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
May 19, 2010

PRESENT: Kurt Beron, Dan Bochsler, John Burr, Cy Cantrell, R. Chandrasekaran, David Cordell, Gregory Dess, Gregg Dieckmann, Simon Fass, Karen Huxtable-Jester, D.T. Huynh, Murray Leaf, Jessica Murphy, Steven Nielsen, Tim Redman, Richard Scotch, Lucien Thompson, Tonja Wissinger


VISITORS: David Daniel, Hobson Wildenthal, Grace Bielawski, Carrie Chutes, Calvin Jamison, Brian Kaiser, Shelley Lane, Kathy Lingo, Chris Parr, Dina Shahrokhi, Brian Weiskopf

1. CALL TO ORDER, ANNOUNCEMENTS AND QUESTIONS
President Daniel called the meeting to order. Dr. Daniel reported that our budget has been approved by UT System, and it includes a 2% merit-based program for salary increases for faculty and staff. Some additional funds will be held back for promotions and special cases. He noted that financially we will be ok this year, and expects to end the year with a slight budget surplus.

All of the building projects are on schedule. The main portion of the landscape project should be completed in about one month, although cleanup work will continue for some time after that. Work has begun on the improvements to the Campbell Road entrance. The plan calls for a tree-lined semi-circular entrance with new UTD signage. Trees are being moved from Campbell Road to this entrance. A series of parallel hedges will take the place of the trees along Campbell. Dr. Daniel is unsure when this portion of the landscape improvement project will be completed, but hopefully by fall. Work on the Student Services building is progressing nicely. The building will be completed this summer but no one will move in until mid or late September, after the rush of the beginning of the fall semester.
Work is continuing on the design plans for the Raytheon building, which will house Information Resources as well as some other administrative and academic units. Dr. Daniel noted that we are also building a new freshman residence hall directly north of the current hall. The Board of Regents approved plans for the new bookstore and visitor center, which will be immediately south of the Activity Center. This building will also include a nice reception atrium area. The City of Richardson passed a bond package that will result in the city paying for approximately $3 million in infrastructure improvements on campus in return for our leasing land to them for development of parks and soccer fields. We will get a loop road that will cut through the parking lots on the east side of campus. The package also includes about $1 million for hike and bike trails, which will finish the existing trail as well as provide access for our neighbors to walk or ride bikes on campus. Dr. Daniel reported that we will request permission from UT System to borrow additional funds to be used for clean-up work in remodeling and repurposing existing spaces for labs, offices, etc. All of this type work will be done after all the moves to new buildings have been completed. He asked anyone with ideas for ways that existing spaces could be put to better use to email those suggestions to Dr. Jamison or Dr. Wildenthal.

A question was raised regarding the lack of classroom space and whether or not we would ever have adequate classroom space. It was reported that some classes did not get listed in Course Lookup until May because there were no rooms to assign to them. Dr. Daniel noted that classroom space would always be a challenge, but hopes that the problem will be dramatically improved in the fall when some of the new buildings are occupied with continued improvement as we begin to convert other spaces. Dr. Wildenthal stated that the Coordinating Board insists that we not have any more space than we absolutely need, and they define the amount of space that is needed. Constraints were put on classrooms to act as an incentive to get people to adjust schedules to use the proper number of rooms. If we cannot satisfy the Coordinating Board’s requirements we will have serious problems if we ever want to build another building. Dr. Wildenthal noted that we have plenty of classroom space but there will be ongoing pressure to be economical with that space.

The question of retaining freshmen and the lack of campus life was brought up. Dr. Daniel responded that Dr. Rachavong works very hard to make sure that campus life is a priority. He suggested that she address the Senate in a future meeting to inform the Senate about some of the programs in place. He noted that one new program in place is the Living/Learning Communities in the Residence Hall. The freshman/sophomore retention rate for the University is 84%, but among those students in the Living/Learning Community the rate is 96%. It was noted that the lack of a big athletic program poses a challenge, as well as the lack of choices in majors. Grace Bielawski noted that there are 150 clubs on campus and many other options available for students to become engaged in campus life. Dr. Daniel asked anyone with specific ideas or suggestions on improving campus life to send him an email with those suggestions.

Dr. Tim Redman encouraged everyone to read the graduation issue of the Mercury – it is one of the best issues that have been published.
In an unrelated issue, Dr. Redman asked for clarification regarding an article that appeared in today’s Dallas Morning News regarding plans for the 5% budget give back to the state. Dr. Daniel noted that this does not represent any additional funds that we will lose but rather a reduction in the amount that some entities will be forced to cut.

