

TSU FACULTY SENATE MEETING

3 December 2009

Minutes

Howard Beeth, Secretary

Members Present: Edieth Wu (Chair), Lalita Sen (Vice Chair), Howard Beeth (Secretary), Rasoul Saneifard (Treasurer), Alexis Brooks de Vita (Editor, *The Faculty Speaks*), C.J. Tymczak (Parliamentarian), Macaulay Akpaffiong (Senator, Pharmacy & Health Sciences), Thorpe Butler (Senator, COLABS), Daniel Georges-Abeyie (Senator, SOPA), Anna James (Senator, TMSL), Wei Lu (Senator, COST), Emlyn Norman (Senator, COLABS), Andrea Shelton (Senator, Pharmacy & Health Sciences), Sara White (Senator, COLABS), Zivar Yousefipour (Senator, Pharmacy & Health Sciences). **Total: 15**

Members Absent: Demetrius Kazakos (Asst. Secretary), Kiran Chilakararri (Senator, COST), Doris Jackson (Senator, Pharmacy & Health Sciences), Michael Sollars (Senator, The Graduate School), Johnnie Williams (Senator, JHJSOB). **Total: 5**

Agenda Items

Call to Order & Campus Parking Update

President Wu called the meeting to order at 3:10p when a sufficient number of members were present to constitute a quorum. She introduced three guests including Ms. Gloria Walker, the Chief Operating Officer of the University, and TSU Chief of Police Roger D. Byars, who together provided Senators with an update on faculty parking on campus.

Ms. Walker began by giving a brief history of parking garage expenses, which are costly and have created a huge University debt. This year, she explained, the Texas Legislature helped the University service the debt. In return, the University has had to maximize profits from the garages, and this has caused some faculty distress because of increased fees.

Ms. Walker estimated that the campus has about 4000 parking places. The garages account for about half of them. Overall, about 30% of the spaces on campus are reserved for faculty. Plans are to cluster faculty parking in Lots E and K with limited spaces available elsewhere. Faculty will be charged \$290 a year for spaces collectively reserved for faculty and \$390 for individually-reserved faculty spaces. The first floors of both garages can be designated for faculty collectively, although not individually. Additional campus spaces elsewhere will be made available for guests of faculty and staff. Campus shuttle buses may or may not be available in the

future. TSU police will be charged with parking enforcement, and violators will have their vehicles impounded on campus rather than elsewhere. Chief Byars reminded the Senate that University parking policy is still evolving and that it will be influenced by a “TSU Parking and Transportation Advisory Board” that will include students, staff, and faculty. Senator Butler is a member of this Board.

Much discussion followed the plans outlined by COO Walker and Chief Byars. Vice President Sen voiced the opinion that in general there were not enough handicapped parking spaces on campus and that shuttle busses, while they ran, made no accommodation for handicapped riders. Chief Byars replied that the University met regulations regarding the number of handicapped parking designated on campus but hoped to increase their number in the future. In response to the concerns of other Senators, Chief Byars said that the key to a successful parking policy was enforcement, including issuing tickets, gated lots, and perhaps the use of boots. He said that high-tech, on-line parking reservations and ticket violations were on the horizon for TSU. He said the University is also considering buying its own tow truck and providing drivers for it; this, he said, would require up-front expenses but provide long-term savings. Senator Akpaffiong wondered if pharmacy students would continue to have to pay for their parking in the Medical Center, and Senator Brooks de Vita questioned whether all faculty members should have to pay the same rates for parking when their salaries greatly differed. Chief Byars said that these questions were among those that would have to be considered the TSU Parking and Transportation Advisory Board.

Chair’s Announcements

After the guests were thanked and excused, President Wu made some announcements. Many of them had to do with University-level committee appointments. President Wu said that the University was making a serious attempt to involve faculty in these important committees. She distributed the membership lists of some committees. As mentioned previously, Senator Butler represents the Senate on the TSU Parking and Transportation Advisory Board, and Vice President Sen volunteered to join him on this committee. The Chair is a member of the Professorships’ Review Committee, charged with reviewing policies for awarding distinguished, named, and endowed professorships. Vice President Sen is a member of the Ad Hoc Committee on Faculty Workload. Senators Brooks de Vita and Butler are members of the Ad Hoc Committee on Textbook Policies and Procedures.

