Texas A&M University Faculty Senate
Roundup Report — October 22-23, 1999

Texas Council of Faculty Senates Fall Meeting

- **Update on Approval of the Core Curriculum and Review of the Core Curriculum:** The most recent version of the Texas A&M University core curriculum, which was reformulated to conform to current legislation, was approved by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board in May. At our February meeting, the Faculty Senate approved the creation of a Core Curriculum Review Committee made up of representative faculty from all colleges. This committee was charged “to study carefully the concept of a core curriculum and to develop a core curriculum designed to meet the current needs of Texas A&M students and to be flexible enough to meet the developing and future needs of our students as well” by reviewing “a number of relevant documents and obtaining testimony from faculty, students, deans, and department heads.” This committee has held numerous meetings since its formation and should be able to bring a report to the Faculty Senate within a few months.

- **Organization of the Bush School as an Independent Academic Unit:** At the July meeting, the Faculty Senate approved a plan for the reorganization of the Bush School into an independent academic unit with the Dean reporting directly to the Provost. As a rider to an appropriations bill, the University was funded over $1 million per year contingent on the Bush School becoming an independent unit. The Provost formed a committee comprised of individuals from the Bush School and from the College of Liberal Arts to propose a possible structure for the Bush School as an independent unit. The report from this committee was then reviewed and amended by an ad hoc committee of the Faculty Senate. Recommendations were made concerning the administrative structure of the school and its relations with the administrative structure of the University. Most importantly, the faculty’s participation in school governance and promotion and tenure procedures were addressed.

- **Faculty Reward System.** In the wake of post-tenure review, the Senate leadership in 1997 initiated a major examination of the faculty reward system and the lack of balance with the various missions of a large university such as Texas A&M. The Executive Committee charged a special ad hoc committee to study and suggest a feasible way that the administration of Texas A&M University can reconcile the faculty reward system with the multiple missions of the University. The report of the ad hoc committee suggests major changes in the criteria that are used for promotion and tenure. The report will be presented at the November meeting of the Faculty Senate and voted on at the December meeting.

- **Resolution on President’s Decision in a Promotion and Tenure Case:** The Provost recommended that tenure not be granted to a faculty member and the decision was accepted by the President. The faculty member appealed to the Committee on Academic Freedom, Responsibility, and Tenure (CAFRT). CAFRT recommended that the faculty member be provided an extra year to work on tenure. The President did not follow this recommendation and stayed with his earlier decision to deny tenure. At its July meeting, the Faculty Senate passed the following
It is the view of the Faculty Senate that a CAFRT recommendation should normally be accepted by the University Administration, and that a rejection of a CAFRT recommendation should be highly unusual; WHEREAS, We believe extraordinary actions require extraordinary reasons—even the appearance of impropriety should be eschewed; WHEREAS, If a CAFRT recommendation is to be overturned by the Administration, a finding of very serious errors by CAFRT or extraordinary reasons should be given; WHEREAS, A full reading of the CAFRT recommendation in the case of Professor Boies and the President's reply does not show such errors or reasons; therefore, be it RESOLVED, That we call upon the President to reconsider his decision and let the CAFRT recommendation stand, thereby permitting Professor Boies to undergo a tenure review once again.” The President did not approve this resolution.

• **Discrimination due to Sexual Orientation:** The Faculty Senate approved a revision of the Student Rules to include the following statement in Student Rights and Responsibilities:

> “Each student shall have the right to participate in all areas and activities of the university. Illegal or impermissible discrimination or harassment that deprives an individual of his/her rights under the law, dignity as a person or ability to pursue his/her academic career and participate in all areas and activities at Texas A&M University is unacceptable. Texas A&M University does not discriminate on the basis of factors including, but not limited to, race, color, religion, age, sex, national or ethnic origin, sexual orientation, veteran's status, or disability in accordance with the American Disabilities Act.”

The President did not approve this revision because the wording that includes “sexual orientation.” Enforcing this wording could put the University in legal jeopardy because this group is not one of those protected by law. The Senate continues to seek a way to implement a more universal nondiscrimination policy.

• **Reinstatement of Computer Skills and Foreign Language Requirement:** At the October meeting, the Senate approved a resolution to restore the foreign language and computer skills requirements to the next catalog as graduation requirements. These requirements were removed when the current core curriculum was adopted. Since they are satisfied by high school courses for most students, the Senate added these as graduation requirements rather than as a core requirement. The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board approved a similar requirement for Texas Tech University.

• **Vision 2020 Resolution:** Texas A&M University adopted a plan to become one of the top public institutions by the year 2020. At the June meeting the Faculty Senate approved a resolution supporting Vision 2020: “...the members of the Faculty Senate, meeting this fourteenth day of June, 1999 endorse the effort and attention paid to increasing the quality of the academic environment by supporting all measures which will improve the quality of teaching, research and service at Texas A&M University, including parity of faculty salaries, and express thanks to the faculty, staff and friends of Texas A&M University who participated in the undertaking....”

• **Senate Business on the Web:** The Executive Committee and Senate office are making more information about the Senate on the web. Agendas, minutes, committee chairs, meeting dates,
bylaws, and constitution have been available for some time. Recently the status of items sent to the President and notes on parliamentary procedure have been added. There is also a page accessible to the Executive Committee that has the complete agenda for EC meetings.

- **University Statement on Licensees:** The Faculty Senate approved a resolution that urged the University to condemn all unfair, unsafe, or exploitative labor practices, and to exhort all licensees of Texas A&M University to maintain fair, safe, and non-exploitative working conditions for all of their employees. The President approved the resolution and incorporated a code of conduct in future university licenses.

- **Graduate Student Appeals:** The Senate approved an expansion of the items that the Graduate Appeals Committee could hear from graduate students.

- **Faculty Salary Parity:** The Senate passed a resolution urging the administration to develop a plan to make the salaries of the faculty at TAMU competitive with those of the peer institutions targeted in Vision2020. The President turned down the resolution because he did not want to be tied to a specific plan. Dialogue will continue with the administration on ways to improve faculty salaries.

- **Discrimination in Northgate Area:** Following incidents of verbal harassment and physical intimidation directed primarily against international students and persons of color in the Northgate area near campus, the Senate passed a resolution urging law enforcement officers to increase their vigilance in the Northgate area and urging the government of the city of College Station and the business people and residents of the Northgate area to act, singly and collectively, to establish and promote a climate of safety, security, and due respect for all persons.

- **Early Admission to South Texas College of Law:** This allows students to enter the law school after completing three years of courses at TAMU. Courses at STCL would make up the rest of the undergraduate degree program for the student.

- **Faculty Participation in Review of Deans:** The Senate passed a resolution that would include review of associate deans in the review of the dean.

- **Procedure for Emeritus Status:** Nomination for emeritus status would be made for all faculty that retire in good standing. A vote of the department would not be required.

- **Stopping the Tenure Clock:** The Senate approved a resolution that enables faculty who have some hardship to ask for an extension of the probationary period before tenure consideration.