A question regarding the impact of DART light rail on our campus was raised. Dr. Daniel responded that it would have no effect on us. He stated that if a public/private partnership could be formed the Cotton Belt could be developed and up and running in a few years. The developer of the Cotton Belt must be able to make money off the land around the stations. If that were to happen and the developer would develop the surrounding area in ways that we wanted, it would be quite feasible to have a DART station on campus. This type of development would be very beneficial to UTD, but because the issue is so complex there is little chance of that happening in the near future.

On a final note, Dr. Daniel stated that our enrollment projections are up substantially for next fall – primarily in the master’s level programs (SOM and ECSS). He is concerned about sustaining quality instruction in those areas. It is important that explosive growth not compromise the quality of what we do. Dr. Wildenthal reported that the new graduate application process no longer requires a deposit at the time of application and this could account for part of the increase. The freshman class will be virtually the same size or slightly smaller than last year. The SAT scores are back up in the 1250 range.

2. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA
Richard Scotch made a motion to approve the agenda as distributed. Tim Redman seconded. The motion carried.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES
Cy Cantrell made a motion to approve the minutes as circulated. Kurt Beron seconded. The motion carried.

4. PROPOSED INSURANCE PLAN CHANGES
Christine Moldenhauer, Human Resources Group Manager, addressed the Senate regarding the proposed upcoming changes in the medical insurance plans. The UT System Office of Employee Benefits asked for feedback from stakeholders throughout the System regarding the best way to handle the issue of increasing plan costs. The UT SELECT benefit costs are currently increasing by 9% based on past costs and forecasted costs for FY2011. The current premium rates are deficient by about 5%, which is being subsidized from the contingency fund for FY2010. Therefore, we would need a rate increase of 14% (9% + 5%) in order to balance the budget for FY2011 (plan year beginning September 1, 2010.)

When this information was presented to the Academic Council, it was their preference to have a 14% premium increase and no reduction in benefits. After collecting feedback from all UT institutions, the majority preferred a 12% rate increase and 2% benefit reduction in order to get to the necessary 14%. This combination of a rate increase and benefits reduction has been approved by Chancellor Cigarroa. At the present time it is not known exactly what the benefits reductions will be, but they will most likely be in the form of increased co-pays, deductible payments, and out-of-pocket maximum payments. The annual benefits Enrollment Fair will begin June 29.
5. **SPEAKER’S REPORT**

Speaker Leaf reported that he has received a memorandum from Rachel Croson, Chair of the Committee on Mentoring. The memorandum describes the practical changes in the mentoring program’s funding source (from the Office of Diversity and Community Engagement to the Provost’s office), and requests the ability as the Chair of the Faculty Senate Committee on Faculty Mentoring to add members of our working group (faculty and staff) as members of that committee.

Essentially, the Committee worked with a separate group set up by the Provost’s office, called the Faculty Mentoring Program Working Group, which had a budget and hosted a series of programs. Dr. Croson’s recommendation is that this now be folded into the Mentoring Committee proper, retaining the budget. I have responded that our general position is that committees can add additional members as needed on an ad hoc basis, and if they want these regularized we can modify the charge. But for the moment, the Mentoring Committee has two vacant positions, from faculty who had declined appointments, and instead of having the Committee on Committees find more nominees the Senate last fall agreed that that would be best left to the Mentoring Committee members themselves. So for the moment no Senate action seems to be needed.

Council discussed this. There was a general view that the Working Group should certainly be folded in, and perhaps the mentoring committee could be compressed as well. The budget and events were certainly good ideas, but could not be required by the Senate in the charge.

Speaker Leaf noted that last fall the Senate adopted the revised Intellectual Property Policy. This included a description of an Intellectual Property Committee but no charge for the committee. Speaker Leaf has now drafted a charge for this committee and sent this to Rafael Martin for review.

Speaker Leaf stated that he has discussed the Sustainability Policy with the Safety and Security Council with the idea of seeing where the Committee responsible for implementing the policy would go. The Safety and Security Council feels that Donna Riha, Sustainability Manager, should serve on the Safety and Security Council, but that there should be a separate Sustainability Committee structured similarly to the Safety and Security Council. Speaker Leaf will work on drafting a charge for this committee.

6. **FAC REPORT**

Dr. Leaf and Dr. Cordell attended the meeting as UTD representatives.

