LETTER FROM THE FACULTY SPEAKS EDITOR

Dear Colleagues,

My editorial assistant Charlene James and I present the Spring/Summer 2015 issue of Faculty Speaks.

This is my last issue as editor of Faculty Speaks, and so we decided to make this a “farewell” issue to those who are leaving the faculty senate. I have enjoyed my tenure as editor though I would have welcomed more faculty participation. My focus was to make faculty Speaks more of an intellectual forum along with sharing information about events at different colleges. Sometimes we were successful and sometimes we ourselves did not live up to our own expectations. However, we enjoyed what we did as a team. I wish the next editor and the new senators the very best.

Nina Saha-Gupta
Editor, Faculty Speaks

NOTES FROM THE FACULTY SENATE CHAIR

Dear Colleagues -

It has been a pleasure to serve as your Faculty Senate Chair for another year. Many thanks to all of you for re-electing me to serve you for the 2015-2017 term. The Senate and I have worked diligently on the continued enforcement of the new Faculty Manual and University Rules, and monitoring and assisting faculty members to address their concerns relative to their rights.

As most of you are aware during the last academic year, several of our faculty passed away, including my good friend and colleague, Dr. Kiran Chilakamarri who lost his battle with pneumonia in April. It was very difficult to say goodbye to someone who just days before had vehemently voiced his commitment to faculty rights at TSU.

None of us are promised tomorrow, so with great passion and commitment, we should take advantage of each second we are blessed with to do what is right and honorable.

In the past several months, many violations of the Faculty Manual have been reported to me by faculty members. After following proper protocol, which was ignored by Administration, I reported them to the Board of Regents at the June 12, 2015, meeting as stipulated in Section 1.3 of the Faculty Manual. To date, no updates have been provided in this regard. For your information, the following is a brief description of the information presented to the Board:

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE
The Deans of the Colleges/Schools have established and are enforcing By-Laws that have not been approved by any University Committees or the Board of Regents (Section 2.2).

The Deans of several colleges have recently established Grievance Committees to review faculty vs. faculty complaints. Deans are obligated to hear these issues (Section 2.6).

Department Chairs fail to include ALL their faculty members when:
* Preparing the budget;
* Planning summer school offerings;
* Teaching assignments; and,
* Recruiting new faculty (Section 2.9).

Some Department Chairs continue to remain in their positions past the 3-year term; no mandatory reviews by faculty have been initiated; nor has faculty been given the opportunity to vote on re-appointment of Chairs. Also, Department Chairs without proper credentials and qualifications are being hired. Furthermore, many Department Chairs that are Interim have served beyond the allowable 2-year term (Section 2.10).

Some Deans do not follow proper hiring protocol for Department Chairs (Section 2.11).

Some Chairs tamper with official university documents, but Dean(s) ignore faculty complaints of violations (Section 2.12).

Faculty members have been threatened with loss of university’s communication privileges for expressing their views about their Chairs, Deans, and Upper Administration for violations of the university’s rules. As a result, ALL faculty have recently lost this right of expression (Section 3.0).

Some Chairs, with Deans’ support, hire new faculty without proper credentials (3.2).

ALL School/Departmental faculty are not provided with candidate information, nor allowed to participate in the selection process of new faculty (Section 4.0).

The Dean of School of Public Affairs has hired several Administrators with faculty status who are now being awarded tenure, but do not meet the minimum qualifications in their prospective departments (Section 4.2).

Some Deans promote and award tenure to certain faculty members without regard to time-in-rank requirements (Section 4.11).

Some Chairs and Deans disregard the Faculty Workload mandate, thereby violating regular faculty’s rights, and creating an unpleasant atmosphere in the academic units (Section 5.1).

Faculty members have been terminated without proper due process (Section 7.1).

Some faculty’s rights to an immediate investigation or speedy hearing after suspension have been violated (Section 7.2).

