APPROVED AND CORRECTED MINUTES

These minutes are disseminated to provide timely information to the Academic Senate. They have been approved by the body in question, and, therefore, they are the official minutes.

ACADEMIC SENATE MEETING
APRIL 17, 2013

PRESENT: Hobson Wildenthal, Robert Ackerman, Peter Assmann, Poras Balsara, Kurt Beron, Dinesh Bhatia, Gail Breen, John Burr, Cy Cantrell, R. Chandrasekaran, David Cordell, Gregory Dess, Gregg Dieckmann, John Ferguson, John Geissman, Lev Gelb, Tobias Hagge, Jennifer Holmes, D. T. Huynh, Joe Izen, Murray Leaf, Jessica Murphy, Simeon Ntafos, Ravi Prakash, Monica Rankin, Tim Redman, Liz Salter, Richard Scotch, Tres Thompson,

ABSENT: David Daniel, Shawn Alborz, John Barden, Warren Goux, Umit Gurun, Mustapha Ishak-Boushaki, Kamran Kiasaleh, Nicole Leeper Piquero, Syam Menon, Dennis Miller, B.P.S. Murthy, Ramachandran Natarajan, Michael Rebello, Robert Taylor, Zhenyu Xuan, Kang Zhang

VISITORS: Chris Parr, Inga Musselman, John McCaskill, James Marquart, Sheila Pineres, Michael Carriaga, Nick Gay, Mark Salamasick, Chris Linsteadt

1. CALL TO ORDER, ANNOUNCEMENTS AND QUESTIONS

Provost Wildenthal called the meeting to order. The $15 million improvements to campus are approved by System. Currently the university is waiting on detailed plans for bids before they can start. The focus of the improvements will be between the trellises and the administrative building. All of the concrete will be torn up and a new fountain will be installed. Rows of shade trees will be along the mall to the Trellis plaza. They would also like to do improvements going east west from the Trellis towards Berkner, and gravel path from the Activity Center that goes by Engineering going towards Berkner.

Joe Izen asked how this will effect bike paths on campus. The comprehensive campus plans include walkways and bike paths. The current set of plans for the north/south improvements will most likely be a bicycle exclusion zone; however, going east west there will be something for bikes. There was much discussion on this topic.

Ground breaking for the new school of management and fourth new dormitory will be May 1. An addition to NSERL (i.e. NSERL 2) is beginning development with architects, as well as the possibility of a second parking structure that will be south of NSERL2. There is a plan to extend some of the roads, specifically a cut through the dorms to Waterview with a traffic light. They also would like to get a traffic light at Rutford and Synergy. The intersection of Rutford and Loop road will be the center point for three major construction projects, which does not take into account that at the same time the center of campus will be under construction for the landscaping.
John Geissman announced that a public hearing was taking place on April 17 in Austin on House Bill number 285- "The bill to be entitled an act related to prohibiting discrimination by public institutions of higher education against faculty members and students based on their conduct of research related to intelligent design be enacted by the legislature of the state of Texas. Section 51.979: Prohibition of discrimination based on research related to intelligent design. An institution of higher education may not discriminate against or penalize in any manner especially with regards to employment or academic support of faculty member or student based on the faculty member’s or student’s conduct of research related to the theory of intellectual design or other alternate theories on the origination and development of organisms.” Dr. Geissman wished the words “theory” and “theories” to be emphasized. “This act would go into effect immediately if it receives a vote of 2/3 of all members of elected to each house.” Dr. Geissman recommends that the Senate make a statement on this topic. Dr. Geissman commented that he had dealt with items like this bill for thirty-two years while working in New Mexico. Speaker Leaf noted this is not the first time that the legislature has had a bill of this type come before them. It has come up at least once in the two previous legislatures. Provost Wildenthal noted that the bill does provide protection for those who Darwinian creation as well. Provost Wildenthal commented that David Dunn, former Dean of the School of Natural Sciences and Mathematics, wrote many letters to the Editor on these types of bills. Speaker Leaf reminded the Senate that they should not worry about lobbying if faculty expresses their views to their legislature. The legislators want to hear from the faculty. Every member has a website that includes a facility for sending emails. These emails are read and someone responds to them. Joe Izen asked if there was any benefit of the Senate taking a stand collectively on this issue. Speaker Leaf responded that he did not see any harm in it but also felt that the individual communications would be more effective.

2. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA
   Speaker Leaf asked to add the approval of the revised academic calendar to the agenda. Tim Redman moved to approve the agenda as amended. Richard Scotch seconded. The motion to approve the agenda as amended carried.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES
   Two minor corrections were requested to the circulated agenda in regards to attendance.
   Speaker Leaf moved to approve the corrected agenda. Richard Scotch seconded. Motion carried.

4. APPROVAL OF ACADEMIC CALENDAR
   Sheila Amin Gutierrez de Pineres presented the academic calendar for 2014 to 2016. The university has grown so much that the University needs to plan events farther in advance. The calendar is exactly the same as the 2012-2013 with one exception. The classes that only meet on Thursdays previously were required to have final exams on Saturday, however, they will be able to take their finals on Thursday of finals week. Tim Redman moved to approve the calendar. Richard Scotch seconded. The motion carried.

5. PRESENTATION BY HUMAN RESOURCES
ACADEMIC SENATE MEETING
April 17, 2013

ITEM #3

Colleen Dutton introduced the members of her team: Marco Mendoza, Director of Institutional Equity EEO; Marita Hawkins, Director of Benefits; Ilyce Murray, Director of Employment Services; and David Gleason, Director of Organizational Development and Training. Colleen Dutton then turned the floor over to Marita Hawkins.