The FAC Chair, Dan Formanowicz of UT Arlington, reviewed what happened at the last meeting of the Regents as well as at Texas legislative hearing on the proposed revisions of the Social Sciences standard by the State Board of Education, which had occurred the previous day.

The Regents have invited him to attend the next meeting of the Academic Affairs Committee. Usually the FAC representative is only allowed to attend the meetings of the Campus Life Committee. We view this as a step in the direction of a more effective consultative relationship.
Kenneth Shine, Vice Chancellor for Health Affairs, described System activities for the health campuses. The main thing that concerns us as an academic campus rather than a health campus is that they have now put in place a program of practice plans that carefully define what part of a faculty member’s salary is tenured and from the University and what part is earned from clinical fees, grants, etc. This is an important step on the way to regularizing salaries. Speaker Leaf asked Dr. Shine if they had received any feedback regarding how well these plans were working. Dr. Shine responded that they are currently conducting audits and will get reports soon. Speaker Leaf noted that if it looks like things are going well we can begin to consider a System-wide salary policy at some point in the future.

Vice Chancellor Shine was followed by David Prior, Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, who joined us for lunch. A large part of the conversation was about the Texas Research Initiative Program (TRIP) and the Coordinating Board Standards for the National Research University Fund (NURF).

Dr. Prior noted that there was a move in the legislature to tighten up funding for foreign students. Essentially, the attitude is “why are we giving degrees to foreigners and not Americans?” Of course many actually do become Americans, and Texans. System will work hard to respond to these concerns and correct the misunderstandings they represent.

The next speaker was Representative Trey Martinez Fischer, of San Antonio. Representative Martinez Fischer was a leader of the Mexican American Legislative Caucus hearings on the State Board of Education. The discussion focused mainly on the new social science standards being put in place by the SBOE.

On Friday the main discussions were with Dan Sharporn and Pedro Reyes. Topics were a new draft policy on conflict of interest that had been circulated to members of the FAC for comment in January, and the changes to Regents Rules on exigency.

The conflict of interest policy draft was 13 pages long and, if implemented, would probably have required virtually everyone engaged in research to disclose, for one reason or another, all payments, gifts, or other benefits received or expected by them or their close relatives, as well as all pro-bono work every year—a more complete disclosure than even the IRS requires—with explanations. Reaction from the FAC was uniformly hostile. OGC recognizes that this was not the way to proceed and the effort will be started over.

The discussion of the exigency policy amendments in Regent’s Rules focused on a conflict between the new wording and the AAUP standards in the view of several members of the UT law faculty, as well as the UT president. Essentially, the problem is that in the wording of Regent’s Rules it is possible to construe tenure as a tie-breaker if all other things are “equal.” In the AAUP wording tenure is to be protected if at all possible. Janet Staiger, Chair of the UT Faculty Council, had also discussed this with Dan Sharporn prior to the meeting, and with me. I said that it was not the intent of the committee to do anything in contradiction to the AAUP position. Tenure should be protected above all. Mr. Sharporn said the same. His advice to UT was to write their local policies as they want. Since there is no real disagreement in intent, the System will seek regental approval for the present wording, and we can come back later to adjust it if it turns out to be necessary. UT will use the AAUP wording in their local policy. UT
Dallas has taken a different approach, stating in the policy that the notion of two sets of qualifications being “equal” should not be construed overly narrowly. The FAC decided that no action was required at this point. The campuses should write their policies as their faculty sees fit on the assumption that AAUP guidelines and Regents Rules are not in conflict, and if rewording of Regents Rules turns out to be advisable we will work on it.

The final discussion was with Sandra Woodley, newly appointed as Vice Chancellor for Strategic Initiatives. This is the office that tries to collect data from the campuses on compliance, progress, and the like for reporting to the Chancellor, Regents, and Legislature. As such, the FAC spent a lot of time trying to explain to its previous head how the information she was asking for was often either off the mark or outright misleading, and if acted upon administratively could be distorting. The most recent example is the last five or so years we have spent trying to explain why the four year graduation rate was not a good measure of “productivity.” It turns out that Mrs. Woodley is a virtual poster-child for what is wrong with such measures, as she explained in telling her “story.” She grew up in rural Alabama, and got married in high school with no thought of going to college. Two children “and a failed marriage” later, she figured out that college would be a good idea. Then she went to graduate school—I think she said the Public Administration program at Auburn. Since then she has worked on educational policy and related policy for a series of legislatures: Alabama, Tennessee, Arizona, and now Texas. She sees the politics and she sees the education side, and wants to help the two come together. The FAC was very pleased with her presentation, and we are optimistic about working with her.

