

**Baylor University Faculty Senate Minutes**  
**15 April 2016**  
**Law School Room 236 • 3:30 p.m.**

**Members Present:** Senators Allman, Dwight; Baker, Lori; Baldrige, R.S.; Beal, Ron; Farwell, Beth for Burgess, Cynthia; Burleson, Debra; Coker, Joe; Cook, Garrett; Dixon, Andrea; Beck, Rosalie for Edwards, Elise; Ellor, James; Faucher, Mary Ann; Gardner, Kevin; Hurtt, Kathy; Johnston, Hope W.; Jordan, Mary Ann; Hurtt, David for Macgregor, Jason; McGlashan, Ann; Mencken, Kimberly; Morgan, Ron; Neilson, Bill; Newberry, Byron; Ostlund, Sandor; Parrish, Michael; Pounders, Steven; Raines, Brian; Souza-Fuertes, Lilly; Stroope, Michael; Tsang, Jo-Ann; Umstead, Randall; Walter, Janelle; Wood, Randy M.; Woody, Margaret, and Staff Council Representative Callie Schrank for Will Telfer

**Members Absent:** All members present or represented by substitutes

**I. Call to Order**

Senate Chair Beal called the meeting to order at 3:32.

**II. Invocation**

Senator Mencken offered an invocation.

**III. Approval of Minutes: March 2016**

Senator Baldrige made a motion to approve the minutes for the Senate meeting of March 2016; Senator Allman seconded. The minutes were approved.

**IV. Presentation**

**A. Provost Todd Still: Academic Citizenship**

Senate Chair Beal introduced Interim Executive Vice President and Provost Todd Still, Vice Provost James Bennighof, and Chief of Staff to the Executive Vice President and Provost Tiffany Hogue.

Provost Still remarked that the faculty senate has been working on the issue of academic citizenship, how to incentivize service in our performance reviews, for a long time, even when he was serving on the senate himself. He noted that Jim Patton started this process during his tenure as chair of the faculty senate. The proposal presented to the faculty senate today was shared earlier with the senate executive committee and with the deans.

The Provost credited Tiffany Hogue with the lion's share of the composition of the new proposal. He added that he believes the new proposal does incentivize service. Though the original request of the faculty senate was that 10% of faculty performance reviews evaluate service, as described in Baylor policy, the new proposal removes percentages altogether, because of the difficulty in determining what is constituted by percentages. The Provost promised a good-faith effort to incentivize service in the new proposal.

Chief of Staff Hogue followed this introduction by walking the senate through the documents provided: a draft of the letter to the faculty senate from the Academic Citizenship Committee, dated March 31, 2014; a short definition of academic citizenship; the newly proposed Annual Faculty Performance Review Form; and an added Planning for the Year Ahead section. She explained that the spring of 2017 would be the last year to use our current form for annual reviews, but that the planning section of the new review form should also be incorporated in the spring of 2017.

The new form does not list workload percentages. The Provost's office has also discussed with the office of Institutional Research and Testing, the possibility of creating a workload form that is more accessible and usable for faculty. The current form is often only seen by department chairs. The new form also changes the former "meets standards" category to "effective", and the former "outstanding" category to "exceptional".

A senator who has served as an interim chair asked how cumulative evaluations can be made without percentages. The provost answered that deans and chairs would be provided training in the appropriate use of the new form. He pointed out that such evaluations are never entirely numerical and require art as well as science. Service is a part of teaching and research workloads and understanding its impact will still require judgment calls and discussions with faculty.

Another senator asked if the planning report will be evaluated against the previous year's planning report. The Provost answered yes, but that the planning report is not meant to be a legalistic document. Some discussion followed with concern that faculty might be averse to setting high goals if they felt that such goals could negatively affect the following year's performance review. The Provost pointed out that the goals are not entirely up to the faculty member but are negotiated with the chair.

Another senator was pleased by the proposed annual review form, but did not like the expectation that "only 25% of the faculty" would perform at the level of "noteworthy". The Provost agreed, and added that we don't bias our class grading with such curves. The senator added that the implementation of the performance review was more problematic than the form, especially with large, diverse departments.

Concerns about the planning document were raised again by a senator. The senator worried that a faculty member might not be ambitious about his or her goals if they felt they would be used to evaluate them negatively at a later date. The Provost stated that in conversations so far, the planning document was expected to be illustrative, not comprehensive. Vice Provost Bennighof added that the performance review served only as the beginning of a conversation, and should prompt discussion with the chair. The process depends on trust.

