THE FACULTY SENATE

TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY FACULTY SENATE
ROUNDUP REPORT

Texas Council of Faculty Senates Spring Meeting

We have a record spring enrollment of close to 45,000 total graduate and UG students.

We had a record number of first year student applications for next year’s class, something over 26,000.

President Murano has had several open forums to make the case for an increase of between $12 and $32, depending on the level of funding from the state. This would mean full time students would be paying about $4,000 per semester in tuition and fees to attend A&M, so it is easy to see why the legislature is concerned about rising cost of tuition (they have not increased the state rate since granting deregulation in 2002). She also hopes to make a case for major state funding to renovate our aging buildings, but that may have to hope for some of the federal aid that has been talked about. However, in our annual joint meeting with the UT Faculty Council last week, we heard considerable doubt that tuition increases will be allowed to cover the needs outlined; the only hope to avoid serious cutbacks in that case may be that the legislature increases its support for higher education.

TAMU has undertaken an exercise in producing an “Academic Master Plan” to try to help us achieve the goals of our Vision 2020 statement that was created in the year 2,000. It is directed by our new Provost, Dr. Jeff Vitter, and includes much faculty input in 3 areas, research, teaching/learning and engagement. The goals are to identify areas where A&M can be a leading player on the global scale, and by necessity involves considerable inter-disciplinary cooperation.

Our Senate issues tend to be fairly typical; getting a handle on an ever growing core curriculum in a way that can satisfy SACs accreditation, conflicts with our system (not University) administration concerning issues such as the “teaching evaluation for dollars competition”, duplication of offices such as those for intellectual properties and attempts to merge several of our funding access portals.

In our meeting next Monday, we will be discussing and likely supporting a proposal by our former Dean of Faculties, Dr. Karan Watson, who is now an Executive Vice-President and Provost that would require departments and colleges to include several “service related” areas in annual performance evaluations. Support is likely since “serving in the Faculty Senate” is one of the areas specifically mentioned. Of course how much weight will be given to these factors will likely depend on the department heads or tenure and promotion committees, so

We are in the middle of a search for a new Vice President for Research, a really key position in a University with as large a research component as ours (over $ 560 million last year). As opposed to the search for a vice-president for student affairs which is still raising student ire based on having one candidate, we have 3 on-campus visits scheduled and the Senate Executive Committee will be one of several groups to interview each of them.

Submitted by Clint Magill, Speaker, TAMU Faculty Senate, 3/5/2009