

Senate Minutes for 12/5/12

Members present: Wilson, Feakes, Kimmel, Sriraman, Furney, Cavitt, Payne, Blunk, McClellan, Hindson

Guests: Sigler, Trauth, Bourgeois, Opheim

Meeting called to order at 4:00.

PAAG Agenda:

1. Overview of STAR Park – President Trauth described the history of the STAR (Science Technology and Research) Park conceptualization 5 years ago. Through the development of a Ph.D. in Material Science and Engineering and an Emerging Technology Fund Grant proposal, the idea of a research park emerged. The Emerging Technology funds are not meant to support research; instead they are meant to support projects that lead to commercialization and economic progress in the state of Texas. The Emerging Technology Fund Grant committee was looking for patents that could be commercialized and lead to start-ups coming out of universities; and universities, on the other hand, would attract companies that would want to come to Texas to work in collaboration with them. Texas State received the Emerging Technology Fund grant before the Ph.D. was approved and this was very unusual. This was because of the commitment the university was willing to make and faculty resources that were already established in the College of Science and Engineering. The research park was imagined initially to be in collaboration with this interdisciplinary Ph.D. and “spin-ins” or companies that come to San Marcos wanting to take advantage of equipment. The building itself was financed through a three-way partnership with the city of San Marcos, Texas State University, and a federal grant. A separate 5013C financial organization was created by the city to recruit companies and industrial partners to come to San Marcos.

The Provost stated that Stephen Frayser was hired as Executive Director of STAR Park to lead this research park and business incubator because he had experience in both. The goal is to try to attract spin-in companies (and potential relationships that would generate intellectual property, such as patents) to develop research to be incubated in STAR One and that could then be commercialized. Currently we have a company named Micropower Global that has been a tenant in the STAR One facility for the last 3 years. Their staff, along with university faculty and student interns, worked on an application of a nanomaterial that we were developing with the company. We helped them develop research and grow their material in our laboratory; this led to further refinement in the materials so that ultimately they could develop a business around this heat transfer technology.

The University has applications from other companies that it is currently considering. In the future, Texas State will have additional research initiatives with faculty that may be located at STAR park. Initially, the University wants to make sure that there is a direct research relationship with the nanomaterials research initiative or polymer processing initiatives for a company to be considered by the advisory board as an appropriate company for the park.

2. Legislative Priorities for Texas State

Dr. Trauth reported that she felt optimistic that we are moving in a positive direction. Senator Seliger is now Chair of the Senate Higher Education Committee and seems to be supportive of Higher Education. In addition, the leaders of the Higher Education Committees seem willing to address the costs of the Hazelwood Legacy Act, which already has cost the University approximately 14 million dollars because of its unfunded mandates. They now seem receptive to the idea that the Legislature should pay for this. No one is arguing that this is not a wonderful benefit for veterans.

Our space deficit is one million square feet, according to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. Dr. Trauth thinks we have a good argument for new buildings at Texas State, and is hopeful of our receiving TRBs should the Legislature allow them.

3. Marketing Texas State – Dr. Trauth stated that we have come a long way since the name change to Texas State University. As the profile of the University goes up, marketing efforts should be commensurate with our prestige. Dr. Trauth would like the Senate to invite John Root, Director of Auxiliary Services to discuss marketing and merchandise. She encouraged us to continue to ask for Texas State items in stores. Recently a contract was signed with the preeminent collegiate athletic marketing firm in the country, Nelligan Sports Marketing. They now manage Texas State University sports marketing and she encouraged the Faculty Senate to discuss merchandising with them also.

Safety Committee Update – Dr. Bill Brittain

Dr. Brittain, Chair of the University Safety Committee, explained that the function of the Safety Committee is to advise and assist the University Administration in promoting an environment that is safe from hazards for faculty, staff, students, and visitors. However, he noted that it is not the purview of the Safety Committee to respond to emergencies. Senate members suggested that it might be beneficial to create a computer app to help address and educate constituents about university emergencies.

Discussion regarding the response to a petition that was written and circulated to raise awareness about the excessive amount of bird and bat waste found in the Alkek parking garage resulted in the Senate encouraging the Safety Committee to continue to work on this issue.

Old Business

- PAAG Review- Senate members discussed the PAAG meeting.
- Research Enhancement Grant – The Senate voted to approve recommended Research Enhancement Grant applications.
- Two representatives for the Equity and Access Committee are still needed. This item was returned to the agenda for the next meeting.
- The Joint Meeting of the Council of Deans, Council of Chairs and Faculty Senate, scheduled for Thursday, December 6th at 3:30 PM, was moved to Alkek 105/106.

New Business

- The minutes for November 14, 2012 and November 28, 2012 were approved.

Adjournment