

# *Newsletter*

*March, 2003*

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*The 2002-03 Faculty Senate officers and membership:*

**Chair:** Charles Weaver (Arts and Sciences)

**Chair-elect:** Joe Cox (Business)

**Secretary:** Eric C. Rust (Arts and Sciences)

**Publicity:** Pat Sharp (Education)

**Arts and Sciences:**

Robert Baldrige

Rosalie Beck

Gregory Benesh

Anne-Marie Bowery

Raymond J. Cannon

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Tom Hanks

**Business:**

Joe A. Cox

Mark G. Dunn

Kent Gilbreath

Patricia Norman

Charles W. Stanley

Jane G. Williams

**Education:**

David L. Longfellow	Dale Connally
Ann McGlashan	Eric L. Robinson
Linda McManness	Pat T. Sharp
Jim Patton	<b><i>Engineering and Computer Science:</i></b>
Kevin Pinney	Henry Walbesser
Eric C. Rust	<b><i>Law:</i></b>
Charles Weaver	Marianne Auld
F. Ray Wilson II	<b><i>Libraries:</i></b>
David Young	Ellen Brown
	<b><i>Music:</i></b>
	Jane Abbott-Kirk
	Michael Jacobson
	<b><i>Honor's College :</i></b>
	Lynn Tatum
	<b><i>Retired Faculty :</i></b>
	Rufus Spain

**Faculty Senate Newsletter  
March, 2003**

I appreciate David Lyle Jeffrey's willingness to provide an essay for the Senate newsletter. As he assumes the role of Provost, faculty are especially interested in his views on the academic future of the university.

Dr. Jeffrey's vision of engaged, well-rounded, eclectic scholarship is one Baylor faculty share. Most of us have been trained in the more narrow and specialized models, and part of the appeal of Baylor is that we have not yielded to the pressures of this debatable academic path.

How can we retain this view of scholarship in the new world of Vision 2012? The uneasiness many faculty have expressed over our new goals are rooted in this question. As faculty evaluate Vision 2012, what the university chooses to do will have a much greater impact than what the university says. From my perspective, faculty are interested skeptics at this point.

This skepticism is understandable. We have adopted new rigorous publication guidelines for tenure-track faculty. What message are we sending to our junior faculty? The first 5-7 years of an academic career revolve around establishing an independent, successful research agenda, a time-intensive and difficult task, one in which success is far from certain. I'm certain that the majority of faculty who did not receive tenure during the past 5 years or so were denied primarily because their level of scholarly output was considered insufficient.

As a result of these publishing constraints, it would be foolish for a non-tenured faculty member to engage in speculative, cross-disciplinary work. The payoff for success is obvious, but the risks associated with failure more so. Ironically, then, the elevated publication guidelines adopted university-wide (5-8 publications prior to tenure, with at least 2 of these in top-tier journals) encourages exactly the kind of narrow, specialized research agendas from which we publicly distance ourselves.

The lamenting of the "free agent" status of academics is another point on which faculty would agree with Dr. Jeffrey. Again, however, the university's actions may encourage just this kind of behavior. Significant salary increases (and even promotion and tenure) are often granted to those who secure outside offers from other institutions. Furthermore, in the past few years we have paid premium salaries (often with elevated rank) to individuals at other universities whom we have sought, usually because of some combination of academic success and religious commitment. While these scholars may have been solid additions to the faculty, they have also generated significant salary inequities and corresponding disillusionment. The recourse for most of us? We're told to secure an offer from another institution. This hardly promotes institutional commitment and loyalty, and undercuts Baylor's stated goals.

Finally, faculty also share Dr. Jeffrey's assessment of Baylor's historic and distinctive tradition of service. Faculty have been willing participants in university committees, honors college seminars, student organizations, interdisciplinary programs, not to mention community and church-related involvement. Many of these activities, however, require significant commitments of time and energy. With the increased emphasis on scholarly productivity, time spent in service activities carries with it real costs. How will the university reward those willing to invest their time and effort in such endeavors? If we insist that 20% of our time is to be devoted to service, how will we be able to compete academically (in tier 1 journals) with those who put 100% of their effort into scholarship?