Many grievances have been submitted to the Provost’s Office with no acknowledgments or resolutions being provided. This causes many faculty to seek remedies outside the university (Section 9.0).

Faculty participation is limited in most aspects of shared governance (i.e., President’s Cabinet, and different University Administrative Committees, etc. (Section 10.0)).

University Committees on which faculty have little or no input or participation (Section 10.2).

College Deans appoint faculty members for certain committees, instead of having an election/selection process at a duly convened faculty meeting for such purpose (Section 10.3).
Furthermore, the following concerns were addressed to the Board:
1. TSU’s Administration decided to cancel some summer 2015 classes one day prior to the start of classes. This has angered many of our students who may leave TSU, and financially damaged faculty who lost the opportunity to seek summer employment elsewhere.
2. Texas’ state law requires all faculty members to be proficient in spoken English. The University hires faculty members without regard to this statute. TSU’s students complain that they cannot understand their instructors’ accents, and in many cases, have dropped classes due to this problem. This is detrimental to students, both financially and academically.
3. The President, Provost, and other members of administration should be readily available and accessible to hear, address, and respond to Faculty, Staff, and Students issues.
4. The state of the University should be communicated to all employees continually on all matters to assure the existence of transparency at the university.

Dr. Rasoul Saneifard, Ph.D., P.E.
Chair, Faculty Senate / Assembly
Texas Southern University Board of Regents Retreat was held March 6-7, 2015.

The following is a summary of some of the presentations at the retreat.

**Degree Works** – presented by President Rudley. President Rudley reported on Faculty and student usage of Degree Works. Dr. Rudley indicated that 1071 students logged on to Degree Works in 2014 as compared to 40 Faculty/Advisors and that 786 students logged on during December 2014 as compared to 47 Faculty/Advisors.

Dr. Rudley also indicated that the post implementation plan included monitoring of usage of Degree Works, and that reports would be generated to note how many are logging on to the system.

**Low Producing Academic Programs** - presented by Provost Ward and Mr. E. Craig Ness, Vice President for Administration & Finance.

**Undergraduate Degrees:**
BS in Physics was phased out, but the THECB opted to allow TSU to join a consortium with 7 or 8 other universities to offer a degree in physics as part of the consortium.
BA in French will be phased out in 2016, with no plans to make it a concentration, which is a narrow path or focus or specialty within a major.
BA in Economics (moved from COLABS to the Business School and will be phased out in 2016; economics is now offered as a concentration instead of a major in JHJSB)
BSDIET in Dietetics will be phased out in 2017 and is now a concentration in Human Services and Consumer Sciences (HSCS)

**Graduate degrees eliminated due to LPP:**
MS in Health Administration will be phased out as a major in 2016 and will be offered as a concentration.
MS in Mathematics will be phased out in 2015.
MA in Fine Arts was phased out in 2014.
MS in Industrial Technology was phased out in 2014.

The THECB **denied several extensions** in 2011, but **TSU appealed** and the following programs were **approved for extensions**:

**Undergraduate Degrees:**
BA in Art (currently in good standing)

**Graduate Degrees:**
MA in English
MS in Chemistry

**Enrollment Trends Summary** – presented by Dr. Rudley
8109 students in Spring 2015.

**Number of Degrees Awarded** – presented by Dr. Rudley
Fall 2013 to Summer 2014 - 1567 degrees

**Summarized by Dr. Nina Saha - Gupta**
A Comparative Analysis of Texas Southern University Faculty Salaries with Texas Other Category I or Doctoral Institutions, 2014-15

By: Henry North, Ph.D.

The purpose of this paper is two-fold. First, it attempts to provide an “apples to apples, oranges to oranges” analysis of where Texas Southern University stands in comparison to its fellow or sister public state institutions that have the status of Category I or Doctoral institutions as found in the Academe Magazine, March-April 2015 relative to average salary and average compensation. Its second purpose is to “fact check” the information presented at the Spring 2015 Opening Faculty Meeting regarding this subject matter.


