

Texas Tech University Faculty Senate
Meeting # 287 April 8, 2009

The Faculty Senate met on Wednesday, April 8, in the Senate Room in the Student Union Building, with President Sandy River presiding.

Senators in attendance: Johnson, Hill, Blake, Cox, Drager, Hart, Harter, Held, Jeter, Koch, McComb, Rahnama, Smithy, Tacon, Toda, Weinlich, Boal, Pasewark, Ritchey, Crews, Hendricks, Pratt, Giesselmann, Helm, Lakhani, Mengel, Tomlinson, Blum, Colwell, Lauderdale, River, Paschall, Gelber, Mann, Santa, CM Smith, Meek, Spallholz, Syma, Warner, Wilde.

Senators excused: Oliver, Spurrier, Williams, Skerik, Rosen, Soonpaa, Shacklette, Opp.

Senators not excused: Farmer, Hamed, Wilson, Rex, Anderson, Rainger, Roeger, Rugeley, Wong, Claudet, Fox, Mathis, Sobolewski, Sharp.

I. Call to Order: Sandy River, President, at 3:20 pm.

II. Recognition of Guests: Provost Bob Smith; Brian Shannon, Law School: Faculty Athletics representative; Felicia Martin, Athletics; Laura Stout, Drew Graham: SGA; Nathaniel Haddox, Staff Ombudsman; Vice Provost Valerie Paton; Interim Senior Vice-Provost Rob Stewart; Associate Vice-Provost Gary Elbow; Parliamentarian Mary Frances Agnello.

III. Approval of Minutes: Meeting #286, March 11, 2009. The Minutes were approved with minor corrections.

IV. Speaker: Dr. Bob Smith, Provost.

Dr. Smith spoke to the Faculty Senate about his vision for the university: "From Here it's Possible." He stressed the importance of vision, planning, and integrated development, with a focus on quality, and stated that Texas Tech will be building and developing from a strong base: The University has a strong tradition of teaching excellence; strong undergraduate and graduate programs; and a commitment to student-centeredness.

Dr. Smith stressed the importance of enrollment growth and research productivity and described how important strategic planning can be in terms of vision, mission, strategic priorities, goals and objectives, and the tie into budget decisions. He stated that the Chancellor, the President, and the Provost all share the vision that Texas Tech can and should become a more prominent national research university.

Dr. Smith said that key research or "flagship" universities are of two types: liberal arts universities, and land grant universities. Some states have both types at a single university. Currently, Texas has one liberal arts flagship university and one land grant flagship university. Provost Smith claimed that Texas is large enough to have more than two flagship universities, and that Texas Tech should be the next choice.

If Texas Tech were to become a flagship university and grow its number of graduate students, then the funding formula would change.

Dr. Smith added that all great American public research universities are part of major athletic conferences, as well. As we compete athletically, so we should compete academically. We can also cooperate and collaborate with other great public research universities. All great American public research universities are characterized by great undergraduate and graduate professional programs, and outstanding facilities for scholarship and research. They tend to provide economic, cultural, and social benefits; rank high in terms of percentage and stature of programs, faculty, and students; their faculty are members of the national academy and win prominent awards. These universities also tend to have sizable research funding, and large endowments. Dr. Smith pointed out that the University cannot invest in all areas, so to develop the university along the National Research University model, what should Texas Tech consider? We must increase enrollment; strengthen academic quality and reputation;

and enhance research. We ought to be doing further outreach and service, and increasing and maximizing resources. These are the strategic priorities as have been articulated by President Bailey to the Board of Regents. Sharing in that vision, Dr. Smith sees the role of the Provost to: Encourage and support program development and other initiatives at the university; build trust; support quality in all we do; and advocate for the institution, with the highest integrity. Dr. Smith plans to serve the institution by visiting with various units and groups on campus (such as the Faculty Senate), seeking their input. Dr. Smith stressed the importance of the "Integrated Scholar," eminent faculty who are able to blend teaching, research, and service in such special ways that they are able to bring to our students and community some very special contributions.

