

Baylor University

Faculty Senate Newsletter

February, 2000

The 1999-00 Faculty Senate officers and membership:

Chair: Robert Baird

(Arts and Sciences)

Chair-elect: Jay Losey

(Arts and Sciences)

Secretary: Charles Weaver

(Arts and Sciences)

Publicity: Buddy Gilchrest

(Education)

Arts and Sciences:

Linda Adams

Robert "Bob" Baird

Rosalie Beck

Anne-Marie Bowery

William Jensen

Phillip Johnson

David Longfellow

Jay Losey

Dan McGee

Richard Riley

Sara Stone

Joan Supplee

Charles Weaver

Ray Wilson

Joe Yelderman

David Young

Business:

Gary Carini

Joe Cox

Charles Davis

Mark Dunn

Karen Johnson

Jane Williams

Education:

Fred Curtis

Buddy Gilchrest

Deborah Johnston

Engineering and Computer Science:

Don Farris

Law:

Marianne Auld

Libraries:

William Hair

Music:

Jane Abbott-Kirk

Christopher Buddo

Nursing:

Sandra Genrich

Truett Seminary:

David Garland

Comments from Robert Baird, Senate Chair:

Senate Initiatives

I.

I want to communicate to the faculty information concerning several Senate initiatives, some recent, some long-standing, some nearing completion, and some still very much in the negotiation stage. I hope to be able to report in my next and last column as chair of the Faculty Senate successful resolution of several of these matters.

For a considerable period of time the Senate has been in conversation with the administration concerning dismissal procedures at the university. The Senate has had two primary concerns: that dismissal charges be heard by a committee other than the Tenure Committee and that membership on the proposed Dismissal Committee be equally appointed by the President and the faculty. At the time of this writing, details of the process are still under discussion, but the administration has agreed in principle to the idea of a Dismissal Committee with appointments made equally by the President and the Faculty Committee on Committees through the Senate. I am grateful to Dan McGee and the Faculty Committee on Academic Freedom and Responsibility for initiating this process. The earliest document was formulated when Dan was chair of that committee. I also appreciate the recent response of the administration to the Senate proposal. The outcome, I think, will be procedures about which the faculty will feel more confident.

For some time the Senate has also been involved in an effort to combine the Grievance Committee and the Hearings Committee into a newly described Grievance Committee. This would serve both the function of making the committee structure more efficient and clarifying procedures. At the time of this writing a specific proposal has been approved by the Senate and submitted to the administration.

Representatives of the Senate have been in discussion with the Provost and Council of Deans in an effort to establish promotion guidelines that take into account several matters: (1) the new scholarly expectations document, (2) the traditional emphasis at Baylor on high quality teaching and undergraduate education, and (3) the recognition that faculty members have different strengths and that they fulfill their responsibilities in dramatically different departmental situations. For example, one would anticipate that the research and publication expectations and opportunities in a department offering the doctoral degree to be significantly different from those in a department that offers only the bachelor's degree. The Senate recommended last November that academic departments which do not now have guidelines for tenure and promotion consider developing such guidelines and that those guidelines be developed in consultation with the appropriate dean. The Senate was responding to the concern of faculty who had indicated the need for direction as they pursue their careers at Baylor. Hopefully, the more general guidelines that will emerge in the conversation between the Senate and the Council of Deans will be of assistance to those formulating departmental guidelines. A Promotion Policy Task Force chaired by Jay Losey originally wrote the document that the Senate and the Council of Deans have been discussing. Losey is currently chair-elect of the Senate.

This year small groups of Senators have been meeting with President Sloan to discuss issues of mutual interest. In the first of these sessions in the fall, much of the conversation focused on the new Scholarly Expectations Document and its interpretation. A portion of President Sloan's presentation to the faculty at the January faculty meeting was in part a response to the conversation he had with senators. We requested that he permit us to include those remarks in this issue of the Senate Newsletter; he agreed. With appreciation to the President for engaging with us in this on-going conversation, we publish the President's remarks here.

Comments from Robert B. Sloan, President

Scholarly Expectations

The following is excerpted from President Sloan's presentation to the faculty at the January 2000 University-wide faculty meeting. Please note that it was prepared for oral delivery and is here printed with only very minor changes, still reflecting its original setting.

Let me spend the last few minutes addressing a subject that I continue to think about, and one that, I am sure, you think about as well. Over the past few months I have heard the "Statement on Scholarly Expectations" described as everything from "a document big enough to drive a tank through," to "a publish-or-perish dictate."

