
ABSENT: Phillip Anderson, Gail Breen, Tom Brikowski, Anthony Champagne, Muhammad Kalam, Shun Chen Niu, Simeon Ntafos, Balakrishnan Prabhakaran, Ravi Prakash, Young Ryu, S. Venkatesan

VISITORS: Priscilla Beadle, Basheer Benhalim, Leslie Guditis (TWU doctoral student observer), Richard Huckaba, Abby Kratz, Iris Kwong

1. CALL TO ORDER, ANNOUNCEMENTS AND QUESTIONS

President Daniel called the meeting to order and thanked the faculty for attending. As the meeting followed the Faculty Town Hall Meeting, there were no questions or announcements.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes of the September 21, 2005 meeting. The motion carried.

3. SPEAKER’S REPORT

The Speaker announced that the School of Arts and Humanities has turned in its Goals and Objectives; NS&M has turned in a partial list, and the other schools have been asked to expedite the process in their schools.

The Steering committee has been set and includes Joy Lynn Reed, Richard Huckaba, Larry Redlinger, Dennis Kratz, Donna Rogers, Jody Nelsen, Austin Cunningham, Andy Blanchard, Gopal Gupta, Kimberly Kempf-Leonard, Bill Hargrove, and Robert Nelsen.

The Scheduling Committee has developed a survey to measure student preferences for times and days of classes, and surveys will be distributed in the near future. Simeon Ntafos is chair of the committee, and Dean Coleman agreed to assist with the survey.

4. U. T. SYSTEM FACULTY ADVISORY COUNCIL (FAC) REPORT
The U. T. System will be preparing its own strategic plan and has asked faculty to come forward with what they feel are the three biggest issues. The plan will then be constructed downward.

The U. T. System finds that graduation rates are unacceptable and wants each of the universities to create a comprehensive plan to improve it rate. The new plan is to cover 12 areas including student advising practices, total curriculum review, faculty development programs for effective teaching, review of scheduling practices, and review of all gateway courses. The current graduation rates for UTD are 29.6% - 4 year; 50.9% - 5 year; and 56.2% - 6 year. The U. T. System expects to see a gradual improvement in the graduation rates. At the U. T. System conference concerning these matters, it was surprising that Commissioner Paredes cautioned not to expect more improvement that 2 to 4% every four years.

The FAC passed a resolution asking each Senate to pass a resolution asking the president to publish and widely disseminate the universities’ procedures for merit raises.

5. LATIN HONORS

Currently, Latin honors are given to approximately 38% of UTD graduating students and are based solely on the student's junior and senior GPA. There is a perception that honors are easier to obtain in some schools. The discussion centered on whether honors should be based solely on GPA or whether there should continue to be a required senior thesis. There was also discussion about whether each school at UTD should have different GPAs to qualify for honors.

There will be a committee formed to look at the program. The committee will consist of at least one representative from each school and at least 7 students. The Speaker asked for volunteers for the committee. The committee includes Murray Leaf, Elizabeth Salter, Cyrus Cantrell, Homer Montgomery, and others.

It was pointed out that although the question of requiring a thesis or project was visited three years ago the issue was never resolved. It was suggested that the committee not revisit the thesis issue but focus on the difference in percentage of students from the schools receiving honors. Equity between schools in awarding its students honors is the most important issue for the committee.

The consensus was to allow the ad hoc committee to look at the entire issue and to bring to the Senate the recommendation for what the committee considers best.

6. SERVICE LEARNING

The idea of service learning was presented three years ago by the U. T. System Student Advisory Committee. At that time students requested that service learning be incorporated into the curriculum. It is important to distinguish between student
volunteerism and service learning. Service learning must be incorporated into the curriculum of academic coursework.

A report done by the Service Learning Committee as part of the strategic planning would like to see an ad hoc committee formed to look into the matter. The committee would need to consist of faculty members, who look at the curricular implications of service learning. Richard Scotch volunteered to serve on the committee and pointed out the need to find an appropriate way to closely monitor service learning projects.

Dr. Daniel pointed out that at the University most things are accomplished from the bottom up, not the top down, so for a service learning initiative to be successful it must diffuse to the faculty. Also, service learning should be done because it is a valuable academic pursuit and should not have the primary goal of building community, although that would be a good externality.

It was also pointed out that internships, constructed with faculty input, can be a valuable learning experience for students. There needs to be an information system to match students with outside businesses who are interested in providing opportunities to UTD students.

Discussion included the need to make sure service learning programs are closely followed. There were also comments on the lack of interaction between UTD and the local community. The comments also focused on the need to have more involvement between UTD and local public schools.

7. SOCIAL SCIENCE BY-LAWS

The Senate was presented with a copy of the revised by-laws from the School of Social Science. The Speaker noted that the Senate does not approve or disapprove by-laws developed by the faculty in a school, but does review the by-laws for adequacy of faculty rights and compliance with Senate guidelines. There was a motion to accept the revisions. The motion was seconded and approved.

8. SENATE, UNIVERSITY-WIDE AND PERIODIC PERFORMANCE REVIEW COMMITTEES

The Senate was given a copy of the final membership on the Senate, university-wide and periodic performance review committees’ makeup. Dr. Nelsen commented that this year was the most difficult year he has had getting faculty members to participate on the various committees. He had a large number of people whom he approached for the committees turn him down. Even chairs have declined this year. It was suggested, in the future, departments request volunteers for the committees and then forward the list of volunteers to the Committee on Committees.
9. OTHER BUSINESS

The Bush library will not be coming to UTD. Dr. Nelsen pointed out that UTD did not make the first cut and did not have the opportunity to present its case verbally.

10. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

APPROVED: ______________________________  DATE: November 16, 2005

Speaker of the Faculty