What initiatives might be necessary for Texas Tech to become a top tier research university? One is the 2009 Doctoral Fellowship Initiative. Dr. Smith announced that "Last week, we authorized a series of Doctoral Fellowships at \$25,000.00/year. Eighty Fellowships have been approved for next fall. We hope this will not only support great doctoral education at the university, but will also serve to send a message to the world that we are serious about serious graduate education." Many of these awards have been granted in the sciences and the social sciences, and others in engineering, education, the humanities and the arts (creative and technical writing programs).

Questions: Senator Held questioned why foreign students are not eligible for government grants, since this lack keeps some strong foreign students from coming to Tech. Smith: For many Federal government programs, only American citizens or individuals with green cards are eligible; however, there are other opportunities available for foreign students, and we need to identify strong foreign students and point them towards USDA programs. Dr. Smith stated that "While we are emphasizing U.S. students, we are not prohibiting international students." He also stressed that we must be out actively recruiting—not just strong international students, but strong U.S. students, as well.

Senator Spallholtz asked about the length of the funding commitment with the Doctoral Fellowships. Smith: four years, guaranteed. Students granted the Fellowships will be funded through the program for one-two years, and then the department that received the resources must guarantee another two or three years, primarily from grant funds—although in the case of technical or creative writing, it might be from university funds.

Senator Iyer asked how the departments will be able to honor the four-year guarantee of funding, (since the money comes from research grants) if they don't continue to get the grants. Smith: The Departments and the Graduate School will be morally obligated to deliver the money to the student.

Speaker: Brian Shannon, Faculty Athletics Representative

Brian Shannon reported that as the Faculty Athletics Representative to the NCAA, he is a member of the Athletics Council. Some academic duties of Faculty Athletics Representatives to the NCAA are: attend conference meetings, as well as national meetings; and in the absence of the president of the University, to vote on various legislative proposals; serving as signatory on all NCAA and Big 12 conference matters; ensuring that student athletes meet all NCAA and Big 12 institutional requirements for eligibility, practice, financial aid, and competition. The FAR also receive, review, and comment on reports from the Associate Athletic Director for Academic Services regarding the academic performance of student athletes; and assure that decisions are being made related to admissions, academic advising, evaluation, and the extent of academic support in ways that are consistent with the primary academic missions of Texas Tech. Faculty Athletic Reps also oversee anything relating to rules and compliance.

Dr. Shannon stated that athletics is one way to give students a way in to education, and possibly change both their lives and those of future generations. Shannon stated that his first

goal as a member of the TT faculty and as FAR is to see that the students are progressing and that our student athletes have an opportunity to get a degree.

From the NCAA Sabbatical Review (October '08) that compared the academic quality of student athletes to that of the overall student body, it was discovered that student athletes scored comparable to or better than the non-athlete students. Retention, graduation rates, and academic successes by student athletes are documented by the Academic Progress Reports.

Dr. Shannon reported that there are three things that the Athletics Council feels that the university needs to keep an eye on:

- 1) Special Admits (different criteria for admissions or scholarships for student athletes). This has been a problem at some institutions. TT has not had any. Nevertheless, the University has made a commitment to track the academic success of all scholarship students, be they athletes, musicians, etc.
- 2) Clustering of large groups of student athletes in particular classes or degree programs.
- 3) Many student athletes (as well as other students) want to attend summer school before their freshman fall semester. Tech's first summer session this year is starting so early that many High School athletes have not yet graduated by the time classes start. This is an issue for students in many disciplines, not just for the student athletes.

Questions: Senator Spallholz asked about the number of excused absences professors are forced to accept for student athletes (particularly those on the baseball teams). Dr. Shannon stated that the NCAA bows to universities and their rules, but that the Texas Tech OP on university-excused student activities allows for these absences.

Senator Held stated an interest in knowing whether the Athletics Council sets rules and regulations concerning contract negotiations with coaches.