I want to be clear and unequivocal about one thing: we are a teaching institution, and our primary emphasis will always be undergraduate education, even as we seek to give added attention to our Graduate School, which by the way, is poised to add Ph.D. programs in mathematics and philosophy in the near future.

As faculty, we must continue to study and devote time to preparation in order to fulfill our obligations to our students. The end goal is not to publish or do research for its own sake, but as a means to the discovery and synthesis of new knowledge, the transmission of knowledge to the next generation, and the education of our students into a culture in which faith and learning are mutually supportive. Given this larger frame of reference, one of our historically primary goals at Baylor is to be outstanding classroom teachers for whom the learning experience for our students is our chief aim.

Great teaching requires *preparation* — a practice which is absolutely inseparable from disciplined, diligent scholarly activity. Preparation for the classroom: isn't that what

every great teacher has to do? How do we prepare? Clearly, teaching is a varied art, and certainly the classroom presentation, i.e., a significant medium of content transferal, can — indeed must — vary. Certainly different disciplines as well as different teaching methods require different methods of preparation. Surely, however, none would disagree that there are methods of preparation that are so obvious, so traditional that they almost amuse us by their very mentioning. I'm referring to reading, writing, and collegial conversation (please note: when I refer to "reading" I intend not only the commonly understood practice of reading literary texts, but I am including also the "reading" of the "texts" of physical creation as well as other realities of experience. That is, I mean to include the gathering of data and other forms of informational and conceptual input that scientists and other scholars use beyond the great fund of literary texts). We rightly expect these disciplines — reading, writing, and discussion — (and others) of our students. Surely we have not outgrown them either.

Preparation: it's what every great scholar does — every day, line by line, step by step. Our lives are filled with the stuff of books, papers, and conversation. However much the wizardry of modern technology changes the speed, range, and formatting of these activities, we still read, write, and discuss. We prepare to teach. Thus, research need not be an end in itself. It may and indeed must serve also as a function, correlate, and subset of preparation for *teaching*. Again, research, composition, and submission for peer review involve the great disciplines of preparation for teaching — reading, writing, and collegial feedback.

Certainly, we all know about the professional politics of journal submissions and the gamesmanship involved in the publication of articles and monographs. We all know that far too much junk gets published and that publication for the sake of bibliographic padding and professional posturing is the dark side of the academic enterprise. Still, there is the legitimate and necessary responsibility of every teaching scholar to stay abreast of the rapid changes taking place in all of our disciplines so as to be able to offer to our students the finest insights, the cutting-edges of research, and the newest advances in information, discovery, and professional, artistic, and theoretical synthesis. The principal purpose of our "Statement on Scholarly Expectations" is, as I understand it and intend it, an expression of Baylor's historic commitments as an institution committed to teaching. It is our way of affirming and pledging our accountability as members of an academic institution. It is nothing less than the university's effort to maintain, encourage, and emphasize the great disciplines of scholarly activity, especially as they prepare us to teach and better enable our students to learn.

These disciplines of preparation correlate with and should produce the byproducts of scholarly composition, artistic creation, and professional skills and work products. It is the byproducts which we measure. It is great teaching and the love of learning toward which we aim. Admittedly, the byproducts of composition, publication, and performance are subject to abuse. Misunderstood and misapplied they become ends in themselves instead of critical, disciplined, and creative acts which prepare for (and also preserve for future generations) the experiences of teaching and learning. But, those are problems of ends and means which require clarity, not the abandonment of the enterprise altogether.

Of course, I must add ‐ and I stress the importance of this point ‐ that research, writing, publication, and scholarly discussion can and should serve other populations and venues outside our own and can also be means to other ends; i.e., they do not serve as preparatory means only for the ends of teaching. Indeed, I believe I could argue that these activities ‐ which I have here described as "byproducts" ‐ are not only means to other valuable ends, but could in some contexts and with other legitimate value assumptions be recognized as ends themselves. For example, as means to other ends we would all surely agree that one important byproduct of scholarship at Baylor is the contribution it can make to our respective disciplines/fields. As scholars we work within larger communities that depend upon the good and fruitful efforts of others, including our own. Also, the disciplines of scholarship can serve to advance the ends of professional, technological, economic, and even spiritual development, not only for ourselves, but for other settings and even worldwide populations. Or, as ends in themselves, the great disciplines of scholarship can serve to satisfy ‐ at least temporarily ‐ the spiritual cravings of curiosity and wonder. I certainly intend no generalized slighting of these other purposes of scholarship. Rather we applaud, encourage, and will reward these as they occur at Baylor as well.

