Faculty Senate Meeting
Minutes
October 13, 2014
601 Rudder Tower
http://facultysenate.tamu.edu


Call to Order
The meeting was called to order by Speaker Jim Woosley at 3:18 p.m.

Guest Speakers
Dr. Karan Watson, Provost & Executive Vice President
Provost Karan Watson, the guest speaker, said she wanted to discuss the university’s efforts to meet Vision 2020. Noting that things have changed since 1997 when work began on the plan, Watson said Texas A&M University has always had strategic plans on how to move toward that vision. Former President Robert Gates, for example, had a focused strategy of faculty reinvestment, she noted. “I’m not sure we have had that kind of focus since then,” Watson said.

Using the analogy of a long-distance race, Watson said “we have just gone through the third lap and we have tired. The fourth lap is coming up and we need the energy to kick. If we really intend to meet this vision, it’s time to kick.”

Watson said it is clear the university is not going to have sufficient resources to invest in everything. “We’re going to have to get better at being strategic,” she said. Consequently, she said, all colleges and divisions have been asked to provide a strategic plan for the next five years. “We’re looking at those plans now and giving feedback,” she said.

One of the challenges the university faces, Watson said, is that the public’s perceptions about higher education have changed. Many people have the impression we don’t care about students or interaction with communities, she noted. A&M can change that, she said, and be perceived as excellent. “We are an institution that strongly supports its land grant tradition,” Watson said. The university, she said, can show in the next five years that it is the leading top-tier land grant institution in the country. That will put us in the top 10 institutions and meet Vision 2020, she said. “What we have to do is recognize that it’s our balance that makes us exceptional,” she said. “We have to learn to be better and more fair to each other.” She said the faculty needs to give input while the university is devising the plan rather than provide reaction after the plan has been set.

When the provost invited questions, Senator Angie Price of Engineering, asked if the university should wait until a new president is in place to develop a strategic plan. Watson said she was opposed to that, noting a president might sharpen the plan but the institution has set its course and she can’t imagine we would change that course because of one person.
Senator Doug Biggs of Geosciences asked how the increase to 58,800 students will affect the student-faculty ratio. Watson said former President Gates started that pattern of growth in 2007. Sixty percent of the growth involves students in Engineering, she said. Even with that growth, Engineering has the same level of students, not weaker ones, she said. Still, the university or any individual college can’t handle the growth without a sufficient number of faculty, she said, adding that the biggest problem was the lack of laboratories. A&M, she said, is “third in state in how we use our classrooms.” She said the university took a chance and got bigger, and now needs to see if that produces additional funding. “If it doesn’t, then we need to cut the faucet back,” she said. The university doesn’t need to let more freshmen in, she said. The question is whether it should make the freshmen class smaller and let the bubble go through. The average class size has gone up slightly, from 55 to 57, she said. She said the university is doing what it can to address that and noted that the Engineering growth has “helped fund a ton of positions in other colleges.”

Addressing other issues of concern to the faculty, Watson said the annual appointment letters should have gone out two weeks after the university’s budget was approved. “A lot of colleges missed the mark. I understand that,” she said. “We had a failure, but it wasn’t intentional.”

Referring to the communication allowances that many faculty and staff are allotted, the provost said they were introduced when cell phones were not common, when A&M was asking people who worked predominately off landlines to get cell phones in order to be readily accessible. Now, nearly all employees have cell phones. Furthermore, she said, various groups have suggested we need to quit having cell phone allowances. Certain people should, but not everyone, she said. Watson noted it that it was mostly staff who are losing cell phone allowances. She added the university was not using state funds or student tuition for cell phones, unless it was for emergency responders.

On the issue of one department having a higher teaching load than another department, Watson said it was “hugely variant.” What’s important, she said, is for it to be discernible why loads vary within a department.

Currently, the university is studying the consolidation of advising within the colleges. She said the university has spots that have great advising and spots that have much poorer advising. The study, she said, will see if there is an approach that can do a better job of providing students with an equal chance of getting good advising. It’s not a directive to consolidate, she said, it’s a directive to do the study.

In regards to the vacation accrual issues, Dr. Watson indicated that it would behoove the faculty to look into the situation. She agreed that 2 days notice was not the right way to roll that out, but also said it wasn’t entirely the Dean of Engineering’s fault. She said nobody is entitled to a 12-month appointment and lots of people have their appointments change from year to year. The ability to change the number of months of appointment has been an administrative decision for decades at Texas A&M and with the exception of very few colleges, has been the norm. The Provost has asked the colleges to decide when they want to do this and have a discussion with her about the right ways, right pattern, and what are the exceptions. The colleges that have not already implemented these changes are in the midst of this discussion.

