

**Texas Tech University Faculty Senate**  
Meeting # 285, February 11, 2009

The Faculty Senate met on Wednesday, Feb. 11, 2009, in the Senate Room in the Student Union Building, with President Sandy River presiding.

Senators in attendance were: Hill, Anderson, Blake, Cox, Drager, Hart, Harter, Held, Jeter, Koch, McComb, Rahnama, Rainger, Rugley, Tacon, Weinlich, Boal, Ritchey, Crews, Fox, Hendricks, Pratt, Lakhani, Mengel, Tomlinson, Blum, Colwell, Rosen, Soonpaa, Oliver, River, Gelber, Mann, Spurrier, Shacklette, Spallholz, Syma, Wilde, Williams.

Senators excused: Farmer, Hamed, Johnson, Opp, Smithey, Toda, Giesselmann, Helm, Lauderdale, Paschall, Peoples, Sharp, CM Smith, Barnes-Burroughs, Meek, Warner.

Senators not excused: Wilson, Rex, Iyer, Roeger, Wong, Pasewark, Claudet, Mathis, Sobolewski, Skerik, Santa.

- I. **Call to Order:** Sandy River, President, at 3:22 pm.
- II. **Recognition of Guests:** Sue Jones, Managing Director of Official Publications; Matt Baker, Dean of College of Outreach and Distance Education; Heather Abel, Outreach; Interim Senior Vice Provost Rob Stewart; Parliamentarian Mary Francis Agnello.
- III. **Approval of Minutes:** Approval of Minutes, Meeting #284, January 2009. The Minutes were approved as distributed.
- IV. **Speaker: Matt Baker**, Dean of Outreach and Distance Education

Dean Baker informed the Faculty Senate that the Division of Off-campus Sites and the Division of Outreach & Distance Education were joined to form the new College of Outreach and Distance Education as of September 1, 2008. (Dean Baker's talk was supported by a short video, a brochure, and a flyer).

The new college was established under Provost Marcy to manage all Distributed Learning (electronic or off-campus delivery) -- meeting the needs of students on-campus and off-campus. Dean Baker stated that modern learners want to learn and connect electronically. "Collectively, the new college enables Texas Tech University to implement, administer and assess distance and off-campus programs more efficiently and effectively." Dean Baker encourages departments that want to do more teaching in this modality to contact the College.

Current college online extended programs include TBS degree programs, 13 Master-level programs, 2 Doctoral programs, and 7 graduate certificate programs.

The new College also includes the TTU Independent School District, which was initially established by the State Board of Education in fall of 1993 as a Texas public high school able to offer high school diplomas at a distance. Texas Tech University Elementary School and Texas Tech University Middle School were added to TTUISD in fall, 1998. The TTUISD diploma program is a viable alternative for students for a number of reasons:

- Serves the needs of rural west Texas and its school districts, with curriculum supplement,
- Serves the needs of the growing home school population, who also want a state-approved curriculum,
- Serves the needs of students who want to accelerate their programs, or who need to make up a high school course,
- Serves the needs of performers, athletes, and others whose professional activities make it difficult to attend traditional school,
- Serves the needs of students whose families travel or move frequently; or who are living abroad but wish to pursue their education through a U.S. institution,

- Serves the needs of upper-income families in other countries who want their children educated in American schools.

Currently, this program is very popular in Brazil.

The program employs about 80 people full-time, and about 80 teachers part-time. Last year, there were almost 90,000 students enrolled in our programs in the TTUISD.

TTU currently has a number of off-campus sites. These are in: Fredericksburg, Highland Lakes, Junction, Abilene, Amarillo, and El Paso (brand new). The facilities at these sites are available to members of the TT community. The Junction site was established in 1971; the others have opened since 2000. All sites were opened in response to a community need.

The College works on a comprehensive and complex funding model. Several of the off-campus sites are operated using Legislative “special operating” funds.

TTU was the first university in Texas to be designated as a Community Engaged University by the Carnegie Foundation.

Outreach: This aspect of the College is self-funded.

Available: Help with conference services; continued Professional Development programs to add new revenue streams to departments—particularly for electronic delivery.

They also operate the Osher Life Long Learning Institute.

Where does the College plan to go from here?

More proposed distance learning sites: Waco and Boerne are planned to open soon; Dallas is presently an area of interest.

- The College hopes to create partnerships with two-year community colleges for space and services at low overhead.
- The College plans to develop and share facilities with the TTUHSC where feasible (for example, in the Hill Country).
- The College plans to emphasize grad program delivery but develop undergrad offerings in articulated programs with community college partners to support “Closing the Gaps” where needed.
- The College plans to collaborate, not compete with, other regional providers.

During the discussion that followed Dean Baker’s remarks, he was asked “How many universities offer a High School diploma?” and “Why would students from other states/countries take distance education courses from Texas Tech?” He replied that very few universities have these programs—“five or six; maybe more.” He also stated that Texas Tech has an established reputation for distance education; the university has been offering courses since the 1920’s.

**Speaker: Sue Jones** (Managing Director of Official Publications)

Sue Jones came to speak to the Faculty Senate in response to the discussion at the January Faculty Senate meeting about the seemingly foreshortened January start-up dates.

