

# **\*\*TSU FACULTY SENATE MEETING\*\***

**1 March 2012**

**Howard Beeth, Secretary**

**Members Present:** Macaulay Akpaffiong (College of Pharmacy & Health Science); Howard Beeth (Secretary); Chris Beineman (COLABS); Alexis Brooks de Vita (Editor, *The Faculty Speaks*); Jafus Cavil (COE); Bettye Desselle (JHJ School of Business); Angie Eaton (College of Pharmacy & Health Science); Robert Ford (COST); Daniel Georges-Abeyie (School of Public Affairs); Lila Ghemri (COST); Mohsen Javadian (COST); Linda Johnson (COLABS); Sharlette Kellum (The Graduate School); Emlyn Norman (COLABS); James Opolot (School of Public Affairs); Jane Perkyns (COLABS); Rasoul Saneifard (Vice Chair); Karma Sherif (JHJ School of Business); Holim Song (COE); Sara White (Parliamentarian); Mammo Wolde (JHJ School of Business); Zivar Yousefipour (College of Pharmacy & Health Science). **Total: 22.**

**Members Absent:** Vera Hawkins (School of Communications); Cassandra Hill (TMSL); Samuel Osueke (COE); Byron Price (Chair); Lalita Sen (Treasurer). **Total: 5.**

**Guests:** Kirsteryn Gunter, Faculty Assembly/Senate Senior Administrative Assistant; Dr. David Olowokere, Chair, Department of Engineering Technology (COST); Provost Sunny Ohia; Dr. Andrea Shelton, TSU Faculty Ombudsperson. **Total: 4.**

## **AGENDA**

### **Call to Order & Conversation with Provost Sunny Ohia**

The March 2012 meeting of the TSU Faculty Senate was called to order by Senate Vice Chairman Rasoul Saneifard, who presided over the meeting in the absence of Chairman Byron Price. Vice Chair Saneifard immediately introduced TSU Provost Sunny Ohia for a dialogue and question-and-answer session with assembled Senators.

Secretary Howard Beeth led off with a question to Provost Ohia about the current status and future prospects of a buy-out plan for qualified senior faculty designed to encourage faculty retirement and so reduce the salary load to the university in this time of financial stress. Provost Ohia replied that the administration had recently conducted a survey of TSU

faculty about such a plan, and the faculty survey indicated that they favored such a option. Accordingly, he said, a buy-out plan “is going to happen”, that the details were presently under administrative review, and that a finalized plan would be announced by the beginning of the Fall semester of 2012.

Senator Robert Ford followed by opening up a brief discussion with Provost Ohia about a new student program, the TSU Urban Academic Village. Due to an inconvenient funding schedule, students entering this enrichment program have not been as thoroughly vetted as desired, but Ford and Ohia both said that this would be corrected in the future, with faculty volunteers available to discuss the program with interested students as part of the student selection process.

Vice Chairman Saneifard complained that the *TSU Faculty Manual* was being routinely violated by administrators, some of whom seemed unfamiliar with its rules, and wondered what to do about this. Provost Ohia replied that all administrators should be familiar with *The Faculty Manual* and that ignorance about it was not an acceptable excuse for violating it. He urged that faculty who believed they were being treated in ways that violated *The Faculty Manual* to use the established grievance procedure explained in *The Faculty Manual* itself.

Vice Chairman Saneifard followed with a complaint about Summer course scheduling and salary. He reported that some department chairs and college deans were making Summer schedules without consulting the faculty. Senator Zivar Yousefipour added that Summer salaries should be equal and not unequal. On the issue of course scheduling, Provost Ohia said department chairs should work with faculty to arrange them and if they were not, “that is wrong”. On the issue of Summer salaries, he advised aggrieved faculty to discuss the matter directly with their chairs and if need be to go up the chain-of-administrative-command to try to resolve salary issues.

Following up on the issue of salaries, Vice Chairman Saneifard noted that adjunct salaries differed and were not standard. The Provost responded that market forces sustained higher salaries in some areas than in others. However, he added that salaries were not dependent on who you knew or favoritism, but on what work you could do.

Following this helpful discussion, Provost Ohia left, and the Senate turned to other pressing business.