At the end of his presentation, Dr. Shannon introduced **Felicia Martin**, who succeeded John Anderson as Associate Athletic Director for Academic Services last fall. Felicia Martin graciously introduced herself to the members of the Faculty Senate. She announced that her office is housed in the Marsha Sharp Centre, and she encouraged Senate members to come by and meet the academic advisors for the student athletes.

Speakers: Jennifer Stout, Drew Graham: Student Government Association

Stout and Graham presented the Faculty Senate with a Resolution that had been passed in the Student Senate on Feb. 5, 2009. The Resolution expresses the students' desire that faculty members turn in textbook lists for the following semester to the bookstores on the first day of finals of the current semester. Their arguments echoed much that was discussed with representatives of the university bookstore last fall. Both students and the university profit if students are able to buy and sell used books. They also mentioned that a large number of disabled students need to utilize electronic media, and that these requests require a significant amount of time to fulfill.

A discussion followed, during which some members of the Faculty Senate expressed sympathy with the intent of the Student Senate's resolution. Several Senators advised the students on the wording of the Resolution. The students' Resolution did not require to be passed in the Faculty Senate. President River thanked the students for their input in this area.

V. Old Business: OP 32:32 (Faculty Evaluations)

Senator Held announced that the Ethical Institution Task Force has made suggestions for changes to OP 32:32. Documents with these suggested changes have been emailed to Senators. Senator Held requested that members of the Faculty Senate look over the documents and be prepared to discuss the suggested changes at the April Faculty Senate meeting.

Senator Iyer recommended that the writers of the OP's pay special attention to their use of

the words “shall” and “will” in the documents, as these words have very specific meanings and should not be used interchangeably.

VI. New Business: Closing of the Student Union Post Office

Senator Blum announced that the Student Union Post Office will be closing, for financial reasons, most likely in June. He stated that it is not yet known what, if anything, will take its place. A discussion followed, during which a number of Senators expressed the belief that a post office on campus is important and that the Faculty Senate should pursue this item. Senator Blum said he will forward additional information to the Senate as it becomes available.

VII. Liaison Reports

Academic Council: (Mengel) A report from the Academic Council has been emailed to members of the Faculty Senate.

Assessment Committee: (Cox) A report from the Assessment Committee has been emailed to members of the Faculty Senate. It states:

The first meeting of the University Assessment Committee was conducted on 26 March.

The Provost is establishing the committee to increase communication between the Administration and faculty on topics related to assessment. In addition, the Committee will be making recommendations on University-wide strategies for effectively using assessment. The Committee is currently drafting a mission statement.

Discussion Highlights:

The Office of Planning and Assessment recognizes that assessment must be driven by and centered on faculty. As a result, faculty must be given the responsibility, authority, and continuing resources to be able to effectively accomplish assessment. Moreover, assessment is itself a research endeavor. The OPA will provide a \$1000 stipend to any faculty member who wishes to present assessment results at a national conference.

SACS accreditation, and, as a result, assessment issues, are pre-requisites for receiving federal funding. A goal at TTU is to implement consistent, comprehensive, and systematic assessment procedures and to move away from a model that “ramps up” and “ramps down” assessment activities around accreditation review cycles. Accreditation review is now mandated to occur every 5 years, instead of 10 years.

Details about two new software solutions (TracDAT—aimed a program level assessment, and Digital Measures—aimed at faculty reporting and strategic planning) will be forthcoming. These tools should facilitate assessment.

Dr. Paton reaffirmed her desire to discuss relevant issues directly with the Faculty Senate as often as requested. Open communication is a top priority.

VIII. Announcements

- A request for information about the distribution of licensing revenues was received from the Faculty Council at the University of Missouri. In view of the late hour, President River will send more information about that by email.
- The May Faculty Senate meeting will take place in the Escondido Theatre, in the basement of the Student Union Building.
- Senator Meek announced that the change in date/day of the Carol of Lights next fall will seriously impact the Music Department.
- Senator Pratt stated that the university needs someone in every College to help increase international student recruitment.

IX. Adjournment: The 287th meeting of the Faculty Senate was adjourned at 5:00 pm.