I am especially proud that our University for the first time to my knowledge has been included in this report. The University is making progress in its financial transparency. I was surprised for the same reasoning. For the over forty years that I have been a paid member of the University, this is the first time the University has gone public in that medium and I believe that this participation helps include us in our rightful place in the higher education professional community. However, one wonders or is curious to know why the “Benefits as a Percent of Average Salary” was not reported?

This year’s report is very timely in that it is a “report on the economic status of the profession that explores myths about higher education and presents data from a variety of sources, including the Faculty Compensation Survey, to bust them. It focuses on four common misperceptions: that faculty are to blame for higher tuition prices; that faculty are “ridiculously overpaid” compared to professionals working in “the real world”; that responding to “disruptive innovations” such as online and for-profit education requires reducing the number of tenure-track faculty; and finally, that if institutions of higher education could get faculty benefits under control, they would be better places for faculty and students.” (p. 1)

Additionally,

“In contrast to these misperceptions, this report shows that the erosion of private endowments and decline of state appropriations, not faculty salaries, have pushed average net price tuition upward. It also uses data on selected disciplines and their closest comparators in professional settings to challenge the notion that faculty are overpaid relative to their counterparts outside of academia. Even among increasingly rare tenured professors, salaries fail to keep up.” (p. 1)

However, the focus our analysis is to look at how this data can be used by us (TSU) in our ongoing budgetary and financial discussion and where we stand in terms of our faculty salaries.

The data analysis for this focus will be based primarily on the reported information found in the “Appendix I” section of the Academe Report on pages 70 – 73. We will assume that the reported information in that Report is valid and was appropriately submitted by reputable university administrators with authority to release said data.
Since TSU did not report any data for its “Average Compensation” or its “Benefits as a Percentage of Salary” no analysis could be made as any such analysis would be limited or of no importance or consequence. It is also noted that the data for average “Presidential Salary” utilized median data hence the faculty salary data should also be subjected to this methodology or treatment for comparative analysis.

Further, the data provided by the Office of Human Resources and Payroll Services proved unworthy given that that data or document did not follow the reporting requirements for same as it includes the summer teaching salary and thus skews the results for comparative analysis and equality.

Regarding the President’s salary to average full professors’ salary at TSU, it is easily determined that the President’s median salary is larger or greater than 3.75 times the reported average full professor’s average salary of $103,500. Additionally, the President’s salary is 3.75 times greater than the reported group median salary of $119,300 for full professors.

Discussion:

When I was a relatively young struggling junior professor, one senior professor of chemistry, Dr. Paul Thurston, would bemoan and argue against the administration giving monetary faculty raises and suggested that salary increments should be given in terms of benefit equivalents instead. In my youth, I would always challenge him that wealthy or relative wealthy individuals always seek or focus on the intangibles while the struggling individuals seek or focus on their primary need of obtaining real money to pay the bills. In the benefits versus salary argument with say Clark Atlanta University, we at TSU might be on the losing end as it appears Clark Atlanta University provides its faculty with “Benefits as a Percent of Average Salary” of 30.4%. Since TSU did not officially report its “Benefits as a Percent of Average Salary” based on a rough calculation of the “Employee Total Compensation Statement” sent out to faculty appears to be a “Benefits as a Percent of Average Salary” equal to or less than 16.5%. (p. 45) Without any further knowledge or data that 13.9 percentage advantage difference in benefits using Dr. Thurston’s argument could significantly offset the monetary difference in salary to make Clark Atlanta University from a strictly fiscal perspective the better choice or deal.

Regarding average faculty salaries, the data found that for comparative purposes and administrative redress should utilize median salary data. Based on that data, (1) TSU full professors’ average salary is $15,300 below the groups’ median salary for full professors of $119,300, (2) TSU associate professors’ average salary is $5,600 below the groups’ median salary for associate professors of $84,800, and (3) TSU assistant professors’ average salary is $12,000 below the groups’ median salary for assistant professors of $72,400.

