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
FEBRUARY 15, 2012

PRESENT: David Daniel, Hobson Wildenthal, Shawn Alborz, Peter Assmann, Ponas Balsara, Kurt Beron, Dan Bochsler, Gail Breen, John Burr, Cy Cantrell, David Cordell, Greg Dieckmann, John Geissman, Joe Izen, Marilyn Kaplan, Murray Leaf, Sumit Majumdar, Dennis Miller, Jessica Murphy, Monica Rankin, Tim Redman, Liz Salter, Richard Scotch, Zhenyu Xuan

ABSENT:

VISITORS: Andrew Blanchard, Calvin Jamison, Sheila Pineres, Serenity King, Sharkey Andrews, Matthew Melton, Mike Mials, Sanaz Okhovat, Conor Wakeman, Rochelle Pena

1. CALL TO ORDER, ANNOUNCEMENTS AND QUESTIONS

President Daniel called the meeting to order. He announced that the Board of Regents approved an $85 million biosciences and engineering building for our campus. It will be an academic building with research labs, classrooms, and faculty office space. $72.25 million of the cost will be paid by the UT System from the Permanent University Fund. Dr. Daniel expressed his appreciation to Dr. Wildenthal, Dr. Blanchard, Dr. Jamison and Rick Dempsey for their help. The building will be immediately south of the NSERL building and construction will consume an existing parking lot. Dr. Jamison is committed to having a new parking lot completed before construction on the building begins. This new lot will likely be on the west side of Rutford or across Synergy from the NSERL building. At the next Regents’ meeting we will be asking for approval to build another parking garage.

The UT System changed its rules on review of tenured faculty. One of the big changes in the new policy is that annual reviews and comprehensive periodic performance evaluations (post tenure reviews) will use the same categories of evaluation. Faculty who are reviewed will be placed in one of four categories: exceeds expectations; meet expectations; does not meet expectations; unsatisfactory. Receiving an unsatisfactory designation in two consecutive annual review periods could trigger a more rigorous comprehensive post-tenure review.

The Regents have made available $10 million of matching gifts money. Our development officers are working to ensure that we receive a share of that money.

Enrollment figures for next fall are projected to be 20,000-21,000. We are continuing to take a careful look at classroom space and parking. Dr. Daniel was asked what type of parking lots are planned. He replied that for surface parking we typically build fairly inexpensive asphalt lots because of the possibility that the parking lot may get consumed by a building in not too many years. The two parking garages soon to be under design will be 4-story structures with 750 spaces each. One will be near the Jindal School of Management and one between the residence halls.
2. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA
Speaker Leaf asked to add an additional item to the agenda – Faculty support for physical space for a UTD Veterans’ Center. Gregg Dieckmann moved add this item to the agenda. Tim Redman seconded. The motion carried. Cy Cantrell moved to approve the agenda as amended. Dan Bochsler seconded. The agenda was approved as amended.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES
Cy Cantrell moved to approve the minutes as circulated. Tim Redman seconded. The motion carried and the minutes were approved as circulated.

4. SPEAKER’S REPORT – MURRAY LEAF
The Budget Committee has begun work.

The ELS Committee continues to work—they have decided on a general approach, which is to have our portal website present two main paths to enrollment. One will be for ELS students who have not completed the language program and seek conditional admission. The other will be for those who have completed the program and seek regular admission. Mr. Elvey expects most students to be in the second category.

The Teaching Effectiveness Committee is working on the recommendations from President Daniel’s September retreat that concern improving teaching.

The MyEdu owners visited the campus about three weeks ago. Sheila Pires assembled the group to meet with them and has the matter well in hand. Speaker Leaf will ask the Distance Learning Committee to take the lead in representing the Senate if Senate consideration seems necessary.

5. FAC REPORT – MURRAY LEAF
Speaker Leaf reported that much happened at the last Faculty Advisory Council meeting.

System organization: David Prior has resigned effective the end of January, rather than wait for a replacement to be hired. Pedro Reyes has been appointed Acting Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs in his absence. Dr. Reyes met with the FAC to discuss priorities for the near term.

Dashboard: Sandra Woodley presented the current state of the Chancellor’s dashboard. The prospects look good to use data from a service like SciVal or, better, Academic Analytics, for data on faculty productivity. If so, this will leave service as the last area to focus on for some kind of reasonably meaningful data on faculty activities.

MyEdu: We had another presentation from MyEdu. They are responding constructively to the input they have been getting in their campus visits. The FAC reaction appears to have gone from dubious to impressed and mildly optimistic.

