

**Texas Tech University Staff Senate**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**June 3, 2009**

**Call To Order:** 2008-2009 Staff Senate President, Ron Nail  
3:00 PM, Senate Room, Student Union Building,

**Officers Present:** Ron Nail, President Elect  
Len Markham, Secretary  
Tamara Ginter, Treasurer

**Pledge:** Ron Nail led the senate in the pledge

**Roll Call:** Present 37 of 59 Senators.  
**Absent:** Chris Leisinger, Shannon Crossland, Elizabeth Massengale, Kyle Clark, Jessica Carrillo, Marlene Kenady, Janet Veal, Barbara Bass, Heather Medley, Jerry Perez, Kar Sata, Melanie Chaffin-Poeling, Kay Hill, Sharon Yeates, Ashley Britton, Becky Evens, John Brocklehurst, Steve Allsup, Brad Jury, Linda Champion, Alicia Marez, and Frances Watson.

**Guests:** Dr. Robert Smith, Provost and Senior Vice President.

**Quorum:** 62% of the Senate Body is in attendance, a quorum was present.

**Minutes:** April and May minutes approved as read

**Treasurer's Report:**

<b>April beginning balance:</b>	\$14,011.63
Expended:	\$ 2,416.02
Encumbrances:	<u>\$ 178.83</u>
Ending balance:	\$ 11,777.44

<b>May beginning balance:</b>	\$11,783.00
Expended:	\$ 302.33
Encumbrances:	<u>\$ 1,702.66</u>
Ending balance:	\$ 9,778.01

April and May treasurer reports were approved as read.

**Guest Speaker:** **Dr. Robert Smith, Provost and Senior Vice President.**

Mr. Smith, new TTU Provost, addressed the senate with a presentation entitled, *“From here, it’s possible”*: *Considering TTU’s Ascent During 2009-2020*. Dr. Smith began by sharing a story about his time at University of Texas (1974-1999) noting it was geared toward enhancing the quality of instruction. He noted the objectives for his presentation: TTU opportunities for growth and development, strategic planning, promise of a new position, directing the promise, and some questions to consider.

### **1)TTU’s Opportunities for Growth and Development**

- Strong Undergraduate & Graduate/Professional Programs
- Commitment to Student Centeredness
- Enrollment Growth & Research Productivity
  - Need for educational growth—only 25% of population over 18 have a baccalaureate degree—important to provide opportunity for an education
  - Research productivity—important to be a research university with national recognition. Research is important in driving economic and social cultural development in today’s society.
- Importance of Strategic Planning: Vision, Mission, University/Unit Planning, Strategic Priorities, Goals, Objectives & Budget Integration

### **2)Strategic Planning**

- Need specific visions. Ours is to be one of the best public research universities.
- National Research University Model—assist in becoming one of the flagship universities in Texas. Characteristics include:
  - Outstanding Undergrad, Grad & Prof Programs & Students
  - Exceptional Faculties, Scholarship & Research
  - Rankings, High % Grad & Prof Students, National & Int’l Recognized Faculty
  - Sizable Research Funding and Endowments
- What should we thinking of in this effort:
  - National Wind Resource Center
  - Partnering with national entities, firms, and build campus in Amarillo area for wind farm to do wind research
  - Great opportunity to find technology important to world
- TTU Strategic Priorities
  - Increase enrollment (especially in graduate programs)
  - Strengthen academic quality and reputation
  - Expand and enhance research
  - Further our outreach and service
  - Maximizing resources

### 3) Promise of a new position: Role of a Provost and key values

- Encourage & Support (or Not): Quality
- Guide & Evaluate: Trust
- Represent & Advocate: Integrity

### 4) Directing the promise

- Collegiate Visits
- Other Unit Visits
- Contact with Faculty, Students & Staff, esp. Shared Governance Representatives
- *All Things Texas Tech*
- Leading Campus Strategic Planning Effort
- Dovetailing University Plans with Unit & Individual Plans (e.g., integrated scholars)

### 5) Some questions to consider

- “Working towards TTU becoming a prominent national research university?”
- “Necessary initiatives?” (e.g., Doctoral Fellowships, National Wind Resource Center)
- “Best leverage of resources?” (e.g., extramural sponsorship of research)
- “How to promote growth without diminishing quality?”

### Final thoughts—“The Janus Perspective”

I was struck by the vastness of this university—2<sup>nd</sup> largest in the nation with 1,843 acres (Air Force is number 1). I also noted the colonnades and arches and the Spanish Renaissance architectural influence. This reminded me of “The Janus Perspective”. Janus was the God of archways, *Jani* means doorways which represents beginning and end, past and future, all symbols for movement forward. We are reminded of that on this beautiful campus, a wonderful place to be. Staff, student, and faculty are placed to move forward.

### Announcements:

- Chris Leisinger, President Elect, delivered a bouncing baby girl today. Baby Avery was 7 lbs 14 oz and 21” long. Mom and baby are both doing well.
- Ron Nail read thank you notes from a couple of scholarship recipients.
- Remember change in July meeting date—End of year ceremony on July 8, 2009 at the Merket Alumni center to say good bye to those senators leaving and welcome new senators. Reception will follow.
- Executive Board will meet on July 1, 2009
- You may have seen TechAnnounce concerning First Care no longer available as of August 31, 2008. Decision was made by First Care to pull out of ERS and TTU has no choice or say in the matter.

