

Faculty Senate Minutes

16 November 2012

Senators Present: Alex, Ambrose, Anwar, Atchison, Bartlett, Crandall, Dalton, Jafar, Johnson, Kuennen, Pendleton, Pjesky, Rausch, Riney, Severn, Takacs, Vick, Vizzini, and Ward

Senators Absent: Drumheller, Landram, and Loftin

Guests: Gary Byrd and Emily Kinsky

Call to Order: President Ambrose called the meeting to order at 12:15 p.m. in Room 14 (Eternal Flame) of the JBK.

Approval of Minutes: Vizzini made a motion seconded by Ward to approve as written the minutes of the 2 November 2012 Faculty Senate meeting.

Dr. O'Brien handed out results of the 2012 National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) that WT freshmen and seniors completed. The survey determines to what extent students are engaged at the university; students learn more when they are more engaged. Reported were Deep Approaches to Learning (activities such as critical thinking, reflection, and integrated learning that lead to more lasting learning) measured in different ways. WT students were compared against students at Southwest public institutions, the Carnegie class, and all students who responded. WT freshmen scored 60, which was slightly better than the 59 for Southwest public, same as the Carnegie class, and slightly less than the 61 for all freshmen. WT seniors scored 66 for Deep Approaches to Learning, the same as for the Carnegie class and all seniors. WT is doing better with seniors than freshmen. WT freshmen make many class presentations (48% versus 38% for Carnegie class), participate in community service (59%), are positively satisfied with faculty members (87%), and positively rate their relationships with administrators and staff (74%). WT seniors scored better than comparison groups in classroom discussions, working with other students on class projects, talking about career plans with faculty, and positive relationships with administrators and staff. Only 14% of WT freshmen read 10 books (compared with 32% of the Carnegie class), 14% wrote papers (compared with 31% of the Carnegie class), and 49% spent 10 hours studying per week. WT freshmen scored less than other groups on academic challenge (critical thinking, integrating, higher-level learning) but better on active and collaborative learning and on a supportive campus environment. WT seniors scored better than Southwest public institutions in active and collaborative learning, student-faculty interaction, and a supportive campus environment. Since 2005, WT has improved in all five categories. Dr. O'Brien requested Senators review and discuss the results with colleagues. Every year, Dr. O'Brien distributes the information to Deans, but perhaps the data have not gotten to the faculty.

Dr. O'Brien handed out results of U.S. News and World Report rankings of universities. When he came to WT, he revised the WT plan to enhance the ranking in U.S. News and World Report because students and parents read and decide which college to attend based on ranking. WT is ranked against 140 regional universities in the West. In 2009, WT was in the third tier, but now is in the top tier. In the Texas A&M University System, Texas A&M International and WT are in the first tier. Angelo, Midwestern, and Tarleton State are not ranked. Texas A&M Corpus Christi moved from the first to the 4th tier by changing from regional to national. Trinity is 1 in the region. Over the years, the rank of WT improved from 79 to 72. Each February, surveys are sent to the President, Provost, etc. to rate all institutions on reputation; WT scored 2.4 in 2005 and 2.7 this year. WT now sends news to Presidents and Provosts of institutions in the region. WT graduation and retention decreased from 85 to 82. Only first-time, full-time freshmen count in the average 6-year graduation rate; WT has 50% transfer students. Atchison asked if freshmen coming in with hours from high school counted; Dr. O'Brien said it depended on how many hours the student brought. WT faculty resources ranked 95th in 2009, but now 59th. WT now has more classes with less than 20 students. Rausch asked who counts as faculty. Dr. O'Brien said full-time faculty and term-contract instructors count, but not adjunct faculty. Student selectivity rank was based on credentials of the incoming freshmen. Financial resources spent per student now are less because of the 13% decrease in budget. The WT alumni giving rank was based on a proxy of 5%; alumni giving is better at Texas A&M International than WT.

Boise State, Eastern Washington University, and Central Washington University were compared with WT. Graduation and retention are worse at WT than Washington. WT is going to decrease next year because freshman to sophomore retention is only 62%. Dr. O'Brien looked for the reason why WT graduation and retention are worse, but salaries at Washington are the same as at WT and WT giving is greater. He asked if there is a link between retention and the academic challenge freshmen are receiving. He said retention is everyone's job at WT. Jafar said demographics at Washington State at Pullman are much different than at WT. Vizzini asked how many WT students are working full time and also taking a full load of classes. Dr. O'Brien thinks the economy might be playing havoc with WT students. He thinks some of the NSSE questions might ask about student work. Rausch asked where WT students go after they quit. Dr. O'Brien said WT can learn where students go if they participate in a clearinghouse at another institution. He said 22-23% of first-time, full-time freshmen plan to transfer. He said some students break up with boyfriends or girlfriends and quit, some get homesick, etc. Dr. O'Brien and Karen went to a donor function at Gruver and stopped at Dairy Queen where the counter girl said she attended WT as a freshman and lived in Stafford Hall; she dropped out of WT because her family stopped paying her school expenses when they learned her roommate and best friend was African American. Dr. O'Brien plans to change contracts on residence halls from one semester to the full academic year. Anwar suggested changing faculty training sessions to seminars by College to have more faculty involvement. Dr. O'Brien said he might ask Amy Andersen to have more frequent, smaller groups and brown bag lunches.

