

MINUTES #136, FACULTY SENATE
October 14, 1992

The Faculty Senate met on Wednesday, October 14, 1992, at 3:15 p.m. in the Senate Room of the University Center with Benjamin H. Newcomb, President presiding. Senators present were Benson, Bliese, Bradley, Burnett, Cismaru, Couch, Coulter, Curzer, Daghistany, Dragga, Dunne, Dvoracek, Elbow, Fedler, Freeman, Goebel, Green, Haigler, Henry, Hensley, Hopkins, Huffman, Jonish, D. Mason, J. Mason, Meek, Miller, Mitra, Morrow, Payne, Perl, Roy, Shroyer, Stoune, Strawderman, Trost, Troub, Urban, Wagner, Weber, Zanglein, and Zartman. Senators Aranha and Dunn were absent because of University business. Senators Davis, Duran, Higdon, Kiecker and Reynolds were absent.

I. INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

President Newcomb called the meeting to order at 3:20 and welcomed the following guests: Donald R. Haragan, Executive Vice President and Provost; Virginia Sowell, Associate Vice President; Karen Selim, Assistant Vice President for Development; Mary Ann Higdon, Library and Julie Ann Andres, University Daily.

Professor Clarke E. Cochran, Political Science, served as Parliamentarian.

II. CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES

Minutes of 9 September 1992 meeting were approved.

III. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Announcements of tasks assigned to Senate committees were included in the agenda. In addition, senators were reminded that applications for CoFGO summer fellowships are available in the Senate office. CoFGO summer fellows work with the Coordinating Board.

IV. REPORTS FROM UNIVERSITY COUNCILS

Provost's Council-- Benjamin Newcomb (report distributed to Senators and on file in the Senate office)

Provost Haragan addressed the issue of the funding of graduate hours. The Coordinating Board had initially recommended limiting state funding of doctoral programs to 80 hours beyond the master's degree. Currently 12-15% of Tech's graduate students accumulate more than 160 credit hours past the master's; the percent of graduate students affected by a 160-hour limit varies from under 10% at UT Austin to over one-third at the University of Houston. If the 80-hour limit were adopted, almost all doctoral students would be affected. The minimum hours after the master's varies widely across campus and according to discipline, particularly with regard to the number of dissertation hours.

Academic Council--Candace Haigler (report distributed to Senators and on file in Senate office)

The Academic Council addressed the grade-repeat policy. The 1993-94 catalog includes a statement that students may repeat any course in which a grade of D or F was received. It goes on to announce that when calculating the GPA, "only the grade made at the last registration is used." This

change in the catalog was made without prior approval or consideration by the Faculty Senate. The Academic Council discussed another policy in which the transcript would carry both an adjusted GPA that averaged in only the most recent grade for a repeated course and a cumulative GPA that averaged the grades received in all courses attempted. The Faculty Senate was asked to comment on this, and the discussion evoked a wide range of opinions.

While the policy of counting only the last grade makes a student more competitive in applying for professional schools, there was concern that it was deceptive since admissions officers often look only at GPA and not entire transcripts. It did not serve the community or the taxpayers since it encouraged a poor investment of funds. Senator Haigler did note that at both A&M and UT Austin, all grades for repeated courses were included in the GPA.

Others were concerned that including all grades for repeated courses penalized students who simply had a bad freshman year. Students who returned after some years were being penalized for youthful problems, even though now earning A's and B's. It was pointed out that students who repeated courses and improved their grades had demonstrated mastery of the knowledge and skills of the course. They had the ability to do the work at the time they were applying for professional programs. The new policy of removing the first grade also might be better at motivating students. Associate Vice President Sowell noted that the policy of including both an adjusted and a cumulative GPA had been developed to implement the policy statement printed in the 1993-94 catalog. The use of two GPAs would show the student's eventual mastery of material without misleading anyone.

