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 15, 2009

PRESENT: Sheila Amin Gutierrez de Pineres, Gail Breen, John Burr, Cyrus Cantrell, Gregg Dieckmann, Jay Dowling, Kelly Durbin, John Hoffman, Shayla Holub, Mustapha Ishak-Boushaki, Joe Izen, Surya Janakiraman, Marilyn Kaplan, Robert Kieschnick, Murray Leaf, Paul Mac Alevey, Steven Nielsen, Simeon Niafos, Ravi Prakash, Tim Redman, Richard Scotch, Robert Stern, Lucien Thompson, Mary Urquhart,

ABSENT: Mark Anderson, James Bartlett, Santosh D’Mello, Juan Gonzalez, Jennifer Holmes, Kamran Kiasaleh, Adrienne McLean, Dennis Miller, B.P.S. Murthi, Michael Rebello, Young Ryu, Elizabeth Salter, S. Venkatesan

VISITORS: Hobson Wildenthal, Andrew Blanchard, Austin Cunningham, Serenity King, David Cordell, Eric Nicholson, Chris Parr, Mark Rosen

1. CALL TO ORDER, ANNOUNCEMENTS AND QUESTIONS

Dr. Daniel called the meeting to order.

Dr. Daniel updated the Academic Senate on Legislative matters, state budgets have been passed in both the House and Senate. He stated we are expecting a 9%-10% increase for the biennium. Prudence is appropriate for the Fall and Winter as the State Controller reviews budgets. Dr. Daniel has charged the Provost to increase the number of outstanding tenure and tenure track faculty. Applications are looking about what we thought, 9% for undergraduate, graduate about the same. Dr. Daniel feels comfortable about expectations for growth in the faculty and modest growth within the student body.

Tuition bills are under discussion in the Texas Senate with discussion topics of tuition freeze and four year tuition plans. We are well positioned with our fixed four year tuition plan. UT Dallas took two years to prepare for the four year tuition plan, so the front end costs are minimal. By next year 70% of our students will be on the fixed tuition plan. Due to our plan for tuition we will be in a better position than other Texas universities.
Another issue is to put additional dollars into a system to create additional research universities. One of the criteria for establishing research universities is the annual $45 million dollars in restricted research funding (UT Dallas is currently at around $36 million). Restricted means contracted funds, or a gift with specific guidelines. UT Dallas grew in restricted research funding by $4 million over last year. Among the emerging research universities only the University of Houston is ahead of us and not growing as rapidly. Research is important to the legislators and they are aware of the growth. Another parameter is the number of Ph.D.’s granted each year, 200 is the goal, UT Dallas was at 139 last year, with Project Emmitt coming to an end Dr. Daniel stated we may take a step backward before we go forward.

Dr. Daniel asked if there were questions, he discussed his update and the seven emerging research universities as valuable collaborators in further detail. He stated we need to grow the size of the faculty to 415 faculty members this Fall, gradually expand the student body allowing us to have the resources we need. Raise UTD’s overall awareness, visit the schools and tell our story, invite these students and their families to our campus; in order to help our university grow.

2. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Dr. Kieschnick moved to approve the agenda as circulated. Dr. Cantrell seconded the motion. The motion carried. The agenda was approved.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Dr. Cantrell moved to approve the minutes of the March 25, 2009 meeting as circulated. Dr. Kieschnick seconded the motion. The minutes were approved.

4. SPEAKER’S REPORT

A. Presentation of Dr. Cary Israel at Collin County Democratic Party General Meeting, Saturday, March 25. Dr. Israel described his plans for “Collin College” and the Collin Higher Education Center to be completed in McKinney in 2010. The plan is not only to offer four year degrees. It is also to offer about eight master’s degrees and four PhDs. Plan is on the web at: http://www.enewsbuilder.net/cccc/e_article001204987.cfm?x=bf7f5CK.0

Some of the degrees match our own, most do not. The general orientation is “professional”, very job oriented or job-advancement oriented. These will be offered as cooperative programs with four year and graduate degree granting institutions—they will be their degrees, not Collin College degrees. We are one of the institutions he is cooperating with. UNT and SMU are others. If this is something we would want to look into as faculty, it should be possible to arrange a meeting with their Faculty Council or some type of delegation. The faculty may not have all the details of the plan, but will certainly have ideas about how the courses will be offered and have some views on how other programs would be integrated.
Dr. Leaf argued that if we view the our common situation in terms of tracking or guiding streams of students with different abilities and interests rather than one of institutional turf, the idea can be much more complementary to what the UTD faculty wants to do than competitive or disruptive of it. Dr. Israel is very interested in making CCCC an academically sound institution and has good judgment about the relative merit of other institutions in the area. About 50% of the CCCC students are getting associate degrees (which are transferable). For the DCCD campuses, the number used to be around 12% to 16%. We are the leading destination of their transfer students. According to the CCCC website, transfers to UTD averaged 768 a year over the four years 2002-2005. UNT was next with 616.