The Chair also distributed an analysis of the length of time it takes undergraduate students to earn degrees at various Texas universities. According to this report, it takes TSU students over 11 semesters to graduate; only students at the University of Houston/Downtown take more time (12+ semesters). TSU students also require more hours (166+) to graduate, more than any of the 10 schools surveyed. The analysis included recommendations to speed up graduation.

The Chair also reported that work is on-going on the Senate’s website, with the University of Texas website being considered as a model for our own.

The Chair concluded by saying that she is trying to arrange moving the time of the Faculty Assembly Meeting from 4p to 11a at every semester’s opening University meeting and to move Faculty Senate elections to a more sensible time. Vice President Sen suggested that when these times and dates are finalized, they should be included in the *Faculty Manual*.

Approval of Minutes

On a motion by Senator Norman, seconded by Senator Georges-Abeyie, the minutes of the November 2009 Faculty Senate Meeting were approved as submitted. In answer to a request, Secretary Beeth agreed to have the Senate's staffer, Ms. Josie Decatur, email future draft minutes to all members of the Senate prior to the meeting when they would be submitted for Senate approval.

Committee Assignments

The following members indicated a willingness to serve or were serving on the Faculty Manual Sub-Committee: Butler, Georges-Abeyie, Saneifard, Shelton, Sen, and Wu.

The following members indicated a willingness to serve or were serving on the Annual Evaluations Committee: Brooks de Vita, Norman, Saneifard, and Sen.

The Chair reminded the Senate that administrators make the final selection of faculty members nominated to serve on committees with the aim of a fair representation from each of the various colleges.

Salary Data Comparison

Vice President Sen reported encountering problems regarding this important project. One problem is that now an Open Records request is required to obtain salary data. Also, current data may not be accurate. Accordingly, Sen requested senators to review their respective colleges to see if the ranks of colleagues there remained accurate or had changed, and to report the result of their college survey to Senate staffer, Ms. Josie Decatur, by 15 Dec.

Faculty Speaks

Editor Brooks de Vita thanked Senate staffer Ms. Josie Decatur for her help on the last issue of the newsletter and said the next issue would be in February 2010. The Chair reiterated her pledge to have the newsletter on the Senate's website once the website itself is up and running.

Phased Retirement

Senator Butler reported that he is learning a lot from the University of Houston phased retirement policy, which is on the Internet. He and his committee hope to craft a TSU policy in time to have it included in the new *Faculty Manual*.

Vice President Sen recommended linking phased retirement policy to sabbatical policy, and The Chair reported that State of Texas law already contains a provision for sabbaticals which are legally regarded as a type of "faculty development". The difficulty, said Senator Butler, has always been to get TSU to fund it. There was discussion around the table about how university funding could be obtained. Members Butler, Norman, Sen, and Wu all stressed the importance of building a sabbatical budget from the bottom up—that is, beginning at the department level. The Chair additionally thought that the issue should be referred to the Budget Committee. Vice President Sen suggested raising the sabbatical issue in the Deans' Council. Secretary Beeth thought an article in *Faculty Speaks* might help, especially if re-enforced with a strongly worded faculty Senate resolution addressed to administrative entities.

Further discussion of the topic revealed that a medley of tactics might be utilized in dealing with TSU administrators about sabbaticals. Senator Anna James said that the Senate's approach in general should be guided by research, advocacy, and implementation. However, while she and The Chair stressed that moderation and diplomacy should always be important, other members cautioned that successful advocacy also might benefit or even require some boldness. Senator Butler, for example, mentioned that faculty in the past have been administratively intimidated; yet, as advocates for the faculty, he maintained that Senators nevertheless had to be brave and insist that sabbatical policy not only be implemented but applied permanently, consistently, and fairly. Senator Norman also voiced the opinion that as faculty representatives, senators had to be forthright in advocating a just policy and pursue it with vigor. Senator Akpaffiong and Secretary Beeth agreed with this.

Old & New Business

Treasurer Rasoul Saneifard complained that administrators are bending rules on workload policy and travel funds. He suggested that new administrators, like new faculty, need training and workshops to acquire knowledge of university policies, rules, and procedures. There seemed general agreement with his comments. Vice President Sen noted that untenured faculty members often know that rules are being violated by administrators but feel too vulnerable to oppose them—yet another reason, she added, that points to the need for a strong, active Senate to promote and protect faculty interests.

The hour being late, Senators agreed to postpone further discussion and adjourned their last meeting in 2009 at 5:10p.