Another senator returned to the question of the use of percentages in justifying evaluations. Both the Provost and Vice Provost noted that the problems inherent in justifying evaluations exists with or without percentages. The Provost added that chairs and deans submit performance reviews in the form of letters, which prompt further discussions. There are always opportunities for chairs and deans to discuss rankings with the office of the Provost. Some discussion of process followed during which it was clarified that faculty would begin the process of self-evaluation with a report of the each year's accomplishments alongside the planning document. Each document would follow the same period of time, an academic year.

A senator suggested the model followed by the School of Business, in which a goals document initialized by each faculty member is considered a draft, and a final goals document follows a meeting with the chair. The Provost expressed appreciation for this idea.

Senators raised the issue of salary raises as they are connected to performance reviews. It was noted that chairs sometimes limit the number of higher rankings on performance evaluations based on the number of raises that could be provided; it was also suggested that this was the reasoning behind the noted expectation that "only 25% of the faculty" would perform at the level of "noteworthy". A senator expressed concern that such limitations would not promote morale, and that limited resources for raises should not limit the potential for faculty to receive high evaluations. The Provost agreed.

A senator asked if there should be six rankings instead of five, so that faculty would know if they were above average. Chief of Staff Hogue stated that she had reviewed best practices and found that four or five ranking categories were the norm while three or six were unusual.

A number of senators expressed appreciation for the flexibility of the proposed performance review and support for the addition of a planning section. One senator noted that the libraries had discussed development goals that involve travel and other budgeting needs. Another senator suggested that effective service be prioritized as a requirement for achieving a noteworthy or exceptional overall ranking. The Provost reasserted that, however the reviews are implemented, service must matter.

Chief of Staff Hogue asked for senate input regarding the suggestion to require an effective academic citizenship ranking in order to achieve an overall exceptional ranking. One senator stated that such a requirement might not be fair because service is not always within a faculty member's control. This was followed by a discussion of the ample availability of service opportunities for faculty members. A senator noted the marshaling of graduation as an example of such opportunities. Another senator suggested that one difficulty in fulfilling university-wide service is the variability of departmental activities that are mandated for faculty members. A senator also suggested tying citizenship to the IRT workload documentation.

A senator asked what percentage of the faculty were outstanding this year? The Vice Provost did not know the answer, but acknowledged that review practices varied too much across the campus. The Provost again emphasized the need for department chairs to be trained in the appropriate use of the new performance reviews, including the assessment of academic citizenship. He again noted that the most important aspect of the new form is the incentivizing of academic citizenship.

Provost Still concluded by asking that the conversation over the new process continue through May into the summer. He assured the senate that the deans of the university were in agreement with the faculty regarding the importance of service.

## **V. Amendments to the Bylaws (Steven Pounders)**

Faculty Senate secretary Steven Pounders presented a series of proposed amendments to the Senate Bylaws, which had been presented and approved earlier by the executive council.

According to the Senate Constitution:

Modifications to the Constitution may be proposed by a passing motion at a regular meeting of the Faculty Senate, but may not be acted on until the next regular meeting of the Senate. To be approved, such proposed changes shall be made public to the University faculty at least two weeks prior to the next meeting of the Senate. Modifications shall require a two-thirds majority of the Senators present at said meeting.

The background for the proposal involves errors in the current wording. There are a few problems in Article I, Section 1 of the Bylaws (concerned with Senate Elections), which require a motion to be modified:

Article I, Section 1, Paragraph d

There are two instances of the word “e-mail”, which should be spelled “email” for consistency with the remaining document.

Article I, Section 1, Paragraph e

The phrase “Senate Election Committee” should be modified to “Senate Election Commission” for consistency with Article I, Section 1, Paragraph c.

Article I, Section 1, Paragraphs c through f

The election procedure needs to be altered so that elections are prepared in a timely fashion. The current instructions involve contacting ITS for a full list of eligible faculty in February, but this is too late. The list of eligible faculty is necessary to determine the apportionment of Senate seats, which has to be communicated to the faculty in January.

The paragraphs should be rearranged so that the election commission is setup in December rather than January; and ITS is contacted in January rather than February. Wording should also be added to the instructions referencing the constitution article that outlines eligible faculty and apportionment rules.

For all of these changes, the secretary proposed the following motion, to be voted upon at the May meeting of the faculty senate:

Motion: To make the following modifications to the Faculty Senate Bylaws:

Article I, Section 1, Paragraphs c through f

- c. In December, the full Senate shall elect two Senators (the Secretary of the Senate serves ex officio) to form a Senate Election Commission to assist the Secretary of the Senate in arranging and running the election. No two commission members may be from the same academic unit.
- d. Early in January the Senate Election Commission shall work with the Department of Human Resources and the office of Information Technology Services to create a list of eligible faculty voters according to Constitution Article II, Section 1; determine the apportionment of Senate seats for each academic unit in the following academic year according to Constitution Article II, Section 2; and develop an electronic ballot. Also in January the Secretary of the Senate shall contact Senators eligible for reelection to determine if they wish their

names to be placed on the ballot. Any Senator who wishes to stand for reelection may do so by notifying the Secretary.