Campus reports were given intermittently throughout the meeting. Some campuses have committees to assess risk for international travel. With respect to the five percent cuts, medical campuses seem commonly to have had administrative prohibitions on travel, especially foreign travel—regardless of funding source. The main departure from this pattern was UTHSC Tyler, whose President has sent a letter ordering a 25% cut in research faculty. Faculty had no prior warning.

Three more campuses have finished their SACS re-accreditation and all have sailed through with no problems. I am reasonably sure that this reflects the change in presidential administrations. More specifically, it reflects the end of the Bush Department of Education’s effort to bully the accrediting bodies into supporting their legislative efforts to strengthen external testing (which would be done by for-profit companies) and weaken peer evaluation. That is, SACS has returned to its previous role and attitude, which is to focus on providing as much guidance as possible to the weaker schools in the region without imposing counter-productive “accountability” procedures on schools like the UT campuses.

7. **STUDENT GOVERNMENT LIAISON REPORT**
   *(Item taken out of order.)* Brian Kaiser and Brian Weiskopf of the UTD Bookstore addressed the issue of textbook orders. Most items have been received for the summer session and they are about 40% complete for the fall semester. They are working closely to ensure that transparency is being followed. They urged professors to get textbook adoption information to the bookstore as soon as possible rather than waiting until a couple of weeks before class begins. Students are increasingly using textbook
information to make their decision on whether or not to register for a course. In an effort to reduce student costs, we will be using a textbook rental program-Rent-A-Text.com-in the fall semester. If the bookstore can get a four-semester commitment for a particular book, they can apply to have it on a rental basis. Professors are encouraged to review the textbooks available on this site and use this information in their final decision making. The cost of a rental textbook is about 45% of the cost of a new textbook. Dr. Daniel would like the Provost’s Office to send an email to all faculty asking them to review the textbook rental program.

Dina Shahrokhi, Student Government Vice President and Chair of the Student Ad Hoc Textbook Committee, urged faculty to adopt textbooks as quickly as possible so that the bookstore can begin searching for the most cost-effective method of getting textbooks. The cost of textbooks is becoming an increasingly important issue. Students are using information on the cost of required texts to “shop” for classes – weighing this factor before deciding which classes to register for. The staff in the bookstore want to make sure that they have all options available so that students can make the best decision.

A question arose regarding the Bookstore’s policy on buying back faculty complimentary copies of textbooks. It is the policy of Follett and our Bookstore not to buy back faculty or instructor comp copies or international student editions.

Grace Bielawski, Student Government President, introduced herself and reported that Student Government has just elected an Academic Affairs Chair, Lewis Chang, who will be working with faculty on the textbook issue. Student Government will also be selecting a liaison to attend the Senate meetings.

8. **HOP – EFFORT CERTIFICATION POLICY**
Serenity King reported that this policy was brought to the HOP Committee by the Office of Research. It is mandated by UT System policy requiring each System institution to write a policy to go along with the online Effort Certification Reporting on Sponsored Projects. Cy Cantrell made a motion to approve the policy. Kurt Beron seconded. The motion carried.

9. **CEP PROPOSALS THEATRE/DANCE MINOR AND ASIAN STUDIES MINOR** *(Item taken out of order.)* Cy Cantrell reported that the proposal for a Theatre/Dance minor was approved enthusiastically by the Committee on Educational Policy. The minor consists of eighteen hours, at least twelve of which must be upper division. It is felt that this minor is a vast improvement over anything that has been offered in the past. Cy Cantrell made a motion to approve the minor proposal. Tim Redman seconded the motion. The motion carried.

The Asian Studies Minor consists of four three-hour courses at the upper division level, along with a total of two sequential courses (minimum of six hours) of a language. This minor was strongly endorsed by the Committee on Educational Policy. Cy Cantrell made a motion to approve the minor proposal. Tim Redman seconded. The motion carried.
10. PROPOSED SENATE BYLAWS CHANGE RE: DATE FOR APPOINTING COMMITTEE ON COMMITTEES
   This change is to allow the Academic Council to appoint the members of the Committee on Committees in May rather than June. Cy Cantrell made a motion to approve this change. Kurt Beron seconded the motion. The motion carried.

   There being no further business, President Daniel adjourned the meeting.

   APPROVED:     DATE:  9 July 2010
   Murray J. Leaf
   Speaker of the Academic Senate