Post Tenure Review—Regent’s Rule: After a good deal of tense discussion and a meeting between the FAC Executive Committee and the Chancellor, an amended version of the text recommended by the Chancellor’s Task Force was approved by the full FAC. A secret ballot was called for. The vote was 26 yes, 3 no, and 1 abstain. The revised rule, with the FAC’s further suggested changes, was approved by the Regents with no changes at their meeting on February 8. The new version includes the requirement that the system will provide templates for the annual review policy and for the comprehensive review policies. We are working in the
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FAC to draft them. The annual review policy is more urgent because campuses should already have periodic comprehensive review (post-tenure review) policies.

Salary scales: The FAC has consistently been concerned with issues of salary equity, compression, and inversion on the various campuses. About four years ago, Dr. Shine, the Executive Vice Chancellor for Health affairs, coordinated an effort to rationalize salary terminology and practices among the medical/health faculty. This has historically been much more chaotic than for the academic campuses. The FAC worked with him in developing a model, and one of the things we asked for at the time was whether Dr. Shine could use the process to introduce consideration of a salary scale like that in the University of California. He said he would, and now has reported back. His conclusion is that the campuses differ far too much, for far too many reasons, to agree on such a system.

6. VETERANS' CENTER PRESENTATION
Speaker Leaf asked for a motion to support the establishment of a veterans' center on campus with a physical meeting space. Tim Redman made the motion as follows:

The Academic Senate urges the UTD administration to make available a physical space that the UTD student veterans association can use to centralize services and activities for veterans on campus.

Richard Scotch seconded. Students Matthew Melton and Mike Rials addressed the Senate. Both Mr. Melton and Mr. Rials are recently returned veterans and feel very strongly that students who are veterans often have needs that are unique to their situation and often are not fully integrated into the life of the University. It would be very beneficial if there were some type of center established with space where veterans could meet. Students, who are currently active military serving in the reserves, are facing a different set of challenges, and it is hoped that the center may help to address some of their concerns as well. Dr. Daniel indicated that he supported the proposal and noted that Dr. Darrelene Rachavong is considering possible space solutions for a center. The motion carried unanimously.

7. STUDENT GOVERNMENT ALLIANCE REPORT
Sharkey Andrews reported that the UT System Student Advisory Council met in February and representatives from our campus supported several initiatives. We were the driving force behind a recommendation that every UT-System campus establish some sort of veterans' center. Students across the System are pushing to see more hybrid courses (combining online and in-person instruction) offered, especially at the graduate level. Marilyn Kaplan pointed out that due to budget constraints Student Government has had to cut back on offering free Scanntrons and blue books. They are now only distributing Scanntrons during mid-terms and final exams. Blue books continue to be offered for free.

Student Government elections will be held the last week in March. In addition to the election of student government representatives, three referenda will be presented:

The first is a “green fee.” This will be a $5.00 fee per student per semester to be used for the establishment of a green fund to be used by a student committee to pursue sustainability issues.

The second is the Student Union expansion fee. This is an increase of $74.00 per student per semester to be used for construction of a new Student Union Building that would connect to the current building.
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8. RESEARCH CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY
Rafael Martin, Associate Vice President for Research, introduced Sanaz Okhovat and Conor Wakeman from the Office of Research. His presentation highlighted changes in federal government regulations. There will be future changes coming regarding financial conflict of interest and we will need to determine how we address those changes both at UT-Dallas and across the UT System. Dr. Martin’s presentation is attached to these minutes.

Dr. Martin said that both the Advisory Committee on Research and the Research Integrity Committee will be reviewing the changes. He will also try to find out what other System campuses plan to do. Dr. Chandrasakaran asked if the Senate could get a report from both these committees and the other campuses before we determine our next step.

9. APPOINTMENT OF DENIS DEAN TO COMMITTEE ON QUALIFICATIONS OF ACADEMIC PERSONNEL
Speaker Leaf explained that Bruce Jacobs had resigned from the Committee because of a teaching conflict that would not allow him to attend all of the meetings. The Committee on Committees recommended Denis Dean as his replacement and he agreed to serve. Tim Redman moved to approve this replacement. Cy Cantrell seconded. The motion carried.

10. CEP PROPOSAL – UNDERGRADUATE CATALOG
Cy Cantrell stated that the changes in the undergraduate catalog were relatively minor and asked Dean Piferes to address those changes.

Dean Piferes said that there were non-substantive changes with course and prefix renumbering. These were all reviewed within the respective schools by the associate deans, departments, and the CEP members from those schools.

