



# Texas Tech University

The Faculty Senate

November 6, 1981

TO: Members of the Faculty Senate

FROM: Benjamin H. Newcomb, President

SUBJECT: Agenda for meeting #36, November 11, 1981

The Faculty Senate will meet on Wednesday, November 11, 1981, at 3:30 p.m. in the Senate Room of the University Center. The agenda is as follows.

- I. Introduction of newly elected senators
- II. Minutes of the special meeting of September 30
- III. Minutes of the meeting of October 14
- IV. Report of the Committee on Committees
- V. Reports of standing committees of the Senate--Budget Study, Faculty Status and Welfare, Study Committee A, Study Committee C
- VI. Report of ad hoc Committee on Tenure Procedures
- VII. Resolution tabled at last meeting--Professor W. T. Zyla (in October 14 minutes).
- VIII. Discussion of the response of the Vice-President for Academic Affairs to the Senate's pass/fail recommendation. (copy of letter attached).
- IX. Discussion of referral of procedures for faculty evaluation of administrators to a senate study committee
- X. Other Business and Announcements
  - A. Disposition of Senate recommendations:
    1. By letter of October 22, inquiry was made of the Vice-President for Academic Affairs as to the status of consideration of the following:
      - Academic Freedom Committee
      - Financial Exigency plan
      - Academic Affairs Information System Committee
    2. By letter of October 22, inquiry was made of the President as to the status of consideration of the recommendations regarding the fall commencement plans.

B. Other actions of university officers and committees

1. By letter of October 22, inquiry was made of the Vice President for Academic Affairs of the status of the report of the Tenure Policy Review Committee.
2. By letter of October 22, discussions about the institution of an Energy Use and Conservation Committee were continued.
3. The Campus Security and Emergency Committee has promptly replied to Senate referral of the question of bomb threats and building security to it. The reply has been referred to Study Committee A as a part of its business. The reply is in the Senate office for interested Senators to consult.
4. The Academic Affairs office has circulated a planning calendar which the Senate has previously suggested. A copy is in the Senate Office.

C. Miscellaneous

1. The report on the meeting of the Council of University Governance Organizations is enclosed. The Senate president will be glad to answer any questions pertaining to the report or the organization.
2. The recommendations of the University Library Committee, in its 1980-81 report, have been forwarded by the Senate president to the Vice President for Academic Affairs. The Senate had in April 1980 requested the Committee to make specific recommendations to the Library and to Academic Affairs.
3. Submission of a request to the Campus Security and Emergency Committee in regard to conduct by spectators at football games awaits its formulation by those most knowledgeable about the circumstances.



## Texas Tech University

Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs

October 26, 1981

Dr. Benjamin Newcomb  
President  
Faculty Senate  
Campus

Dear Dr. Newcomb:

This is in response to your letter of September 14, 1981, regarding recommendations pertaining to the pass-fail policy. It is my understanding that the recommendations were intended to maintain the original aims of the pass-fail option which was to allow students to explore areas in which they might have interests, but not strong academic backgrounds. It is my further understanding that in recent past years there have been relatively large numbers of students who signed up for courses pass-fail and then deleted the pass-fail option after they determined a likelihood of the successful completion of the course with a reasonable grade. This had apparently allowed a problem to develop with students switching to and from the pass-fail option without making a full commitment to their courses in the first few weeks of a semester. Last spring, however, the Administrative Council initiated action which resulted in a single date (October 12, this Fall) for the last day to drop a course and for the last day to declare pass-fail. While we're currently getting the first semester's experience with this policy, it apparently is having the effect of reducing the amount of activity of students opting into or out of a pass-fail grading system. The Associate Deans report that there has been less activity regarding declaration of pass-fail than in previous semesters.

As you know, there is student concern about the pass-fail policy, with an apparent desire on the part of many students to liberalize, rather than further restrict, the pass-fail option. The recommendation which you sent to me would restrict the pass-fail option essentially to general electives, which might discriminate against students in those programs which have very few electives. A recent reaction from the Administrative Council indicates a desire to restrict misuse of the pass-fail policy, but to allow the judicious use by students to allow them to explore areas of interest without having to compete for grades in unfamiliar areas with majors in those areas. A more basic question in this is the academic soundness of the pass-fail system.

