

Baylor University Faculty Senate Newsletter

February 1999

Comments from Senate Chair Daniel B. McGee:

Enrollment Management: What's In A Name?

For sometime Baylor has been involved in a discussion about enrollment management. Students, faculty, staff, and administrators have engaged in this discussion in a number of settings including the last University Planning Council meeting. Such deliberations about the nature and future of Baylor are a sign of institutional health and those who prompted them are to be commended.

I want to share some observations and questions that remain with me. First, it appears that the decision to increase the enrollment of Baylor has already been made. This was first signaled when the term "enrollment management" became synonymous with "enrollment growth."

It is not clear to me as to the plans for the rate of growth for the immediate future? What enrollment numbers have been plugged into the five-year plan that has been in process during this academic year? The really important issue is whether we will continue as we have for a number of years the pattern of increased enrollment and then a frantic effort to meet the needs of those additional students. My hope is that we will put in place the variety of resources needed for a quality Baylor education before there is further increase in student enrollment.

For example, there is the important issue of physical facilities. For a number of years we have struggled under the burden of limited facilities. What we have and are building does little to satisfy the need for adequate faculty office space, laboratory facilities, library facilities, and in some areas classrooms. We should secure such facilities in anticipation of student growth not in reaction to student growth. While we are making plans for some additional academic buildings, they are in the future. Furthermore, I am not aware of a thorough study of our facilities that would assure us that we have anticipated all our needs.

There is also the issue of an adequate faculty. Baylor has committed itself to achieving a student-faculty ratio of sixteen to one. I am concerned that this goal receive as immediate and certain achievement as the goal of enrollment growth. This means attention to the composition and size of Baylor's faculty. It has been announced that several new faculty positions have been authorized but I have not seen a calculation of what this means for the overall student-faculty ratio into the future. The composition of the future Baylor faculty also needs to be addressed. Are the plans for the immediate and/or long-term future to increase the percentage of our students taught by lecturers, graduate students,

and part-time teachers? I would argue that students are best taught by a faculty that has a long-term commitment to the Institution. Furthermore a faculty that has some sense of security in their work will be more honest with and therefore more helpful to their students. There is also the issue of how "second-class" faculty roles undermine collegiality. When some faculty members are excluded from important parts of the decision-making process, their sense of truly belonging is diminished.

Another concern that I have relates to adequate funds for student financial aid. Also, we have had only a brief history of having an applicant pool that allows us to meet our admission goal with students who meet Baylor's minimal academic standards. It would dramatically alter the quality of our academic life and reputation if we should expand and then have to take unqualified students just to sustain ourselves financially. This concern is especially relevant at a time when we are projecting higher academic demands upon the faculty. It would be incongruous to increase the academic quality of the faculty's work while not being certain that we can do the same with our students.

The bottom line for me at this point in our discussion is to ask that "enrollment management" really means "management" and not reaction to problems that we hope to fix as they arise. The kind of enrollment management that I envision will require more than dreaming of a bigger Baylor. It will require in depth studies and planning over a period of several years that is shared with the entire University community.

Comments from Dr. Charles S. Madden, Vice President for University Relations

How Big Should Baylor Be?

Last summer, when it became obvious that the 1998 freshman class was going to break all records, there were those who were surprised, exhilarated, and then some who feared uncontrolled growth. We accommodated the incoming class, made preparations to raise minimum standards and limit the 1999 freshman class to around 2,750.

Several conversations followed with faculty, staff, administration, regents, and present students. Each had advice on the central question, "How big should Baylor be?" Some suggested that we should reduce the size of the student body to become more highly selective. Others worried that that would become elitist and inaccessible—except to the wealthy—if we reduce the size of the entering classes. Still, others suggested that, with more than 11,000 undergraduates, Baylor would no longer be Baylor. "We would no longer know each other," some students worried. One retired faculty member recalled that everyone was convinced that "Baylor would not be Baylor" if it was allowed to grow larger than 5,000...four decades ago.

The more I have thought and studied growth patterns at both Baylor and other schools, the more I have been driven to consider the following ideas:

1. Enrollment cannot be considered in the abstract. A balance among factors—such as endowment, tuition, size and quality of the student body, size and quality of the faculty, size and quality of the staff, size and quality of the administration, buildings and infrastructure—must be maintained.
2. Changes in quality and quantity of student enrollment bring a variety of positive and negative consequences in the short and long-runs. As change occurs, resulting impacts on resources and teaching loads, dozens of other factors must be considered and appropriate responses made.
3. The student body must reflect a mix of racial, ethnic, religious, gender, geographic, and cultural factors. A resource base also requires a certain number of full-pay, or mostly pay, students in quantities necessary to support modest scholarships for need and/or merit for a substantial part of the student body. An extremely elite student body would require that we either drastically cut students, faculty, and staff or increase endowment several fold to fund our position in a very competitive market for high achieving students.

To the original question of how big should Baylor be there is no one answer that satisfies everyone. Consider this. What is Baylor? Is Baylor a campus, a faculty, a student body? Is it an administration or a group of alumni? Perhaps Baylor is a complex and comprehensive community including present, former, and future students; present, former faculty; staff and administration; as well as supporters. Does this community not contribute in different ways to the quality and resource base of the entire institution? Do not these supporters pay tuition for their children, donate money, attend Baylor events, and hire graduates? The "complete Baylor" may consist of a community that geographically exists in Texas, the U.S. and the world. Maybe the "whole Baylor" consists of hundreds of thousands of people who depend on Baylor for education, cultural identity, intellectual and athletic pride, and a sense of home. Those of us who depend on the support of the entire Baylor community for resources and the opportunity to do the work we love must realize there is a balance we must seek on their behalf. We must realize that our community has been growing for 153 years and is now expecting to send its next generation to have that same experience that is at the root of its educational identity. We struck a bargain many decades ago with the "greater Baylor community" to serve it with educational quality and integrity. The size of the institution may need to grow to meet the service needs, but only while being true to the values underlying this intergenerational agreement.

Dates of future Senate meetings for 1998-99:

Meetings begin promptly at 3:30 p.m. in room 303; Cashion Academic Center, Hankamer School of Business.

March 16, 1999
April 20, 1999
May 11, 1999

Important Dates:

President's State of the University Address: Wednesday, April 21, 1999; 3:30 pm;
Barfield Drawing Room, BDSC

Faculty Senate Website:

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

Check the website for minutes, meeting dates, membership, and other important information. Thanks to Kathy Weber for maintaining the website.

[Home](#)