

# Baylor University

## Faculty Senate Newsletter

November, 1999

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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)

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**Engineering and Computer Science:**

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**Law:**

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**Nursing:**

Sandra Genrich

**Truett Seminary:**

David Garland

*Comments from Robert Baird, Senate Chair:*

Scholarly Expectations and Fair Procedures

Few initiatives have created as much discussion among the Baylor faculty as the implementation and anticipated implementation of the "Statement on Scholarly Expectations" approved by the Council of Deans on February 4, 1998, and by President Robert Sloan on the 16th of that month. These faculty discussions have focused on three issues.

First, faculty who entered the tenure-track "pipeline" prior to the fall of 1998 are confronted with **university-wide** expectations different from those that prevailed when they joined the Baylor community. I refer to university-wide publication (or performance) expectations because some departments have had publication requirements in place for some time. These new publication expectations have raised two questions: (1) Does this not unfairly change an individual's job description in midstream? and (2) Have those confronted with the new expectations been given adequate opportunity to meet those expectations? These issues have been ongoing matters of conversation between the administration and the Faculty Senate. Early in the conversations, many in the Senate felt that those who were well along in the tenure process and who had been hired under different expectations should have been given an exemption. That view was not accepted by the administration, though the Senate was assured that the situation of those who were nearing their sixth-year tenure review would have that fact taken into account during the transition to the new publication requirements. Many faculty believe that the situation of these tenure-track faculty has not adequately been taken into account.

Second, apart from the situation of those facing imminent tenure decisions, there is general concern among faculty that sufficient research time will not be made available to meet the new publication expectations. The Senate has discussed this specific issue with the Provost. The Provost has communicated to the Senate that he, in turn, has requested that the deans meet with their tenure-track faculty to insure that reassigned time is made available to them. I am not sure, however, that we have taken as seriously as we must how much time is required for an individual to publish significantly or how large the teaching-load gap is between Baylor and most universities who have research and publication requirements. Consider the job announcements in the most recent issue of *Jobs for Philosophers*, the American Philosophical Association's publication of current openings. In a "quick" count of the first 100 announcements that mention teaching load, forty-six (almost half) have a teaching load of 2/2 (two courses per semester). Seventeen have a teaching load of 2/3. Twenty-four have a teaching load of 3-3. Three have a teaching load of 3-4. Only ten of the 100 have teaching loads of 4/4—which is still Baylor's official policy. We have to acknowledge how far, in this respect, we lag behind other universities who require research and publication. The significance of this is that Baylor faculty will be competing for placement of articles in professional journals with faculty from universities that have much lower teaching "loads". To be sure, the Baylor administration has made significant strides in providing more reassigned time for research and publication (or performance). Nevertheless, we ought to be aware of how far we have to go, and we need to be judicious in our publication expectations of faculty who continue to have heavy teaching responsibilities. This is a matter of fairness. The goal of

the Scholarly Expectations document is to turn the big ship Baylor in a different direction. It cannot be done overnight. Many deeply desire that it be done in a way that is sensitive to the interests of the ones most affected—the faculty.

Third, many tenure-track faculty are uncertain about the precise nature of the publication requirements they are facing. As one faculty member said to me recently: "I'm not sure if the number and quality of publications is determined by my department, my dean, the Tenure Committee, the Provost, or the President." At this point it seems to me that the departments must take the initiative and develop publication guidelines for those on tenure-track. Some departments have already done this. It is, moreover, imperative that these proposed guidelines be discussed with and agreed to by the administration to insure that everybody is "on board" with respect to those guidelines. We have a model for this process. In 1993 departments entered into conversation with the Dean and Provost (at least this was true in the College of Arts and Sciences) concerning criteria and procedures for faculty evaluation and compensation. Departments submitted their proposals to the administration. The proposals were critiqued by the administration, returned to the departments, and resubmitted taking the critiques into account. The same kind of discussions should now take place with regard to publication requirements.

In 1993, for example, the guidelines (which clearly are no longer adequate) developed by the philosophy department concerning research and publication read as follows:

**Performance in research and scholarly contributions.** While this is secondary to classroom responsibilities, the department encourages such professional pursuits. In addition to contributing to the reservoir of human knowledge and insight, such activity contributes to high quality performance in the classroom and to admission of the department's students to excellent graduate and professional programs.

