

November 2, 2011 Minutes

Members present: Feakes, Wilson, Conroy, Morey, Czyzewska, Sanders, Cavitt, Hindson, Kimmel, Furney, Melzer, Stone, Ash, Winek

Guests: President Trauth, Provost Bourgeois, VPSA Smith, Sigler (Library), McKenzie (Star)

Meeting called to order at 4:00 PM.

PAAG Discussion Items

1. University Budget:

The Senate asked the President for her perspective on how the budget will impact faculty and staff lines over the next couple of years. As the State contribution to the University budget decreases, the Faculty Senate also asked to hear an overview of how the administration will prepare for the decline in support, and will plan for the next legislative cycle and the potential for additional funding cuts.

Despite the prospect of a \$12 billion shortfall in the state budget going into the next biennium, the President asked that everyone not lose sight of the very positive big picture, and the reality that we are all part of a wonderful enterprise. TX State is fortunate to be popular with applying students--to receive 19,000 freshman class applications. The strength of this demand gives us some cushion in facing the negative outlook of the next legislative session. There is a basic structural problem with the state budget in the underestimation of the business tax and until that is rectified, problems will continue for education funding. K-12 and higher education are in the crosshairs because they are sectors in the budget considered "discretionary." The "no new taxes" pledge by many of the legislators elected in the last election left little room to resolve the shortfall. Leadership in state senate is likely to shift and the political landscape could change after the next election.

The President's Cabinet is discussing how to handle another cut in funding now that the \$6 million in reserves have been pushed out to the divisions, including \$1 million dedicated to new faculty lines. There is little if any fat to trim, having the highest student to faculty ratio in the state, as well as being severely understaffed.

The Provost is examining faculty expenditures and is moving negative continuing balances in adjunct faculty salaries to permanent funding, as well as converting continuing needs for faculty to new faculty lines. Other needs that the \$1 million new faculty lines funds may be used to address are net new staff lines and operating funds to support faculty hires, and new positions in University Advancement that would provide development personnel at the college level. In planning the budget, the strategic plan will provide prioritization guidance.

A senator commented that assigning staff duties to senior lecturers could provide some flexibility in departments with critical staff needs.

2. Capital Campaign:

The Senate asked to hear the current status of the capital campaign, and the goals for the public phase of the campaign.

The capital campaign goal is \$110 million. The “quiet phase” has been underway since 2006 and the campaign is now in the public “family phase.” \$75 million of campaign funds are dedicated to academic excellence efforts, and \$8 million is dedicated to construction of the performing arts center. The \$100 million raised in the first phase are not non-liquid assets.

The goal of the public/family phase over the next 2 years is to attach as many people as possible to the effort. These will be smaller donations made by a much larger group of individuals. The university is relying on senior faculty in all academic programs to step up and provide leadership in the coming 18 months of the campaign.

Senators commented that there is confusion among the faculty about the five-year contribution commitment that has been established, and cited examples of broken links and non-functioning web pages when trying to respond to the recent call for contributions.

The President and Provost noted these problems and will see that they are addressed.

The Senate Chair observed that candidates for the VPUA position expressed concern about the next campaign since known donors have been recruited for the present effort.

The President commented that current development efforts have laid the infrastructure for the next campaign, including repositioning the university in the eyes of alumni, and keeping young alumni attached to the university.

A senator asked if the alumni contact lists that have been developed could be made available to departments, to which the President answered yes. It was acknowledged that many departments have had problems maintaining alumni lists for their graduates.

3. Campus Safety:

Recent Timely Warning announcements have generated concerns regarding safety procedures across campus. The Senate requested a discussion on overall campus safety and the methods intended to inform the faculty and staff of appropriate safety procedures for specific situations.

VPSA Smith described efforts to enact procedures in compliance with the Clery Act, which requires colleges and universities across the United States to disclose information about crime on and around their campuses. University Police Sergeant Robert Campbell has been appointed the campus emergency coordinator. Dr. Smith distributed a print out of campus emergency procedures that is posted on the university website (www.emergencyinfo.txstate.edu/) and suggested that it be posted in every classroom. She said that the emergency management team is doing the best it can, but also knows that there is more to be done yet.