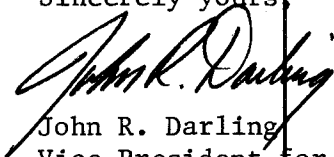
There is a difficulty perceived by the Administrative Council with a second recommendation in your letter which related to consultation with

academic advisors before declaration of pass-fail. This is related to another statement in the option which indicates the name of the student taking the course pass-fail will not be made known to the instructor. Since it is quite possible that a student's advisor might also be the teacher of a course which a student is seeking to take pass-fail, acceptance of that recommendation might cause an internal conflict in the policy.

In summary, rather than acting upon the various proposals and recommendations which have come to the Academic Affairs office regarding pass-fail, I propose to study the matter this year by assessing the results of the single last date for withdrawal and declaration of pass-fail policy. Also, I will be asking that the academic soundness of the pass-fail option be considered so that policy changes, if any, can be communicated for study by the various groups involved before the changes are implemented.

I appreciate the work of the Faculty Senate in making its views known and will be in further communication with you as our study develops.

Sincerely yours,



John R. Darling  
Vice President for  
Academic Affairs

JRD/tp

xc: Dr. Len Ainsworth, Administrative Council  
Mr. Mark Henderson, Student Association

Report on the Council of University Governance Organizations Meeting--  
San Marcos, October 2-3, 1981

This organization, sponsored by TACT, holds two meetings a year for faculty governance officers to share experiences, advice, and commiserations. Major points discussed this year were in regard to Senate relations with faculty, with presidents, and with Boards (the term Senate is used generically--some institutions had various terms).

In regard to relations with faculty:

- 1) the consensus was that faculties pay no attention to a powerless and lack-luster senate. No person present stated that he was ever reproached because the faculty thought his senate too vigorous.
- 2) one recommendation was that the faculty be polled on single issues rather frequently. This keeps up contact and shows interest in general faculty views. One example of this might be in regard to making decisions on insurance coverage.
- 3) contact with committees was achieved at UT Austin by having research assistants to the Senate go to committee meetings to report to the Senate on committee activities.
- 4) It was thought important to have hardworking faculty on committees and on the Senate recognized by the Senate and by the administration.
- 5) It was thought important for Senates to take on difficult jobs--such as instituting faculty evaluation by peers and students.
- 6) Policy recommendations should be made at the initiative of the Senate without waiting for the administration to send something down--our financial exigency plan was cited as an example here.

In regard to relations with the president:

- 1) All senates noted relatively easy access to the president and other administrative officials.
- 2) Some senates thought that formal regular meetings with the president were important. None could attest, however, that this resulted invariably in the president bringing potential policy decisions to the senate before final decision was made. In fact, some said the reverse was more commonly the case. The problem of being presented with a fait accompli was not solved by regular meetings with the president.
- 3) Social contacts between the president and senate of an informal nature were common, and believed to break down barriers. One senate boldly suggested to the president that he have the members over for drinks.
- 4) Senates should take great pains to break in new presidents and other high administrative officials.

5) On confrontation: UT Austin faculty representatives reported that they believed their boycott of some years ago to have been partially successful in showing the president faculty determination. However, they noted that the stopping of the ongoing business, particularly in regard to approval of departmental programs, necessitated calling off the boycott. No one had alternate suggestions, and most discussion shied away from confrontation tactics.

In regard to relations with regents:

- 1) All faculty representatives attended board meetings and found them perfunctory.
- 2) One representative, from UT Arlington, stated that he had gotten himself invited to a committee meeting of the UT regents to be held before the next board meeting. No one else had had any such experience, and all thought it would be worth a try.

Other issues taken up were health insurance rates, which will be further discussed at the winter meeting of the council, and evaluation of administrators, of which UT Austin provides the one model.

The council as well agreed to the installation of coordinators who will keep in touch with senate presidents, collect minutes and examples of policy, and give the council more direction and meaning, though it is not expected to rival the council of university presidents.

October 1981