

Baylor University

Faculty Senate Newsletter

April, 2001

The 2000-01 Faculty Senate officers and membership:

Chair: Jay Losey
(Arts and Sciences)

Chair-elect: David Longfellow
(Arts and Sciences)

Secretary: Charles Weaver
(Arts and Sciences)

Publicity: Buddy Gilchrest
(Education)

Business:
Joe Cox
Mark Dunn
Van Gray
Karen Johnson
Charles Stanley
Jane Williams

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Linda Adams
Robert "Bob" Baird
Rosalie Beck
Anne-Marie Bowery
Ray Cannon
Tom Hanks
David Longfellow
Jay Losey
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Jim Patton
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Ray Wilson
Joe Yelderman
David Young

Education:
Fred Curtis
Buddy Gilchrest
Pat Sharp

**Engineering and
Computer Science:**
Don Farris

Law:
Marianne Auld

Libraries:
Kathy Sparkman

Music:
Jane Abbott-Kirk
Michael Jacobson

Nursing:
Martha Sanford

Truett Seminary:
David Garland

Tenure Decisions, Benefits, Initiatives, Computer Matters, and Elections

by Jay Losey
Faculty Senate Chair

Tenure Decisions

When I learned that seven out of 19 of our colleagues were denied tenure, I felt saddened for them and their families. As my sadness gave way to reflection, I wondered about the percentage of denials. In my service on the senate, I couldn't recall more than three denials in a given year. What happened this year? That question led me to another: Had the tenure-track candidates been carefully mentored and did they know they had perceived deficiencies? My belief was that the candidates had been mentored well and that, in most instances, departmental tenure guidelines were in place.

David Longfellow, the incoming senate chair, and I have had conversations with the president and provost. Both assured us that all the affected candidates were aware of deficiencies based on the pre-tenure letters in their files. Further, both assured us that no pattern was apparent in this year's denials. I subsequently pursued the matter by raising questions with three members of the Tenure Committee. Because of strict rules of confidentiality, these committee members could only provide general responses or no responses to specific questions. In short, I could draw no conclusion from these conversations. Today, I still have no definitive explanation for the percentage denied tenure.

However, I can say that when I asked the president in a meeting with several senators about teaching, research/publications, service, and collegiality and the role they play in tenure decisions, he indicated that he expects to see evidence of growth and excellence in the four main domains. At the same time, he indicated that each faculty member has different talents and strengths. Some may have outstanding talent as teachers, while others may have outstanding talent as researchers. The intricate mosaic must be interpreted on a case-by-case basis.

Unquestionably, we faculty members are being required to do more today than in the past. I want to encourage tenured faculty members to be actively involved in mentoring tenure-track candidates; we need to help our junior colleagues in every possible way, including assignments that involve reduced teaching responsibilities, release time, repeat course assignments, team teaching, less onerous departmental committee assignments, and so on. There are times when those of you on tenure track may have to say "no" politely and tactfully when requests impinge upon what you must do to earn tenure. We all need to pull together to ensure successful results for those seeking tenure. Surely we want to see our junior colleagues, with whom we labor together for many years, earn tenure.

Benefits

Marilyn Crone, Vice President for Human Resources, and Richard Amos, Director of Compensation and Benefits, are currently studying all facets of Baylor's faculty and staff benefits. Marilyn Crone is gathering as much information and data as she can in preparing a comprehensive benefits document, which she hopes to release in late spring or early summer. She welcomes all inquiries and suggestions regarding any benefit and would like to hear from you. I want to thank Marilyn for working with me on this matter of vital concern to all faculty and staff members.

The senate supports reducing the service requirement from 20 to 10 years and has given to Marilyn the policies of several other universities on this matter. If you have a view regarding the service component or have data, you should call or e-mail Marilyn Crone or Richard Amos. Further, the focus groups studying benefits have met once and will meet again to follow up on the consultants' recommendations. Finally, post retirement health coverage is being studied. Both Marilyn and Richard have heard our concerns and are striving to provide a post retirement benefit package that reflects the best interests of faculty and staff members and the university. I want to thank Marilyn for listening patiently to me as I've tried to express the concerns of faculty and staff members on this sensitive issue.