A discussion ensued about the need to train faculty in safety procedures so that they are able to act quickly and knowledgeably in a variety of emergency situations, and to canvas faculty for information on specific safety problems or threats in individual buildings and facilities across

campus. It was noted that the staff shortage is affecting safety, e.g. burned out lights in stairwells that have not been replaced.

Break

PAAG Follow-up

A senator questioned whether there is data to substantiate the claim that development officers pay for themselves. Has that been the case in the University Advancement division?

A number of Senators reiterated the need for a centralized safety-training program for faculty, administrators, and staff. It was suggested that new faculty orientation and new chair orientation include units on appropriate action in emergency situations. A Senator pointed out that emergency procedures do exist, they do not have to be invented. Senator Stone will identify websites that address campus emergency procedures and will forward them to the Chair. In order to gather more information from faculty on safety concerns, this topic will be on the agenda for the 11/9 meeting with the Senate Liaisons.

Faculty Development Leave Review Results

The Senate completed its review of the 37 applications submitted for Development Leave. One application was re-classified as an administrative leave request, and the remaining 36 received matrix scores that qualify them for Senate approval. The applications have been forwarded to the Council of Academic Deans for review and the Senate recommendations and rankings have been sent to the Provost.

New Business

1. CAD meeting items:

Interim VPUA McKinnon announced plans to combine the Discover Texas State and Bobcat Days outreach events.

VPIT Van Wyatt gave a presentation on planned renovations to Alkek Library.

2. As a work around to the problems the Senate is experiencing with college faculty distribution lists, John McGee suggested using a SAP mechanism to send email to a college distribution list. The Chair will send out the link URL.

3. The Chair has received the updated salary data that includes the last round of merit increases and will work on getting it posted to the Senate website.

4. The Chair reported on the Texas Council of Faculty Senates meeting that she attended with Senator Furney on October 29. The report from the Coordinating Board included the approval of a 42-hour core curriculum that will be enacted by 2014. Six required outcomes have been identified (e.g. critical thinking) and each core course must demonstrate how it accomplishes these outcome goals.

5. The Senate has received a request for a Senator from outside of the College of Applied Arts to lead a summative review of Dean Chahin.

6. Recommendations for faculty to serve three-year terms on Presidential Awards for Excellence Committees are needed by November 11.

Teaching: representatives from Applied Arts and Business

Service: representatives from Health Professions and Liberal Arts

Scholarly/Creative: representative from Science

A discussion ensued regarding the number of committee members from Science on the S/C committee because awardees from the prior 2 years are added to the college representatives. The Chair will contact the committee chairs regarding the intended purpose of adding 2 years of awardees rather than one, and the possible perception of the committee review being skewed by one college having so many more votes than representatives from other colleges.

7. Adjunct Faculty Committee: All the recommended representatives (2 from each college) have agreed to serve on the committee. The Chair and Vice Chair will send out notices to the alternate members (2 from each college) and all adjunct faculty who responded to the Senate's survey as being very interested in the committee.

8. Summer salary information has been released by the Faculty Records office. It is the same as last year and does not include an adjustment for the merit increases that took effect this month. The Chair will investigate.

9. Senators reported continuing problems with the Banner registration system, including labs not being linked to courses. A Banner representative will meet with the Council of Chairs on 11/3.

10. Senators cited registration problems caused by overloaded staff and advisors. Many students were not able to get appointments with advisors. The university goal is for the ratio of college advisors to students to be 1/350, although in Liberal Arts, for example, it is presently about 1/500.

There was also concern expressed for how PACE advisors can be trained to broadly serve all university programs. Will 20 PACE advisors be a sufficient number to serve the large freshman class of 2012? Several Senators agreed that the area where the academic advisors serve the students least well is in career advising.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the 10/26 meeting were approved.

Adjournment