Lamar University  
Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes  
October 4, 2006  
  
Attending: Arts and Sciences: Christine Bridges, Terri Davis, George Irwin, Don Owen, Randall Terry, Valentin Andreev, Dale Daniel, Emma Hawkins, Jeff Forret, Mike Matthis, Dianna Rivers, Jeremy Shelton, Steve Zani, Kenneth Dorris; Business: Kakoli Bandyopadhyay, George Kenyon, Celia Varick, Soumava Bandyopadhyay, Jai Young Choi; Education: Lula Henry, Barbara Hernandez, Kim Wallet-Chalambaga, Bill Holmes, Bernadette Moore, MaryE Wilkinson; Engineering: Mien Jao, John Gossage, Bernard Maxum, Paul Corder; Fine Arts and Communication: Randall Wheatley, Kurt Gilman, Sumalai Maroonroge, Ann Matlock, Nicki Michalski; Library: Jon Tritsch, Theresa Storey; Developmental Studies: Umporn Tosirisuk; LSC-PtArthur: Mavis Triebel  
  
Absent: Arts and Sciences: Nancy Blume, Chung-Chih Li, Rick Altemose, Dave Castle, Jim Love, Sheila Smith; Engineering: Malur Srinivasan, Brian Craig; Fine Arts and Communication: Kurt Dyrhaug, Zanthia Smith  
  
1. The October 4, 2006 meeting was called to order at 3:01 p.m. in Landes Auditorium.  
  
President Gilman discussed sign-in and the need to update email addresses.  
  
2. Chris Bridges moved to accept the September 6, 2006 minutes, and Valentin Andreev seconded. The motion was approved.  
  
3. President Gilman presented a plaque to Bill Holmes in honor of his service as President of the Faculty Senate from 2004-2006.  
  
4. President’s Report:  
  
New Chair Workshop   
I recently met with Donna Meeks, Chair of CID, to establish guidelines for a seminar designed for incoming department chairs. We then met with Dr. Doblin to present our strategy. As a result, this spring, 2007, on Friday, January 26, the initial workshop will be held, beginning at 9:00 am in the John Gray Library, 8th floor.   
  
This will be a day-long workshop, divided into three segments. Topics will include hiring, evaluating faculty and staff, budgeting, using SIS and FRS, legislation affecting faculty and staff, overall fiscal organization, availability of information, HEAF, IT, HR, and other topics of value to chairs.  
  
The principal panel will be comprised of a dean, a chair, and a representative of the faculty. The breakout sessions will be run by experts from HR, IT, SIS/FRS, and Banner.  
  
  
Faculty salaries at 35 public institutions  
The Coordinating Board report on FY06 salaries shows that Lamar University has made tremendous gains in the rankings over the past three years. Dr. Doblin forwarded to us an assessment of these findings, and I will share some of these with you now. I can also, on request, give you the web site that lists other years in which the salary rankings are compiled.  
  
Update on number of administrators  
Many of you commented recently on the perceived number of new administrators at Lamar. After a discussion of this with President Simmons and Provost Doblin, Dr. Doblin explained the difference in numbers as a result of reporting methods between 2004 and 2005. He says that “...when we submitted our institutional data for the annual IPEDS report the last time, officials told our office that those staff members whose titles were Director to Assistant/Associate VP should be reported in the ‘Executive/Administrative’ classification rather than the ‘Professional’ one.” He also remarked that the total staff increased by only 12. President Simmons reminded us that some administration has had to be added due to the implementation of Banner, and that once that is in place, they would no longer be in an administrative role.  
  
LU Budget on the web  
At the recent ExCom meeting with the President and Provost, Dr. Simmons said that the current LU budget is in its final revisions, and he has instructed Mr. Ferguson to make this available to faculty on the Web.  
  
LU Recreational Sports Center  
President Simmons reported to the ExCom that the New Rec. Sports Center—the student section—is scheduled to open on Jan. 12.  
  
TCFS  
The Texas Council of Faculty Senates will meet in Austin on October 19-20, and Dr. Bill Holmes will be representing our Senate in my place. A major agenda item concerns the reporting “hotline” that many of you, and many other faculty and administration at other universities, have expressed concern about. Please contact Bill or me with other concerns before the October meeting.   
  
Online course evaluations  
Many of us have expressed concern over the low participation number results from students doing online course evaluations. Dr. Doblin has requested faculty input on the participation process, and I will direct this to the Academic Issues Committee.  
  
