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
OCTOBER 19, 2011

PRESENT: Peter Assmann, Kurt Beron, Dinesh Bhatia, John Burr, Cy Cantrell, R. Chandrasekaran, Daniel Cohen, David Cordell, Gregg Dieckmann, John Ferguson, Jeremy Hall, Joe Izen, Kamran Kiasaleh, Murray Leaf, Stanimir Markov, Syam Menon, Dennis Miller, Neeraj Mittal, Jessica Murphy, Ravi Prakash, Monica Rankin, Michael Rebello, Tim Redman, Venus Reese, Liz Salter, Richard Scotch, Lakshman Tamil, Lucien Thompson, Mark Thouin, Zhenyu Xuan

ABSENT: Shawn Alborz, Bobby Alexander, Poral Balsara, Dan Bochsler, Judd Bradbury, Gail Breen, Gregory Dess, John Geissman, Lev Gelb, Mustapha Ishak-Boushaki, Ganesh Janakiraman, Linda Keith, Sumit Majumdar, Steven Nielsen, Peter Park

VISITORS: Andrew Blanchard, Calvin Jamison, Serenity King, Abby Kratz, Emily Tobey, Austin Cunningham, Kayla Klein

1. CALL TO ORDER, ANNOUNCEMENTS AND QUESTIONS
Provoct Wildenthal called the meeting to order and asked if there were any questions. Joe Izen raised the issue of the account reconciliation process in PeopleSoft. He was asked to reconcile the accounts he is responsible for without having access to the electronic images of the receipts or documentation to accurately perform the reconciliation. He asked if there will eventually be a mechanism for getting back-up and/or receipts into the PeopleSoft system. Dr. Jamison answered that this is something that will be available electronically and there is the capability to match receipts with accounts and specific items purchased.

Richard Scotch noted that he was asked to reconcile accounts several weeks ago but was never given access to look at the files, so he has been unable to do this and the deadline has now passed. Several other members reported having the same problem. Tres Thompson reported that he has experienced differences in his levels of accessibility depending on what browser was used. Dr. Jamison will follow up on these issues.

2. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA
Cy Cantrell moved to approve. Richard Scotch seconded the motion. The motion carried.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES
Cy Cantrell moved to approve. Tim Redman seconded. The motion carried.

4. SPEAKER’S REPORT
Simon Fass asked the Academic Council to place a question on the Senate agenda that had come up in the considerations of the ad hoc committee to construct the online course evaluation system. The question was whether faculty could give extra credit in the course to students who completed the form online. The amount of extra credit proposed was from 1 to 3% or perhaps
50%. Normally, the Council would not refuse to advance an item proposed for Senate consideration, although they might refer it back to the maker or to one or more committees for clarification or more information. In this case, however, the Council considered the proposal so inconsistent with our basic policies that no further consideration would be warranted. There were three major reasons.

First, we have a long-standing policy that a grade is strictly an evaluation of assigned work in the class. It is a measure of learning; not a reward, punishment, or mode of compensation of any kind.

Second, another policy is that assigning grades is done by faculty only. It would be impossible to assign such a grade without knowing who had completed the form, and the Council felt that this was inconsistent with the promise to protect student anonymity.

Third, the council could not imagine what a reasonable grade would be.

After I conveyed the considerations of the Council back to ad hoc committee, I had a side conversation by email with Simon Kane, who is doing the technical design work. Simon asked the broader question: was there anything faculty could do to reward participation. My response was that they could not do anything that involved grading, and in my view anything outside of classroom matters would look like currying favor or trying to impose pressure. But faculty certainly could encourage students to complete the form, explain what it is used for, and explain how to access it.

Everything else pending is on the agenda.

5. UT SYSTEM FACULTY ADVISORY COUNCIL REPORT
FAC report: Meeting of September 22 and 23.

FAC Resolutions. There were several substantive resolutions and a lot of time spent in discussing the proposed amendments to Regents Rule 33102. Essentially, a group consisting mainly of the Chair of the Faculty Senate at UTSA and the representative from UT Austin took sharp exception to several points in the draft proposed by the Chancellors Task Force, and further objections to their own misunderstandings of what the Task Force was. The objections to the draft were expressed in a resolution from the floor that was broken into a set of eight resolutions voted on separately by the members. Seven were approved by narrow margins of one to three votes. These were:

1. Many faculty have commented that the proposed revisions come across with a very punitive tone. Therefore we recommend rewording sections 5.1.(g) and 5.2.(i) with language from Section 3.

2. In order to enable an impartial peer review process, the comprehensive review committee (Section 5.2.(g)) needs to be elected, not appointed.

3. Since the proposed revision now links annual review to more severe consequences (sections 5.1.(g).(2)-(5)), annual review must include peer review.