I am not the first to suggest that Baylor's march toward Vision 2012 will produce profound changes in the climate of Baylor University. Many of you have read a series of essays written by Dr. Kent Gilbreath in the School of Business. Dr. Gilbreath raises excellent points for discussion on many of the issues I have raised here. On April 10-11, the Council of Deans will host, "The Baptist and Christian Character of Baylor: A Colloquy in Honor of Donald D. Schmeltekopf." I am sure these same issues will be raised by the impressive group of speakers the Council of Deans (led Brad Toben) has secured.

Baylor University is at a critical period in its history. How the university acts during this time—which faculty are hired, tenured, and promoted, what activities are rewarded and encouraged, and how we treat those with whom we disagree, for example—will say much more about the future than what we say.

Chuck Weaver, Chair  
Faculty Senate

#### Baylor as an Intellectual Community

I am grateful to Chuck Weaver and members of Senate for an invitation to share some thoughts about intellectual community at Baylor. Faculty Senate plays an important role in the formation of community on campus, one that can, in my view, be broadly constructive in helping us to engage together the fullness of the opportunities set before us in the context of Vision 2012. Accordingly, I would be glad for any response to these musings from both Senators and others in the faculty.

The history of higher education offers persuasive evidence that the character of the intellectual life is such that it can only be realized fully in community. Inter alia, this is one of the deeper things we learn from the searching dialogues Plato accords to Socrates and his friends, and it is also what Cicero was getting at when he said that excepting wisdom itself, "nothing better was ever given to mankind by the immortal gods" than intellectual friendship. Jesus likewise formed with his disciples an *enkuklios paiedeia*, a circle of learning referred to by later Christian writers (e.g. John Wyclif) as the "college" of Christ and his students. Our inherited idea of a collegium as it grew up in the first Christian communities, then monasteries, cathedral schools and, at last, in the first universities, is a reiteration of these archetypes of the shared intellectual life.

In the vast majority of larger institutions of higher education today little enough of this sense of vital intellectual community persists. There are many probable reasons for its general demise; among them we may reckon the intensive specialization of (and within) academic disciplines and the "free agent" status of leading scientists and intellectuals, many of whom move frequently, selling their services to the highest bidder. More than the "stars" of academe are affected by this transience. Without deep ties to a sustaining community of which the university is a part, loyalties to disciplinary guilds come to outweigh loyalty to

one's own university. Partly as a consequence, the very idea of an intellectual "community" can become distorted, or used in a casually inflated way to describe mere formalities, or professional associations (e.g. "the biochemical community"), much as also (and rather weakly) to refer to groups of people who have one or more political goals in common but may not even know each other personally.

One of Baylor's historic strengths is that as a community it has tended more than most universities to resist the extreme hypertrophy of disciplines. Academic lonerism and artificial separation of the university's intellectual life from the shared identity (substantially but not exclusively religious) of the wider Baylor community has been here constrained by a kind of social and spiritual consensus. This seems to me to have been on the whole a very good thing.

Moreover, in our joint effort to go to the "next level" academically a vital sense of community is not something Baylor should be willing to barter away now. Precisely, in fact, the contrary: we should be seeking to build upon that character which has been preserved here, after all, so much more authentically than in many of this country's larger academic institutions. Happily, in both the language and goals of Vision 2012 one can discern a characteristic impulse to build upon the historic experience of intellectual community which has been so fruitful in this place. Writ large, this impulse—a deep affection really—accounts for our emphasis on such goals of our academic development as interdisciplinarity, the study of civil society, the formation of an Honors College, and a magnificent aspiration to live out the virtues of Christian community life in all dimensions of our shared enterprise.

As a Christian community Baylor is, of course, only one of many kinds of possible Christian intellectual community. We are not, for example, a church, and don't need to be. But to fulfill our distinctive mission as a Christian intellectual community we do need to be "of the Church" in the widest sense, an ekklesia of generous high-common-denominator ecumenical spirit which privileges the life of the mind both in the academic disciplines and across them. We are, as much as Plato's Academy or the Celtic monastic community founded on the island of Iona, an *enkuklios paeideia*. Further, we are a legacy neither of Athens nor Jerusalem exclusively, but of both together. (Both Gentile and Jewish points of view continue to shape our questions.) That is, we are a Christian community which deeply inhabits our intellectual patrimony. We have, accordingly, not just one "maternal language" of enquiry, but many.

