

FACULTY SENATE MEETING
TUESDAY, December 15, 1998
Blume Conference Room, 5th floor Cashion

MINUTES

Present: Abbott-Kirk Baird, Beck, Beckner, Bowery, Carini, Chinn, Counts, C. Davis, E. Davis, Dunn, Farris, Genrich, Buddo, Gilchrest, Hillman, Jensen, K. Johnson, P. Johnson, Johnston, Longfellow, Losey, McGee, Stone, Supplee, Weaver, Wilson, Yelderman, Young

Absent: Conyers, Tipton

I. Invocation

The meeting began at 3:35, though the link with the School of Nursing was not established until 3:45. Kathy Hillman gave the invocation.

II. Consideration of Agenda

The following items were added to the agenda:

III. Consideration of the Minutes of the November 17, 1998 meeting.

VII. Discussion of the letter from Maurice Hunt, chair of the English Department, regarding "Tenure with Reservation."

III. Approval of the Minutes of the Meeting of Nov. 17, 1998.

The minutes had been distributed and corrected prior to the meeting, and were approved by acclamation. Final copies will be distributed electronically.

III. Discussion of Plans for the Faculty Forum on Enrollment Management

After discussion regarding possible dates and times for the Forum, A. Bowery moved that the forum be held on Thursday, January 14, 1999, in a location TBA. The motion was seconded by Longfellow, and was passed.

Next, discussion centered around the format. The Senate agreed to the following: The forum will be approximately 90 minutes in length, with the first hour of the meeting consisting of open discussion, followed by a 30-minute meeting of the Senators to compose a first draft. McGee agreed to work with Kevin Barge (Communications), who is working as a facilitator for the University Planning Council, to determine details of the final format.

Senators also agreed to encourage and welcome attendance from all faculty, and to solicit questions from them as well. In addition, the forum will address questions which already

had been asked by the University Committee on Enrollment Management (E. Davis) as the Faculty Senate (see Minutes, Meeting of October 20, 1998).

IV. Discussion of the Issue of Student Grades with +s but no -s.

This issue had been tabled at the October 20, 1998 meeting, while those who had dealt with the issue in the past were consulted. Baird reported that according to the information he was able to locate, this issue was first raised in the early 1970s, apparently as an attempt to curb grade inflation. Other Senators concurred with Baird's recollection. After brief discussion about the possibility of assigning this to an existing or ad hoc Task Force, the Senate decided to take no formal action on this matter.

V. Discussion of Report on Student Evaluations of Faculty and Courses

McGee distributed the report of the Faculty Development Committee, chaired by Don Parker (Geology), dated May 13, 1998. This report was given first to the Provost, and was presented to the Council of Deans in June or July, 1998. As yet, there has been no response from either the Provost or the Council of Deans.

Senators discussed various options. Bowery moved that the Senate support the recommendations of the Faculty Development Committee, and request that the Provost implement the suggestions. The motion was seconded by Hillman, and it passed.

Senators then discussed the possibility of creating a standing committee to oversee the process of Student Evaluations. Bowery moved that the Senate support the recommendations of the Faculty Development Committee, and request that the Senate create a standing committee on Faculty Evaluation, which was seconded by Buddo. During discussion, a number of potential difficulties with such a committee were raised: What would be the committee's charge? To whom would it report? Should the committee deal with student evaluation of faculty only, or should it be more inclusive? After a long discussion, this second motion was tabled. Then Hillman moved that the issue be referred to the Faculty Committee on Academic Freedom, Responsibility, and Environment for study, and asked that they report back to the Senate. This new motion was seconded by Longfellow, and passed.

VI. Discussion of the use of the category "Tenure with Reservation" during tenure evaluation.

Senators were given a copy of a letter from M. Hunt, Professor and Chair (English), addressed to Randy Wood (Chair, University Tenure Committee) and McGee (Chair, Faculty Senate). The text of this letter appears as Attachment 1.

The tenured faculty of the Department of English unanimously voted to recommend that "Tenure with Reservation" be eliminated from the tenure-decision forms the faculty must complete. They expressed their belief that such a decision should be unequivocal, and that that the meaning of "with reservation" is ambiguous and promotes uncertainty.

