

TSU FACULTY SENATE MEETING

1 April 2010

Minutes

Howard Beeth, Secretary

Members Present: Edieth Wu, Chair; Lalita Sen, Vice Chair; Howard Beeth, Secretary; Rasoul Saneifard, Treasurer; Alexis Brooks De Vita, Editor, *The Faculty Speaks*; Macaulay Akpaffiong, Senator, Pharmacy & Health Sciences; Thorpe Butler, Senator, COLABS; Robert Ford, Senator, COST; Anna James, Senator, TMSL; Emlyn Norman, Senator, COLABS; Andrea Shelton, Senator, Pharmacy & Health Sciences; Sarah White, Senator, COLABS; Zivar Yousefipour, Senator, Pharmacy & Health Sciences. **Total: 13.**

Members Absent: C.J. Tymczak, Parliamentarian; Demetrius Kazakos, Asst. Secretary; Kiran Chilakamarri, Senator, COST; Daniel Georges-Abeyie, Senator, COPA; Doris Jackson, Senator, Pharmacy & Health Sciences; Wei Li, Senator, COST; Michael Sollars, Senator, The Graduate School. **Total: 7.**

Agenda Items

Call to Order & Chair's Announcements

The Chair called the meeting to order at 3:15p when a sufficient number of Senators finally arrived to create a quorum. She announced that TSU President Rudley had indicated that perhaps the faculty would get a 2% pay raise in the Fall of 2010 and that students would probably be assessed a 3% tuition hike.

Approval of Minutes

The amended minutes of the Senate's March meeting were moved, seconded, and passed unanimously.

Faculty Survey of Administrators Committee Report

Senator Yousefipour presented an analysis of the progress and problems encountered with this year's in-progress faculty survey of TSU administrators. She indicated that there were some problems with the survey form itself, including that it did not provide enough space for faculty to

write comments. She also noted that there was some question number confusion and that the addition of lines on the form would clarify it. Further, she explained that some faculty had little contact with senior administrators and in some cases chose not to evaluate them. In addition, some faculty expressed a concern that their written comments could expose their identity. This led to a discussion about the possibility of using on-line surveys or Scantrons in the future, a subject which has been discussed in earlier years. Some Senators remarked that sender-identity was vulnerable using computers, while Scantrons limit or exclude the possibility of written comments. The issue was left unresolved. Vice Chair Sen said that she hoped to have the data from the survey entered by the end of the semester but that she would need student assistance to do so. However, the Chair reported that our university probably has already spent student funds for this semester. In conclusion, Senator Yousefipour requested that in the future those who administered the surveys to the faculty in the various colleges bundle them by type before turning them in to the Faculty Assembly/Senate office for processing.

Faculty Manual Revision Report and Discussion

After the Chair distributed additional copies of *The Faculty Manual*, Vice Chair Sen asked for additional volunteers to serve on the *Faculty Manual* Revision Committee, and Senator Thorpe Butler volunteered to do so. Vice Chair Sen went on to say that the Workload Committee was en route to recommend that 3/3 course loads be the highest required. Conversation developed around the issue of what to do if department chairs failed to observe work loads rules. Filing a grievance would be one possible response, although it was pointed out that the grievance procedure takes a lot of time even though it held out the possibility of some sort of compensatory adjustment. One senator noted that some faculty, especially untenured faculty, were afraid to register complaints about work load and other administrative violations of the rules for fear of retaliation.

A related discussion took place about the rules pertaining to rank, tenure, and promotion—specifically, which set of rules to follow, those in the old *Faculty Manual* or those proposed for the new *Faculty Manual*. The Chair said that she thought the old rules stayed in force until the new *Manual* was formally adopted.

Summer Classes

Editor Brooks De Vita and Treasurer Rasoul Saneifard presented on this topic. Brooks De Vita said that some prerequisite courses are difficult for many entering TSU students who often fail them, blocking their path to higher level courses. Her recommendation was that some sections of these courses be offered in a longer form to allow students to achieve greater competency in the subject matter. She also queried the practice of allowing students to register without faculty consultation for on-line for difficult prerequisite courses and for courses requiring a prerequisite that they had not taken. Vice Chair Sen mentioned that the Graduation and Retention Committee had discussed allowing students to take either 4 week or 10 week versions of some intro courses.

