

TSU FACULTY SENATE MEETING

24 Feb. 2011

Minutes

Howard Beeth, Secretary

Members Present: Edieth Wu (Chair); Lalita Sen (Vice Chair); Howard Beeth (Secretary); Rasoul Saneifard (Treasurer); Alexis Brooks de Vita (Editor, *The Faculty Speaks*); Macaulay Akpaffiong (Pharmacy & Health Sciences); Thorpe Butler (COLABS); Kiran Chilakamarri (COST); Robert Ford (COST); Daniel Georges-Abeyie (SOPA); Doris Jackson (Pharmacy & Health Sciences); Anna James (TMSL); Wei Li (COST); Andrea Shelton (Pharmacy & Health Sciences); Sara White (COLABS); Zivar Yousefipour (Pharmacy & Health Sciences). **Total: 16.**

Members Absent: C.J. Tymczak (Parliamentarian); Demetrius Kazakos (Asst. Secretary); Emlyn Norman (COLABS); Byron Price (Graduate School); Mammo Woldie (Business). **Total: 5.**

Guests: Dr. James Opolot (SOPA)

Agenda Items

Call to Order & Chair's Announcements

The Chair called the meeting to order at 3:15p when a sufficient number of Senators finally arrived to create a quorum. It was noted that this meeting of the Senate makes up for the regularly scheduled February meeting that was cancelled when our university closed down on 3 February because of bad weather. Following the Call-to-Order, there was a brief discussion about the Faculty Assembly meeting tomorrow when 4 qualified faculty have to be elected to the University Rank, Tenure, Promotion & Salary Committee to fill vacancies representing the Colleges of Pharmacy and Health Sciences, Business, Communications, and Liberal Arts & Behavioral Sciences.

Approval of Minutes

Senators approved as submitted the revised minutes of the Senate meeting of 4 November 2010 and the draft minutes of the Senate meeting of 2 December 2010.

Senate Elections

Senators scheduled to present yielded their position on the agenda so that Senator Jackson and the other members of the Senate Election Committee—Senator Ford and Treasurer Saneifard, assisted by Dr. James Opolot—could lead a discussion about the pending April Senate election.

Committee Chair Doris Jackson began by distributing a document that included nine election items that required discussion:

1. “Official ballot paper
2. “Official list of faculty eligible to vote
3. “Time allotted for voting morning session and afternoon and evening session
4. “Centralized v. Decentralized voting process
5. “Consideration for having a voting location other than the third floor Faculty Senate Office
6. “Security for the ballots
7. “Process for tallying the ballots
8. “Retention of ballots for recount
9. “Deputizing faculty to run the voting process”

During her introductory remarks, Senator Jackson made several points, including the following:

1. That the goals for the next election = honesty, transparency, and avoidance of difficulty;
2. That the election should be promoted by email and possibly by having a forum where candidates for office could present their ideas;
3. That voting machines were available at no cost to the university but would have to be properly programmed;
4. That an accurate list of voters for each college must be obtained from the university administration;
5. That voters be required to show their TSU ID card to help verify their eligibility to vote;
6. That ideally voting should take place from 7a-7p on election day;
7. That experienced community volunteers could be available to assist on election day, if needed;
8. That designated faculty volunteers should be scheduled to monitor voting throughout election day;

9. That technical support personnel would be available on election day to deal with possible voting machine problems;
10. That election day should be early in the week so that any issues that develop can be resolved that same week, without any weekend delay and while the voting machines themselves are still on campus;
11. That senators should email her to volunteer their services on election day, and to share with her and her committee any election-related ideas they have.

General discussion followed Senator Jackson's remarks in which virtually all Senate members participated. During the discussion, there was general agreement that a centralized voting location on the first floor of Hannah Hall seemed preferable; that for security at least 2 faculty should be present at the voting site at all times on election day; that the ballots should be tabulated on the same day as the election; and that the ballots themselves should be delivered directly from members of the Election Committee to the Faculty Assembly/Senate office administrator, Ms. Isoke Frank-Williams, for lockdown in her office. Vice Chair Sen suggested that voting machines be tested prior to election day to insure their proper functioning. Senator Ford confirmed plans to arrange a meeting between the Election Committee members and Provost Ohia to help promote election cooperation and efficiency. However, Senator Ford reminded his Senate colleagues that the Senates bylaws are not clear regarding who actually can vote in elections and who can run for Senate office, despite the fact that a Senate committee he chaired made recommendations about these matters two years ago. He suggested that the Senate reconsider these 2009 recommendations ASAP. Towards the end of their thoughtful conversation, senators--encouraged by Senator Georges-Abeyie--stopped talking long enough to pass the following four motions:

1. That voting be centralized in one location rather than decentralized in several and that the Election Committee determine this single location;
2. That voting and vote counting should be done by electronic machine under the security of the Election Committee and with Harris County technical support personnel present;
3. That the required nominating meeting for candidates be held on Tuesday, 8 March, from 2-4p in a location to be determined;
4. That the Faculty Senate election be held on Wednesday, 13 April, from 7a-7p.

The hour growing late, the senators adjourned their meeting at 5:25p, agreeing to continue their discussion of the pending Senate election at their next meeting on March 3rd.