Initiatives

The senate has a number of ongoing initiatives. First, the Part-time Faculty Ad Hoc Committee, chaired by Deb Johnston (Health, Human Performance and Recreation) has recently produced a report along with recommendations. Presently, the university has no policy on part-time faculty, who now number 100+. The senate will discuss and, I hope, vote on the part-time faculty document at the April meeting. If approved, the document will be presented at the May Council of Deans meeting.

Second, the plus/minus grading proposal is being considered by the senate. This proposal will need the widespread support of students, faculty members, and administrators before it comes for a vote in the senate sometime in the fall 2001 semester. I have already presented and explained the rationale for the proposal to Student Congress and the Council of Deans. I provide here the suggested proposal created and unanimously recommended by the Faculty Committee on Student Life and Services (Ray Wilson, senate liaison):

100-Point Scale	Plus/Minus Option	Present Scheme (example)
	A+ 4.0	
93-100	A 4.0	A 4.0
90-92	A- 3.67	
87-89	B+ 3.33	B+ 3.5
83-86	B 3.0	B 3.0
80-82	B- 2.67	
77-79	C+ 2.33	C+ 2.5
73-76	C 2.0	C 2.0
70-72	C- 1.67	
67-69	D+ 1.33	
63-66	D 1.0	D 1.0
60-62	D- 0.67	
0-59	F 0.0	F 0.0

The rationale for the proposal is two-fold: that Baylor University is the last Big 12 institution with the plus only system and that a plus/minus system will give faculty members the opportunity to make finer distinctions in assigning final grades, thereby strengthening the academic integrity of the university. This proposal is a way to initiate conversation. If you have any views on the plus/minus grading proposal, please give them to me (x4896 or Jay_Losey@baylor.edu).

Third, the Tenured Faculty Development Plan Task Force, chaired by Jim Patton (Psychology and Neuroscience), continues to collect data and work towards producing a final report. If the final report appears before the senate's May meeting, it will take priority; otherwise, this initiative will take precedence in the fall 2001 semester. I know that you all understand how vital and complicated creating a post-tenure developmental plan must be. Everyone involved in creating the plan wants to make certain that it reflects well on the university and is acceptable to tenured faculty.

Fourth, the Policies for Information Systems Usage (formerly the Electronic Systems Usage Policy) revision has been approved by the president and is now in place. The senate's primary concern was to establish clear line of authorizing electronic searches by vice presidents and to clarify that the accused faculty or staff member would have due process—i.e., would go through the dismissal process as specified in the Faculty Handbook (151-160). To view the newly implemented policy, you should go to the following web site: <http://www.baylor.edu/ITC/policies/BU-InfoSys-Policy.html>. I want to thank Reagan Ramsower, Vice President and Chief Information Officer, for his guidance in developing the revised policy.

Computer Matters

Presently, ITC, under the leadership of Reagan Ramsower, is supporting two platforms and thus maintaining Macs and PCs. An informal policy has developed regarding requests for Macs. Any faculty member, staff member, or academic unit may submit a request, along with reasons for the request, to the appropriate dean. Once the dean approves a request, Reagan reviews the approval and gives the final go-ahead. This informal policy has helped those who require Macs to run certain software programs. However, as the university moves towards a wireless environment, I imagine that PCs will be the dominant computer. This semester, the BIC is involved in a laptop initiative. This initiative, known as eBIC, involves faculty, staff, and students connected to the BIC. If the eBIC initiative proves successful, I can imagine that more and more faculty, staff, and students will request laptops. Faculty members will continue to integrate wireless computing into classroom presentations, and students will need to have the same technology. I sense that Macs are, over time, going to be reduced and eventually phased out as the university moves towards a wireless environment..