Senator Saneifard didn't disagree with these ideas but noted that some chairs arbitrarily lengthened some summer courses and still expected faculty to teach them at the same pay, a practice that deans should be alerted to.

Faculty E-Mail Distribution List

Throughout the academic year, the Senate has tried and failed to secure a reasonable means of communicating with its faculty constituency via direct email. As matters stand, all other organizational players on campus—the Board of Regents, the President, the Provost, the Staff Association, etc.—can do this by direct email into faculty mailboxes, while the Faculty Senate alone cannot. As a result, many faculty do not have direct email access to the faculty newsletter, *The Faculty Speaks*, or to the minutes of the Faculty Senate. Consequently, these faculty have no idea of the hard work done in their behalf by the Senate. Lack of accessible email communication between the faculty and their Senate contributes of lack of unity among the faculty and to their demoralization and cynicism toward their leadership.

Heretofore, the Senate assigned Ms. Josie Decatur, its sole staffer, to resolve this singular and troubling problem. Ms. Decatur reviewed for the Senators the history of her efforts over the last academic year and the many explanations given by various administrators, none of which solved the communication problem, which continues.

Secretary Beeth pointed out that the Senate had shown great patience with the administration concerning the impediment of its communication. Vice President Sen added that such blockage perhaps amounted to the denial of faculty free speech, according to the American Association of University Professors. Beeth therefore suggested that it was time to shift from relying on the efforts of a single individual to resolve the problem, which has not produced tangible results, to taking a corporate, collective action by the Senate in the form of a carefully worded resolution to university administrators that would intimate that the Senate would take further action if the administration did not soon arrange for direct email access by the Senate to its constituency, the faculty. This suggestion received no visible support. Instead, the Chair said she would be willing to pursue the matter individually with university administrators. As a result, the Senate overwhelmingly passed a resolution charging her to so (“The Senate authorizes the Chair to try to secure a faculty cue for appropriate Faculty Senate communication to the faculty.”).

The Faculty Speaks

Faculty Speaks Editor Brooks De Vita submitted a report about the publication covering the 2009-2010 academic year. She noted that five (5) issues of the faculty newsletter appeared during this time, more issues than in the previous five (5) years combined.

Her report described the difficulties she has encountered as editor as well as some requests to solve the difficulties. Her difficulties included an inability to directly email issues of the publication globally to our faculty, the lack of a Senate-supplied computer and properly equipped

Senate-provided office, and a heavy, 7-classes per year teaching load. She therefore requested that undistributed issues of *The Faculty Speaks* be distributed at all meetings of the general faculty, that the Senate secure from the administration access to direct emailing to the faculty so that *The Faculty Speaks* could be emailed to them directly, that the Senate supply her with a fully equipped office as well as a laptop computer for mobile use, and that she be given a per-semester teaching load reduction to reflect the work she is doing for the faculty as editor of *The Faculty Speaks*.

The Senate agreed to further discuss these matters during its next meeting, in May.

Carnegie Community Engagement Update; Distance Education Issue

Re: the Carnegie project, Senator Robert Ford distributed copies of the Carnegie application which must be submitted by 1 September 2010. He and the Chair both suggested that the Senate establish a committee to study the application.

Re: distance education, Senator Ford noted that the profession is moving in the direction of utilizing technology for student learning and instruction. Our university, he said, has accordingly designated a person to study the matter, and Ford will meet with this person and report back to the Senate.

Phased Retirement

Senator Thorpe Butler reported that it might be more financially advantageous for faculty formally to retire before going on phased retirement, odd though this may sound, although Vice Chair Sen urged caution about such a plan which she thought might leave faculty vulnerable to financial injury.

New Business

Treasurer Saneifard reported that Parliamentarian C.J. Timczak has been unable to attend Senate meetings lately because he has been assigned to teach a class at the same time the Senate meets. He promised to discuss this matter with the appropriate department head and dean.

Secretary Howard Beeth suggested that the Senate might consider exchanging observers with the TSU Staff Association as well as the TSU Student Government Association to better inform all, a matter to be further discussed at the Senate's May meeting.

The hour being late, the Senate voted to adjourn its April 2010 meeting at 5:25p.