

****TSU FACULTY SENATE MEETING****

2 February 2012

Howard Beeth, Secretary

Members Present: Macaulay Akpaffiong (College of Pharmacy & Health Science); Howard Beeth (Secretary); Chris Beinman (COLABS); Alexis Brooks de Vita (Editor, *The Faculty Speaks*); Bettye Desselle (JHJ School of Business); Angie Eaton (College of Pharmacy & Health Science); Robert Ford (COST); Lila Ghemri (COST); Vera Hawkins (School of Communication); Cassandra Hill (TMSL); Mohsen Javadian (COST); Linda Johnson (COLABS); Sharlette Kellum (Graduate School); James Opolot (SOPA); Samuel Osueke (COE); Jane Perkyns (COLABS); Byron Price (Chair); Rasoul Saneifard (Vice Chair); Lalita Sen (Treasurer); Karma Sherif (JHJ School of Business); Holim Song (COE); Sara White (Parliamentarian); Mammo Woldie (JHJ School of Business); Zivar Yousefipour (College of Pharmacy & Health Science). **Total: 24.**

Members Absent: Jafus Cavil (COE); Daniel Georges-Abeyie (SOPA); Emlyn Norman (COLABS). **Total: 3.**

Guests: Kirsteryn Gunter, Faculty Assembly/Senate Senior Administrative Assistant; Provost Sunny Ohia; Andrea Shelton, TSU Faculty Ombudsperson. **Total: 3.**

AGENDA

Call to Order & Welcome

Chairman Byron Price called the meeting to order at 3:10p when a sufficient number of senators finally arrived to constitute a quorum. He began by noting that he had circulated to senators an article about the coming revolution in higher education. He asserted that there also should be a Faculty Senate revolution in terms of innovative, new activities, including grant applications. He then introduced the new Faculty Assembly/Senate Senior Administrative Assistant, Kirsteryn Gunter, noting that she had good technical and grant-writing skills, and senators welcomed her.

Approval of Minutes

Secretary Howard Beeth distributed paper copies of the December 2011 minutes after having had Ms. Gunter send email copies to all senators several days earlier. After reviewing the minutes, Senator Sharlette Kellum noted that while she had attended the Senate's December meeting, she was listed as having been absent. Secretary Beeth reminded senators to be sure to sign the attendance sheet at every meeting to avoid similar confusion. Senators otherwise approved the December 2011 minutes as submitted.

University Committee Reports & Assignments

Vice Chair Rasoul Saneifard quickly reviewed the operational status of University Committees. Some, he reported, were up and running while some still needed a charge. He also mentioned that he and Chairman Price were now recognized as ad-hoc members of committees from which they had previously been excluded. He added a plea that all faculty should be active members of committees for the good of all and of the university. His continuing remarks were interrupted by the unannounced and unexpected arrival of Provost Sunny Ohia, who was given the floor.

Senate Discussion with Provost Ohia

Provost Ohia reported that TSU's credit rating had improved impressively and that his next priority would be to increase research productivity. Accordingly, he informed senators that he intended to visit all deans and department chairs systematically to review the research productivity of each and every faculty person on campus. He said he was guided by the view that there were but two ways to "grow" research: by hiring talented new faculty and by stimulating those already at TSU. To stimulate veteran faculty, he announced that increased money would be available for Seed Grants, and he encouraged faculty members to submit proposals for them. However, some senators reminded Provost Ohia that new rules established during his tenure actually complicated the completion of research. For example, Treasurer Lalita Sen noted that advisement and especially registration ate up additional faculty time and energy. Vice Chair Saneifard added that faculty in COST were required to be on campus five days a week from 8a to 5p, to which the Provost replied that all faculty were required to do was meet classes and keep office hours. Senator Macaulay Akpaffiong complained that time was lost and research stalled when equipment failed. The Provost reported that some new technical personnel had been hired to address this problem and that another strategy might be to centralize equipment in fewer locations with tekkies permanently assigned to these locations.

The Senate's conversation with Provost Ohia ranged over a number of other issues.

Secretary Beeth reminded the Provost that he had promised the Senate to have further news of faculty buy-outs by February. Provost Ohia, in fact, reported significant progress. He said a staff report with recommendations would shortly be submitted to President Rudley for consideration. This report, he said, would include a survey of faculty buy-outs at other Texas state universities. He confidently expected that TSU would present faculty with a buy-out proposal during the Spring 2012 semester designed to be operational in the Fall of 2012.

Faculty Ombudsperson Andrea Shelton wondered if our university had or would consider implementing a “legacy” program, as did some higher ed institutions, that offered tuition reduction to students who were children of university employees. The Provost promised to report back to Shelton and the Senate about this.

