

## Meeting Minutes - Sept 1, 2004

Welcome

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call

Senators present: Louisa Arriaga, Jana Atkins, Gene Bals, Estella Barron, Eric Burrell, Jaclyn Byrd, Bryan Carson, Nick Chavez, Robin Cooper, Gerald Cunningham, Chance Dragich, Sandy Ellis, Maria Fernandez, Travis Findley, Sandy Gellner, Brent Guinn, Scott Hall, Patrick Hancock, Lori Hefley, Gary Johnson, Carolyn Kennedy, Susan Kitten, Rick Loper, Amy Martindale, Libby Moreland, Dawn Moreno, Teresa Neal, Rebecca Owens, Donna Perry, Larry Phillippe, Valli Ramanathan, Eddie Ramirez, Don Roulain, Carol Ann Stanley, Jake Syma, Richard Verrone, Barbara White, Everne Williams

Senators absent: Evelyn Armstrong, Steven Boyer, Doug Crockett, Rocky Gauna, Virginia Holder, Mike Hurlow, Evelyn Lemer, Sheri Lewis, Guadalupe Luna, Larry Rocha, Judy Tiner, Tim Wolf

Guests: Jon Whitmore

Minutes

o Motion made by Gary Johnson to approve August minutes as written. Seconded by Jake Syma. Motion passed

Treasurer's Report – Susan Kitten

o Motion made to accept the report as written by Gary Johnson, seconded by Chance Dragich – motion passed

President Jon Whitmore

o The Staff Senate is very useful to understand more fully what staff interests and issues are.

o There is a full group of students this year. Thanks to all who participated in readying grounds, working registration, and handling money. Each staff member is ultimately connected to the core of this institution. Without the staff we couldn't be successful.

o Budget – Tech has a much better fiscal picture this year than when President Whitmore came to Tech a year ago. A big part of this is that students are paying higher tuition.

§ There is \$22.6 million additional in the budget this year. The biggest portion, \$10 million, is 2-3% merit raises made available for staff

§ The second largest portion goes to student financial aid for students who had most difficult time meeting the increased tuition through student loans and grants.

§ Money was set aside for hiring additional employees for keeping up with student population growth, particularly in maintenance and custodial services for new buildings. Most new staff money goes to hire new advisors for students and direct student support areas where the student population growth has hit hardest.

§ Money was set aside for better equipment in the classroom for students – notably in science and technology areas and for teaching improvements. Last year, a budget advisory committee was created. Three staff members were included on this committee. The committee's purpose was to help decide how much to raise tuition and how to spend it. They advised the president about proportionate spending of that money. President Whitmore states he mostly adhered to those recommendations. Tech staff, as well as students, faculty, and deans, did have direct input into tuition being raised. That committee will continue its work this year and will meet soon.

§ This is a legislative budget year. The biennial budget will be decided starting in January. Tech will send budget priorities for Fall 2005 to the State Legislature. Tech is asking for more funding through the basic formula process – the way most funds come to Tech. Last year, Tech didn't get the funding needed for growth, so tuition had to be raised. Tech representatives will ask for more funding to finance more growth this year and will also ask for the return of the Excellence Fund. The Excellence Fund is money Tech received for 3 or 4 years to support research here at Tech. That source was eliminated during the last legislative session. It may possibly be restored for 2005 and will help Tech pay for research activities. Tech also plans to ask for funding for the new business school building – about half of the money needed to build it. If enough money is raised, some state money will go into the old business building to make it a first-class classroom building. It will also house some academic departments. Tech representatives will also pursue a smaller amount to fund an expansion on the Law School building.

§ The budget for next fiscal year is already being discussed. Tuition was raised twice last year – in January and September. It is not planned to raise tuition twice in a single year again, although additional circumstances could change this. Tech will not consider raising tuition again for spring term this year.

o New buildings:

§ President Whitmore toured the new Animal Sciences building a month ago and it is coming along. Move in is planned around November 1. This is a much needed building for teaching and research. This new building will serve both functions.

§ Experimental Sciences Building is located behind the Engineering complex. The move in will probably be next spring. This is a big project. It is necessary to hire more janitorial staff to take care of this building. This is where Tech will add staff, and spend extra on heating and cooling as well.