Elections

As you all know, we encountered some problems with mailing labels during the election process. I want to thank Chuck Weaver, senate secretary, for his diligence in making certain that everyone eligible to vote had an opportunity to do so. I'm pleased to report the results of the election:

NEWLY-ELECTED SENATORS for the term 2001-2004

Arts & Sciences

Bob Baldrige (BIO)
Rosalie Beck (REL)
William Cooper (PHIL)
Ann McGlashan (MFL)
Ray Wilson (BIO)
David Young (CHE)

Business

Mark Dunn (MKT)
Kent Gilbreath (ECO)

Law

Marianne Auld

Music

Jane Abbott-Kirk

Education

Eric Robinson (ED PSY)

To all of you who were nominated and stood for election, I want to thank you for your support of the senate. To those of you elected, I look forward to your contributions and to your leadership.

This newsletter is the last one being produced by Buddy Gilchrest, publicity officer. I want to offer my congratulations to Buddy on his retirement and to thank him publicly for his many years of loyal and dedicated service to Baylor. Buddy has also been instrumental in improving the content of the newsletter and in maintaining the senate's web site. Buddy, we're all going to miss you! This article is my final one as senate chair. I want to thank all of you for your support this year. I also want to thank David Longfellow (History) for his help and advice. I wish David well as he assumes chair duties in August and can promise you that he will be a strong advocate for the faculty.

"MY BAYLOR"

Web Pages Customized for Each Student

by Reagan Ramsower

Chief Information Officer Baylor University

Technology is helping to enrich the learning environment on campus and extend our presence to alumni and friends. The computer in the last four decades has become an indispensable tool for many academic disciplines. Today, computers coupled with broadband communications are proving to be useful tools in all of the academic disciplines. Web pages, in particular, provide an unparalleled opportunity to create a vibrant campus environment where the seeds of life-long learning are planted and nurtured.

Almost every student who enters Baylor this fall will bring a computer, many of them laptops. These students and their parents are expecting that the computers will be used to assist the students in their learning. These students and their parents are also expecting a rich, traditional, face-to-face Baylor classroom education of the highest quality. These expectations are not contradictory—they are complementary. High tech and high touch can work hand-in-

hand to create an outstanding educational experience.

It is not entirely clear what is the best way to use the tools of technology to strengthen teaching and learning at Baylor. However, in order to find a good path, we need to heighten the conversation regarding technology and teaching. I find scenario building to be a good way to frame conversations; therefore, permit me to sketch a possible scenario of technology at Baylor for the 2002-2003 academic year.

Perhaps you have visited a site on the Internet that allows you to create a customized, personal page with topics and information that you specifically select. My Yahoo, for example, allows you to customize a personal page with topics, news, shopping items, and other information of interest to you personally. In my scenario, every student starting the 2002 school year will have a collection of "My Baylor" web pages that are personally designed and customized for each student. A student's My Baylor pages will include campus announcements, a list of information regarding classes that the student is taking, a personal calendar containing tasks and assignments taken from each of the student's classes, and a list of current tasks that show all the class assignments pending for the student. In addition, depending on interest, the student will customize the page by adding news and announcements regarding his or her major, career choice, and interest in Baylor's social, academic and sports clubs. Hot links point to the web sites of the current classes for that student. Typical class web sites include class news and announcements, a class schedule, information on the faculty member teaching the course, a repository of electronic documents relating to the course including electronic library materials, and the assignments for the course.

