

## **Minutes of Faculty Senate 21 February 2014**

**Present:** Alex, Ambrose, Anwar, Atchison, Blanton, Crandall, De'Armond, Diego-Medrano, Drumheller, Fiaud, Jafar, Johnson, Kelly, Kuennen, Landram, Pendleton, Rausch, Takacs, and Ward

**Absent:** Jacobsen, Loftin, and Stuntz

**Guest:** Clark substituting for Stuntz

**Call to Order:** President Ambrose called the meeting to order at 12:18 p.m. in Room 14 (Eternal Flame) of the JBK.

**Approval of Minutes:** Kuennen made a motion seconded by De'Armond to approve as revised by Jafar the minutes of the 7 February 2014 meeting of Faculty Senate. All Senators present voted in favor.

### **Discussion with Provost Shaffer:**

Ambrose asked Shaffer about information from the Faculty Handbook Committee and whether the Committee is an editing or a policy body. Shaffer said that Dr. O'Brien said the Faculty Handbook Committee is a high-level review body to accept changes, discuss and review, and send recommendations to the President and Faculty Senate. Shaffer said he believes the revised faculty instructional responsibilities section of the annual evaluation form was sent through Faculty Senate months ago. In the future, all items need to be sent to both the President and Faculty Senate at the same time. Shaffer said he might prefer to send items first to Faculty Senate to work out issues, then send to President O'Brien after approved by Faculty Senate. Shaffer reported the Deans Council is not in the loop and Deans are not comfortable with the Faculty Handbook Committee proposing changes to procedures. Shaffer said he hopes both the Faculty Senate and Deans Council will make recommendations and send them to the Faculty Handbook Committee to put into the Faculty Handbook. Shaffer suggested a timeline for when issues should be transferred. Jafar said the Faculty Handbook Committee process is not clear. Shaffer said the real issue was raised by Atchison who said the Faculty Handbook Committee did not follow the process stated. Ambrose said he heard the Faculty Handbook basic procedure would be changed so recommendations would not be sent to Faculty Senate but just to the WT President. Shaffer said he will ask Dr. O'Brien. Jafar suggested the Provost should be a member of the Faculty Handbook Committee.

Kelly discussed classrooms and said he taught class in a room too small for the number of students enrolled. Also, the class before his meets until his class starts so he has no time to prepare the classroom. Shaffer said the Registrar's Office will not place a class in a room that does not hold the number of students enrolled in the course. When people use the room for other activities, they sometimes do not put back all the chairs and tables. Shaffer said WT is unhappy with the software now used to schedule classes into rooms but will have new software this fall for scheduling spring

2015 classes. The program will not book classes into the same room without at least 10 minutes between classes.

Jafar said sometimes he cannot attach and send files with an e-mail message because he receives a message saying a Social Security number is in the file. He suggested having different limits on different groups of WT people. Rausch would like to receive a report from IT that specifies what page has a nine-digit number resembling a Social Security number. This would help him remove the number so he can send his file when he is working at night. Shaffer said he cannot answer the questions but suggested having James Webb come to Faculty Senate. Shaffer said if confidential data are released, the university reputation suffers. Some universities have accidentally released Social Security numbers of students. Tarleton and UTA paid as much as \$100,000 to the federal government for accidentally releasing Social Security numbers. Shaffer said faculty, not students, are restricted from looking at anything online.

Anwar said online courses are important but quality, especially of graduate programs, might be lost. Shaffer said online classes have become so large that quality is difficult to maintain, so he asked for additional faculty to reduce online classes to a manageable enrollment. Problems with large enrollments in online courses are mostly in social sciences and business. Shaffer said caps have not been set for online courses because some disciplines need different caps than for other courses. Shaffer said WT faculty are stretched too thin and online classes need to be prioritized or capped. He hopes discussion will be at the department level. Rausch said there is less concern about undergraduate than Ph.D. classes. Anwar said there is intra- and inter-competition. WT needs more students but it is a double-edged sword. Shaffer said WT is projecting 4% enrollment growth next year. He said in U.S. News and World Report, universities are hurt by having too many students per class. Rausch said he could teach all students in only one online class but WT puts the students into two sections. Jafar said lots of work is needed on infrastructure of courses. He asked the minimum preparation required for a class to be online. Shaffer asked if WT wants to have faculty on campus but online faculty from all over the world. Jafar said WT is a state university. Shaffer said WT needs to increase enrollment to offset less money from the legislature. He said WT will have full-time recruiters in metropolitan areas east of I-35 to attract students to WT. Shaffer said WT also needs to retain more students.

