

# FACULTY SENATE MINUTES

September 11, 2007  
Room 303 Cashion  
3:30 p.m.

**Members Present:** Senators Blackwell, Bowman, Boyd, Brown, Cannon, Cloud, Andy Pittman (for Connally), Cordon, Diaz-Granados, Duhrkopf, Gardner, Garner, Kayworth, Korpi, Longfellow, Lehr, Long, Losey, Miner, Myers, Ngan, Nunley, Pennington, Purdy, Rajaratnam, Rosenbaum, Sadler, Spain, Stone, Sturgill, Supplee, Talbert, Tolbert, Vitanza

**Members Absent:** Senator Green

**I. Welcome and Invocation:** The meeting was called to order at 3:30. Senator Cloud offered the invocation.

**II. Guests: President John M. Lilley  
Executive Vice President and Provost Randall  
O'Brien**

## **Comments from the Provost**

*Introduction of Ruth Prescott:* Provost O'Brien introduced Ruth Prescott, the new Vice Provost for Internal Affairs. She has served in similar positions at Texas A&M University and Mississippi State University. At her former institutions, she has always distinguished herself and was voted woman administrator of the year at Mississippi State just this past year.

*Review of Faculty Hiring Process:* At the President's request, the process for approving letters of appointment is being reviewed. This review is being led by Bud McGregor and Jaffus Hardrick. We know there are issues with this process that must be addressed. We have already found some snags in the process that are being corrected.

I was surprised to find nearly three pages of issues that come from the departments around campus who have not turned in paperwork on contracts and faculty who have not yet turned in signed contracts. Responsibility for the slowdown is at all steps of the process, not just one particular stage.

With background checks starting up this year, we need to make sure this doesn't slow down the process any more. We are going to do

everything we can to get a turnaround time of 24 hours on the background check of your successful candidate. *President Lilley:* We think we will have a new electronic system in place by the first of the calendar year to help track this process.

Related to this issue, we would like to encourage departments to schedule interviews for faculty candidates and make hiring decisions in the fall semester where possible. This will help to take some of the immense pressure off of human resources in the spring. Of course, since many departments may have their professional meetings late in the fall, we understand that not all units will be able to schedule interviews this early.

*Diversity Efforts in Hiring:* We would like to encourage diversity efforts this year and every year. We are aware of affirmative action laws that require that we do our best to insure equal opportunity for minorities, but we can't guarantee equal outcome. It seems to me that if we are more intentional about recruiting minority applicants, we can hope to increase our chances of increasing minority hires in the university. We have seen good percentage increases in the minority student population over the past five years. For minority faculty, we are up 42 percent over the same period of time. This sounds exceptional until you look at the actual numbers; we have gone from 8 to 14.

*Chair Training:* Our start of the year chair training seminar went very well. All of our start-of-semester orientations went exceptionally well this year. We have four chair training seminars scheduled for this semester:

- Managing the Pre-Tenure Process
- Faculty Search
- Managing Student Records
- Managing Academic Department Resources

We will have others in the fall. We are trying to be efficient and provide the resources that our chairs need to do the job they are positioned to do.

*Interval Between Classes:* We are looking into expanding the intervals between classes from 10 minutes to 15 minutes. We have a committee that has studied this issue. The committee included 3 faculty senators, three other faculty members, three staff members and three students. The committee considered several options and input was solicited from all 65 departments on campus. The recommended changes were distributed to the senate. The recommendation is that beginning with the 2008 summer school

terms, we will start with 15 min between classes and that this will continue into the fall semester. *Senator*: What's the process for approving this? *Provost O'Brien*: We recognize that process is as important as product. We invite conversation at every step along the way. Some individuals and groups have been more supportive about these changes than others. If there is not a great deal of resistance, we will probably be moving toward making this change. However, we don't want to just hand this down from the administration. This doesn't come from Pat Neff; it comes from committee.

