

Minutes, Baylor University Faculty Senate

14 January 2014 • 3:30 • Cashion 111

Members Absent: Baldrige,^{*} Boyd,[†] Madden, Shoaf, Souza-Fuentes,[‡] Still, Woody[§]

The meeting was called to order at 3:30 PM by Senate Chair Patton.

Senator Wood made a motion to approve the minutes from the December meeting, which was seconded by Senator Pounders and passed.

Chair Patton presented President Ken Starr with a certificate reflecting the Senate's resolution congratulating him on his recent appointment as Chancellor of the University and commending him for his leadership. President Starr then addressed the Senate.

- He emphasized the importance of faculty mentoring of undergraduates, noting that the degree to which faculty make themselves available as mentors plays a large role in students' decision-making process when choosing a college.
- Judge Starr also expressed gratitude to the Faculty Senate for its support of the transition agreement last fall.

Chair Patton announced that membership of the Senate committee on Service was almost finalized.

Reports were received from several committees:

- Chair Patton reported from the Council of Deans
 - The main issue of interest was a report regarding enrollment, which stated that applications were about the same now as they were at this point last year.

^{*} Ann Rushing attended in his place.

[†] Doug Claybrook attended in her place.

[‡] Theresa Kennedy attended in her place.

[§] Dale Connally attended in her place.

- Chair-Elect Baker reported on the Staff Council meeting.
 - President Starr addressed the Staff Council.

- Senator Wood reported on Student Life.
 - He applauded Student Life for the wonderful trip they coordinated for students to attend the Fiesta Bowl.

- Senator Neubert reported from the Athletic Council.

- Senator Burleson reported from the Admissions Committee.
 - The committee is primarily dealing with a number of appeals at this point.

New Business

- Chair Patton reminded the Senate that two years ago it voted to become a part of the Coalition on Intercollegiate Athletics (COIA). That group's national convention is coming up in late February, and he sought the Senate's wishes regarding sending a representative.
 - The Chair stated that the convention was a useful opportunity to interface with other schools regarding issues such as compliance, initiatives to provide student athletes with better stipends, etc.
 - He noted in particular that COIA was asking all faculty senate chairs to have an interview with their institution's athletic director regarding the school's compliance with the NCAA's concussion initiative.
 - COIA will then collect and analyze this data.
 - One senator asked if there was any down side to our participation, and Chair Patton said he did not know of any.
 - Another senator stated that it is incumbent upon the Faculty Senate to have a voice in overseeing Baylor's athletic program as it gains increasing national prominence.
 - Chair Patton added that for the well-being of our student-athletes, we have an obligation to raise concerns about issues such as scheduling basketball games during the week of finals.

- COIA provides us with an opportunity to learn from the experiences of other schools.
- Chair Patton then drew the Senate’s attention to the College of Arts & Sciences’ *Pro Futuris* strategic plan, especially section 2B that emphasizes reliance on Academic Analytics (AA) in making decisions about tenure, faculty promotions, and research leaves.
 - It was noted that the reliability of Academic Analytics is questionable, in part because it relies upon data that is two years old, which makes it useless for making timely decisions about tenure, etc. It was also observed that reliance upon AA would be applicable to the humanities, not just STEM disciplines.
- Senators made several other points regarding the use of AA:
 - It was noted that AA can only access certain types of grant funding, making it unreliable.
 - There were questions about why faculty members aren’t allowed to view their AA ranking.
 - It was pointed out that reliance upon this kind of metric for evaluating faculty runs counter to President Starr’s emphasis upon faculty mentoring.
 - Another concern is that reliance upon AA will drive departments to shift their hiring decisions in favor of candidates who will score high on AA.
 - One senator added that it will also shape faculty research towards more popular topics that will get more citations and thus improve one’s AA score.
- Chair Patton suggested inviting Michael Matier, Vice Provost for Institutional Effectiveness, to our next meeting to explain and defend the use of AA.
 - Senator Harvey moved that we invite Dr. Matier as well as the Provost to our next meeting.
 - Senator Spies seconded the motion, and it was passed.

A motion to adjourn was made, and the meeting was adjourned at 4:55 PM.

Respectfully submitted by Joe Coker