Using that data and the numbers reported in the Academe Report for a faculty of 281 members by the first three academic ranks would need a sum total of $2,936,500 to level up the faculty to the Category I (Doctoral) median salary using (2014-2015) dollars. The amount need using current salaries would require an allocation of $1,667,700 for 109 full professors; $632,800 for 113 associate professors; and $636,000 for 53 assistant professors. Six (6) faculty members were shown for the rank of instructor for TSU and were thus not addressed as insignificant or small sample.
WE WISH YOU A FOND FAREWELL…

The 2013 – 2015 school year was an important year for Texas Southern University, and the faculty. All of the senators and officers who are leaving the Faculty Senate will be missed. Many of them participated in the revisions to the Faculty Manual, and advocated for their peers on a variety of issues and concerns. A special recognition is due Dr. Lalita Sen, who is leaving the board after serving many years in the Faculty Senate, her most recent contribution being her service as Treasurer for two consecutive years.

Goodbye to These 2013 – 2015 Executive Officers

Dr. Lalita Sen
Treasurer

Dr. Nina Saha-Gupta
Faculty Speaks Editor

Dr. Emiel Owens
Parliamentarian

Dr. Rasoul Saneifard
will continue his tenure as Chair.

Dr. Vera Hawkins
begins her new position as Parliamentarian.

Dr. Jafus Cavil
will continue his tenure as secretary.

... AND WE WELCOME NEW OFFICERS!

Welcome to our New 2015 – 2017 Executive Officers

Dr. Luis Perez-Feliciano
Faculty Speaks Editor

Dr. Edieth Wu
Vice-Chair

Dr. Olurominiyi Ibitayo
Secretary
It’s hard to believe that the Fall Semester is upon us already, and with the end of summer, we can reflect on all that we want to accomplish this year.

As you make academic and personal plans for the upcoming year, it is important to reflect on the substantive role each of us has played to the success and growth of Texas Southern University.

We are branches to this tree that sustains and connects each of us to the other. TSU depends on each of us to sustain it as it does us.

This symbiotic relationship exists in nature so two different species can benefit from the interaction. It is a relationship that is fundamental to the survival of each.

As in nature, we each have our own relationship with TSU. Mine started as a preschooler in the early childhood development school with the amazing Ms. Dora Hodges, where I could often be found making my way across the hall to play piano in my Uncle Oddis’s office (Dr. Oddis Turner). This transitioned into my attendance in several summer camps, including Dr. Carol Hightower-Parker’s program and Dr. Hill’s REEP program, where I fell in love with science for the first time.

Years later, Mr. George Thomas took a chance on a college student from Virginia with big ideas who talked too much and gave me my first internship at KTSU. KTSU was there again when Dr. Hope-Thompson gave me, a recent graduate with more big ideas, my own radio show. With his support it became a success until his untimely death where he was taken from all of us too soon.

Now, as a doctoral student in the College of Education, it is no different. I am surrounded by administrators and faculty who are committed to excellence, and committed to me as they are to all of their students. Through my 20+ year relationship with Texas Southern University, it has become a “Home” and a family because it houses YOU: the faculty and administration. Each of you who takes time with your students, or sees potential and harvests it. Hats off to you all!

I feel strongly about doing my part to serve Texas Southern University as I have been served through the commitment of the faculty and staff throughout the years.

As the school year starts be encouraged to think of ways you can continue to serve. It might be joining a committee, or even saying something positive about TSU to those who are not a part of this ecosystem of diversity. Both of these are like water to the tree that is this great institution. It is said that like branches on a tree, we all grow in different directions, but like a root we are all fed by the same source.

As we meet new students, get settled back in if we’ve been gone for the summer, reflect on the root that is TSU: how it has served us, and what we can each continue doing to repay the favor.

Thank You For Your Service …

Charlene M. James
Assistant Editor, Faculty Speaks