### **Questions for the President and Provost**

It was pointed out that, under the proposed schedule, both Tuesday-Thursday and Monday-Wednesday-Friday classes will meet 150 minutes each week.

*Senator*: I know one of the options considered was for two two-day schedules. Can anyone comment on what led to the rejection of these proposals? *President Lilley*: I think having a 4-day week is dangerous for the spirit of the place. For example, if we have virtually no classes on Friday, then I think students will start leaving on Thursday night. One of the things I like about this institution is that there seems to be a lot of student activity on campus over the weekend. We risk giving up some of this if we go to a 4-day week. *Senator Purdy (a member of the committee)*: Another option that was considered was to not have classes on Wednesday, but it didn't seem like a good idea to just stop teaching in the middle of the week. *Senator*: With set-up and tear-down time, having two days of longer class meetings can give us more effective class time. *Senator*: Some classes meet five days a week. We have to adjust the Tuesday-Thursday schedule for the meeting times that are off by 30 minutes. What changes will this new schedule produce? *President*: I think there will probably be no change for these classes. *Senator*: I think some classes work best on a Monday-Wednesday-Friday schedule as opposed to fewer, longer meetings. *Senator Diaz-Granados (a member of the committee)*: The feedback we received from both faculty and students led us to recommend that more data be collected to assess the magnitude of the problem. However, the message from the provost's office is that there is a problem and, as such, this is the most viable solution. *Provost O'Brien*: Much of our feedback in favor of longer intervals is actually from professors. You have the right to not have students show up 5 or 10 minutes late to class every day because they can't make it across campus. If you have professors with watches that are a few minutes slow or a few minutes fast, this makes the problem worse. *Senator Diaz-Granados*: There was some discussion about synchronizing clocks around campus.

*Senator:* Some of the issue is a result of moving cars around campus. We have eliminated some internal parking areas. Are we thinking about reevaluating our parking policies? *President Lilley:* We talk about it quite a bit. In our campus master plan, we are looking at sustainability and safety. We imagine that people will park on the periphery and then, say, take a bike into central campus. I wouldn't say there has been a review of parking specifically, but this could come out of the work on the campus master plan. *Senator:* As we look at this, we should think about handicapped accessibility. In some areas, we are deficient in handicapped parking. *President Lilley:* We are looking into how we handle parking for handicapped individuals as well as others.

*Senator:* One thing that distinguishes Baylor from other campuses is that freshmen can have cars. *President Lilley:* This is true, and I think it's something that can be managed. We need to encourage freshmen to bring both their cars and their bikes.

As scheduled guests, Charlie Beckenhauer and Jaffus Hardrick, were not yet available, the Senate began discussion of items from the Old Business category.

### **Approval of the Minutes and Discussion of the Procedure for Approving Minutes**

Senator Sturgill reviewed the proposed process for approving minutes. A draft of the minutes will be distributed to the senate electronically one week after the meeting. Senators will have five days to review the minutes and reply with corrections. After this period, updated minutes will be distributed with a summary of changes. If no more significant corrections are needed, the minutes will be posted to the senate website.

*Senate Chair:* This would get the minutes out after two weeks. If there are no objections, we will operate this way under the chair's prerogative. There was some discussion about eventual changes to the bylaws to include this change.

### **Honorary Degree Proposal: Dr. James Leo Garrett (Long)**

A nomination for James Leo Garrett was distributed. Dr. Garrett has been very active in Baptist life in the state and the nation. The honorary degree committee met and unanimously voted to support granting an honorary degree. Senator Long reminded the senate that there are four different categories of honorary degree: arts and

letters, divinity, sciences and laws. We are recommending Dr. Garrett for divinity. We have 13 letters from around the country supporting this nomination. We recommend that the senate approve this nomination.

A **motion** to approve the nomination was made by **Senator Longfellow** and **seconded** by **Senator Vitanza**. Subsequent discussion focused on the process for granting honorary degrees. After the senate supports this nomination, it goes to the Provost's office and is presented to the Regents. Honorary degree committee would like to see the degree awarded at the December commencement. The **motion Passed**.