It was moved and seconded that the Senate indicate its desire to retain the present policy of including all grades for repeated courses in the GPA and that the Senate reject the policy in the 1993-94 catalog. The motion was defeated (14 yes/24 no).

A motion that the new policy be committed to the appropriate senate committee for study and future report was adopted. The question will be submitted to the Senate's Academic Programs committee.

Senator Elbow then asked how this policy got into the 1993-94 catalog before the Senate had addressed it. This was the second or third time in the last few years that a policy appeared in the catalog without Senate discussion. Senator Newcomb pointed out that last year the drop dates were changed without Senate approval; the change was rescinded after (and perhaps because) the Senate rejected the change. Provost Haragan responded that he agreed that the Senate should have been consulted and could not explain what had happened. At the request of the Senate, President Newcomb will send a formal letter to the Academic Affairs office protesting its adoption of change without Senate recommendation.

Graduate Council--Catherine Miller

The last Graduate Council meeting was brief. Students were admitted to candidacy; new faculty were placed on the graduate faculty.

Research Council--Fred P. Wagner, Jr. (report distributed to Senators and on file in Senate office)

The Research Council discussed the distribution of royalties from intellectual property, an issue raised because of the University's desire to recoup on the indirect costs it contributed to such developments. The meaning and intentions of this preliminary discussion were not clear, but Senators expressed concern that the discussion implied changes that could

be detrimental to developing research applications in commercial fields. It was noted that any change in current policy on intellectual property would be subject to Senate recommendation and that the Senate must be alert to developments in this situation.

V. REPORTS FROM STANDING COMMITTEES OF FACULTY SENATE

Committee on Committees

Senator Dunne reported that all members of the Faculty Senate were on a committee or serving as a liaison to a university committee. There is yet no liaison to the International Affairs Council; this liaison will be chosen at random, if no volunteer is forthcoming. Some adjustments in assignments were made due to the election of new senators. Changes in liaisons were noted as follows:

Research Council--Wagner
University Center Board--Trost
Student Senate--Higdon

New assignments to Senate Committees were announced as follows:

Academic Programs--Huffman
Study Committee B--Weber
Study Committee C--Zartman

Academic Programs Committee--Howard Curzer (report distributed to Senators and on file in Senate office)

The Academic Programs Committee was asked to consider the issue of the proposed name change of the College of Home Economics. While most departments had not been consulted about the name change, the committee found that the College had given a great deal of thought to the name change. The majority decided that this process had been reasonable, and recommended that the Senate make no recommendation on the proposed name change. Many senators continued to express misgivings about the meaning and significance of both the new name and the lack of consultation with other departments and faculty. However, the Senate accepted the report and its recommendation.

Study Committee A--Ruth Morrow (report distributed to Senators and on file in Senate office)

Study Committee A examined the parking problem, especially that of lot R7. It reported that current policy was to tow cars parked illegally in reserved spaces on request. The committee recommended that faculty cars only be ticketed and not towed from reserved spaces and that patrols be initiated at peak problem times (prior to 4:30 and 6 pm evening classes). The report was accepted without dissent.

Study Committee B, which was assigned to consider the situation of athletics, reported that it had met twice and had planned a third meeting. The committee was receiving excellent cooperation from all offices, including the Athletic department, and hoped to have recommendations by November.

VI. OLD BUSINESS

No old business was presented for discussion.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

Academic Freedom: The Statement of Academic Freedom and Artistic Expression was distributed to the Senate. This statement was submitted by the Fine Arts Doctoral Committee for the Senate's consideration and

recommendation to the administration. The statement was committed to committee for study and future report.