Jones stated that calendar development is done by Official Publications (which is the publisher of all official publications for the university) and is under the Office of the Provost.

There are three calendars that are in development at any one time. The first is the skeleton calendar: This calendar contains the basics necessary to setting the university calendar dates, etc., and is developed three years ahead. Then, there is the detailed calendar, which is set each spring for the following academic year. Once a calendar is approved, it becomes the official calendar and is posted on the website. Thus, this year’s calendar was put together in the fall of 2005, and approved in January of 2006 by Dr. Brink.

Formerly, the calendars were approved only by the Provost's office. The university calendars now go through Academic Council for approval, so it should be possible for those who feel changes are warranted to suggest revisions during that process.

The calendar process is influenced by the university's 43-year history of calendars. This year's calendar is based on that of 1997-98, which had the same configuration as this year.

When asked why January classes started a week earlier than usual, Jones replied that the start-up dates were influenced by several factors:

- 1) In previous years, registration took four days; with the new Banner system, we now only need one day for registration. So, although the "faculty on duty day" was the same day and date as in 1997, classes could start earlier.
- 2) The common calendar changes each year, and affects the structure of the university calendar.
- 3) There are university rules that affect the calendar, such as: the number of days students must spend in class per year; summer school cannot start until 16 days after spring exams; intersession must be 16 days long; avoidance of July 1 for summer school final exams; the length of the break between the two summer sessions.

Jones stated that former VP Brink set the dates for this year to accommodate the spring/summer intersession at Junction; allow for summer registration before June 1; have finals for first summer session July 2 and 3; and have a week between the two summer sessions.

A number of questions/comments were brought up after Jones' report.

Senator Drager questioned the four-week long summer sessions, stating that the students no longer have time outside of class to do the required reading, etc.

Senator Mann brought up a previously-discussed topic: that once faculty members are "on campus," more than one or two days are needed for student advising, etc. before classes commence.

Senator Jeter suggested that the Faculty Senate recommend that classes go back to starting one week, rather than two weeks before MLK Day.

Senator Held asked how the fall break will affect the upcoming calendars.

Jones replied that her office is holding back on dealing with fall break until the new Provost is available for input.

Senator Held reiterated that he hopes the university will re-evaluate the fall break after fall semester.

Senator Tomlinson asked why Thanksgiving break cannot be lengthened to accommodate a fall break.

Parliamentarian Agnello suggested that the Faculty Senate look at the calendars of other major universities for possible alternatives.

President River announced that she will add the following topics to the list of Faculty Senate concerns she plans to present/discuss with the new Provost: the university calendar; the fall break; the length of summer session courses.

## V. **Old Business**

Study Committee B: OP dealing with the responsibilities of Deans and Chairs

Senator Jeter reported that Study Committee B has made some changes to its proposed revisions to OP 32.03 (dealing with the annual Administrator evaluations). Senators Held and Wilde were involved in the revision.

(See attached PDF of OP 32.03 with proposed changes marked).

A vote was taken. The proposed revisions were passed.

The proposed revisions will be sent to the Provost's office.

Study Committee A: Senator Peoples reported to President River that in view of the discussion at the last Faculty Senate meeting on the possibility of revising the constitution, Study Committee A has withdrawn its report.

## VI. **Committee / Liaison Reports**

Study Committee C: Study Committee C has met and discussed the teaching evaluations and has come up with some ideas that may become recommendations.

Ideas they are considering are:

- a) That student course evaluations be done earlier in the semester, rather than the last week of classes.
- b) That evaluation forms be sent to departments earlier, to accommodate the earlier evaluations.

The Committee investigated the idea of on-line evaluations, but feel the response rate would drop substantially, if this were done.

The Committee will look into other approaches to the evaluation process. They plan to look into the process used at other universities, and to ask department Chairs for their opinions on the strengths and weaknesses of the current process.

The Committee hopes to bring proposals on this subject to the Faculty Senate by the end of the semester.

Nominations Committee: Senator Wilde announced that he has some candidates for Faculty Senate officers lined up, and that he will do more arm-twisting to get fuller slates.

President River requested that he use the next two weeks to find more candidates. That will leave Senators with two weeks in which to decide their vote for next year's Faculty Senate officers.

Faculty Status and Welfare Committee: Senator Rosen reported that the Committee is looking into the subject of merit pay. Faculty members want to know if, when they are awarded "merit pay" whether it really is for merit, or if it is a cost of living pay increase. The Committee is circulating a draft letter to deans which asks what the criteria are for awarding merit pay, and whether faculty are told this criteria.

A discussion ensued. The suggestion was made that since merit pay is awarded at the department level, Department Chairs might be the best people to contact for information. Senator Held expressed the view that at times like this, when the pay is 2%, this isn't much of an issue. It was decided that whatever the amount of money involved, transparency is important; faculty need to know the criteria for being awarded merit pay.

There were no Liaison Reports.

#### VII. **New Business**

Senator Held brought up Chancellor Hance's support of a tuition freeze across the state.

#### VIII. **Announcements**

There were no announcements.

#### IX. **Adjournment**

The 285<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Faculty Senate adjourned at 4:50 pm.

LMM