Marita Hawkins spoke on a major change for faculty payroll deductions. In the past there had been substantial disorder and confusion regarding how benefits for the summer were taken out of 9-month faculty paychecks. The outcome, sometime, was that faculty were going to doctor's offices only to find that their benefits had been terminated due to lack of payment. Deductions will now be standardized. This year they will be taking half the summer benefits payments out of May paychecks and the other half out of the June paychecks. This is a default option and the faculty do not have to do anything to receive this option. Starting in September 2013 the benefits, payments will be prorated to reflect the 9 months of employment, but will cover 12 months. This will align the university with the majority of the corporate world. Joe Izen asked if it was possible for faculty to elect to pay in the old manner. Colleen responded that given the problems in the previous years, this would not be possible. The new fee structure would go into effect for the July 15 beginning of enrollment. She also noted that at that time the University would be having a benefits fair.

6. APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO THE ACADEMIC DISCIPLINE PANEL
Gene Fitch explained the purpose of the panel. Members of the panel are appointed for three years, currently only two members are stepping down. To be a member of the panel a faculty member must be willing to give a minimum of 6 hours of commitment to training. Should a member wish to serve on sexual assault cases additional training will be required. When a case is called, on average it is two hours. Dr. Fitch reminded everyone that number is an average. He has been on cases that only take two hours, and others that have taken seven hours.

Speaker Leaf noted that there are now a greater number of senior lecturers on the list to be on the panel. The Senate has in the past taken the view that this was desirable, since Senior Lecturers now make up such a large part of the faculty that deals with undergraduates. Liz Salter asked if there was a maximum number who could be on the pool. She suggested that if the pool size were increased from 14 members to 28 it could include all of those who have volunteered. Serving on the panel will give the Senior Lectures an opportunity to satisfy their service requirement. David Cordell moved to approve all of the listed volunteers to the panel for a three-year term. Peter Assman seconded. The motion carried.

7. SPEAKER'S REPORT – MURRAY LEAF
Conflict of Interest/Conflict of Commitment policy and UTSP 180. We discussed an initial draft of the policy for implementation at UTD in the last meeting of the Academic Council. President Daniel made some further suggestions, mainly that we be clear about what is meant by a “management plan.” I have made the changes to the draft and sent it back to him. The Council will discuss it again at the next meeting.

As I indicated at the last Senate meeting, we are not alone in our approach. The FAC has passed relevant resolutions. We have endorsed them here, and will adhere to them. As far as I know, every other campus is doing the same. We will not abandon our traditional and necessary rights and freedoms to act and to be responsible for our actions. You may have
noticed an article in the Austin American Statesman on a discussion of the System’s
disclosure plans at UT Austin. The consensus of that meeting was that the plan was
outrageous.

Yesterday, all campuses received a letter from the Chancellor saying that “implementation”
of UTSP 180 has been put off until September 1. In the meantime, there would be more
discussions with campus administrators and with the FAC. Campus administrators are due
to meet with the Chancellor next week. The FAC will also meet next week.

2. The Information Security Advisory Committee met last Wednesday. The meeting
included Leah Teuslch and Lewis Watson, the ISO for System. The conversation was frank
and informative. The Committee has drafted an initial report and will suggest an expansion
of its membership in accordance with the Senate resolution at the last meeting to the effect
that their task should include reviewing proposals for exceptions from the requirement for
encryption.

3. The 3 + 3 Committee on revising the bylaws has met. The deans stated their objections to
the drafts so far and we agreed on some alternative approaches. There was no disagreement
with the broad approach, which is to focus on providing a clear interface between faculty
and administration at the school level and assure transparency as appropriate. The next
meeting will be in early May. Meanwhile, the committee agreed that we needed to add
someone from NS&M. Dean Novak has been added.

8. STUDENT GOVERNMENT LIAISON REPORT
Raj Dwivedi was not in attendance. The report was not presented.

9. APPROVAL OF CANDIDATES FOR GRADUATION
David Cordell moved that:

These students have applied for graduation and have been reviewed by the Office of Records.
The Office of Records has declared that all of these students will be eligible for graduation
upon the completion of the current semester’s work at the necessary levels. I request, therefore,
that the Faculty Senate certify these students to graduate upon receipt of final grades, and
notification of completion of other requirements, provided that the grades are consistent with
the standards for graduation prescribed by this University. He also request that the Faculty
Senate certify those students designated as eligible to graduate with honors upon completion of
coursework and requirements consistent with the standards for honors at the levels offered by
this University. Gregg Dieckmann seconded. The motion carried.

David Cordell moved that:

These students have applied for graduate degrees and have been reviewed by the Graduate
Dean. The Graduate Dean certifies that all of these students will be eligible for the degrees
indicated upon satisfactory completion of the current semester’s work. I request, therefore,
that the Academic Senate certify these students to receive the degrees as indicated upon receipt of
final grades and notification of completion of other requirements, provided that the grades
received are consistent with the standards for credit prescribed by this University. Gregg Dieckmann seconded. The motion carried.

The lists of candidates are appended.

There being no further business, Provost Wildenthal adjourned the meeting.

APPROVED:  

Murray J. Leaf
Speaker of the Academic Senate

DATE: 14 May 2013