4. Section 5.1.(g).(2) can trigger the initiation of termination proceedings on an annual basis after a failed remediation. Because of the severity of such accusations, the criteria for invoking a remediation, as well as the criteria for determining the outcome and completion of the monitoring of such remediation, need to be clearly specified.
5. We are concerned about the increased frequency of formal reviews in light of the increased severity of the associated consequences.

We refer to the following statement from AAUP*:

"Shortening the time horizon of faculty, so as to accord with periodic reviews, will increase productivity only artificially, if at all. More frequent and formal reviews may lead faculty members to pick safe and quick, but less potentially valuable, research projects to minimize the risk of failure or delayed achievement."

Section 5.1.(g).(3) potentially shortens the time between comprehensive reviews to two years. Some research questions take more time to investigate. We recommend at least three years to remediate issues in research productivity.

6. We are concerned about the almost identical language for annual reviews (Section 5.1) and comprehensive reviews (Section 5.2). It suggests that the intent is to conduct a process similar to comprehensive reviews on an annual basis (but without peer review).

7. We request to extend the timeline for the revisions to this important Regents’ Rule in order to be able to accommodate proper advice from the whole FAC.

We refer to the following statement from AAUP*:

"Post-tenure review must be developed and carried out by faculty."

The resolution that did not pass was:

As part of an impartial peer review process, the comprehensive review committee (Section 5.2.(g)) should be elected from faculty in the academic unit, not appointed.

Other members of the FAC, mainly a group from UT Austin, are continuing to try to develop alternatives to the system draft.

Other resolutions, that came from committees and were approved unanimously, were:

1. Resolution to amend the Model Policy for HOP committees. This was in several parts, but the basic idea was to make clear that since this committee has only one faculty member it cannot be taken as superior to the Senate in matters of academic policy assigned to the faculty. That is, if the Senate approves an academic policy this committee cannot disapprove it, and contrariwise if the Senate disapproves an academic policy this committee cannot approve it. This has not been a problem at UTD, but it has elsewhere. The other suggestion was to include language that indicated that stakeholders originating policies should say whether they should be included in the HOP or not.

2. FAC agreed to start working on templates for Annual Review and Periodic Performance Review for the campuses.

3. There was a resolution in support of the Chancellor’s initiative to build a medical school in the Valley, which included a somewhat subtle reference to governance issues at UT Brownsville.

4. There was a resolution on best practices for faculty development.
2. Resignation of David Prior as Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs.
As many of you may have heard, Dr. Prior announced his resignation on Monday, 3 October. This was a complete surprise to everyone in the FAC, and we were uniformly concerned, for two main reasons. First, that we have all been impressed with Dr. Prior’s understanding of what is necessary to build first class institutions of higher education, and his willingness to stick to this vision in working with Regents and others who do not share or understand it. He has been our effective and energetic supporter and interpreter. Second, we were afraid this might be an instance of the kind of intimidation by termination that Governor Perry and his associates at the TPPF have apparently been attempting at Texas A&M, with such unfortunate consequences for that institution’s reputation, as well as for the morale of its faculty. I have conveyed my own concerns to Chancellor Cigarroa and he has responded. The response included assurance that there was no outside pressure involved.

The FAC Executive Board agrees that we should respond to this situation. I will draft a note stating our concerns. The note will indicate the ways in which we thought Dr. Prior had represented what the university needs to do to attract and retain productive faculty, and it will offer our assistance in going ahead. We would like to have faculty representation on the search committee for a replacement, but we recognize that it is the Chancellor’s prerogative.

6. Student Government Liaison Report
Kayla Klein reported that in response to a request from Dr. Daniel, Student Government is putting together a university-wide task force on communication. Specifically the committee will be looking at more effective ways to advertise upcoming events. Student Government is also researching ways to increase resources on campus for veterans.

Know Your Rights Day will be held on November 8. This event is primarily for international students and freshmen so that they can learn about their states’ rights as well as their rights on campus.

Preparations continue for Homecoming activities.

A series of Town Hall meetings is planned with the Deans of each of the Schools. These meetings will provide an opportunity for the Dean to discuss what is happening in their school as well as offer a question and answer time for the students.

Kayla reported that a student recently attended the Student Government meeting and expressed her desire that UTD be a smoke-free campus. This student has pledged to collect signatures on a petition in favor of this move. Current UT System policy allows each campus to make its own decision regarding smoking on campus. Currently the UTD rule is that smokers must be at least 25 feet away from building entrances. Student Government would like the opinion of the Faculty Senate as they continue to investigate this issue.

Kayla also mentioned that the UT System Student Advisory Council had been asked to get feedback from faculty regarding their opinion of online courses and the possibility of
increasing the number of online courses offered. This will be discussed at a Student Advisory Council meeting in mid-November.