But here I am dealing particularly and specifically with Baylor's historic identity as a teaching institution and how the "Statement on Scholarly Expectations" represents, I believe, genuine continuity with, indeed a reaffirmation of, our historic identity. Again, my point here has been to speak about *Baylor's* historic emphases, about *our* mission, *our* values and the means of achieving *our* aspirations as an institution largely devoted to the spiritual and transformative character of teaching for the sake of our students. Given who we are, I believe it is right neither to overlook the importance of research, writing, publication, and artistic and professional performance as *means* (hence our "Statement on Scholarly Expectations"), nor to elevate these tasks beyond their historically primary (though not exclusive) role at Baylor as preparation for *teaching*.

Baylor's scholarly expectations imply not only accountability ‐ in hiring, promotion, salaries, pre-tenure review, tenure evaluation, and ongoing post-tenure evaluations ‐ but, just as important, *support* from the university. For example, over the past few weeks, Wallace Daniel has held a series of meetings with department chairs in the College of Arts and Sciences to discuss the scholarly expectations policy. These meetings have gone very well, I am told, and have helped to clarify some issues. In addition, the faculty of the School of Education, under the leadership of Bob Yinger and Susan Johnsen and a task force of the faculty, have just recently adopted and forwarded for further review an impressive statement on scholarship, entitled "A Faculty Guide for Scholarship in the School of Education." Don Schmeltekopf has asked all of the deans to develop criteria at the school or departmental level to establish the meaning of scholarship as it manifests itself in the various disciplines. The goal is to have some very specific guidelines to help faculty know what the criteria of accountability are for their particular academic unit. What serves as a good measure of scholarship in one place may not apply in another. That is why we must initially develop these criteria at school and departmental levels as opposed to having a generic, university-wide checklist.

We also are seeking to support your scholarship efforts by providing more sabbaticals, release time and funding for research projects. This summer the University will grant more than 50 sabbaticals — the most ever. We also have increased the budget for institutionally-funded research activity. And if a faculty member can make a compelling case for release time to engage in a scholarly activity, I believe he or she will find support from their department chair and/or dean. We are also working hard to improve our faculty-student ratios so that the total environment is supportive of our central teaching mission.

Again, I want to encourage all of us to keep our eyes on the overall objective, and that is to support and prepare for classroom teaching by engaging in the scholarly activities that will keep us at the forefront of our fields. I know all of us believe our students deserve that.

Changing Baylor's ranking in the Carnegie classification is not now, nor should it ever be, our ultimate goal. If commitment to our central mission brings better rankings, well and good. If doing what we do best — i.e., remaining committed to excellence in teaching, and continuing to challenge ourselves as faculty members to prepare for the classroom experience, so that both in and outside the classroom we may strive to have a life-changing influence upon our students by virtue of the knowledge, faith, wisdom, and character which we bring to our interactions with them — again, if those commitments bring us greater acclaim, well and good. If not, so be it. We are charged to be faithful. And faithful to our historic charge as a Christian institution, committed to our students and their welfare, we will be.

I hope that the holidays have provided you with an opportunity for rest and renewal. We all have a busy and exciting semester ahead of us. Let me also say thank you for the outstanding work that you do on behalf of the University. Our students and alumni are fortunate to have at this juncture in Baylor's history a community of scholar-teachers who are so invested in the mission of this great institution. God bless you all. Thank you.

Faculty Senate Meeting Dates

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

March 21, 2000

April 18, 2000

May 9, 2000

President's Faculty Forum Meetings

Scheduled for 3:30 p.m. in Kayser Auditorium

Thursday, March 2, 2000

President's State of the University Address

Wednesday, April 19, 2000, 3:30 p.m., location TBA

Faculty Senate Website

http://www3.baylor.edu/~Fac_Senate/senatehome.html

The Senate website has minutes, meeting dates, membership, and other important information. Please send suggestions to: buddy_gilchrest@Baylor.edu.

The Senate wishes to thank:

Randy Francis for assistance with the Faculty Senate web page and

Tresa Gilchrest for assistance with the Faculty Senate Newsletter.