ACADEMIC SENATE MEETING
June 21, 2006


ABSENT: Mark Anderson, Poras Balsara, Dinesh Bhatia, Tom Brikowski, Duane Buhrmester, Cy Cantrell, Jeff DeJong, Juan Gonzalez, Warren Goux, Jennifer Holmes, Robert Kischnick, Sumit Majumdar, Homer Montgomery, Shun Chen Niu, Sheila Pineres, Beatrice Rasmussen, Brian Ratchford, Tim Redman, Mary Urquhart, S. Venkatesan,

VISITORS: Austin Cunningham, Richard Huckaba

CALL TO ORDER, ANNOUNCEMENTS AND QUESTIONS

Dr. Wildenthal called the meeting to order in Dr. Daniel’s absence.

Dr. Wildenthal began his announcements by noting the unexpected and untimely death of Dr. Larry Terry, VPBA, on June 17. He explained that Dr. Terry’s duties in the Business Affairs office would be divided among himself, Darrelen Rachavong (VP for Student Affairs) and Jody Nelsen (Assoc. VP of Business Affairs). Dr. Rachavong would take over the Information Resource (IR) department, in addition to Student Affairs, until a replacement could be found for the head of IR. Information Resources now includes the Web Services and Police Department. Ms. Nelsen would continue to supervise Procurement Management and Facilities Management. Dr. Wildenthal will assist with special assignments in Budget and Finance.

Dr. Wildenthal said that Ms. Nelsen had successfully recruited Rick Dempsey as the Assistant Vice President for Facilities Management. Mr. Dempsey has been the Director of Facilities Management at U.T. Permian Basin. He will begin in the Physical Plant in three weeks.

In other news, Dr. Wildenthal said that the Berkner building had suffered rain damage last Friday night because of a huge hole in the roof left by contractors working on the air handlers. It is unclear who will ultimately be responsible. The water damage is estimated at $100,000, but no harm was done to the larger equipment.
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2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Dr. Pervin pointed out that on page three, last paragraph, in the third sentence, the ‘not’ should be added between ‘departments are’ and ‘cooperating.’ The change was noted.

Dr. Wildenthal called for a motion to approve the minutes as corrected. A motion was made and seconded. The motion passed.

3. SPEAKER’S REPORT

Dr. Leaf updated the Senate on the grievance policy for Senior Lecturers. The Office of the General Council (OGC) has consented to add the Senior Lecturers to UTD’s faculty grievance policy. OGC had been reluctant to allow Senior Lecturers to be included on the faculty’s grievance policy unless the school could prove that good lecturers are hard to hire without such a policy. Dr. Nelsen pointed out to the OGC that the auditors at SACS did not see a good outcome for reaccreditation without such a policy for Senior Lecturers.

The Facilities Committee should have a comprehensive website up and running soon to handle complaints and suggestions that relate to facility upkeep and repair. There would be a link on the webpage to a site with information on University planning. This page will be a repository for suggestions and comments on past and present campus buildings and grounds. It will include a high-resolution photo of the campus. This should provide a base line for future talks on how to plan for future buildings and use of land.

On the Committee on Committees, Dr. Leaf reported that the Academic Council had approved his recommendations for the 2006-2007 replacements. The members this year are Jack Rushing (Arts & Humanities), Margaret Owen (Behavioral & Brain Sciences), Ted Day (School of Management), Juan Gonzalez (Natural Science & Mathematics), Marie Chevrier (Social Science) and Cy Cantrell (Engineering & Computer Science). Dr. Leaf, as Speaker, is Chair. He is planning to have the first meeting of the committee in about three weeks. The plan is to start as early as possible so the appointees will have time to respond and, if they accept, arrange their schedules accordingly. Last year’s committee was put together very late and appointees did not accept the positions.

SACS is also very serious about credentialing, and wants to know from which institutions of higher learning UTD faculty members earned their degrees.

On the calendar issues, Dr. Leaf had spoken with Dr. Wiorowski about how to address issues such as exam dates and grades due dates, and the effect of state legislation on the public school calendars. Dr. Wiorowski said the Calendar Committee has developed a template for scheduling, but has avoided larger policy issues that would determine how the template is to be applied. There are four such questions: Dr. Leaf had four questions for the Senate to consider:
1. Dr. Wiorkowski asked if there could be ‘provisional’ honors.
2. Do we need ‘dead’ days? Should there be a policy on it?
3. The lag time between grades in and convocation — how much time should there be between convocation and Christmas, and at the Spring graduation.
4. The coordination with the public high schools.

He asked if the Senate wanted to form a new committee or give it to an existing committee to consider these issues. The Senate agreed that we should form an ad hoc committee. Dr. Leaf will appoint the committee in consultation with the Academic Council.

4. FAC REPORT

Dr. Kaplan reported on the Faculty Advisory Council, which she and Dr. Bartlett attended.

There was a speaker, Ted Heath, from the U.T. Austin Library system who spoke on how contracting at the system level, instead of on an individual level, will help all the U.T. System libraries by providing greater access to materials while the System is saving money, sort of like buying in volume.

On other news, several of the other schools have a faculty committee on admissions and registrations. Since one of the action items for the UTD Senate in the upcoming year is to look at the admissions recruiting procedures, she said the Senate might want to consider setting up a committee for this issue.

Also, three new retirement plan options have been added to the Benefits package. The Board of Regents (BOR) is still pushing hard on graduation rates. They are also pushing hard for accountability processes for research centers and institutions. The Student Advisory Council had some issues they would like to have addressed, especially random drug testing for student healthcare workers. They would like to see guaranteed tuition rates, such as what UTD is already doing. They would like to see the whole U.T. System standardize tuition due dates so they can plan their budgets. They would like to have a system-level guide for transfer equivalency of courses. They would like online degree audit plan and accountability for advising. There is a problem at all of the campuses with advisors telling them they qualify to graduate and then saying they do not meet the requirements.