### **Update Regarding Computer Purchases**

Dr. Wilcox reported that, as he understands it, a new high-performance computer is in the process of being ordered. It may take six to eight weeks for it to be ready. Baylor is preparing an announcement through Public Relations, and we can expect the President to announce this in an upcoming newsletter.

### **III. Guests: Charlie Beckenhauer, General Counsel Jaffus Hardrick, Assistant Vice-Provost**

Materials were distributed describing the new background check procedure for faculty. Jaffus Hardrick explained that faculty feedback on this process was desired, and he reminded the senate that these procedures applied to new hires after January 1, not existing faculty. Our insurance carrier is requiring these kinds of checks and it's a good thing we can do to make sure Baylor remains a safe work environment. We are already conducting background checks on all staff and any faculty who may be working with children (*e.g.* education and communication disorders). As part of this, we have an obligation to make sure whoever is coming on board is who they say they are. We went out and found that almost all of our peer institutions are performing these kinds of checks. Faculty forums will be scheduled for obtaining additional feedback and to help make sure this is done the right way.

Charlie Beckenhauer pointed out that criminal background checks will be handled through a third-party vendor (ChoicePoint), and that they are not expected to slow down the hiring process. We usually get a response in 24 hours. This may be prolonged if we are looking at international faculty. The criminal background checks may be a bit spotty and results may depend on the states involved. We want to promote a uniform approach to screening your applicants by faculty.

In addition to the criminal background checks, we depend on faculty to perform what we would call routine screening. This includes contacting references and undirected references once a hiring decision has been made. *Senator*: What will be the role of faculty in this? *Beckenhauer*: It can be what you want it to be. It can involve the search committee, chairs, deans, etc. There can be particular knowledge on the part of some people in the search process that can help evaluate that past behavior. *Senator*: What kind of information will we need to collect from the applicant for the background check? *Hardrick*: There will be a consent form that they have to fill out that will include this information. *Beckenhauer*: The third party is regulated in its function. If they find a problem, the candidate must be given the opportunity to correct it before a negative hiring decision can be made.

There was some discussion about how this process would address or fail to address students who might represent a safety risk.

*Beckenhauer*: Our mental health people, student life people and risk management offices are offering training sessions that I encourage any of you to go to. Since early 90s, we have a protocol for identifying aberrant behavior in students. Faculty can bring this to any of these offices and we form an interdisciplinary group to evaluate the situation. This is a chance for the institution to get all the data points about an individual. We don't make people get mental health treatment, but we do have the right to prevent them from participating in activities at Baylor until they bring us back proof that they are not a risk to themselves or others.

*Senator*: I see from the handouts that you have available background checks other than criminal checks. *Hardrick*: These are other options that are available, but what we are talking about here is just criminal background checks for routine hires that don't have special duties. If you are working with minors or driving for the university, we may run some of the other checks. *Senator Garner*: We already do some of these checks in nursing. Will these checks be redundant?

*Beckenhauer*: We will work to make sure we don't duplicate effort on this. This service costs about \$40 per check for just the criminal check. *Senator*: There is a group that wants to be able to carry guns on campus. There was some discussion of this idea leading to discussion of the tragedy at Virginia Tech. *Beckenhauer* pointed out that we do have a crisis management plan. *Senator*: We need to be sure chairs and faculty know about this plan.

*Senator*: For the criminal background checks, at what point in the hiring process will the candidate be given the form to initiate the background check. *Hardrick*: We will distribute forms to the chairs in

preparation to the campus interview. *Beckenhauer*: We will probably want to get these forms filled out while the candidate is on campus, but we expect to only run checks on the finalist. *Senator*: We need to make sure someone other than the administration knows about a negative background check so it doesn't appear that administration is rejecting these candidates arbitrarily.