Several members of the Senate steered the discussion towards salary structure and salary data. Senator Mammo Woldie asked the Provost if President Rudley had, as planned, hired external consultants to study TSU’s salary structure. And Vice Chair Saneifard asked the Provost if it would be possible for the Senate to acquire a master list of all faculty salaries and raises for the last year, since a preliminary examination based on partial information suggested that some raises appeared way too high, while others appeared too low. The Provost hedged in answering these questions, saying he would have to check with his “superiors” about releasing bulk salary and raise information. He reminded senators that individual faculty members who felt aggrieved could appeal to various committees for redress.

Following the Provost’s departure, Vice Chair Saneifard resumed his survey of the status of University-level committees. He reported that the University Rank, Tenure, Promotion, and Salary Committee was handling two cases and that the University Hearing Committee was handling one. Senator Lila Ghemri added that she was compiling the Senate’s “Manifesto” on-line as she received suggestions from faculty about what to include in it.

Open Textbook discussion

Senator Robert Ford is part of a committee that is studying the issue of creating an ‘Open Course/Textbook’ option on campus that would allow professors to develop their own textbooks or coursepacks, thus keeping the price to students lower and the profits on campus.

Several senators had questions about this.

Senator Ghemri wondered about copyright issues.

Senator James Opolot said that TSU administrators don’t credit such self-developed material with regard to tenure and promotion.

Notwithstanding, Senator Karma Sherif reported that the JHJ School of Business had already taken steps to implement such an option, and Senator Cassandra Hill added that professors can already publish their own work and have it copied at TSU. Finally, Chairman Price linked self-produced textbooks and coursepacks to Distance Education. He suggested drafting a proposal or applying for a grant, perhaps to the National Science Foundation, to create at TSU a substantial Distance Education Program—one that both would reduce the cost to students as well as have a capacity to reach students who had difficulty in making the trip to classes on campus. Price asked for volunteers to meet over lunch next week to discuss the possibility of applying for a TSU Seed Grant to launch such a project.

In conclusion, Senator Ford said that his committee would take these suggestions into consideration and report back to the Senate in the future.

Two Year Course Rotation Policy

Senator Ghemri reported that TSU is considering implementing a policy whereby every course would have to be taught at least once every two years. Such a policy, she said, is already in place at the University of Houston and elsewhere. She wondered what senators thought of the idea.

Senators were overwhelmingly supportive of a “two-year rule”.

Editor Alexis Brooks de Vita said it was at least a plan—and one that would allow students and faculty to schedule ahead, and students to graduate on time. She added that faculty should be intimately involved in the design and implementation of such a program.

Vice Chair Saneifard likewise thought that the plan would improve student graduation rates—a very sore point at TSU—as well as offer some support for low-enrollment departments.

Accordingly, Chairman Price suggested including a “Two Year Rule” in the Senate’s “Manifesto” of ideas to be considered by the faculty-at-large.

Compensation for Course Development & On-line Teaching

Senator Zivar Yousefipour began discussion of this issue by relating how she developed and taught an on-line course but got stiffed when it came to payment. Chairman Price vowed to go to Provost Ohia in Yousefipour’s behalf.

In a brief discussion of the issue, Senator Bettye Desselle said that her understanding of TSU’s current policy was not to pay for new, on-line course development—but possibly to pay for actually teaching such a course. However, Senator Kellum reported that the University of Houston paid neither for the development nor the teaching of such courses—and furthermore

retained exclusive rights to them as well. In response, Vice Chair Saneifard said that it was only just for faculty to get paid for all work accomplished, and Chairman Price said perhaps the Senate could establish an on-line blog to discuss such matters.

Faculty Enhancement & Development Ideas

It was suggested that any grant authored by the Faculty Senate include a provision for the development and enhancement of the faculty. Chairman Price stated that “We [the Faculty Senate] should be the gunslingers” and should “pay ourselves first”. Senator Ford agreed, adding that the Senate should “create wealth” for the faculty.

On other matters, Treasurer Sen expressed concern that all colleges and schools within the university were not equally represented on University-level committees, and Vice Chair Saneifard said he would examine memberships and report problems, if any. Treasurer Sen also raised the issue of sabbaticals, and Chairman Price suggested that this issue be among those included in the “Manifesto” being prepared.

New Business

Vice Chair Saneifard reminded senators that a state-wide meeting of Texas Faculty Senates was scheduled later in February. He recommended that TSU send at least one representative and promised to provide senators the cost and other details by email soon.

The February 2012 meeting of the TSU Faculty Senate adjourned at 5:05p.