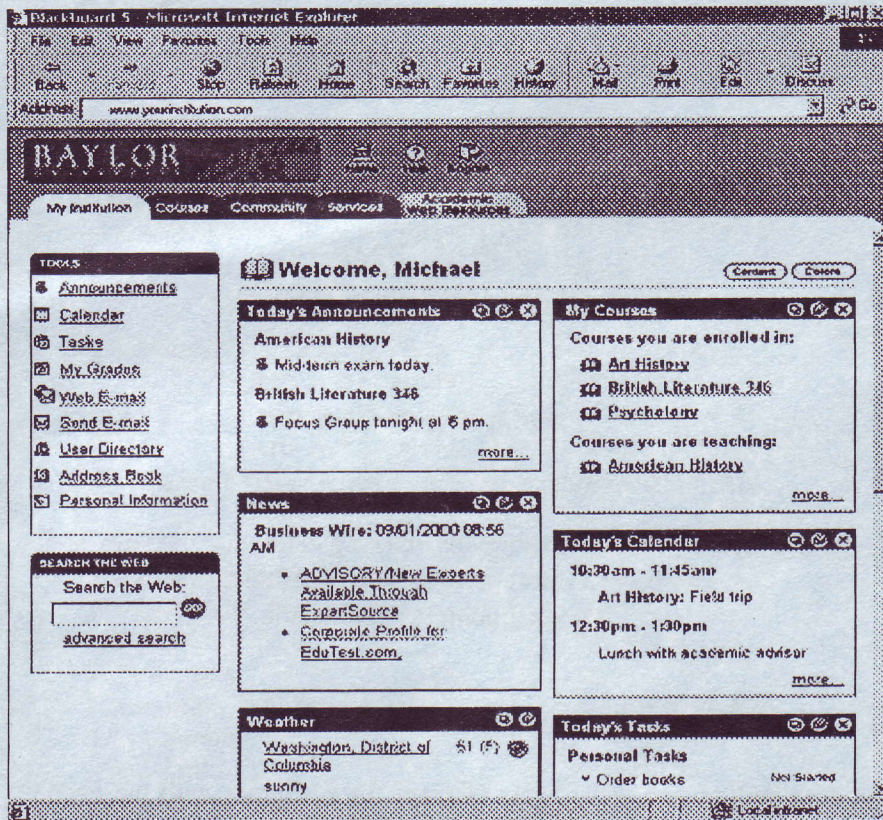
My Baylor web pages will also support a wide variety of ways to communicate among professors and students. E-mail will be the most common electronic form of communication, but willing professors will also utilize discussion boards, online chat sessions, instance messaging, and video conferencing.

My Baylor pages provide a technology service to augment the learning environment of students. Campus life is raised to a higher level of awareness by providing instant access to customized news, announcements, and calendars regarding Baylor classes and events that are relevant to each student. Students become better organized and more successful because the pending assignments for all their courses are highly visible on their personal My Baylor pages. The ability to access course materials and communicate electrically increases learning outside the classroom. Teamwork increases because electronic tools enable appropriate work to be done without requiring a face-to-face meeting.

One of the most important benefits of My Baylor pages is long-term. Long after a student graduates, My Baylor pages continue keeping alumni informed of events at Baylor. Through their My Baylor web pages, alumni may register for online adult education classes to retool a skill or kindle their desire to learn about Psalms, neural networks, 18th century art, or the life of Thomas Jefferson. Contact with cherished professors and other student is maintained through My Baylor pages. Lifelong learning, Baylor style, will be delivered

from My Baylor pages.

The top/first "My Baylor" page of a student would look something like this:



I would love to hear what you think of My Baylor web pages. If such a scenario is to become a reality, the first step requires a willing faculty taking the time to create class web sites. While tools are available to assist in this process, you would have to devote some time to this task. A basic class web site with only the essential information will probably take only four to twelve hours to create. A highly sophisticated class web site with lots of bells and whistles can take much longer depending on your experience with computers.

I personally believe that My Baylor pages will provide sufficient benefit to students and alumni to be worth this effort, but continued dialogue is needed. Please drop me an e-mail or give me a call and join in the conversation on this scenario. Of course, you can also send me your own scenario.

Faculty Senate Meeting Dates
All meetings scheduled for Cashion 303 at 3:30 p.m.

April 17, 2001

May 8, 2001

President's State of the University Address
Barfield Drawing Room, Bill Daniel Student Center
3:30 - 5:00p.m.

Wednesday, April 18, 2001

Faculty Senate Website

http://www.baylor.edu/~Fac_Senate/senatehome.html

The Senate website has minutes, meeting dates, membership, and other important information. Please send suggestions to:
buddy_gilchrest@Baylor.edu.

The Senate wishes to thank:

Dan Williamson and Angela Granger for assistance with the Faculty Senate web page and
Tresa Gilchrest for assistance with the Faculty Senate Newsletter.

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