Clark asked if faculty will receive compensation for the extra time required to transition from Angel to Blackboard. Shaffer said a pool of money has been created for faculty to rebuild classes or move to Blackboard. Drumheller said all classes will be moved to Blackboard. A checklist will be used for educational demand. Amy Andersen will review online courses. Drumheller suggested sharing quality concerns with Andersen. Drumheller suggested the number of students to allow in an online course perhaps should be tied to whether it is a writing-intensive or similar course. Anwar suggested the Provost should remember to praise faculty for teaching overloads and doing extra work.

Atchison asked Shaffer's opinion of the legislative budget. Atchison said the ST student:faculty ratio has been rising; 20:1 is the stated ratio. Shaffer said O'Brien said academic affairs is the highest priority in the upcoming budget. Shaffer said seven or eight faculty positions were requested by WT. Shaffer said he thinks WT will hire three or four more faculty to help teach the extra students. Shaffer said agriculture,

engineering, MBA, and graduate instructional technology are growing rapidly. The number of transfer students is growing. The freshman class has been large for each of the past five years. Shaffer said faculty positions have been requested for agriculture, psychology, education, and positions that teach primarily core curricula. WT over-relies on part-time instructors, but parents expect full-time faculty to teach their children. The President has focused on obtaining two more faculty to teach core curricula, but the positions tend to be non-tenure track.

Rausch said he still has not received enough textbooks for his students and asked how the WT bookstore determines the number of books to order. Shaffer said the number is based on how many books were sold for the course during each of the last 3 years, not how many students are in the class. Few books were sold at the WT bookstore last year. Many students now rent books. Kelly said university bookstores are obsolete. Shaffer said the WT bookstore is the only Texas A&M University System bookstore that is not outsourced. He said the WT bookstore turns a profit each year. He suggested the bookstore establish a system notifying faculty when the supply of books is low so more books can be ordered. The WT bookstore has not taken advantage of DataTel and how many students are adding and/or dropping a course. Shaffer said the student should go to the bookstore and say they need the book as soon as possible and the bookstore can obtain a book within 48 hours.

Rausch asked a question about SACS and whether a faculty member could teach a course without having a degree in the subject. Shaffer said as long as the course content is the same, the course name and number do not matter.

Shaffer discussed post-tenure review and said The Texas A&M University System policy for post-tenure review is predicated on a state statute. Recently the TAMU System legal counsel said WT does not meet the state statute. Peer review must be part of post-tenure review. Department heads, deans, provosts, etc. are not peers. The Texas A&M University System put into place a policy where every 5 or 6 years each faculty member is reviewed by peers. Shaffer charged Faculty Senate with writing a simple post-tenure review policy for WT. Once every 6 years faculty might submit information for tenured peers in their departments to review. Clark suggested perhaps the current policy of review every year might be replaced by review only once every sixth year. Shaffer said the Deans Council discussed this and sometimes the opinions of peers and department heads differ. Drumheller asked that peer be defined. Shaffer said some departments do not have any tenured faculty. He said 99% of the time peer opinion is positive, but what happens if it is not positive. Rausch said some departments hired most of their faculty at about the same time. Shaffer said he wants to stagger who will be reviewed. He suggested faculty who are close to retirement not be reviewed. Clark suggested if a faculty member is applying for promotion to full professor, the same portfolio might be used for post-tenure review. Anwar said in each College, Sedona should be used to upload publications. He suggested information in Sedona be open to review by all faculty. Drumheller said there might be problems with copyrighted publications. Shaffer asked what should be in the portfolio or whether vitae are required. Shaffer said a deadline, such as the end of the semester, is needed for Faculty Senate to create a post-tenure review policy. Clark suggested December at the earliest. Shaffer asked when faculty would want to know so they can start collecting data. Rausch suggested looking at policies by other universities. Shaffer said post-

tenure review at Texas A&M University differs by department. Shaffer said sooner is better than later so WT is in compliance as quickly as possible.

**Old Business:**

Ambrose said the Faculty Senate officers wrote a letter requesting Dr. O'Brien to adopt the Faculty Senate version of the instructional responsibilities section of the annual evaluation form, but in the event he does not adopt the Faculty Senate version, Dr. O'Brien was asked to consider removing especially the subjectivity, range of weights, and teaching load.

Ambrose said he sent the Faculty Handbook Committee a letter on collegiality. Proposed corrections by the Faculty Handbook Committee were discussed. Faculty Senators should write comments if suggesting a change. Drumheller said section 5.5.1 is not clear who is elected to be the outside member on a departmental promotion and tenure committee. Jafar asked about the proposed appeals process. He said five business days are needed for faculty to write a letter of appeal. He asked what happens if a candidate has an emergency and cannot submit a portfolio by the deadline.

The meeting of Faculty Senate was adjourned at 2:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bonnie B. Pendleton".

Bonnie B. Pendleton, Secretary

*These minutes as written were approved at the 7 March 2014 meeting of Faculty Senate.*