The consensus in the Council was that for now it was more important to ask President Daniel for a report on the current state of our relationship with the CCC, and especially what their standards are for the UTD courses that will be offered there and the faculty that will be hired to offer them.

B. Meeting concerned with safety and security. Thursday, March 31. Apparently partly in response to my memorandum to the Safety and Security Council, Vice President for Student Affairs Darrelene Rachavong called a meeting of the key concerned individuals with Priscilla Lozano, the lawyer in OGC who has been working most closely with Donna Rogers, the Dean of Students. Everyone there seemed to feel that it was a very productive and helpful meeting. Those attending were Dr. Leaf; Larry Overzet, Chair of the Safety and Security Council; Dean Michael Coleman; Professor Anthony Champagne; Dr. James Cannici, Director of the Counseling Center; Captain Steve Finney of the UTD Police Department; Dr. Abby Kratz, Associate Provost; Dean of Students Donna Rogers, Dr. Rachavong; and Ms. Lozano. We reached an important consensus, and made several specific decisions that should substantially enhance the sense of safety on the campus.

The consensus was that while we have generally good arrangements in place, we need to devote much more effort to making the general campus population aware of what they are and how they interface with one another.

The first specific agreement was that we would develop a system for assuring that faculty taking students on class-related trips would be informed if the students had a record of violation of the campus code of conduct or criminal activity off campus as would be reported in a criminal background check. A record in these cases would not lead to automatic prohibition of the travel. The information would be provided to the faculty member in charge, who would make the judgment. The procedure will be based on a modification of that currently in place for the Archer Fellows program, in which a group of students spends a semester in Washington, D. C. The students we vet are subsequently vetted by the federal government.
The second agreement was that the dean of students will provide notice of disciplinary action for students being considered for RA and TA ships. This will be based on a process in which the hiring authority will submit a list of candidates and get a response indicating what actions have been taken. The Safety and Security Council will take initial responsibility for drafting the form to ask for such information and outlining the process, and then we will involve other stakeholders.

The third specific agreement was that the Counseling Center will publish on their website the criteria by which it decides whether a person is an “imminent threat” to themselves or others. The Counseling Center will also expand its Annual Report. The Safety and Security Council will take initial responsibility for stating what sort of details the campus community would like this report to contain. Dr. Cannici reported, for example, that no student under the care of the Counseling Center has ever engaged in a violent attack on any other student on campus.

There is a continuing disagreement regarding the scope of FERPA. This turns on the meaning of the phrase “educational record maintained by” the university. Dr. Leaf’s view, which he thinks Daniel Sharphorn agrees with, is that it should be concretely and narrowly construed to mean the official record that would be passed on to other institutions that ask for it—the transcript. This would, for example, exclude emails sent by faculty to each other or to administrators. Ms. Lozano took the view that since an email was on a university server, it was “maintained” by the university and was also an educational record. The only document that would be excluded would notes by a faculty member strictly for their own use. Dr. Rachavong will follow the advice of Ms. Lozano. Ms. Lozano will, however, take up the question with Mr. Sharphorn.

Finally, Dr. Rachavong reported that after the knife attack on campus about six weeks ago, she called her staff together and asked everyone to review their records to see if they had received any reports that would have led them to anticipate such behavior on the part of the perpetrator. There were none. She said this because, evidently, there were reports that a faculty member had in fact notified them or warned them of such a danger. This faculty member had indeed made a call, but it was not a warning and when asked directly if the student posed a danger to themselves or others the response was he did not.

