

Faculty Senate Minutes
Wednesday, January 30, 2013

Senators present: Czyzewska, Cavitt, McClellan, Wilson, Furney, Payne, Kimmel, Feakes, Blunk, Hindson, Sriraman, Ash, Conroy

Guest: Trauth, Bourgeois, Opheim, Sigler

1. PAAG Discussion

- a. Goals and planning for the University to move toward National Research University status
 - i. Now that Texas State has achieved Emerging Research University status, the Senate is interested in knowing what the next goal is on the trajectory toward achieving recognition as a National Research University. What is the university's ultimate research status goal, and what short-term and long-term plans are in place (or are being discussed) to advance toward that goal?
 - ii. Dr. Trauth reviewed how the state originally established the research-status levels for state institutions during the creation of an accountability system for higher education. Then, in 2009, TRIP funding became available, and with it, a clearer path for universities to become Emerging Research Universities. Texas State fulfilled the requirements very quickly, and had already surpassed some of them. To complete the remaining requirements, there were tasks for the faculty (in terms of the development of the tenth Ph.D. program and research expenditures requirements) and for the administration. The next step, reaching the state's National Research University status, also will entail both faculty and administration completing necessary tasks.
 1. Dr. Bourgeois noted that we need to create a strategic plan for research, and there is a committee working on a proposal that will be presented to the Provost, the President and her cabinet. For example, for the move to National Research University, it will be necessary to increase restricted research expenditures from the current \$21 million to \$45 million. One of the steps that the Provost is taking to support this goal is funding the Interdisciplinary Research Partnerships through the OSP.
 2. Texas State must choose four of six criteria. The President and Provost have chosen to focus on
 - a. An endowment of \$400 million or more by 2022;
 - b. A freshman class with a high academic achievement rate, with over 50% of the freshmen in the top 25% of

their high school graduating classes. The Provost noted that we have been above this percentage before, and we are very close right now. Scholarships are very important in helping support this goal, so that we can compete against other universities;

- c. Membership in the Association of Research Libraries, which would indicate an Academic Resource Center that has achieved National Research Library Status; and a chapter of Phi Beta Kappa and/or Phi Kappa Phi;
 - d. A high-quality faculty, with 5-7 tenured faculty who have received specified national lifetime awards of achievement, as defined by the Coordinating Board.
- iii. There are concerns about how to provide sufficient funding for sustaining the level of faculty productivity and research dollars to reach such goals. The administration is urging the Legislature to continue funding the TRIP program at such a level that we will benefit from it. We have a considerable number of funded research projects in the TRIP queue waiting for matching funds, although there are many ahead of ours.
- iv. When asked how this move might affect expectations for tenure and promotion, the President responded that expectations for tenure and promotion are established by the faculty at the department level, and so different expectations may arise from the faculty, but will not be set by the administration..
- b. Online evaluation position
- i. In response to the House Bill 2504 requirement to provide public access to the results of a common teaching evaluation for organized undergraduate courses, a Texas State committee of Faculty Senators and Chairs representing each of the Colleges, and the Director of TREC, created a set of five questions. The questions, the method of their delivery, and the use of the results, were thoroughly discussed in the committee deliberations, and also at two open forums. The resulting questions eventually formed the common evaluation, known as the Student Perceptions of Instruction (SPI). The committee was adamant that the SPI never be used for faculty evaluation towards merit and promotion, and was equally opposed to the distribution of the surveys in an online format. It was the committee's firm conviction that the value of the SPI to the students and to the public was directly related to the participation rate for each course, and that this rate would be adversely affected should the surveys be conducted online. Since the inception of the SPI, a variety of groups, most recently the Associated Student Government, has advocated for the conversion of the SPI to an online format.

The Faculty Senate would like to reiterate its position on this issue, which echoes that of the committee, and to hear your views regarding conducting HB2504 SPI surveys online.

- ii. The President explicitly stated that she and the Provost made a promise to the Senate not to move the evaluations online as long as the Senate is against such a move, and she stands by that promise. Only if the faculty were to come to her, having changed their minds, would she consider changing the evaluations. The President suggested that the Senate meet with the ASG directly to express its concerns.
- iii. The Senate requested resources to evaluate the *actual* cost of the evaluations, to use in further discussion with the students.

c. FY2014 budget priorities

- i. Have there been updates to FY2014 budget projections of which the Senate should be aware? Which of the strategic plan initiatives are prioritized for funding? The Senate is particularly concerned about the long-standing staff hiring freeze and minimal staff performance increases.
 - ii. When discussing the possibility for a pay raise in the fall of 2014, each VP and the Provost were tasked with seeing if they could find money to fund raises. The response, including comment from the Council of Deans, was that they could not finance merit raises without taking monies from new faculty lines. VPs made the same argument when discussing the hiring of new staff.
 - iii. There will not be further decisions on these issues until the end of the Legislative session, but a merit raise is a high priority, followed by monies for new faculty and staff.
- d. Dr. Trauth announced that the Board of Regents is working to have a bill introduced to drop the phrase “San Marcos” from the university’s official name.

2. PAAG Follow-up

- a. The Senate discussed how difficult it will be in the current budget climate to reduce the teaching load for faculty, an important element in increasing research productivity.
- b. The Senate will invite ASG to a future meeting for further discussion about online evaluations.
- c. The Senate eagerly awaits the outcome of the Legislature’s budget.

3. Information and Follow-Up Items
 - a. CAD Jan. 29 meeting report (Feakes)
 - i. Freshmen application numbers are ahead of last year, as are acceptances. Transfer applications are down considerably.
 - ii. Dr. Dan Brown discussed summer orientation advising and the role of the individual Colleges in that process. Last summer, he invited colleges to participate in orientation by giving brief overviews of their programs, but the colleges rejected this request. Dr. Brown requested that the Colleges reconsider, emphasizing the importance of establishing an early relationship between the Colleges and their majors. PACE has increased the number of summer orientations for the upcoming summer.
 - b. Graduate College Dean Candidates lunch meetings.
 - i. The February 6th lunch has been canceled. There will still be lunches on February 20th and March 5th.
4. Old Business
 - a. The following PPS reviews expired this week; the Chair will request additional time to review, as the Senate had concerns about several items.
 - i. PPS 7.09 request to delete (1/26) was approved.
 - ii. PPS 7.12 Clear English Requirements (1/28) was returned to the agenda.
 - iii. PPS 7.11 Disability Services (1/30) was returned to the agenda.
 - iv. PPS 4.02 Conduct of Classes (1/31) was returned to the agenda.
 - v. PPS 8.06 Faculty Access to Academic Personnel Files (1/31) was returned to the agenda.
 - b. The registration and Academic Calendar Coordinating Committee request was reviewed. It will be forwarded to Dr. Heinze.
5. New Business
 - a. A College of Education representative for the Presidential Award for Excellence in Service Committee will be selected by next week.
 - b. The joint CAD Meeting will be held in the Reed Parr Room. Agenda items are due by February 13, 2013.
6. The minutes of January 23, 2013 were approved.