A. Criteria for evaluating this performance include:

1. quantity and quality of research
2. number and quality of publications
3. participation in professional meetings and organizations
4. recognition of the quality of one's work by professional peers

B. Procedures for evaluating the extent to which the criteria have been met

include:

1. documenting the quantity and quality of one's research and publication
2. documenting participation in professional activities
3. documenting the recognition of one's work by peers

In revising this statement to meet current scholarly and publication expectations, at least three changes need to be made, and it is the third that is so difficult. The first two involve simply changing the sentence indicating that research is secondary to classroom responsibilities and replacing the word "encourages" with "requires." Now comes the hard part. How do we go about specifying the precise quantity and quality of research and publication? One could require a specific number of presentations at professional meetings, articles, and/or books, and one could work out a formula that would equate a certain number of presentations with an article, and a certain number of articles with a book. My understanding is that some Baylor departments have done this. I must confess that there is something about this quantification process that I find repugnant. Nevertheless, we have to attend to tenure-track faculty members who are saying: "Just tell me what I have to do to receive tenure." If what one has to do is to publish a certain quantity of material, then the quantity needs to be specified.

Determining quality is obviously more difficult but some possibilities are available. These include requiring that the publications appear in refereed journals and/or that the published material be cited by other authors or in some other way evaluated by one's professional peers. The difficulty, of course, is that one cannot finally escape the role that human judgment must play in all of this. In that sense, there will always be some level of anxiety experienced by those on tenure-track. To mitigate against undue anxiety, faculty, department chairs, and deans, might initiate a conversation that will enable all academic units to produce guidelines acceptable to both faculty in the discipline and the administration.

Our responsibility requires us to be as helpful as we can be to those on tenure-track. At a minimum, this responsibility involves making as clear as possible the nature of the publications expected, as well as providing adequate resources to meet those expectations. As we attempt to turn the ship, may we not lose sight of these responsibilities.

*Comments from Donald D. Schmeltkopf, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs:*

## **SOME REFLECTIONS ON THE ACADEMIC PRIORITIES OF BAYLOR UNIVERSITY**

A common theme in higher education circles today is the necessity for focussed academic programs for individual colleges and universities in the United States. While a few institutions may attempt to do virtually everything that is educationally respectable and important—;from architecture to zoology, from the highly theoretical to the very practical—;most of our institutions are being asked to give attention to what they do best and to reflect more intentionally on what they ought to be doing best. Several factors are at work moving institutions in this direction, among them the harsh reality of financial limits, an increased awareness of public accountability, and a heightened sense of competitiveness in the higher education marketplace. But whatever the causes, the dominance of this kind of thinking in American higher education today reflects a significant transformation in our nation's educational system at the end of the 20th century.

What is Baylor's educational niche? What do we do well and what ought we to do well? These are extremely important questions to be able to answer. A conversation regarding these matters should be reflective and broad based, but the discussion should also lead to practical conclusions. We at Baylor are not immune to the larger concerns surrounding resources, accountability, and competition, but even if we were, good stewardship demands that we conduct our institutional life in the most responsible way possible.

I am taking this occasion, therefore, to call upon the faculty, in particular, and other relevant parties, in general, to join with the administration—;department and program heads, deans and associate deans, and the central administration—;in a vigorous discussion about the focus and priorities of Baylor's academic programs. May I offer two criteria that I believe should frame our discussion and decision-making regarding this issue: one, the extent to which the specific program is grounded in Baylor's mission, and two, the extent to which the specific program is educationally beneficial to students and is of educational and scholarly benefit to the larger academic community and to society.

To initiate this discussion, allow me to offer my own thoughts—;tentative though they may be—;on our niche, what we do well and what we ought to do well. My thoughts on what we do well are based to a considerable degree on recent national rankings published by various external entities. (The limitation of this approach is clear, however, since most of our undergraduate academic programs in the arts and sciences, and in some professional fields, are not nationally ranked by any external group.) Our engineering program was ranked 16th in the nation by U.S. News & World Report among schools whose highest engineering degree is a bachelor's or master's. The same magazine ranked our entrepreneurship program fifth in the nation, and the undergraduate program in business 51st in the nation. The U.S. News ranked our Law School in the "top tier,"

50th in the nation, and our communication sciences and disorders program was ranked 41st in the nation, third among those programs not offering a doctorate.

The Gourman Reports rated our undergraduate theater program in the top 25. Our pre-med program is excellent: a 10-year statistical study indicates that Baylor graduates applying to medical school experience a 15-to-20 percent higher acceptance rate as compared to competing graduates from undergraduate universities nationwide. And our Ph.D. in religion is ranked by the National Research Council (NRC) as 31st nationally of the 72 Ph.D. programs in religion. (The NRC actually ranked only the top 38 of these programs.) These national rankings are based on a variety of measurements, but a common theme is the quality of the graduates the programs produce, a credit to the teaching and scholarship of the respective faculties.