## **Approval of the 2 Feb. 2012 Senate Meeting Minutes and those of a special Ad Hoc Senate “Brainstorming” Meeting of 9 Feb.2012**

The minutes of the 2 Feb. 2012 Senate meeting, prepared by Secretary Beeth, were approved as submitted, and those of the special Ad Hoc Senate “Brainstorming” meeting of 9 February, prepared by Faculty Assembly/Senate Senior Administrative Assistant Kirsteryn Gunter, were approved with one change.

### **Charges given to Departmental, College, and University Committees**

Senator Macaulay Akpaffiong led the discussion about this important issue. The problem, he said, was that some deans were not giving clear charges to faculty committees, some of which were inventing their own course of action and behaving as “renegade committees”. He recommended that deans should have the charge of all committees on file in their office so that they could be verified. Senator James Opolot suggested that the charge of all committees should be included in the minutes of committees where they could be consulted. Senator Emlyn Norman observed that standing committees should have standard charges in order to reduce confusion and disputation.

Vice Chair Saneifard offered to mention this problem in meetings with upper level administrative managers and to recommend that faculty committees keep a written copy of their charge on file for guidance if the Senate authorized him to do so, and the Senate so authorized.

### **Administrative Violations of *The Faculty Manual***

Vice Chair Saneifard led a spirited discussion about administrative managers who regularly abused faculty by violating *The TSU Faculty Manual*. These violations, he said, included favoritism, the promotion and tenure process, scheduling courses without consulting faculty, not compensating Senate officers as required, class over-enrollment that contributed to student failure, and more.

Several senators and others present added to this list of management transgressions, and some of them proposed at least partial solutions for consideration.

*Faculty Speaks* editor Alexis Brooks de Vita reported that faculty who challenged administrators were often targeted for retaliation, which especially inhibited junior, untenured faculty from doing so. And she added that, in any case, being advised to meet with department chairs to resolve problems was somewhat illogical, since often department chairs were the very ones who caused the problem in the first place. She and Senator Norman thus suggested another possible way to reduce management misbehavior: by writing specific sanctions against such violators into current revision of *The Faculty Manual*. However, Senator Daniel Georges-Abeyie observed that such revision has

been in progress for a long time, that the end of it isn't in sight, and that the content of the final document remained far from certain. He suggested instead that department chairs and deans who are repeat, flagrant violators could be reported to the provost or publicly listed in some way, perhaps in *The Faculty Speaks*, with their violations specified; this, itself, he concluded, would be a powerful sanction.

Vice Chair Saneifard voiced the option of another possible way for faculty to respond to repeated management violators: a faculty "no confidence" vote at the departmental, college, or even university level.

Senator Ford and others mentioned the possibility of holding faculty workshops to acquaint faculty and administrators alike about proper procedures, behavior, and the contents of *The Faculty Manual*.

Senator Opolot reminded his tablemates that in the past, administrators who violated the rules were punished, even fired, as a result of faculty push-back and fight-back. He encouraged the faculty to continue this kind of resistance.

Ombudsperson Andrea Shelton, a guest at the Senate meeting, offered that she could help resolve campus conflict if asked to do so, and already had handled over 30 such cases. However, Editor Brooks de Vita suggested that an ombudsperson's office and power had limited investigative authority and furthermore could only recommend a solution rather than enforce one.

The hour growing late, senators agreed to think more about restraining management misbehavior and consider it again in the near future, while moving on to additional agenda business.

### **College of Science & Technology Faculty Concerns, I**

Developments in one department in the College of Science and Technology provoked a spirited discussion wherein the facts were disputed and accordingly the proposed solutions varied.

Two members of the Senate reported that one department chair had ordered faculty in that department to make themselves available to students beyond their office hours and outside their offices in the university library. Some faculty members objected to this. Accordingly, the chair and faculty of this department had a meeting to resolve the issue, but accounts differ as to the outcome.

Senator Ford offered some additional background information, which he said came directly and recently from a member of the affected department. According to this information, Ford reported that the chair of the department was somewhat new. As a gesture of support, faculty in his department agreed that as an experiment they would meet students

in a common location (the library) to tutor them—for one semester. After that semester passed, the chair and faculty had another meeting to discuss whether the practice of library tutorials for students would continue. Ford's informant told him that the majority of the faculty were willing to do this, except for one person, who the chair exempted from this service and who accordingly expressed no further concern with the matter. However, Ford said that within the department conversation about this issue apparently continues between the faculty and the chair.