Strategic Planning: A recommendation that additional elected faculty members be added to the Strategic Planning task force provoked heated discussion. Senator Goebel took exception to the suggestion. He noted that he and other members of the Faculty Senate served on this committee; the recommendation implied that they were incompetent or derelict in their duties. The committee was large, its work was difficult and time-consuming, and no more faculty were needed on it. Haragan, he noted, had asked the deans to incorporate the faculty in college level planning. Defenders of the strategic planning task force's structure noted that the faculty on it were not "yes men." Senator Dunne remarked on the difficulty in recruiting faculty to serve on university committees, a difficulty that will continue unless this work is rewarded and meaningful. Senators Curzer, Daghistry, Elbow and others argued for elected input. They noted that they were not impugning the work of individual faculty on the committee, but that there was a fundamental difference between appointed representation and elected representation. The problem was a long-term philosophical disagreement between the administration, which feels that faculty representation can be achieved by appointment and dean's selection, and the Senate and most faculty, which feel representation can only be accomplished through an elective process. Bolstering this argument, others noted that many faculty felt that their voices were not properly represented in the strategic planning process and that they did not know what was being done or why. Senators who also served on the task force last year did not present formal reports to the Senate as did Senate liaisons to other university committees, and minutes of task force deliberations were not generally circulated.

After the first period of discussion, it was moved that the Senate set up its own strategic planning committee that would operate parallel to the strategic planning committee appointed by the administration. After some discussion of the problems of redundancy and the need for administration cooperation in such a measure, the motion was defeated. A motion was approved that current senators who are also serving on the strategic planning task force present formal reports on task force meeting to the Senate. Senator Newcomb, who has recently been appointed to the task force, will report on task force meetings.

Environmental impact: Professor Bliese requested that the Senate investigate the environmental impact of TTU. It was moved that a committee consider whether such an investigation should be initiated and what it might entail. The motion was approved.

University governance: Senator Hensley noted that the Senate had liaisons to various University committees and that individually Senators often served on committees. He had observed a great deal of redundancy in university committees and a seeming absence of a faculty body that actually monitored the processes that determined the faculty's teaching, research, and service functions. He was not clear about the real power of the Faculty Senate. He saw it operating in a liaison role, with decisions being made elsewhere.

A motion was offered that the question of the Faculty Senate's participation in university-wide committees be sent to the appropriate Senate standing committee for study. The committee should examine the Senate's active role and its monitoring function at all levels, not its limited role as liaison. The committee should be instructed to bring back

recommendations about how this more active, monitoring role might be accomplished. The motion was approved.

Discussion of the issue continued after the adoption of the motion. Once again the problem of getting faculty to serve on existing university committees was pointed out. Others responded that the more important projects undertaken, the more people would want to be involved. Another pointed to the lack of continuity and consistency in these efforts to monitor what was going on. At this point, Provost Haragan commented on Senator Hensley's earlier question about the faculty's role on university committees. There had never been faculty representation to these council, he observed, until "we decided to do this about five years ago." The appointment of senators to the councils seemed the best way to communicate with the faculty. Now the president appoints committees, and the Senate makes nominations for appointment to these committees. If the study just initiated located a university committee that the Senate was not represented on and that it wished to be represented on, this probably could be accommodated. Haragan said that the tone of the discussion implied that there was "something sinister going on and that the administration is out to get the faculty again," a view he felt "had been put to rest some time ago." Haragan stated that he supported "shared governance," but it did not mean the faculty ran the university. The faculty needed to be consulted on academic matters. The administration did "a pretty good job of this" and would be happy to hear suggestions on how to improve. When Senator Hensley interjected that he thought the faculty did run the university, Haragan insisted that it did not. The Board of Regents sets policies. The faculty is to teach, to do research, and to be in charge of academic programs, and nothing done in regard to this is done without consulting (with the one exception mentioned above). Hensley called for a strong role for the Senate in monitoring the administration and for a study of how governance currently occurs and how to improve the process to get shared governance.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

The Senate adjourned at 5:04 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

M. Catherine Miller

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Secretary 1992-93

ANNOUNCEMENT:

Items for the Senate agenda should be submitted before
AGENDA COMMITTEE meetings on November 2,
November 30, 1992 and January 11, 1993.