F2.08 reporting  
The ExCom again reported to the Provost that faculty in some colleges were not receiving full information about their annual salary raises. In response, Dr. Doblin e-mailed Deans to remind them of this policy, and he included a model that has been used successfully in the College of Arts & Sciences.  
  
Course Fees  
Many of you have raised concerns about the new policy on course fees that was mandated by the State. I urge you to hold your future comments until the administration has detailed this process, which, by their assessment, offers much greater flexibility with funding generated by these fees.  
  
Staff Appreciation Day  
Mark Asteris reports that the Staff Senate is in the process of establishing a date for Staff Appreciation Day, and also dealing with other concerns associated with this event. Hopefully, we will see a date established soon.  
  
LU acquisition of the dorms  
President Simmons, at the ExCom meeting with he and Dr. Doblin, explained the process by which LU acquired complete control of the new dormitories. Basically, the two-step process was a result of the acquisition of the revenue bonds by TSUS, and the effects of Hurricane Rita. Even though TSUS assumed the revenue bonds prior to Rita, there was still an outside-the-state (of Texas) company that controlled operations. After Rita, TSUS established its own corporation, and the transition to total control by Lamar (and Texas) was complete. Dr. Simmons sees this as a complete “win” situation for us.   
  
Announcements:  
Distinguished Faculty Lecture—C. Bridges  
Passing of Sterling Smith  
  
5. Committee Reports  
  
Academic Issues-Terri Davis  
The committee reviewed the summer semester alternatives and originally made a recommendation to reject summer T and accept summer X. However, Dr. Smith says the administration would like to have all four approved because summer T is designed to accommodate the needs of teachers and students entering Lamar from high school. The committee is reacting to this information. A resolution for acceptance of summer schedules will be made in new business. An attachment contains the relevant information.  
  
Faculty Issues-Lula Henry  
At the committee meeting Dianna Rivers was vice chair. Distance Education asked for ideas about promoting web based courses, and the committee recommended a one time stipend. The committee will soon be circulating information about the Piper Award.  
The committee is planning to address the issues of parking by the chemistry building and chair evaluation processes.  
  
Budget Issues-Ann Matlock  
Dave Castle was elected vice chair. The committee discussed the need for a resolution on the use of merit funds for equity or other rewards to selected faculty members by deans and chairs. The committee feels that it is essential that we pass a resolution on this matter, strongly condemning the practice. A suggested resolution will be presented to the Faculty Senate as new business on October 4, 2006.   
  
The Committee continues to be concerned about what appears to be growth of the administration out of proportion to the faculty. We are continuing to work on this issue and will bring a report to the Faculty Senate as soon as possible. It appears that some of the growth in the administration is due to changes in some job titles, but the Committee will nevertheless examine the current budget when it is available. The Committee has decided that we could survey the entire faculty on how they are being informed about their merit evaluations, merit raises and equity raises. The Provost has expressed his interest in the results of the survey, and we will send it out as soon as possible. The committee urges all Faculty Senators to encourage the faculty in their areas to fill out and return the survey. The Budget and Compensation Committee will meet again next Wednesday, October 11, 2006 at 3:00 p.m. in Galloway 214.  
  
Development and Research-John Gossage  
The Committee passed an expedited faculty leave request, and is expecting new applications to review.  
  
Distinguished Faculty Lecture-Steve Zani  
Wendell Bean was elected vice-chair. Things are all set for the lecture.  
Please attend and encourage students to attend. If you have a Monday night class near there, let students know they won’t be able to park by theatre.  
  
6. Old Business-none  
  
7. New Business  
  
The Academic Issues recommendation was proposed by Terri, seconded by Valentin, and passed. The Senate will vote on it as a resolution during the November 1 Senate meeting.  
  
The budget resolution will be presented for a vote during the November 1 Senate meeting.  
  
8. Open Discussion  
  
Senator Andreev feels that taking from merit to use for equity causes inequity. Instead, he suggests an additional pool; once every two years the University would put aside an amount of money for recognizing “particular” merits decided by a committee.  
  
Senator Kenyon stated that salary inversion is a constant process that needs to be addressed.  
  
Senator Kenyon commented on parking issues. He says that the current system is not working. Students laugh at tickets because they simply roll off the system after a couple of semesters, and they still get their grades and have no penalty.  
  
President Gilman asked for specific details so we can get them to President Simmons.  
  
Senator Rivers requested help with her survey.  
  
9. A motion for adjournment was made by Terri Davis, and seconded by Valentin Andreev. The Senate adjourned at 4:25 p.m.