ACADEMIC SENATE MEETING
January 21, 2004


ABSENT: Janok Bhattacharya, W. J. Dowling, Robert Marsh, Hobson Wildenthal

VISITORS: Priscilla Beadle, Ryan Davidson, David Ford, Jr., Bert Moore, Sophie Rutenbar, Larry Terry

1. CALL TO ORDER, ANNOUNCEMENTS AND QUESTIONS

Dr. Jenifer called the meeting to order.

The Presidential Search Committee will be meeting on the campus on Monday, January 26th. The entire committee has been formed.

The President also spoke about a meeting with the Chancellor and the committee that the Legislature established to consider the tuition increases. The Legislature is of the strong opinion that they made a mistake in granting decentralized tuition. They are asking for more accountability. We may have to do some of the things other schools are doing, e.g., differential tuition for different types of classes, etc. The Chancellor is indicating that this is the direction the component institutions should be going.

Renovation of Founders is still being considered and a resolution is close. Project Emmitt continues to be a challenge. It appears that a contract is ready to be signed, and if that is the case, the money from the state will be coming to us.

The chess team won the national championship. Dr. Redman has done a wonderful job with the team and is to be heartily congratulated.

The purchase of the Kodak Building is no longer under consideration, and the administration is looking for another building that will suit UTD's needs better.
The results of the proposal for a major research grant with the Army is due on Friday.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes of November 19, 2004. The motion carried.

3. SPEAKER’S REPORT

There are five topics: Conversations with the system attorney on academic integrity, the Presidential search, the senate website, signage, and plans for the May convocation.

A. At the December meeting of the System Faculty Advisory Council, Professor Nelsen arranged for Helen Bright, the System attorney concerned with academic dishonesty, to meet with the Academic Affairs committee, which I attended. Our concern was with the system requirements for procedures to assure due process, which had seemed on the understanding I had from Dean Rachovong to be unnecessarily complicated in the event that a student did not accept the penalty offered in the first instance. The concern grew out of our discussion here in the Senate revolving around the possibility of increasing the penalties for first time instances of cheating by graduate students, relative to the penalties for undergraduates, together with the very substantial increase in cases from last year to this. At present there is no differentiation and it was Dean Rachovong’s view that if the penalties for graduates were increased many of them—indeed virtually all of them—would insist on full-scale hearings and also probably appeal. My understanding of what this hearing procedure involved was that it required a transcript and allowed lawyers and that if the student brought their lawyer we would have to bring ours. If there was an appeal, it would involve yet another full-scale hearing with the President presiding.

The conversation was interesting and productive. It turns out that my understanding was not correct and the procedure is really rather reasonable. Lawyers are allowed, but they cannot act as lawyers. They may advise their clients, but they cannot speak for them. The hearing is not a court, and they therefore have no standing as officers of the court. Transcripts are not required; tapes will do. And, importantly, the hearing does not have to be conducted by the Dean of Students as such but may be anyone in the Dean’s office. Finally, if there is an appeal, the President does not actually conduct another hearing but simply
has to review the record and there is no further appeal beyond that. If students do want a formal hearing and do bring a lawyer, the System OGC will provide one for us. This would almost certainly be Helen Bright, and she would be excellent. Finally, Bright is inclined to agree that we should be tougher on graduate students, which doesn’t mean we should do it on that account but it does mean will have her cooperation if we decide to for reasons of our own.

Two of the UT Campuses, Galveston Medical Branch and Arlington, use faculty as hearing officers.

On my return I talked this over with Dean Rachavong, including the possibility of using faculty as hearing officers here. She is still of the view that we should not differentiate Graduate from Undergraduate students, mainly on the ground that we get very few repeat offenders in either category, and thinks that the best way to solve the staffing problem is not with faculty but with a full-time, trained, specialist in her office. She had asked the administration for such a position last year and it was denied because of the budget crisis. She is renewing the request now. For the rest, she agrees that my second understanding of the required process is correct.

At present, I think we should wait to see what happens if she can get the needed additional staff person.

B. On the same topic, the Senate Subcommittee on Integrity has reported their view that at this time graduates and undergraduates should not be treated differently, mainly because there is no clear consensus to do otherwise.

C. The President’s search committee will hold its first meeting on Monday January 26th. We have constituted a local support group to advise our representatives on the committee and to widen the base from which we try to identify candidates. To avoid making the members of this group an object of press attention, we are trying to keep its membership small, informal, and to some extent flexible, but the plan is to meet with them before each meeting of the Search Committee and to leave open the possibility for other meetings as well.