C. Meeting between Dr. Leaf and VPBA Jamison. The university is about to let a new contract for the bookstore, and Dr. Jamison wanted to be sure to do so in a way that would be consistent with the UT System’s commitment, and our own commitment, to hold down textbook prices. To do this, Dr. Jamison’s general strategy is to allow the bookstore an expanded scope of operations, perhaps including food service and a visitor’s center, to make it a place where campus visitors would naturally and normally come to browse, relax, and perhaps buy a few things. A further part of the strategy is to support the market for used textbooks by not continually ordering new editions where this was not necessary.
Dr. Leaf indicated that while faculty would not be amenable to a blanket agreement stay with any given textbook for a fixed number of years, they would certainly not want to switch to a new version if it was not intellectually justified, and that most of the switching is apparently not done by faculty deliberately but either by inadvertence in failing to specify an edition or by the bookstore itself. We recommend strongly that the new contract address these problems and also assure that the ordering information provided to the bookstore by faculty be made public immediately, and not kept as proprietary information of the bookstore alone. Further, if the ordered edition is not available, the bookstore should be obligated to communicate this to the faculty member who placed the order, rather than select an alternative edition on their own. In addition, with respect to notifying the bookstore of plans to reuse the text, the ordering form could be redesigned to allow the faculty member to state his intention—indicating perhaps a number of years or repetitions. Dr. Leaf offered to bring together a faculty group to review the contract and advise on what it should contain. The Council agreed that we should do something like this—perhaps before the actual contract is drafted.

D. Dr. Leaf reported several reactions to the presentation by Curt Eley at the last Senate meeting. There is a strong sense that communication has not been adequate and that the Senate should follow up, keeping attention focused on the graduate admissions portion of the website. Certainly something like an annual report would be good but we probably need more. He asked the Council if we should consider an expert support or advising committee of a few especially knowledgeable faculty, such as Drs. Cantrell, Pineres, Kieschnick, and Prakash? The Council had agreed that we should. Subsequently, Dr. Pineres suggested Jennifer Holmes instead, and Dr. Holmes agreed. The Caucus meeting has discussed this approved it as a priority for this coming year. If there is no objection we (President Daniel) would go ahead and make the appointment. There was no objection; the Senate concurred.

E. Serenity King reports that all of the policy changes that required OGC approval are now back. Nothing more is pending. This is a first.

F. There is evidently a mandate from the Office of Sponsored Projects on time and effort reporting. Should we ask the Research Advisory Committee to take a hand? Dr. Leaf has sent an email to the Chair and Co-Chair (Alain Benoussan and Philip Loizou) to ask if they have been involved in developing the rules up to now.

G. Last Tuesday, Cy Cantrell called a meeting with Dr. Leaf and Dr. Overzet, preliminary to the meeting called by Dr. Rachavong, to discuss the possible relationships between policies regarding security and policies regarding academic integrity. Dr. Leaf agreed that no decision would be taken on security policies without review including CEP or the Committee on Academic Integrity. He also agreed to write a brochure summarizing the faculty role in referrals for academic dishonesty, reaffirming the key points of current policy. The group also discussed
the possibility of initiating a policy that all judgments of plagiarism regarding Master or PhD theses would be made by faculty panels, rather than by the Office of Judicial Affairs. Dr. Cantrell will ask Academic Integrity to draft a policy. Dr. Leaf mentioned this possibility in the meeting called by Dr. Rachavong. Her response was that she would welcome it, and that from her point of view judicial affairs need not be involved at all.

H. Dean Cunningham reports that he has been in discussions with Ellen Safley regarding the submission of our (UTD earned) dissertations and thesis to the TEXAS DIGITAL LIBRARY. No additional cost to the student is involved but there are associated open access benefits. On March 31, Dean Cunningham circulated a description of the possibility along with a recommendation that we add TDL submission and continue the current UMI submission to me as Speaker and to the Associate Deans for Graduate Studies. Everyone was in favor. Since this most obviously an administrative matter that does not require Senate approval, I agreed that we should go ahead with the decision, but that I would mention it here as an information item in case there was any objection.

I. When I was in Austin for the FAC executive committee meeting this Friday, April 9, I discussed Regent's Rules section 50101 with Dan Sharpnord and Priscilla Lozano. Our main focus was on two possible modifications: having the president delegate his authority, and having academic appeals go to a different channel than appeals for other disciplinary matters. Our consensus was:

- The President can set up advisory bodies and have them recommend decisions, while he still signs as making the final decision. This is what UT does.