**New Business:**

**2009-2010 Officer Elections**

**President Elect:**

Nominations from the floor—Gary Bryant, Sandy Gellner, and Beverly Pinson

Secret ballot vote counted by Ron Nail and Ron Schulz

Beverly Pinson was elected as President Elect for 2009-2010

**Secretary:**

Nominations from the floor—Sandy Gellner, Len Markham, Audrey Pekowski and Marci Beasley. Noted that Marci Beasley would be leaving senate and not eligible to serve and Audrey Pekowski withdrew her name.

Secret ballot vote counted by Ron Nail and Ron Schulz

Sandy Gellner was elected as Secretary for 2009-2010

**Treasurer:**

Nominations from the floor—Tamara Ginter

Tamara Ginter elected by affirmation to continue serving as Treasurer for 2009-2010.

Motion made by Michael Gellner to cease nominations, seconded by Ron Schulz.

**Committees:**

**By-Laws**-reported by Michael Glass

- Second reading of bylaw changes regarding Article 1 Membership A. Eligibility. Purpose is to clarify eligibility of a TTU employee for service in the Staff Senate.

**ELIGIBILITY**

A Texas Tech University or Texas Tech University System Administration employee interested in serving as a staff senator must be employed in a benefits eligible full-time or part-time position for at least one year of continuous service at the time of nominations.

(The committee took out the “uninterrupted” in the first sentence as “continuous uninterrupted” was redundant.)

Motion made by Ron Schulz, seconded by Mac Cooper to accept the bylaw changes as presented. Motion passed.

**Communications & Public Relations**-reported by Audrey Pekowslo

–Remind senators of 2008-2009 end of year ceremony on July 8<sup>th</sup> at the Merket Alumni Center with reception to follow.

**Elections** – reported by Len Markham

– Nominations ended June 1<sup>st</sup> and committee is in the process of verifying the nominations. There were no nominations from the Services area and only one nomination from the Craft/Trade area. This means a special election will be needed in the fall to fill the vacancies.

**Grievance** –No report

**Issues** – reported by Patricia McCaleb

–Employee Retention issue—received issue regarding 70% turnover in each year for past several years in one department. Ron Nail read a draft of letter addressed to Dr. Bailey (See Appendix A to minutes). Entertained a motion from Mac Cooper, seconded by Sammy Arguello to send the letter with grammatical corrections. Motion carried and letter will be sent. Ron Nail will sign the letter on behalf of the Staff Senate.

**Nominations** - No Report

**Scholarship** – reported by Gary Bryant

– TechAnnounce for scholarship applications for first summer term. Five scholarships will be awarded.

**Technology** – No Report

**Child Care** – No Report

**University Parking** – reported by Larry Burks

– New permits should have been received.  
– Car Clinic on July 22, 2009 for staff, faculty and students.

**Adjournment:** Adjourned at 4:37 pm.

## APPENDIX A

June 10, 2009

Guy Bailey, President  
Texas Tech University  
MS 2005  
Lubbock, TX 79409

Subject: Staff Retention Oversight Committee

Dear Dr. Bailey:

This letter is being sent to you on behalf of the 2008-09 Staff Senate and all staff at Texas Tech University. The Staff Senate received a request from an employee to look into the more than 70% turnover per year for the last several years in a particular department on campus, and the Issues Committee began research on the question. The issue soon showed itself to be more complex than originally thought, and it touched on many points that are vital to employees' satisfaction with their jobs.

Issues Committee members are happy to note that a high turnover rate sometimes indicates good things happening in a department: employees may be receiving such good training, for example, that they are quickly promoted out of the department. However, the employee who submitted the issue for our consideration is concerned that the reasons for the turnover in his or her department result from poor relations between supervisors and lower-level employees.

Our objective is to bring some of these concerns to your attention. They include the high cost to the University when highly trained employees are lost and must be replaced, and when complaints or grievances are officially investigated and dealt with.

Issues Committee members researched methods of handling similar issues at other universities in the Big 12, including the University of Texas at Austin, Texas A&M University, and the University of Oklahoma. Information was also drawn from the Campus Conflict Management Guidelines Committee (CCMGC), at <http://www.campus-adr.org/Information/GuidelinesFinal.pdf>. We are happy to report that Texas Tech's policies are in conformance with the major points in the guidelines, including the presence of an ombuds for staff and a procedure for grievances or complaints.

However, the CCMGC guidelines also recommend that universities "stay vital and relevant through evaluation and continuous improvement" by assessing their "current ways of dealing with conflict and disputes of various types [including] the parties' goals; the outcomes achieved; the costs in time, resources, and personal distress; security issues, the effect of current processes on ongoing relationships; and the likelihood of future disputes." This is something (we feel?) Texas Tech is not doing.

The Staff Senate requests that a committee or task force on staff retention and oversight be convened to evaluate the current procedures in place and the possibility of updates or corrective actions so that Texas Tech University continues to be at the forefront in staff retention. Needed actions may include institutional, not departmental, oversight; the identification of departments with high turnover rates to determine whether the reasons are positive or negative, with corresponding rewards or corrective actions for the departments concerned; and a measure of employee value based on training and experience, with corresponding rewards or corrective actions for the employees involved.

We hope that conflicts can be identified before they become critical, so they can be solved with minimal cost and upset to the University, its departments, and its individual employees. We would be delighted to help in any way we can.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Sincerely,

Ron Nail  
President, Texas Tech Staff Senate