Guest Speaker - Regent Elaine Mendoza

Guest Speaker, TAMUS Regent Elaine Mendoza (who has served on numerous commissions and committees dealing with education at all levels) questioned why, in polls taken before the previous legislative session, the populace identified higher education as the first priority in cutting the budget. This seemed especially ironic at a time when population growth meant so many more prospective students were reaching college age, especially Hispanic and other minorities and in the wake of earlier studies. For example “Closing the Gaps” had emphasized the need and value of increasing the number of college graduates to deal with a knowledge-based economy. In part, Ms. Mendoza felt that the perception was fostered by data showing expenses associated with drop outs. For example, of the 13,500 students entering TAMUS schools in 2004, only 8,600 graduated within 6 years. The 4,900 who did not graduate took with them $51 million in ‘lost’ financial aid and $24 million in state allocations while still averaging $11,000 in debt individually. These numbers give legislators and citizens a perception that higher education is ineffective. The TAMUS via the Board of Regents gathered leaders of each institution to examine its mission as related to the demographics and regional economies. The goal for each was to create a culture of excellence, as defined by performing at the highest level possible to attain that mission. Ms. Mendoza emphasized that our flagship and regional schools do have unique and differing missions based on demographics and local economies. The product is “Empower U” (http://empoweru.tamus.edu/), a program designed to provide accessible accountability to demonstrate the value of the TAMU system schools to the state as well as transparency to the public.

The program was initiated via a task force with representatives from all institutions charged to define the data that comprise the most important metrics that allow students to succeed and to post the data publicly on the Internet. A second task force was charged with developing measures of learning outcomes, as related to essential skills such as communications, critical thinking, globalization, specific knowledge, and ability to integrate knowledge. Again this was done so that progress could be demonstrated and accessed by anyone. The third objective is to reduce costs of higher education by having better prepared students from K-12. Ms. Mendoza indicated that the TAMUS colleges of education provide more teachers than any other source in the state and have agreed that the most critical current need is to prepare elementary school math teachers who are able to teach math, and not to have “generalists” teaching math as is done now. Ms. Mendoza feels that our willingness to develop the “Empower U” concept has impressed both the Higher Education Coordinating Board and state legislators and will help convince them that funding higher education can only benefit to the state, and not be a detriment. “Too much is at stake and the issue is too important” not to try to change the perception of higher education across the state.

Speaker Comments

- The March Faculty Senate meeting will be on the 18th instead of the 11th as was originally scheduled. The change is due to the original meeting taking place during the student’s spring break.
• The joint meeting with The University of Texas Faculty Council is Monday, February 25 in Austin. Transportation will be provided for any Senator wishing to attend.
• The HSC merger is progressing, though slowly, with faculty titles still being discussed.
• A steering Committee consisting of the Dean of Faculties, the Speaker, and the college Deans has been formed to work through the effects of expanding the College of Engineering to 25,000 students by 2025.
• Senator Varner asked that the January minutes show that the vote to consider an emergency resolution gained the 75% majority required to proceed.

Approval of January 14, 2013 Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes  
Motion Passed  
Attachment B

Consent Agenda
The Consent Agenda passed as presented.

GRADUATE COUNCIL – GC REPORT
New Course Requests – January 3, 2013  
Motion Passed  
FS.30.118  
Attachment C
AERO 670  Turbulence Modeling
ENTO 645  Arthropods as Vectors of Plant Pathogens
VTPP 652  Fetal and Embryo Physiology

UNDERGRADUATE CURRICULUM COMMITTEE – UCC REPORT
The Undergraduate Curriculum Committee did not meet in January.  
No report to submit to Faculty Senate.

W-COURSES
Courses submitted for W Certifications – January 23, 2013  
Motion Passed  
FS.30.119  
Attachment D
ENGL 481  Model 1  Senior Seminar
ENGL 481  Model 2  Senior Seminar
ENGL 481  Model 3  Senior Seminar

Courses submitted for W Recertification – January 2013
CHEN 414  Chemical Engineering Laboratory I
PHIL 332  Social and Political Philosophy

Committee Reports
Academic Affairs Committee Charge Report  
Attachment E

Old Business
Proposed Rule Change for Retention of College Deans  
Motion Passed  
FS.30.120
Secretary Magill moved to remove the Proposed Rule Change for Retention of Deans from the table. After a second and an unopposed vote to do so, the rule was approved and passed unanimously by voice vote.

New Business

1. Executive Committee resolution to amend previously adopted resolution FS.29.187 Accepting upper-division courses in the core curriculum  
Motion Passed FS.30.121

Senator Price offered an amendment to the proposed amendment to Senate resolution (FS 29.187) that would allow restricted upper division courses to be included in the revised core curriculum. Dr. Price’s amendment, which was seconded, would strike the clauses that: 1) prohibited courses with prerequisites and 2) that are restricted to a single or small group of majors from the proposed amendment. After discussion dealing primarily with the fact that some core courses are already prerequisites for other core courses, the observation that “or instructors permission” could over-ride a prerequisite course requirement, a question on the value of ENG 104 as a prerequisite to any other course and the fact that the rule against upper division courses is our own, not a mandate of the Coordinating Board, the amendment to the amendment failed, 24 for to 33 against.

The original amendment defining conditions under which upper division courses can be submitted for consideration as core courses then passed, as presented, by voice vote.

2. Proposed Revisions to TAMU Student Rules, Sections 1.8  
Motion Passed FS.30.122

Agenda item H addressing needed changes in Student rule 1.8 passed unanimously.

3. Proposed Revisions to TAMU Student Rules, Sections 1.1.3  
Motion Passed FS.30.123

Agenda item I addressing needed changes in Student rule 1.1.3 passed unanimously.

4. Faculty Senate Resolution: Student Fees Kyle Field  
Renovations (submitted as an emergency resolution for an item not originally on the agenda)  
Motion Passed FS.30.124

When the meeting was returned to the Chair, a request for an emergency resolution was moved, seconded and approved with one dissenting vote. After discussion of how wide the scope of the resolution was, which dealt with use of existing or new student fees to pay to build a sport facility, the following resolution passed:

“Whereas the University has limited sources for fees used to enhance the educational experience of our students and has not been allowed the option of raising those fees, therefore be it resolved that the Faculty Senate opposes the use of new or existing student fees for the purpose of renovating Kyle Field.”
Committee of the Whole

- Senator Stadelmann asked that we consider having a joint meeting with the Blinn College Senate to address our many common problems.
- Senator Louder expressed concern over our students being told they would be paying $75 million to upgrade the student side of Kyle Field with the options of increased sports passes and/or increased fees. Just as concerning was a student referendum that would allow students to vote instead for the option of redirecting fees now collected and used for educational purposes including Library and information technology to the Kyle Field project. There was some concern that if the student passes rise too much, the number of seats available for students could be cut drastically, allowing those seats to be sold at a higher non-student rate.
- Senator Coopersmith lauded the University on its “Energy Efficiency” award based on the cogeneration system, but was concerned that little effort was being spent to upgrade older facilities for better efficiency.
- Senator Klein expressed concern that funds for ‘first year seminars’, previously provided by the University have been cut, especially since this was often cited as a high-impact learning experience in our recent SACS review. Others pointed out that funds for Honors courses and supplemental instruction have also been reduced, which may impact our education mission.
- Speaker-elect Daugherity reported that several states have or are considering restricting hours for any part time and adjunct faculty to avoid increased health care expenses ($110 million in the case of Virginia)

Adjourn