On SACS, Dr. Nelsen reported that they are very interested in certificate programs. They are considering requiring learning outcomes for all courses, including research. Faculty is now required to keep only samples of a student’s work, not all of it. There is some question about the fast-track programs and how concurrent courses that can be taken for graduate or undergraduate credit are being graded so that learning outcomes correspond to course level. In addition, they are looking at the credentials of faculty that have received their degrees from foreign institutions. Dr. Nelsen is considering an
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independent auditor to check the transcripts of foreign faculty to ensure the credibility of the courses.

From the legislature, they are providing funding for an electronic system that will hold records of graduates and be available for admissions offices in higher education schools access. UTD did receive some Texas Revenue Funding (TRF), but it is in the form of IOUs; they do not yet have the money to hand over.

A Senator who addressed the FAC told the attendees that the legislature does not see higher education as a priority, or important. There may be a tax windfall from the tax on gas prices and this extra tax might be made available to help all state education agencies with their energy costs.

One of the medical schools is assigning lab space based on funds received for research.

The “dating” system for research faculty is almost up and running. The website will help researchers to locate colleagues at other U.T. System institutions that they might collaborate with on their research projects.

5. PROVOST REPORT ON ACTIONS REGARDING PROMOTION & TENURE

There were roughly twenty cases for third-year, six-year and associate-to-professor recommendations. There was not total concurrence on recommendations in four instances. Two of these were at the assistant-to-associate plus tenure level. In those cases, the ad hoc committee, the Dean and the Committee on Qualifications of Academic Personnel (CQ) all concurred on giving positive recommendations; however, the Provost recommended to the President negatively. The other cases were from associate-to-full professor. On one, the ad hoc committee and the Dean recommended positively, but CQ recommended negatively. On the other, the ad hoc recommended positively, the Dean recommended negatively, and CQ was more or less positive. Of those latter two cases, on the first the Provost recommended concurrence with ad hoc and the Dean, but contrary to CQ. In the second case, the Provost recommended negatively, contrary to ad hoc and CQ. The two cases involving tenure were contested. A dispute hearing followed the appeals, and the findings were sent to the President. As far as the Provost is aware, the President has not made a final decision.

6. PROPOSED REVISIONS TO CHARGE FOR COMMITTEE ON WOMEN & MINORITIES

These revisions were sent from the Committee on Women & Minorities. They proposed changing the name to the Core Committee for the Support of Diversity and Equity, along with other changes to their charge. The President and the Academic Council had further suggested the word “core” be removed from the title. There are two major changes. The first is a broadening of the focus from only women and minorities to include all underrepresented groups along with general concerns over equity. The second makes it a
university-wide committee which reports to the President, rather than a Senate committee.

The speaker called for a motion to accept the revised charge as circulated. The motion was made and seconded. By a show of hands, the motion carried with no opposition.

7. ACADEMIC INTEGRITY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION ON TURNITIN.COM

The Academic Integrity Committee is recommending that the same scrutiny given to Master’s level papers as undergraduate papers. Dr. Leaf asked if it is a matter for the graduate dean in the appropriate office to enforce. Austin Cunningham, Dean of Graduate Studies, reported that he had met with the Integrity committee when this question was raised. The responsibility would rest with his office. The committee supported the idea and their opinion, with which Dr. Cunningham agreed, was that the appropriate time would be when the committee received the final copy of a paper. He said this process would ensure that any paper leaving the university will be of quality work, and will help alleviate any future question of plagiarism. Similar considerations apply to the Undergraduate Dean.

Accordingly, the Senate regards the motion as a recommendation to the Graduate and Undergraduate Deans.

The motion as circulated was seconded. The motion carried on a show of hands, with none opposed.

8. POLICY ON PEER REVIEW FOR SENIOR LECTURERS

The Speaker called for a motion to approve the policy on Peer Review for Senior Lecturers as circulated. The motion was made and seconded. The motion passed.

9. OFF CAMPUS BOOKSTORE COMPLAINT ON ACCESS TO COURSE LIST INFORMATION

Several years ago, the Senate voted to make it mandatory for faculty to provide a list of the required books for their courses to the UTD Bookstore. It was believed that the UTD Bookstore was going to forward that list on to Off-Campus Bookstore. That has not happened because the UTD Bookstore says the form is their property and they claim they do not have to send the list to anyone else. The Off-Campus Bookstore sent a letter to the previous Speaker of the Faculty about not receiving any lists of required books. The issue has come to the Senate for help in resolving the problem.

Dr. Wildenthal said his office would investigate the problem and see what can be done.
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10. QUALITY ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM

John Siebert, the speaker scheduled to talk about the Quality Enhancement Program (QEP), was not able to make the meeting.

Dr. Leaf explained that if UTD can show the SACS auditors that we have put a viable program in place that would provide extra quality to a student's campus life, and have visible outcomes to prove it, then SACS would not come every five years to review how the school is maintaining its certification. The SACS team is hoping to get the staff, students and faculty involved. The Provost is asking for ideas on new programs that the QEP can discuss at their meeting.

Richard Huckaba gave a short update on the SACS reaccreditation progress. He told the Senate it is urgent that the SACS team receive, as quickly as possible, core curriculum assessments on summer courses currently being taught.

11. ADJOURNMENT

There being no other business, Dr. Wildenthal adjourned the meeting.

APPROVED:  
[Signature]
Speaker of the Faculty

DATE: 180606