Comments by a few senators indicated a sharp difference in opinion about requiring faculty to tutor students beyond their office hours and outside their offices. Senator Macaulay Akpaffiong took the position that faculty should assist students after hours, even if not paid, because of the special traditions of TSU, including an uncommon dedication by the faculty to student success and the extra effort it commonly required. However, other faculty took issue with this. One senator urged that faculty resist and fight back at the departmental level or risk further demands and abuse. Another member remarked that faculty are not Teaching Assistants who tutor, and she added that tutoring labs with tutors are already available on campus for interested students to use. Yet another senator noted that untenured professors, especially, might be victimized by administrators who tried to expand the traditional job duties of university professors. And yet another reminded his colleagues that university policy must follow a process—one that doesn't seem to have been followed in this case. Finally, another speaker reminded the table that TSU was no longer an open-admission university or the institution it was in yesteryear, and that now faculty are expected to devote more and more time to research—time that would be diminished if they were obligated to spend additional time tutoring.

Vice Chair Saneifard concluded the discussion by saying that the issue was not about whether faculty wanted to help students, which all do, but by wider considerations about how, exactly, this was to be done.

### **College of Science & Technology Faculty Concerns, II**

Vice Chair Saneifard indicated that he had standing individual problems with COST administrators, namely his department chair, Dr. David Olowokere, and his dean, Dr. Lei Yu, arising from his officership in the Faculty Senate. He asked for Senate relief and guidance about these problems. Prior to the Senate's discussion, he recused himself from the Senate chamber and turned the meeting over to Secretary Beeth. Secretary Beeth immediately called on Senator Lila Ghemri, a senator representing COST and one who had knowledge of events, to provide senators with a historical background of the situation, which she did using a document set that had been copied and distributed to all senators.

According to Senator Ghemri, Vice Chair Saneifard had two initial difficulties with COST administrative managers. The first was the teaching load that he was due as an officer of the Faculty Assembly/Senate, which was one half of what he normally would be assigned.

He showed his chair and dean the appropriate section of *The Faculty Manual* that stipulated this. Since he had already in the Fall 2011 semester taught all of the courses he was required to teach during the whole 2011-12 academic year, he actually was not obliged to teach any classes at all during the Spring 2012 semester. However, Saneifard agreed to continue teaching the one course to which he had been wrongly assigned providing he was paid a double-overload salary— one for continuing to teach the course he wrongly had been assigned, and another because it contained twice as many students as normal. When no agreement could be reached re: a compensation figure, Vice Chair Saneifard declined to be forced to continue teaching it without an acceptable overload salary adjustment, and COST administrators appointed a substitute person to finish teaching it. However, in the course of these events, COST administrators charged Saneifard in writing with “abandoning” his one class. The parties met on 22 Feb. to consider this and related issues. Two conflicting summaries of this meeting exist, both of which were among the documents distributed to Senators. Senator Ghemri was the author of one of them, dated 24 Feb. 2012. Its main “Finding” was that “there was no evidence that Dr. Saneifard had abandoned his class”. The other summary of this meeting, unsigned and undated, suggested otherwise. Notwithstanding, Senator Ghemri reported that Vice Chair Saneifard had requested COST administrators in writing to retract the documents they authored charging him with professional misconduct, which they have not done. Hence, she concluded, he brought the issue to the Faculty Senate for relief and guidance.

Once Senator Ghemri concluded her presentation, Senate members engaged in a spirited discussion—so spirited that Secretary Beeth and Parliamentarian Sarah White were sometimes unsuccessful in keeping the good order of the body. However, Senate members finally agreed that Vice Chair Saneifard, having discussed the problem with his chair and his dean without favorable results, should take his issue up the administrative ladder to the Provost for resolution and, if he fails to obtain satisfactory resolution from him, then to the appropriate Grievance Committee, with the option to return to the Senate for further consideration if need be. When he reentered the Senate chamber and was informed of the Senate’s disposition, he pledged to follow the Senate’s advice. Thereupon, the hour being late and Senate members weary from their labor, the March 2012 meeting was adjourned at 5p.