D. The Senate website has been redesigned, and we have set up a system for committee chairs to send, by email, material to be posted to their committee sections. The email address is senate postings@utdallas.edu. Access is screened, so the email must be from the chair’s email address. On the Senate side, access is restricted to the Speaker, Secretary, Governance Secretary, and web-person. So far I have not properly notified the chairs and gotten it moving. That is next.
E. The ongoing problem of inadequate signage came up again in the last meeting of
the Staff Council, and the police officer on the council added a point I had not
been aware of. Local police and fire agencies, when called to campus, do not go
by building addresses (which don’t exist) or names (which no-one can find) but by
their own numbers—which are not on the buildings and not known to us. The
reason for not putting appropriate names on the buildings has been cited as cost,
since the name plates would have to custom built. But numbers ought to be a
much simpler matter—the problem would only be to find or to decide which ones.
This muddle has gone on long enough and is a natural problem for the Facilities
Oversight committee to take up. Unless there is massive objection from the floor
today, I will ask them to do so. (It was agreed, on the President’s instance, that the
administration would constitute a working group on this instead. Dr. Terry will
chair.)

At this point, the President said that he did not think that action by such a
committee would be necessary and that he would address the matter with
his Cabinet and see that something was done.

F. The Commencement Committee would like to make this Spring ceremony
particularly memorable, in large part because this will (probably) be the last under
President Jenifer. As part of this, we would like very much to increase the faculty
presence. It seems to me that it would be especially appropriate to have the
members of the Academic Senate there and to have their presence, as such, noted
in the program. Please plan to attend if at all possible. We will ask you all
individually in order to get individual replies, to plan the necessary seating
arrangements.

There was discussion about whether Senators should attend all sessions.
The Speaker expressed hope they would, but there was general consensus
that Senators should at least attend the session where the students from
their respective schools would be graduating.

4. PROPOSAL FOR GRADUATE PROGRAMS

The School of Behavioral and Brain Sciences has presented a proposal for graduate
programs. The proposals were for a Ph.D. in Cognition and Neuroscience, a Ph.D. in
Communication Sciences and Disorders and an M.S. and Ph.D in Psychology. Dean
Moore presented the proposal and responded to questions.
President Jenifer reminded the Senators that UTD was disadvantaged in the former Carnegie classifications because many of our authorized degrees actually represent several, separate degrees as is the case with the current Ph.D. in Human Development and Communication Sciences.

After discussion wherein the quality of the proposal as an exemplar for all such proposals was noted, a motion was made and seconded to approve these new programs. The motion passed.

5. COMMITTEE ON FACULTY MENTORING

Speaker Leaf presented the charge for a new Committee on Faculty Mentoring that had been recommended by the Core Committee for the Support of Women and Minorities. Dr. Leaf explained that the Council recommended that this new committee be a Senate committee rather than a University-wide committee and the initiators of the motion had agreed.

Dr. Ford, author of the motion, spoke to the new committee and stated that the Core Committee for the Support of Women and Minorities also wanted this committee to be able to meet with the President annually. A motion was made and seconded to add this statement to the charge as an amendment. The motion passed.

The total number of faculty on the committee was recommended as fourteen. The draft charge went on to say that each academic department/program or relevant academic unit having one representative. A motion was made and seconded to amend the charge simply to state that the committee would have fourteen members and that the Committee on Committees would work with the Core Committee for the Support of Women and Minorities on the distribution of the membership. The motion passed.

Dr. Benn made a motion to include Senior Lecturers in this charge. After considerable discussion, an amendment was made. There was no second for the amendment. It was explained that the Core Committee for the Support of Women and Minorities intended this committee to mentor faculty as they prepare for tenure and therefore should be for tenure track faculty only.

Another recommended change to the motion was in the third paragraph. The draft stated that the committee would meet with individual junior faculty. A motion was made and seconded to amend the wording to indicate that members will meet with individual faculty, not the entire committee. The amendment passed.
Dr. Chandrasekaran moved that wording be added to make it clear that this committee would not preclude an individual school’s current mentoring committee but would work in conjunction with any other mentoring programs on campus. This amendment was seconded and passed.

The main motion as amended passed and is attached to these minutes.

6. SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING AND COMPUTER SCIENCE BYLAWS

Speaker Leaf introduced the Bylaws for the School of Engineering and Computer Science and indicated that it was in conformance with all the rules and regulations of the University.

Dr. Benn thanked the Bylaws committee of the School of Engineering and Computer Science for giving Senior Lecturers the 10% vote representation, but he encouraged the Senate to pursue a school wide policy on the Senior Lecturers’ representation.

After further discussion about the bylaws, a motion was made and seconded to approve the Bylaws as presented.

The motion passed.

7. ADJOURNMENT

The business was concluded and the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sandra K. Goertzen
Academic Governance Secretary