans Council to Instructor Promotion because some deans fear it limits their flexibility with instructors. Dr. Shaffer gave the hypothetical example of an instructor getting a promotion and then the department/college experiencing a downturn in students. Does the dean have to keep the promoted instructor if a junior instructor is better?

Many senators are unhappy with the inconsistency in Instructor Promotion policies across colleges. Dr. Shaffer explained that each Dean has their own personality and each college has its own unique culture. Having departments do their own things instead of one size fits all causes part of this but colleges and departments are different. We need to find balance between uniqueness and fairness.

Ingrassia asked Dr. Shaffer what was the biggest sticking point in Instructor Promotion and how would he frame it to help the deans go for it?

Here are Dr. Shaffer's answers:

- Move discussion to specifics rather than philosophical/theoretical.
- Need to propose precise procedure and standard for instructor promotion.
  - o For example, if you teach for x number of years and your APS is at x mark, then you will get a promotion.
  - o Or put together Promotion packets (similar to P&T).
- Need to decide how many instructors can go up per year (if all went up, huge hit to budget).
- When decided how many per year, then decide who goes up per year.
- Instead of pay raises, maybe promotion would come with a course reduction.

Finally, Dr. Shaffer invited Davis to a Dean's Council meeting. Davis said he would do it or send the best person.

### **Topic # 5 – Merit Raises**

Dr. Shaffer thinks a one-time bonus is more likely than a merit raise. At this time, the hope is to see something concrete after spring enrollment numbers come in. The Dean's and Dr. Shaffer are very concerned about the lack of merit raises. It is bad for the University and faculty.

Ingrassia asked if tying merit raises to enrollment is typical to the A&M system and if it is likely to continue here at WT?

Dr. Shaffer said that it is easiest to offer merit raises if there is an enrollment increase. WT typically uses a very conservative budgeting model based on a 1 or 2% increase. This year (2018-2019) WT budgeted 0% growth and that was met. President Wendler decided that money for merit raises was not important. In the past O'Brien chose to give merit raises even when enrollment didn't cover it. Either way it is the president's choice.

Given that President Wendler has chosen to discourage current freshman and sophomore enrollment in the hopes of gradually building the junior and senior class through transfers, Faculty Senators are having a particularly hard time understanding his choice to not give merit raises justified by declining enrollment.

Dr. Shaffer's fear in the move to larger junior and senior classes through transfer students is the gradual decline in the faculty needed for freshman and sophomore classes.

In addition, the issue of students from some community colleges and dual credit/AP classes not being ready for junior-level work was discussed. Dr. Shaffer told of a situation where a panhandle high school asked how ready their students were for college-level work. When told that their students were having problems, the school made improvements to their program. Perhaps we need to do something similar with the community colleges.

### **Topic # 6 – SSC Noose Incident**

Dr. Shaffer did not know about the noose incident until it appeared in the newspaper. He felt it could have been handled better. The Dean's are also on record saying that SSC maintenance is bad. Randy Rikel and Stan Pena carried a message from the Dean's to SSC. SSC's answer is high employee turnover to which WT replies – pay employees more. WT is in Year 6 or 7 of a ten-year contract. Unless SSC specifically violates contract, they are on campus or three or four more years.

In concluding his visit to Faculty Senate, Dr. Shaffer expressed his appreciation to the faculty for their hard work and acknowledged the difficulties of the last few months. He is hopeful that Admissions will soon modernize their methods for admitting students and notifying them of scholarships. Dr. Shaffer encouraged faculty to come and visit him and also to get to know the people who teach at community colleges.

**Approval of Minutes:** Clifton made a motion to approve the Faculty Senate minutes of October 2, 2018; Li seconded. Motion passed with one member abstaining.

### **Current and Old Business**

#### *Alumni evaluations*

Davis said there is no opposition to the current Faculty Handbook proposal or Faculty Senate Resolution but he does not think it will accomplish what we want. The department heads don't like paying for the alumni evaluations which cost \$100 per person.

While at the Texas Council of Faculty Senates, Davis surveyed other schools about alumni evaluations. None of them included alumni evaluations in T&P packets. Instead the faculty could ask for outside letters and include them.

#### *Merit raise*

Davis included a Merit/Salary plan from TAMUCC for senators to review.

#### *Instructor Promotion*

Ingrassia felt that as a carryover from last year's committee it would help to have a new person on committee with fresh eyes. Noah Franken volunteered to be a member of the Instructor Promotion Committee.

#### *TAMUS Board of Regents Vice-President Mendoza Visit*

Davis reported that attendance from faculty senators was fixed. All officers are attending and each college is represented. The senate discussed possible information to share with Vice-President Mendoza.

### **New Business**

Parking Committee vacancy from FAH needs to be filled. Two nominees were named: Jean Stuntz and John Shanks. John Shanks won the nomination.

Recently Davis attended the Texas Council of Faculty Senates. Davis reported that other senates are dealing with the same issues we are, namely instructor promotion and merit increases. **none with one exception**

Davis handed out a proposed change to the Faculty Handbook and asked Senators to review and be ready for discussion about the proposal at the next meeting. The proposal involves Example 7 on page 94 (PDF page 101) concerning attendance at graduates and convocation.

Piper Professor nominations and applications are due November 16. So far there is one application in process. The Piper Professor application is online.

Ingrassia made a motion to adjourn; King seconded.

**Upcoming schedule**

November 16 - Becky Stogner, Director, WTAMU Alumni Association

November 30 – James Webb, WTAMU Chief Information Officer

The Faculty Senate meeting adjourned 2:30 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon Burnett, Secretary

*Minutes approved at November 30, 2018 Faculty Senate Meeting*