Joe Izen asked if the possibility of having covered bike racks was an issue for students. Kayla replied that this has not been discussed but Student Government is looking at the issue of keeping pedestrians and bicycle traffic separated – especially in the interior areas of campus. Monica Rankin suggested the possible establishment of having “walk your bike” areas on campus.

7. DISCUSSION OF NEW ACADEMIC PROGRAM REVIEW GUIDELINES
Emily Tobey was present to lead the discussion on this issue. She reported that several new initiatives are coming from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. One of those is a requirement for new data that we are required to collect regarding student demographics, external review credentials, admission data, faculty productivity, and student diversity. One new requirement is to report on student productivity and publication. We will now be asking masters and PhD students to give counts of referred publications, papers, juried performances, etc. Dr. Tobey feels that this data collection will be very straightforward.

We will continue to have periodic program reviews looking at the quality, productivity and effectiveness. The common requirements will include two external reviewers for paper review of masters-only programs. PhD programs will require two external reviewers as well as an onsite visit. This is what we are currently doing.

We will also need to report graduation rates, student retention rates, enrollment, graduate licensure rates, alignment of program, curriculum, facilities and equipment, program administration and faculty resources. Again, we are currently reporting all of this information.

A new requirement is that we will now be required to review masters programs as well as PhD programs. The onsite review for masters programs is optional.

Dr. Tobey asked the Senate to consider enlarging the membership of the Academic Program Review Committee. It currently consists of three faculty members and three deans. In order to accommodate the new requirements we could be having six to eight program reviews per year. Dr. Tobey suggests doubling the size of the committee. She also suggested considering the possibility of the committee being comprised only of deans or associate deans. She is working to develop a review schedule and this must be turned in to the Coordinating Board by December 1.

Dr. Leaf asked if only a few schools will come up for review each year or if more schools will be having reviews each year. Dr. Wildenthal responded that reviews will be program-based not school-based. The new schedule will synchronize with the existing schedule so that schools do not go too long without having a review. Under this schedule some schools will have multiple reviews in a year.

There will be some overlap with the data collected for SACS.

The charge of the Academic Program Review Committee will need to be revised as well as enlarging the membership of the committee. Speaker Leaf will work on revising the charge to the committee.
8. CEP PROPOSALS
   A. POLICY TO ASSURE ACADEMIC INTEGRITY FOR MASTER’S THESSES AND DOCTORAL DISSERTATIONS
      Dr. Cantrell stated that the motivation for this policy was the fact that there have been instances where the university has had to revoke degrees because of issues of plagiarism. Dr. Cantrell asked Dean Austin Cunningham to address the policy. Dr. Cunningham stated that both of these instances occurred before his office began using Turnitin.com, which is one mechanism used to detect occurrences of plagiarism. To clarify, Dr. Cantrell explained that members of the committee are only asked to certify that to the best of their knowledge the work in question is original and that the data or other research material used in its preparation was not falsified.

      A typographical error was pointed out in Section 3.3: The mention of Section 4.1 should be Section 2.1

      It was suggested that rather than simply referring to “the Dean” in the policy, these instances should always be more specific, stating “the Dean of . . .” instead.

      Cy Cantrell moved to approve. Tim Redman seconded. The motion carried and will be sent to the HOP Committee for review.

   B. CERTIFICATE PROGRAM IN ENTERPRISE SYSTEMS
      Dr. Cantrell presented this information. The certificate is a skills-based certificate in SAP software. There is a strong market for this certificate. Richard Scotch suggested that some sort of definition of what SAP is to be included. Cy Cantrell moved to approve this certificate. Mark Thouin seconded. The motion carried.

9. REPORT ON PRESIDENT DANIEL’S PLANNING RETREAT
   Dr. Wildenthal asked if there were any questions on the material presented in the agenda packet. These are all key areas that both the President and the Regents are concerned with. Dr. Leaf noted that President Daniel will work with the Committee on Effective Teaching to address ways encourage and reward excellence in teaching.

   Dr. Wildenthal noted that the main areas of concern for the Regents are: 1) four-year graduation rates; 2) PhD graduation rates; 3) budget concerns

   Since this is the first year of the biennium, we will receive the same amount of funding next year as we received this year. Any additional funds we receive will have to come from increased tuition and fees for new students.

   He also noted that the Regents have bought an online advising tool called MyEdu. Speaker Leaf mentioned that System plans on revamping the content that is available on MyEdu so that it will be more appropriate for use as an advising tool.

   Dr. Chandrasekaran suggested forming three committees – one to address teaching evaluation, the PhD graduation rate and transfer students. Dr. Leaf noted that teaching evaluation issues will be addressed by the Committee on Effective Teaching.
Speaker Leaf asked members of the Senate to respond to Dr. Daniel if they had any comments or concerns about this material, or to be added to the Committee on Effective Teaching.

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

APPROVED: [Signature]
Murray J. Leaf
Speaker of the Academic Senate

DATE: 23 Jan, 2013