

## *Senate Minutes for 12/08/11*

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

Guests: Trauth, Bourgeois, Opheim, Grimes, Sigler

Meeting called to order at 4:00.

### **PAAG Agenda:**

1. *Definition of Scholarly / Creative Activity* – The President believes that this issue requires a dialogue among faculty from across the University. While particular decisions about the nature of scholarly / creative activity must be made at the departmental level, it is worth considering what comprises such activities. Of concern is how research and scholarly / creative activities are mentioned in relevant documents, so that the inclusiveness President Trauth seeks in applying the terms will be clearly stated. Regarding the process for selecting winners of the Presidential Excellence Awards, the President noted that it is important for all faculty to celebrate winners and their achievements; thus, if the process is causing faculty concern, a review of the process and relevant policy statements is needed. She explained that it might be best for the Chairs of the selection committees to be elected from the membership, rather than appointed by the Administration. In addition, the composition of the committees could be reexamined, and committees could be instructed to create rubrics to guide them in their deliberations.

About comments made recently by some Chairs regarding the review of Development Leave proposals, the President expressed that she felt faculty earned leave and therefore any burdens on Chairs to staff classes normally taught by those faculty taking leave should not be a deciding factor in whether an applicant is awarded leave. The Chair of the Senate noted that the governing legislation for leaves requires that an elected body judge the merits of proposals, and so she and Senators wonder if Chairs' opinions on proposals should have much weight in the ranking of proposals.

2. *Status as an Emerging Research Institution* – The President offered an overview of the issues at state level that led to the creation of categories among state institutions. Those initial rankings, based upon measures developed without a public forum, placed Texas State in the third tier: Doctoral Institutions. However, Texas State fits more properly into the second tier, Emerging Research Universities, and so it has been the Administration's goal to have the University moved into the category that contains institutions much more like Texas State. In the 2009 legislative session, the requirements for admission to the various tiers were released, and Texas State can now argue it fulfills all the requirements for designation as an Emerging Research Institution. President Trauth explained that this

achievement is important for all at the University, particularly for attracting quality faculty and in representing the growing prestige of Texas State. The Provost added that the University now has research expenditures of \$33.48 million, placing it among those now designated as Emerging Research Universities.

3. *2012-2017 University Goals* – The President distributed a summary of goals and intended outcomes for 2012-2017. The Senate is concerned that the document uses the limiting term of “research” in citing goals for faculty and the University. The President and the Provost suggested that the term could be revised to reflect a more inclusive attitude: “research and scholarly / creative activity.” In discussing start-up funds, the Provost reiterated that they are necessary when hiring new faculty who may need laboratories for their research; however, such funds must lead to external funding. He also explained that any department may apply for start-up funds if they will be used to support the research agendas of new faculty.

## **BREAK**

### **PAAG Follow-up:**

1. Senators noted that the terms “research” and “scholarly / creative activity” are up for debate even within departments.
2. The Senate was pleased with the President’s plans for examining the process for awarding Presidential Excellence Awards. The Chair will inquire whether revisions to the relevant PPS, 6.11, can be tabled until after decisions have been reached on changes to the review process.

**Update from CAD, University Budget and PACE:** The Chair distributed documents regarding plans for training advisors and for choosing faculty liaisons for the PACE Center. All PACE advisors – 19 total – will be trained as generalists, but will then be assigned to particular colleges proportionally based upon college size. Current college advisors will report to PACE advisors. There is no planned role for faculty advisors in PACE; the Dean sees faculty as mentors for students after they complete their first year. Faculty liaisons, one per college, will serve as advocates for PACE initiatives in their colleges, and will receive 50% workload credit for their service.

*University Budget* – The Administration expects a \$12 million budget shortfall for the coming year. The Provost sought input at a recent CAD on spending priorities in a difficult economic climate. The Deans’ first priority is to lose no faculty due to budget constraints. Second is hiring faculty to confront continuing enrollment growth; Third, equity raises to deal with salary compression and inversion; Fourth, 3% merit raises. The Provost will explore these suggestions in the coming weeks. Copies of the current Operating Budget and Salary Report are available in the Senate Office.

## **New Business:**

1. The Chair received an email from the Dean of Fine Arts & Communications regarding the Senate's concerns about the review process employed by the University Arts Committee. She will send a reply, particularly regarding the Committee's lack of a clearly defined process for selecting awardees.
2. A faculty member in the College of Fine Arts & Communication wonders why there is no link to the Banner system on the University homepage.
3. The Task Force comprised of the Curriculum Committee and Academic Standards Committee met, and will report soon to the Senate.
4. On November 11, the Planning Report was released by the Facilities Committee.
5. The next meeting of the Senate is January 18.

**Minutes of 11/30/11 approved.**

**Adjournment.**