Senators discussed this issue at some length. The Faculty Committee on Academic Freedom, Responsibility, and Environment had recently prepared a letter on this very

issue, signed by McGee, and sent to all tenured and tenure-track faculty (see minutes from October 21, 1998, Attachment 1). After discussing various aspects of the use of "Tenure with Reservation," the discussion was tabled, and Senators Hillman and Wilson, members of the Tenure Committee, will bring the issue to the Tenure Committee for discussion. The Senate will discuss the matter further after the Tenure Committee has met and deliberated.

VII. Committee Reports

A. Faculty Committee on Academic Freedom, Responsibility, and Environment (Bob Baird).

The Committee has met with Jay Losey regarding the Promotion Policy being prepared by him and the Task Force. Several minor changes were suggested, and the revised document has been sent back to the membership of the Task Force for final approval. The report should be delivered to McGee before the January meeting of the Senate.

B. Faculty Committee on Enrollment Management (Elizabeth Davis)

At the time of the committee's last meeting, the University had accepted 1748 students (approximately 66% of those who applied), and approximately 35% of those accepted have sent deposits. Admissions criteria remain at 21/1000 (ACT/SAT scores) and standing in the top 50% of high school class rankings.

C. Faculty Committee on Physical Facilities (Joe Yelderman). No Report.

D. Faculty Committee on Student Life and Services (Gary Carini). No Report.

E. Athletic Council (Mark Dunn)

The Athletic Council met on November 19, 1998. Graduation rates for the university were reported as 83%, which is above average for the Big 12. Also, the Council now states that earlier reports of revenue were probably overstated.

F. Staff Council Liaison (Nancy Chinn). No Report.

G. Task Force on Promotion Policy (Jay Losey). See VII (A) above.

H. Senate Newsletter and Web Page (Buddy Gilchrest)

The web page continues to be developed. The next Senate Newsletter will be distributed in late February. The deadline for suggesting materials/announcements for the this newsletter is February 15.

VII. Miscellaneous

A. Chair reports on:

(1) Status of Recommendations on Lecturers

There is some confusion regarding the Administration's implementation of

the recommendations of the Task Force. McGee and Baird will seek to clarify with the Provost.

(2) Request to Provost regarding status of Faculty Dismissal Policy, Policy on Financial Exigency and reduction of Academic Programs, and Reduction of Academic Programs not mandated by Financial Exigency. Again, no action has been taken.

(3) Report on Evaluation of Administrators.

McGee, Beckner, and Buddo, representing the Senate, are scheduled to meet with Marilyn Crone on December 18, 1998.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:25.

Respectfully submitted,
Chuck Weaver

Attachment 1

Text of Letter sent to Faculty Senate by Maurice Hunt, Professor and Chair of English

BAYLOR UNIVERSITY

19 November 1998

To: Professor Randy Wood, Chair, University Tenure Committee

Professor Dan McGee, President, Faculty Senate

At a recent meeting of the tenured faculty of the Department of English, those present unanimously voted to recommend that the category "Tenure with Reservations" be henceforth eliminated from the tenure-decision forms that faculty must use. Unequivocal categories of "Tenure" and "No Tenure" are much clearer in meaning. Tenured English faculty believe that the vague middle possibility promotes uncertainty among faculty considering it as to its meaning for different University Tenure Committees and Baylor administrators.

Thank you for seriously considering our recommendation. I would be happy to clarify the details of our discussion and resolution.

Cordially,

Maurice Hunt
Professor and Chair

xc: Dr. James Barcus
Dr. William V. Davis
Dr. Tom Hanks
Dr. J.R. LeMaster
Professor Ann Miller
Dr. Robert Ray
Dr. Ron Thomas
Dr. Nancy Chinn
Dr. Greg Garrett
Dr. Andy Moore
Dr. Dianna Vitanza
Dr. Linda Walker

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
PO BOX 97404 WACO. TEXAS 76798-7404 (254) 710-1768

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