- e. Five weeks before Spring Break, the Secretary shall announce by email to the full-time faculty of each academic unit the number of positions on the Senate to be elected by that faculty for the following academic year and the names of the Senators eligible for reelection who have indicated a desire to run for the office again. The Secretary shall call for other nominations to be returned to him or her within two weeks. Nominations may be either in writing or by email. Each full-time faculty member may nominate herself (himself) or one other colleague. On a rolling basis, the Secretary shall confirm that nominees agree to serve if elected. At this point, nominees become candidates.
- f. At the beginning of the week before Spring Break, an email shall be sent to all eligible faculty voters with instructions for accessing, filling out, and submitting their electronic ballots. Faculty members may vote only once. Faculty members with appointments in more than one academic unit shall vote in the unit in which their tenure status is determined, or, if non-tenure track, in the academic unit which is otherwise determined to be their primary affiliation.

## **VI. Announcement of Slate of Officers for 2016 (Michael Parrish)**

Senator Michael Parrish chaired the Nominating Committee appointed to propose a slate of Senate officers for the 2016-2017 academic year. The nominees announced at this meeting will be voted on at the May meeting. Senator Parrish first thanked the members of the nominating committee: Senators Byron Newberry, Michael Stroope, Ron Morgan, Randall Umstead, Sandor Ostlund, and Kimberly Mencken.

Senator Parrish then announced the following nominees for the slate of officers in 2016-2017:

Senator Steven Pounders for secretary  
Senator Andrea Dixon for Publicity officer  
Senator Anne McGlashan for Chair Elect

As the current Chair Elect, Senator Byron Newberry will serve as Senate Chair in 2016-2017.

Senators may submit alternative nominees at the May meeting.

## **VII. Pre-matriculation Transfer Credit Policy (Ron Morgan)**

Senator Morgan has served as the faculty senate representative on a task force to review the university pre-matriculation transfer credit policy. Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education Wes Null served as the chair of the task force. The Vice Provost and other administrators would like to make it easier for transfer students to know in advance how their credit will transfer to Baylor.

However, multiple departments have concerns about maintaining appropriate standards. The current undergraduate advisor for the English Department stated that 80% of transfer proposals were rejected, in part because of the rejection of AP courses which did not meet standards. The Math department is opposed to online placement exams that are not proctored, and spent time researching community colleges that do not proctor exams.

The task force agreed with these considerations, but then last month during a presentation at council of chairs, Dean Nordt laid out a new policy by which Baylor will now accept all transfer courses and exams that are compatible with the Texas Common Course Numbering System (TCCNS). The college of Arts and Sciences will determine equivalency for other general education courses and those outside of Texas.

In the senate discussion that followed this report, a senator suggested that the faculty senate take a strong stance against this move by the college. Another senator asked about the impetus for this policy. A senator noted that students arrive at Baylor thinking that they will get credit and only find out when they get here if their credit is rejected, which could affect their finances and decision to come to Baylor. Another senator asked if it was too late to stop this new adoption of TCCNS standards.

A senator commented that the decision to accept TCCNS standards for transfer credit was driven by budget concerns, not by a concern for helping transfer students; the senator felt that we don't do students any favors by adding them to classes for which they are not prepared. Another senator pointed out that the exclusion of unproctored exams is not friendly to military transfers, who often have no other exam options. Another senator suggested that departments should determine acceptable course equivalences, one possibility being a standard exam created by the department.

Because of the immediacy of the issue, current students registering for classes, it was suggested that the senate make an immediate motion. Senator Raines made the following motion, seconded by Senator Morgan:

The faculty senate vigorously opposes Baylor's inclusion in the Texas Common Course Numbering System for determining course equivalencies. The action taken to include Baylor in this system was made without sufficient or timely faculty consultation, which is a breach of shared governance. Moreover, academic best practices dictate that the appropriate body to decide transfer equivalencies is the department. The faculty senate is requesting that we suspend participation in this system until faculty have been appropriately consulted.

The conclusion of the vote was one senator opposed, all remaining senators in favor, and no abstentions. The motion passed.

#### **VIII. Committee Reports**

There were no further committee reports but a senator asked whether faculty were consulted in the current renewed provost search. Chair Beal responded that the senate executive council had interviewed the new candidate recently.

#### **IX. Adjournment**

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Senator Baldrige and seconded by Senator Umstead. The motion passed.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:00.

Respectfully submitted,

Steven Pounders  
Recording Secretary