As further evidence of what we do well, to these nationally ranked programs should be added areas that are producing important research, funded and non-funded, areas of artistic creativity, and areas of interdisciplinary work. Chemistry, Aviation Sciences, Social Work, and Education lead Baylor in externally funded research projects and programming. Active publication agendas are being pursued in all of our Ph.D. programs, as well as in business and in several humanities bachelor's and master's programs. And the creative productions of our artists—in music, art, and theatre—are highly competitive with those from peer institutions and those artists have excellent reputations in Texas and in some cases outside of Texas. Finally, Baylor has achieved excellence in some of our interdisciplinary programs, including Church-State Studies, the Baylor Interdisciplinary Core, the Honors Program, and our programs in international education.

At the President's Executive Council retreat on June 10-11, 1999, considerable attention was given to a discussion of Baylor's academic priorities. As the chief academic officer, I was asked to name the five or six programs that should receive priority consideration for the next 10-15 years and to justify my selections. My list, in rank order, was as follows: 1) religion/philosophy/seminary in combination; 2) biosciences/pre-medical studies/environmental studies in combination; 3) law; 4) engineering and computer science; 5) economics/accounting/finance; and 6) classics/literature/language. I then named and discussed four other areas which, in my view, need to be central to Baylor's mission and maintained at consistent levels of excellence: music, education, social work, and nursing. These, together with the first six, constitute my current view of the 10 academic priorities of Baylor.\*

The top six have more coherence than at first may appear. The list combines the theoretical and the practical, with disciplines of the arts and sciences constituting the core. I believe the twin disciplines of theology and philosophy are or should be the intellectual pillars of Baylor University. Not only do these disciplines engage us in the pursuit of moral and theological truth, but they also are, or certainly should be, the most integrative of all academic disciplines. We, therefore, need strong undergraduate and graduate programs in both. In this connection, but departing from my rank order, the study of classics/literature/language is an important complement. The study of the

language, literature, and thought of the Western world especially, but non-Western as well, is an important and needed intellectual piece of the theological and philosophical pillars of the university.

The biosciences, of course, pursue the truth of natural life, and, in combination with pre-medical studies and environmental science, provide foundations for advances in health-care and ecology. While carried out in a professional context, the study of law at Baylor represents the application of a great moral, political, and legal tradition, one that holds up the rule of law over the powers of rulers. Engineering and computer science, both founded on the disciplines of physics and mathematics, are central to our understanding and use of complex technology. And economics, accounting, and finance provide important theoretical and practical frameworks for the successful conduct of various business affairs.

The four other areas—music, education, social work, and nursing—reflect important human endeavors in society that are undergirded by Baylor's Christian and academic commitments. Music is especially needed for its aesthetic value in the life of the university and in the broader community, as well as for its important contribution to Christian worship in particular and to religious sensibilities in general. The areas of education, social work, and nursing are each significant and fundamental fields of service to humankind and are, in addition, concrete manifestations of Baylor's mission to serve society.

I recognize the inherent generality of the foregoing claims, but I hope they are suggestive of the line of argument one might make in defending an appropriate educational niche for Baylor University. I believe my list is grounded in Baylor's mission, and at the same time it supports programs that are of important educational and scholarly benefit to students and society.

In the spirit of what is good and right for Baylor and its students, past, present, and future, I invite the faculty and others to think about the academic priorities of our institution as a whole. While we will and must do many things—after all, we are a comprehensive, doctoral-granting university—what should be our focus? What areas of excellence or yet-to-be-developed areas of excellence should we support in an extraordinary way? What ought we to do well and be known for doing well? Baylor needs your thoughtful consideration and detailed responses to these questions.

This approach to thinking about our institutional future implies the necessity for new financial resources. We will not cannibalize each other in the service of the "top 10." But in seeking additional resources, those with the best arguments and the most energy will surely have an advantage in their efforts to position their respective programs at the pinnacle of Baylor University.

\*One of the problems of such an explicit listing is that many worthy and excellent programs must of necessity be omitted, especially, in this case, programs in the College of Arts and Sciences. The reader should keep in mind that the primary purpose of this essay is to generate discussion on the academic priorities of Baylor.

### **Faculty Senate Meeting Dates**

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

November 16, 1999 February 15, 2000

December 14, 1999 March 21, 2000

January 18, 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](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](mailto: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.