Communities, to be effective, seek to understand the needs of their members, to learn better how to minister appropriately to each other, and how to liberate the diverse gifts of all members to their maximum fruitfulness. Sometimes we stumble and fumble in our attempts at fruitfulness (academics are in some respects a little like whooping cranes), but we owe each other a persistent effort. The recent Faculty Workload Policy and, still more recent Tenure Standards Guidelines are, in my view, examples of such effort. Both remind us that even

with much collaborative thinking there will almost inevitably be need for further fine-tuning and revisiting down the road. It is important to our success to resist investing more in any given formula than in the larger objectives which occasion our policies and guidelines, and yet also to recognize how necessary to community life these are as provisional instruments of a common good.

Some have already observed that our new Tenure Standards seem, with respect to scholarship, not as demanding (e.g., quantity of published research) as standards in most “tier one” institutions. In the narrowest sense of a fully comparable counting of articles or rigid calculation of grant funding this may be the case. But the emphasis we place on quality, peer-reviewed undergraduate teaching and a rich practice of service within the broad context of Christian intellectual community – each of which is essential to our distinctiveness and faithfulness to historic values — is for a university of our size quite extraordinary. Together, these expectations give form to deepening and remarkably admirable notion of intellectual community and collegial identity among our faculty. However partially or imperfectly, these policies and guidelines, I believe, thus reflect the values for which Baylor has always wished to be known even as they point us toward higher levels of achievement. That we now wish to become one of the very finest universities in America is certainly true; that we should attempt to achieve this goal merely by a narrow imitation of the multiversities which now rank in the “top 50” would be to misconstrue the very principles which have prompted our planning.

As we move steadily forward in our quest for excellence (inevitably drafting new policies and procedures as we go), it is the distinctive virtues of a Christian intellectual community that we should want to enhance and promulgate. I hope that Senate will contribute sagely to ongoing discussion about how most effectively to develop in ourselves the substantive virtues of shared intellectual life. As one small contribution to that discussion let me take this opportunity to say that, in my own view, we ought to desire to be a university which is not merely one more academic/professional redaction of aggregate elements in the body politic, but a specific and perhaps unique member – a joint, or fulcrum, an elbow upon which our society and its institutions may come to depend for a certain leverage it could not otherwise obtain. We want to be superb, yes – but not merely as a central Texas simulacrum of whatever counts as caché in the homogenous blend of a certain national media image. Rather, we seek to contribute to our students, as well as to our colleagues in other universities, an excellence with distinctive advantage, an education that, because it is seriously Christian, affords a richer, more diverse appreciation of the meaning of persons and the splendor of truth than could be obtained without our continuous practice of the time-tested virtues of Christian intellectual community.

David Lyle Jeffrey

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# *Faculty Senate Committees*

**Faculty Committee on Academic Freedom, Responsibility and Environment**

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Senator Ann McGlashan

**Faculty Committee on Enrollment Management** - Senator Ray Cannon

**Faculty Committee on Physical Facilities** - Senator Rosalie Beck

**Faculty Committee on Student Life and Services** - Senator Ray Wilson, II

**Liaisons report:**

Mark Dunn (Athletic Council),

Jane Abbott-Kirk (Staff Council),

Liz Ngan/Jane Williams (Personnel, Benefits and Compensation)

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## **Faculty Senate Meeting Dates**

**All meetings scheduled for Cashion 303 at 3:30 p.m.**

April 15, 2003

May 6, 2003

## **Faculty Senate Website:**

[http://www.baylor.edu/~Fac\\_Senate/senatehome.html](http://www.baylor.edu/~Fac_Senate/senatehome.html)

The Senate website has minutes, meeting dates, membership, and other important information. Please send suggestions to: [Pat\\_Sharpe@Baylor.edu](mailto:Pat_Sharpe@Baylor.edu).

## ***The Senate wishes to thank:***

***Dan Williamson for assistance with the Faculty Senate web page.***

***Rona Stefka for assistance with the Faculty Senate Newsletter.***