Dr. O'Brien handed out a proposal by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to change the way a university is funded based on market share of weighted student credit hours. How much funding a university receives is based on share of the

pie. WT is increasing enrollment but not as fast as the area of Texas east of I-35. The proposal would set aside and distribute 10% of the pie based on performance measures of degree efficiency, total undergraduate degrees, number of graduating per FTE faculty, program cost, number of graduates in critical fields, and student persistence. Ten percent is proposed by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, but some legislators want 25%. Kel Selinger, Chair of the Senate Higher Education Committee, asked the university Presidents to come to a consensus.

Vizzini asked if Dr. O'Brien might foresee increases in faculty lines. Dr. O'Brien said he made a commitment to Wade Shaffer for four new positions. SACS accreditation talked about the proportion of classes taught by part-time faculty (in math, communication, and English more than 50% of core courses are taught by part-time instructors); Dr. O'Brien committed to additional faculty in each of the three areas. Because of uncertainty of budgets, he wants the new positions to be term-contract with 15 hours taught per faculty. He consolidated some part-time instructors to full-time faculty positions. Dr. O'Brien said Communication Disorders had a waiting list of 50 students that could not be admitted because of too few faculty; one faculty position would pay for itself by the extra students admitted. Dalton asked about funding for communication disorders coming from special funding. Dr. O'Brien said WT went to the legislature to obtain funding by special item to start communication disorders. He said in 2003, special items were consolidated into the institutional enhancement category. Dalton said communication disorders is primarily a masters' program with graduation and employment rates near 100%; but, rates are based only on first-time, full-time freshmen. Dr. O'Brien said the primary emphasis of legislators is undergraduates, with graduate emphasis at TAMU, UT, and Texas Tech. WT needs to increase enrollment or especially retention. Of 1,200-1,250 new full-time freshmen, 35-38% quit the first semester. A 10% better retention rate would be 500 paying students. Rausch said Amy Andersen reminded of House Bill 2504 requiring faculty vitae; Rausch asked if he could use a different vita besides the one from Sedona. Dr. O'Brien said he will check.

Takacs explained a handout on the number of faculty and faculty overloads per WT department for fall 2011 and 2012. He said the Faculty Handbook indicates teaching more than 12-15 hours is considered overload. Atchison asked how anyone can teach 42 credit hours (music and psychology practicum). Jafar suggested giving students certificates for completing core courses and being selective and certifying faculty to teach core courses. Dr. O'Brien said he is floored by how many part-time instructors teach core courses. Jafar asked what is meant by engagement and rubrics. Dr. O'Brien said Peter Faccione was brought to WT to discuss critical thinking, and a person is coming to explain Living-Learning Communities.

Alex said the WT computer science program was in the College of Business but is now with Engineering. In 2007, computer science had 2 faculty members, but was told enrollment needed to increase to add faculty members. Dr. O'Brien said engineering accreditation required WT to make up-front investments for the program expected to have more students and so that graduating students can sit with practicing engineers before being certified to practice. Alex said computer science might not be able to grow with only 2 faculty members. Dr. O'Brien said several years ago, computer science had too few graduates and might have been eliminated but he decided computer science faculty and students could increase when put with the electrical

engineering program. Dr. O'Brien said Kel Selinger will be asked to look into practices with low-producing programs. For example, physics programs were eliminated from most Texas universities last year, but 50% of undergraduate physics programs across the U.S. would not meet Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board requirements. Doing away with physics programs will not save money. Dr. O'Brien asked Nick Flynn to look at B.S. degrees with tracks that count all together toward retaining a program.

Anwar said reports at the Texas Council of Faculty Senates in Austin in October indicated most universities received no pay raises for as many as 3 years. Dr. O'Brien is to be commended for salary increases for WT faculty and staff. Anwar asked Dr. O'Brien about retaliation in departments and colleges and said he has seen retaliation by insulting faculty, removing courses taught, etc. Anwar said retaliation destroys faculty productivity, families, and communities. Dr. O'Brien said he will not condone or tolerate retaliation and has taken actions to remove three administrators since he came to WT. Anwar asked where the College of Business is going with the new structure of administrators. Dr. O'Brien said the model for the WT College of Business is the same as he had at Loyola. He said salaries of faculty in the College of Business increased for accreditation. He went to the current model to have more course sections taught without adding more faculty. The model could work at WT because Business (or engineering or nursing) is more homogeneous than many departments such as social science or fine arts and humanities.

On behalf of a Faculty Senator who wished to remain anonymous, Anwar asked Dr. O'Brien about sharing reports by the Ombuds Officer with the Provost. Dr. O'Brien said if there is a pattern of problems, he will share with the Vice President of that academic area.

Dr. O'Brien said WT faculty have access to a tremendous amount of financial data to compare among WT and Texas A&M University System institutions. He invited faculty to come to the President's Conference Room in Old Main to view the data.

The Faculty Senate meeting adjourned at 1:42 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Bonnie B. Pendleton, Secretary

These minutes as written were approved at the 30 November 2012 Faculty Senate meeting.