- Apparently, the origin of the idea that the President must make the decision is not state law as I had thought but the Regents Rules only. Dan or Priscilla will check, but they felt pretty sure of this. If it is so, and there is no larger legal constraint, the rule can of course be changed. In fact, for a slightly different set of reasons, they were recently discussing doing so. The changes could be of either of two sorts: either it could give the president some clearer "wiggle room" in the use of his authority, or we could actually split the tracks taken by academic appeals and other appeals, with perhaps academic appeals going to the provost and non-academic going to the President or a designee.

- The rule at present should not be construed as precluding the possibility that plagiarism judgments on Masters and PhD theses would be made by faculty panels, rather than Judicial Affairs, although the procedure would have to afford due process. We did not specifically discuss whether the final signature could be something like a panel chair or would have to be a university officer (provost or president), but I am reasonably confident that the answer should be the latter—they would be far more firmly assured of legal protection in the event of litigation.
I have previously brought up the peculiarity of conflating academic dishonesty with all other types of disciplinary problems, including even what if off-campus would be plainly criminal conduct, and Mr Sharphorn shares our view that this is not a particularly logical arrangement. If we decided to go ahead to try to separate the two appeal tracks, it would obviously be part of the larger problem of disentangling the two disciplinary arenas. So we would have to do it carefully.

On Wednesday, April 8, I testified before the House Higher Education Committee on Wednesday this past week in favor HB 330. This was Paula Pierson's bill to establish a faculty regent in the UT system. So far as I am aware, it has the solid support of both the administration and the regents--and the faculty, of course, which is mainly what I testified to.

5. FAC REPORT—

FAC Executive Committee met in Austin on Friday. Drs. Leaf and Kaplan attended.

6. REPEATED GRADUATE COURSES

Dr. Cantrell introduced the policy of trying to regularize course work repeated for a grade. Dr. Cunningham discussed which grade would be the official grade with repeated course work.

Dr. Cantrell moved to accept the proposed wording for repeated course work proposal.

There was additional discussion turning on the alternatives of allowing students leeway in response to external constraints beyond their control versus avoiding a system that could be “gamed.”

Dr. Scotch called the question. Dr. Leaf asked for a vote by show of hands, there were ten votes in favor of the policy and eight votes opposed. The motion carried.
7. CEP

Master of Arts in Latin American Studies:

Dr. Cantrell introduced the discussion for a Master of Arts in Latin American Studies. Dr. Redman discussed the proposal. Dr. Redman made the motion to approve the proposal; Dr. Cantrell seconded the motion. Dr. Leaf asked if there was any further discussion. A discussion took place. It was agreed that the developers of the program in Arts and Humanities would contact the faculty who have been teaching courses in the environment and physical geography of Latin America, not now reflected in the course listings. They will be incorporated. The motion carried.

Administrative Section of the Undergraduate Catalog:

Dr. Cantrell introduced the Administrative Section of the Undergraduate Catalog. The course descriptions will follow in due course. The official catalog will be online, printed copies will be available for advisors. Dr. Cantrell moved to approve the first forty pages of the Undergraduate Catalog. Dr. Kieschnick seconded the motion. Dr. Cantrell asked if there was further discussion. The motion carried.

8. FIRST FORTY PAGES OF UNDERGRADUATE CATALOGTEGRITY

Dr. Cantrell discussed two issues of academic integrity that have arisen concerning plagiarism in Master’s and PhD theses. The first is that at present, there is no faculty involvement. It is the view of the Academic Integrity Committee that there should be such involvement. Such judgments should be made by a faculty panel and forwarded to the Provost for action. The second is that once a decision has been made by Judicial Affairs, there is no policy or procedure in place by the concerned faculty member (not the student) can appeal the decision. The Senate agreed that both policies should be developed. The Provost and President concurred. The Academic Integrity committee will work with the speaker.

9. APPROVAL OF CANDIDATES FOR GRADUATION

The Secretary of the Faculty presented the lists of candidates for undergraduate and graduate degrees for the Spring commencement:

Candidates for Undergraduates Degrees: These students have applied for graduation and have been reviewed by the Office of Records. The Office of Records 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 Academic 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. I also request that the Academic 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.

Dr. Cantrell moved to certify the list of Undergraduate Candidates for graduation. Dr. Izen seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Candidates for Graduate Degrees: 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.

Dr. Tim Redman seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Dr. Redman moved to certify the list of Graduate Candidates for graduation. Dr. Cantrell seconded the motion. The motion carried.

10. ADJOURNMENT

Dr. Leaf asked for a motion to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned.

APPROVED:  
Murray J. Leaf
Speaker of the Senate

DATE: 1 June 2006