*Senator*: Do you want to say anything about the use of disclaimers on websites? *Beckenhauer*: I don't think there is anyone monitoring peoples' websites. We do want to be consistent.

*Senator*: Will a hit on a background check just be felonies or will it include other items. *Hardrick*: It may include other things. When we get a report back, we will discuss it with the chair. If it's something minor like a moving violation, this probably won't raise any red flags. Other things are more severe and we would not be able to hire.

*Senator*: When we have had problems in hiring, it has not been with criminal activity, it has been with lifestyle. Is there a disconnect here?

*Beckenhauer*: yes. That's why we rely on two things, a criminal background check and routine screening to detect other things that might be a problem at Baylor.

*Senator*: Is it our responsibility to find out about the sexual orientation of the candidate. *Beckenhauer*: No, but you may want to make sure the candidate is aware of what the campus work environment is like. Another senator made reference to a past situation where this issue has prevented a faculty hire.

*Senator*: If we are doing a chair search but the candidate didn't want their dept to know, can we still contact undirected references?

*Beckenhauer*: If a candidate wants this kind of thing, give that to them up to a point. But, if they are down to the top three and they still don't want their department contacted, maybe we should remove them from consideration. If you are being prevented from collecting information, that's probably a red flag.

A Lariat reporter was present. *Reporter*: Why haven't you run faculty background checks all along? *Beckenhauer*: I'm the wrong person to ask.

*Senator*: We have not permitted Lariat reporters in the senate meeting in the past. We should probably discuss this. The chair asked the reporter to leave. *Senator*: I am against including a Lariat reporter because I don't trust the Lariat to get the reporting right.

*Senator*: I don't have a problem with reporter being here. We don't disclose names in our minutes and I would expect the reporter to do

the same. **Senator Supplee** made a **motion** to exclude Lariat reporters from all except in the President portion of the meeting. *Senator:* I didn't know she was a reporter, but I hoped we were past the time when we had to worry about this. *Senator:* If we allow faculty to sit in on meetings, do we need some kind of registration mechanism. *Senator:* I think there is a big difference between other faculty here and having a reporter. *Senator:* We do have the option of going into executive session whenever we need to. *Senator:* I do have a concern of getting fair and appropriate information from President if it was known that a Lariat reporter was here. A senator observed that, since students are not invited to senate meetings, the current situation is already covered. *Senator:* If this motion passes, I hope the chair will take time to talk to a Lariat reporter afterward. The **Motion passed.**

## **V. Staff Council Report: Suzie Johnston**

Today we held our first Staff Council meeting at 10:30 a.m. this morning. This was the first year we elected members. About 1/3 of the Staff Council is now elected. President Lilley came and spoke. On the issue of the campus smoking policy, we are moving forward to see what things we need to do (signs, etc) to help enforce this policy. Staff council would like to be more visible and more active on campus. The new election process should help with this. We would like to complete a policy for and appoint a staff ombudsman. The code of ethics document was also distributed to the Staff Council and discussed.

*Senator Supplee:* Can you talk about the state of your work toward a staff ombudsman? *Johnston:* We are having trouble identifying a person who can be an effective advocate for staff.

## **VII. Old Business**

### **A. Update Regarding Computer Purchases**

This item was discussed earlier.

### **B. Statement of Intent: Priorities, Goals, and Issues (Cordon)**

Input is needed on this document. I've tried to make it positive but right now, it's mostly a document from the chair. It's not a ranking of priorities. The ones toward the end are processes that we have already started. Some of these are things we've already done.

There was some discussion of what are we doing about Item 3, the promotion policy as it applies to some associate professors. Discussion with Lilley makes it clear that he is not interested in a policy for grandfathering in faculty who were hired with less of a research expectation. The committee working on a response to this policy has met once. The committee expects to call a town-hall meeting on this issue.

There was some discussion of whether we should we include issues pertaining to the composition of search committees. This topic was deferred until new business.

