

TSU FACULTY SENATE MEETING

7 Oct. 2010

Minutes

Howard Beeth, Secretary

Members Present: Edieth Wu (Chair); Howard Beeth (Secretary); Rasoul Saneifard (Treasurer); Alexis Brooks de Vita (editor, *The Faculty Speaks*); Thorpe Butler (COLABS); Kiran Chilakamarri (COST); Daniel Georges-Abeyie (SOPA); Anna James (TMSL); Andrea Shelton (Pharmacy & Health Sciences); Mammo Woldie (Business); Zivar Yousefipour (Pharmacy & Health Sciences). **Total: 11.**

Members Absent: Lalita Sen (Vice-Chair); Demetrius Kazakos (Asst. Secretary); C.J. Tymczak (Parliamentarian); Macaulay Akpaffiong (Pharmacy); Robert Ford (COST); Doris Jackson (Pharmacy & Health Sciences); Wei Li (COST); Emlyn Norman (COLABS); Byron Price (Graduate School); Sara White (COLABS). **Total: 10.**

Agenda Items

Call to Order

The Chair began the meeting at 3:15p without a quorum which was not assembled until 3:30p. While the quorum was assembling, she turned the floor over to Dr. Adebayo Oyekan, the Interim Associate Provost and Associate Vice President for Research, and his colleague, Linda Gardiner, who jointly spoke about university funding, travel, and seed grant policy.

Faculty Research—Funding, Travel, and Seed Grants

Re: travel, Dr. Oyekan said that President Rudley must personally approve all international travel as a matter of state law, and that all applicants must apply for it at least 60 days in advance.

Re: seed grants, Dr. Oyekan said that they are normally in the \$10-15K range and are reviewed in-house. However, he said that last year our university established grants in the \$25-50K range for especially meritorious grants that must be externally reviewed. Notices for both categories of grants are sent out in May of each year with an application deadline of 1 Sept.

Re: travel grants, Dr. Oyekan said that there were no deadlines for application, although the final awards are announced by the end of December. Prior to that time, grants are awarded until the money runs out. Lately, he said, our university has decided to give less for individual grants in order to have the funds to assist more people.

Re: both seed and travel grants, Dr. Oyekan said that all the funding comes from the state. He said that Provost Ohia makes the final decision regarding both seed and travel grants. He reported that the university is currently using a somewhat sophisticated tracking procedure to try to match grants with appropriate faculty.

Dr. Oyekan's presentation stimulated a lively discussion. The discussion included expressions of some concerns, including the following:

Senator Georges-Abeyie said that because of the increasing expense of research, he would prefer fewer grants in larger amounts rather than more grants in smaller amounts. Several other senators agreed with him. However, Dr. Oyekan replied that if faculty really cared about their research careers, they should be willing to spend some of their own money to fund it.

Senator Brooks de Vita noted that significant travel and registration costs to attend and present at professional conferences initially had to be paid by faculty, who were later at least partially reimbursed by the university. She said it would provide relief to faculty if there was a way for the university to pay these expenses up front rather than afterward. However, Dr. Oyekan replied that time considerations re: budgets and requisitions made this unlikely, although the Chair noted that each college now has a business office that might be able to assist in pre-paying some conference expenses.

Senator Yousefipour and Senator Georges-Abeyie both returned to the issue of the size of grants, urging that grant amounts be increased. Senator Yousefipour emphasized that international travel and conference fees are so high that modestly salaried faculty could not afford to attend them without greater institutional support. Senator Georges-Abeyie added that salaries vary widely from college to college and between faculty ranks, noting that junior faculty from less affluent colleges need much more institutional assistance than senior faculty from more affluent colleges.

However, Dr. Oyekan reiterated that research was a mutual expense that had to be borne by both our institution as well as the faculty.

Before they left, senators thanked Dr. Oyekan and Linda Gardiner for their informative presentation and then turned to other business.

Approval of Senate's September 2010 Meeting Minutes

Senator Beeth provided senators with copies of the Senate's September 2010 meeting minutes, which were approved with one correction.

Faculty Manual Sub-Committee

In Senator Sen's absence, discussion focused on the criteria being used by some administrators to evaluate faculty tenure and promotion applications. Some senators remembered that Provost Ohia, when queried about this in an earlier faculty meeting, had announced that faculty would have the option of being evaluated either by the standards established by the 2002 version of *The Faculty Manual* or by those in the proposed but not yet formally adopted 2010 version. However, several senators, including some representing SOPA, COLABS and COST, among other colleges, reported that faculty in their colleges were being told by deans that they had no choice and had to accept evaluation based only upon one administratively-selected version of the *Manual*, in violation of university policy. The Chair took the position that the rules of the 2002 *Manual* governed until they were formally replaced by approval and adoption of a subsequent manual.

Much heated discussion followed in which virtually all senators participated. One senator reminded his colleagues that TSU had a long history of administrators who tried to intimidate faculty and that many legal suits followed, damaging the reputation of our university. He hoped that wrongful behavior by current administrators would not cause yet more injury to the school's reputation. In the end, after much back-and-forth and round-and-round, the Senate authorized a sub-committee consisting of Senators Beeth, Brooks de Vita, and Butler to send a memo to Provost Ohia about the matter, asking that he in turn send a memo to all deans clearly stating the evaluation option available to faculty under university policy and requesting, in light of the confusion, that the tenure/promotion deadline of 20 October be reset to a later date in order to allow faculty additional reasonable time to prepare their tenure/promotion dossiers.

The hour being late, senators agreed to postpone discussion of remaining agenda items until the November meeting and adjourned their October 2010 monthly meeting at 5:30p.