§ Tech is also building a new residence hall which is on fast track for completion. This project is done as a design/build project where the designer and contractor work together. The new residence hall is scheduled to be open by this time next year. There is a big penalty to the contractor for failure to meet this deadline. Tech is also raising money for a new business building and the law school. Half the funds to build comes from private donors, half from the state.

o In last year's meeting, the Ombudsperson position was discussed and approved as an outlet for issues relating to staff concerns. A committee developed the job description and a set of OPs. Tech is in a position to advertise that job now. The goal is to hire someone this fall and have that person in place by spring. Tech has a new Vice President for Administration and Finance – Tom Anderes. Staff members were on the search committee for this position. Ombudsmen, by definition, are independent and work confidentially with staff about issues. They work informally to solve these issues. The budget for the office of the Ombudsperson resides in new Vice President's office. President Whitmore will meet at least once per year with the Ombudsperson and do whatever possible to continue to help staff.

o President Whitmore pledges to keep attending Staff Senate meetings where possible. He will be spending much time in Austin as well. He will continue to have a monthly meeting with the Staff Senate president who will fill him in if he must miss a meeting. Staff issues are important. The issue President Whitmore heard the most in the beginning is the lack of raises and made a point of addressing that issue. He states that he will try to continue to address the issue of raises each year. The other major thing that came out of the Staff Senate is the Ombudsperson. That was put into the budget and Tech is moving forward with that project.

o Questions

§ Is TTU building a conference facility here on campus? That question comes up occasionally, but there's nothing on the current plan to spend money for that kind of building. Sometimes they get going through partnerships with businesses or private donors, but Tech is not currently actively engaged in this type of project.

§ Is there a veterinary school in our future? No, but this issue has come up. Veterinary schools are often attached to agriculture. They are very expensive and usually have a small number of students. A&M has one of the best in the country. Most states don't have more than one veterinary school.

§ Are there plans to build another parking garage? Tech has hired a consultant through Max Hinojosa's office. This consultant is conducting a year-long study whether Tech needs another garage and how much people are willing to pay. Garages are expensive compared to parking lots, but there may possibly be another garage built in the future. Administrators have to have input from faculty, students, and staff in reference to parking rates rising for the convenience of closer parking, and where? There will be staff member on committee that studies those issues. Parking is a continual issue. Max Hinojosa had a company fly over campus and take pictures of parking lots at different times during the day. Lots of parking spaces were available in various places on campus every time they took picture. There are more spaces than people think. The question is how to get more information to people about where to park. The garage has lots of spaces on the roof.

§ Traffic and parking took away hang tags for employees to move around campus to other parking lots as needed for meetings and other reasons.

§ There are some policies currently in place discriminating against part-time employees – there is no longevity pay, the \$1000 pay increase for a new doctorate is not available to part-time employees, and they must pay half of their health care premiums. It is not on the agenda to discuss this, but could be if Staff Senate wants the administration to address it. Most part-time positions are research positions utilizing people with masters degrees and doctorates, but they are paid less than graduate students. The administration cannot look into everything, but if that's an issue, they will work with the Staff Senate to look into it.

#### Other Business

o Agenda Issues: The Issues Form is the official outlet for relating issues to the Staff Senate. Issues Forms received go through the Issues Committee for research and then through the Executive Committee for further research or an action to bring it before the full Staff Senate. The Issues Form does not have to be submitted by a Staff Senator. Any staff member can submit an Issues Form. All Staff Senators have a copy of the Issues Form, and it is now also available on the Staff Senate website. Brent Guinn will meet with President Whitmore once a month to bring any issues to his attention. There are currently four or five issues to go before the Issues Committee.

o The Nominations Committee got together and made a list of committees. The real work of the Staff Senate goes on in the committees. An issue has to be relatively refined through committee work before it can be brought before the Staff Senate. All senators placed on committees should be contacted about committee placement. Representatives from all EEO classifications are on the Nominations Committee and were present at the last Executive Committee meeting. Staff Senators wishing to serve in a specific area should contact Brent Guinn or Sandy Gellner. The Nominations Committee also places Staff Senators on other standing committees on campus, such as the IT Strategic Advisory Committee (through Sam Segran). Anyone interested in serving on these committees should contact Sandy Gellner. The chair for each committee is elected by the committee members. The committees will all meet this month (September). The first item on the agenda for each committee meeting is to elect a

committee chair. The chair of each committee is asked to consistently attend executive committee meetings. Brent Guinn will set the meeting time if there is no committee chair. Richard Verrone or Brent Guinn will also be at the initial meetings for all the committees to help get them started.

#### Announcements

- o Due to attendance and quorum requirements, please contact Jana Atkins if you arrive late.
- o As committee meetings are scheduled, please contact Brent Guinn or Richard Verrone with meeting times and locations so one of them can make plans to attend.
- o The next Executive Committee meeting is September 29 in Engineering Center room 104 at 3:30 p.m. Contact Brent Guinn for directions.
- o The next Staff Senate meeting is October 6 at 3:00 p.m. in Escondido Theater in the Student Union.

\*\*\*\*Senate term 2005 – please look for your Staff Senate minutes to be available on the Staff Senate website [www.depts.ttu.edu/staffsenate](http://www.depts.ttu.edu/staffsenate) . Availability will be announced through TechAnnounce.