This priorities document comes as a **motion from the executive committee**, so it requires no second. The **motion passed**.

### **C. Committee on Committees Report (Cordon)**

I have had to do some work on the Committee on Committees report to get it into its current state. I can't promise that it's perfect, but I have done everything I can to make sure it's correct. If it's approved, I will send both lists to Naymond Keathley who will post it on the web.

*Senator:* David Jeffrey is on the tenure committee. He was provost when most of these people were hired. Is this a good idea? *Senator:* This is a presidential appointment and we don't get to review it. *Senator:* Just because the person who did the hiring is on the tenure committee doesn't mean there will be a lack of objectivity. *Senator:* I recommend that the senate executive committee approach the President about this appointment and bring up concerns over objectivity. *Senator:* I don't believe this was a political decision. *Senator:* Could we consider approving the report with the consideration that we will talk with the President about this appointment. A senator reported that, during interviews with faculty candidates, David Jeffrey repeatedly claimed he didn't know anything about the senator's department. Later he said the same thing to a visiting accreditation committee.

The **motion to accept this document** comes from the executive committee, so no second is required. The **motion passed**.

**Senator Lehr** introduced a motion: The senate would like to make a statement to the President pointing out the potential conflict of interest caused by David Jeffrey serving on the tenure committee when he hired faculty who will be up for tenure during his term. The motion was seconded by **Senator Cloud**. *Senator:* Jeffrey was only provost for 2 years. Did he really hire that many people? *Senator:* Does it matter if there were two or 20? It's still a conflict of interest. Subsequent discussion focused on whether Jeffrey should abstain for some of these votes. Another senator pointed out that, when you are on the tenure committee, you could serve for as many as 10 years. *Senator:* Maybe the policy of appointing a tenure committee member from the honors college should be reconsidered. Right now, this is a very small pool compared to the other appointments. The **motion passed**.

#### **D. Faculty Contracts and Letter of Appointment Process**

The chair reported that the senate executive committee had a good discussion with the President and provost on Monday. It's clear that the President realizes that there is a problem. A big part of speeding up this process will be eliminating steps and extra paperwork. This will be something we will discuss every month until it is resolved. *Senator:* This issue has been described as a problem with the process. The process is not the only source of the problem.

#### **E. Committee Reform Process (Cordon)**

Now that the Committee on Committees report is done, I will move forward with this. We will be identifying categories for committees.

#### **F. Equitable Opportunities for Promotion to Full Professor (Blackwell)**

Nothing new to report.

#### **G. Lecturer Committee (Lehr)**

*Chair:* I would like to consider a permanent senate committee to look at issues pertaining to lecturers. What I would like to do is start this out as an ad-hoc committee. We would like to have representatives from the senate and from outside the senate. *Senator:* This administration has given more power to the deans, so lecturers are totally under the control of the deans.

The chair invited a motion to form an ad-hoc committee co-chaired by Senators Lehr and Sadler to look into issues pertaining to lecturers and to consider the possibility of forming a permanent faculty committee. The **motion was made by Senator Myers and seconded by Senator Vitanza**. The **motion passed**.

#### **H. Ombudsperson Policy and Appointment (Supplee)**

After receiving suggested changes from the Office of General Council, the committee wanted clarification on which of these changes were legally necessary. The policy has been sent back to General Council for a response.

#### **I. Code of Ethics (Cordon)**

There has been a lot of feedback on this document including several alternative versions. Right now, there is nothing to approve. *Senator:* The statements in this document are assertions about what we should be, put in the form of saying that we are. It should be framed as “we are expected to do this” not “we do this.” When you frame it this way, it makes it seem artificial.

Once an updated draft is available, it will be forwarded to the senate.

#### **J. Strategic Planning Update (Cordon)**

Four of the nine proposals that the President will talk about on Friday were those placed at the top by the planning council. The others were not that far down. I think the council’s recommendations were heard. *Senator:* Results could be distributed earlier. Right now, much of this information is circulating around by word of mouth.