It was noticed that there was a maximum course load policy for the long semesters of eighteen hours but there was no corresponding maximum course load policy for the summer. The catalog now states that anyone wishing to take more than 15 hour during the summer must get approval from the Associate Dean.

The next change is specifying that a student can fast-track into only one graduate program.

There is a new graduation requirement stating that no course work be taken off campus in the final semester and that all transfer work be submitted prior to the last semester. This is a result of students

Change to WP and WF designations: The intent of having the WP (withdraw passing) and WF (withdraw failing) was to inform whether a student was passing or failing a class in the last three weeks of the withdrawal period. Some law schools are translating the WF into an “F” and we had a policy that if the instructor did not sign the form to withdraw in that period the student automatically received a “WF.” The withdraw period is being changed from four weeks to six weeks and the “WP” and “WF” designations will no longer be used. Students will now receive a “WL” (withdraw late) for the seventh through the ninth weeks. These still require instructor signatures.
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Addition of two new grades: Probation advising and at-risk advising is done based on mid-term grades, yet many times professors do not have enough information at mid-term to give a grade. The first new grade is to “MN” which says there is not sufficient information at mid-term to assign a grade.

The second new grade is “NF”—failure for non-attendance. It will count as an “F.” It will appear on the transcript.

Increase in minimum number of residency hours to graduate: The proposed change is from the current thirty hours to forty-five hours.

Student-initiated grade changes: The following wording will be placed in the undergraduate catalog and will correspond with wording in the graduate catalog:

The only grounds for considering a grade to be incorrect are either clerical error or that it is arbitrary or capricious. Examples of clerical error would include, but are not limited to, a mistake in adding component grades, a mistake in recording grades, or attributing a paper or examination to the wrong student. Arbitrary or capricious means that the grade cannot be considered reasonable given the material of the course, the overall performance of the class, and the individual performance of the student. The university assumes that course-work is best evaluated by the instructor in the immediate context of the course activity. Requests for reconsideration must show with clear and convincing evidence why this assumption should be set aside.

If a student believes they have been assigned a grade on the basis of a clerical error or that the grade is arbitrary or capricious, they should first seek to discuss the grade with the instructor. If this does not lead to satisfactory understanding, the student may file a formal appeal following the procedures described for academic grievances in the Rules, Regulations, and Statutory Requirements Section C.

Cy Cantrell moved to approve the undergraduate catalog copy submitted. Richard Scotch seconded. The motion assumes that all grammatical errors will be corrected in the final copy. The motion carried.

GRADUATE CATALOG
Cy Cantrell said that the graduate catalog information will not be presented today. It will be on the agenda for the March Senate meeting.

11. ANNUAL REVIEW POLICY
This policy is pursuant to changes in Regents’ Rules that were adopted at their February meeting. The Regents’ Rules require that there be a local campus review policy in the Handbook of Operating procedures for both annual reviews and the comprehensive periodic performance evaluation. Speaker Leaf has distributed our draft as a potential model policy for all the UT System academic campuses. This item does not require action by the Senate but Speaker Leaf asked for feedback regarding the policy. Discussion focused on the relationship between the evaluations in each of the kinds of activity—scholarship, teaching, and service—and the overall evaluation. This should be clarified in order provide a clearer definition of the crucial “unsatisfactory” designation. Speaker Leaf will make changes reflecting these concerns and send the revision to the Committee on Faculty Standing and Conduct for their further input.

12. DISCUSSION ITEM – PREREQUISITE GRADES
Dean Pifferes reported that the undergraduate associate deans would like to bring this issue to the Senate to take back to the faculty. Currently the minimum passing grade is a D−, so if a
course has a prerequisite a student can move to the subsequent course with a grade of D- unless the catalog specifies a higher grade. The undergraduate associate deans would like the Senate to consider a policy of a minimum grade for moving along in a prerequisite. Their preference is a grade of C or C-. Under the current system at the beginning of each semester the associate deans have to manually pull the students who have a failing grade in a prerequisite course. If the new policy is adopted the process will be automated through the PeopleSoft system.

Richard Scotch moved that the Senate accept this recommendation and that the policy be given to Council for a future Senate meeting. John Geissman seconded. The motion carried.

13. ADJOURNMENT
Richard Scotch moved to adjourn. The motion was seconded and Speaker Leaf adjourned the meeting.

APPROVED:  
DATE: 23 Jan 2015

Murray J. Leaf  
Speaker of the Academic Senate