#### **K. United Way (Cordon)**

Thanks to those who have given. We have a five-minute presentation scheduled for the faculty meeting on Friday.

### **VIII. Committee/Liaison Reports**

#### **A. University Curriculum Committee (Myers)**

There are three proposals in the Provost's office. The first is for the creation of an undergraduate curriculum committee with membership drawn from the curriculum committees of the various schools around campus and senate appointments. This committee would help to give voice to the various curriculum changes that are occurring across campus and to deal with those issues that are cross cutting.

The second proposal is for an electronic curriculum action form approval process.

The third proposal has to do with the general education goals. A recent survey collected input on this. The Provost will appoint a 20-member committee to create a list of goals for our general education process.

### **B. Academic Freedom (Longfellow)**

No report.

### **C. Enrollment Management (Sturgill)**

No report.

### **D. Physical Facilities (Brown)**

There is a new campus master plan, but we have not had as much involvement with this planning process as we would like. *Senator:* The senate executive committee should point out to the President that this committee should be involved. Another senator pointed out some concerns about pedestrian traffic in and around the new parking garage.

### **E. Student Life (Talbert)**

No report.

### **F. Liaison Reports**

#### **i. Council of Deans (Cordon)**

The report from the Provost included some items from the Council of deans meeting.

#### **ii. Athletic Council (Connally)**

Senator Sadler reported that almost every coach now has a policy of early morning workouts. There is some concern among faculty that this has dramatically increased the tardiness rate for early morning classes. Another senator reported an incident involving two people from the athletic department visiting a faculty member asking about a change of grade. There was some discussion about how the senate should respond to this report. Does it go to the athletic council? *Senator:* This is a consequence of advisement being moved to the athletic department. *Senator:* We have had occasions where it looks like the athletic department is giving permits for classes without consulting affected departments. *Senator:* We have two or three students joining classes this week because they just cleared NCAA requirements. This doesn't seem right.

### **iii. Personnel, Benefits, and Compensation**

No report.

## **IX. New Business**

### **A. Faculty Evaluation Forms (Vitanza, Diaz-Granados)**

Tiffany Hogue contacted the senate chair about creation of new faculty evaluation forms. Senators Vitanza and Diaz-Granados have agreed to serve on this committee.

### **B. Tenure and Promotion Policy and Other Documents**

Copies of the proposed tenure and promotion policy were handed out at the start of the meeting. The senate chair asked Jim Bennighof for a FAQ about this policy. A draft of this FAQ was distributed. If you have anything else you think should be included, forward them to the senate chair.

### **C. Attendance at Graduation Ceremonies**

Concerns have been expressed over the very low rate of faculty attendance at graduation. There are two lines of discussion. Is there a problem with the ceremony that hurts attendance or is there something else? Is there some way we can address these issues? Can we help faculty to feel like their participation is valued? Can we do something with the ceremony to help promote attendance?

*Senator:* It has been cumbersome to get out of the aisle to go over and greet your graduates. I did receive an email from a graduate stating how valuable it was for them to have members of their department present.

*Chair:* Is this an issue of the faculty not feeling valued for what we do? Is it the same problem we have with the United Way?

*Senator:* I don't think it's all one or the other.

*Chair:* Can we set up an ad-hoc committee to look at this?

**Senator Cloud made a motion** to create this committee, **Senator Myers seconded** and several senators agreed to serve: Myers, Pennington, Purdy, Cloud and Sadler.

#### **D. Baylor University Branding Focus Group: September 25**

Senate received an email requesting participation in these groups.

#### **E. Student Success Task Force**

This task force has been formed. The senate executive committee has been invited to meet with this group.

A senator brought up concerns over nepotism with the recent spirit squad hire. *Senator:* What does the faculty senate have to do with this? If anything, this should go to the athletic council.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:14.

Respectfully submitted,

David Sturgill  
Secretary