Mark Klemm, Capital Campaign Director, Texas A&M Foundation
The day’s second guest speaker, Mark Klemm, director of the capital campaign, said this will be the third comprehensive campaign the university has undertaken. The purpose is to find partners who want to help A&M solve big problems, he said. As a result, the campaign will be outward looking, rather than inward looking, and former students are receptive to the idea. It will be publicly launched in November 2015. The campaign, he said, is now in a silent phase, which he called “one of worst-kept secrets around.” He said the Foundation is looking for specific ideas from faculty that could spawn $5 million, $10 million or $50 million gifts. More details will come out as the campaign progresses, he said. It will go through 2020.

Speaker Comments
In the speaker’s remarks, Woosley said he had met with the chancellor. Although the chancellor couldn’t tell him a lot about the presidential search, he did assure him there were excellent candidates and the search committee would be pursuing them between now and the first of year.
Swearing in of new Senators
Re-elected and newly elected senators who were not sworn in during the September meeting were installed and welcomed to share in the governance of this institution.

Approval of September 8, 2014 Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes—Attachment A
The minutes were approved as submitted.

Consent Agenda
GRADUATE COUNCIL – GC REPORT
New Course Request – September 4, 2014 Graduate Council Report
BMEN 606 Medical Device Path to Market
MARA 673 International Maritime Industry Graduate Management Experience
MSEN 612 Fundamentals of Transmission Electron Microscopy
MSEN 613 Advanced Transmission Electron Microscope (TEM) Methodologies in Life and Materials Science (TEM II)
MSEN 614 Fundamentals of Scanning Electron Microscope (SEM) and Environmental Scanning Electron Microscopy (ESEM)
MSEN 618 Composite Materials Processing and Performance
MSEN 626 Polymers Laboratories
SOCI 640 Sociology of Development
SPED 603 Foundations of Special Education
Attachment B
FS.32.48
Motion Passed

Course Change Request
BIOL 611 Molecular Biology of Differentiation and Development
Attachment C
Motion Removed

Special Consideration
Dwight Look College of Engineering
MEng in Engineering
Request to offer existing degree via distance education
Attachment D
FS.32.49
Motion Passed

Special Consideration
Mays Business School
Department of Finance
Master of Financial Management
Request for a new degree program
Attachment E
FS.32.50
Motion Passed

UNDERGRADUATE CURRICULUM COMMITTEE – UCC REPORT
September 12, 2014
New Courses
AGCJ 466 Advanced Radio Broadcasting
ANSC 221  Equine Handling and Safety
ANSC 325  Advanced Livestock and Product Evaluation
ANSC 418  Equine Exercise Physiology
ANSC 419  Equine Reproduction
ANSC 424  Equine Sales Management
ANTH 417  Naval Warfare and Warships in Ancient Greece and Rome
BESC 411  Environmental Health and Safety Compliance
CLAS 417  Naval Warfare and Warships in Ancient Greece and Rome
HORT 281  Horticulture as a Profession
PHLT 301  Orientation to Public Health
PHLT 302  Foundations of Public Health
PHLT 303  Social Context of Population Health
PHLT 304  Biological Basis of Public Health
PHLT 310  Public Health Writing
PHLT 311  Narrative Approach to Public Health
PHLT 330  The Environment and Public Health
PHLT 331  Occupational Safety and Health I
PHLT 410  Public Health Communication
PLPA 334  Turfgrass Pathology

Withdrawal of Courses
ALED 102  Critical Issues in Agricultural Leadership
ALED 201  Introduction to Leadership

Change in Courses
ALED 439  Agricultural Extension Philosophy and the Land-Grant Mission
DDHS 3160  Preclinical Dental Hygiene
DDHS 3250  Biomedical Sciences I
DDHS 3325  Microbiology
DDHS 3340  Biomedical Sciences II
Dwight Look College of Engineering: Department of Engineering Technology and Industrial Distribution
Course prefix change from ENTC to ESET
    452, 455, 462

Attachment F
FS.32.51
Motion Passed

Change in Curriculum
College of Liberal Arts
Department of Hispanic Studies
Minor in Hispanic Studies

Attachment G
FS.32.52
Motion Passed

Change in Curriculum
College of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences
BS in University Studies – Biomedical Sciences

Attachment H
FS.32.53
Motion Passed
Change in Curriculum
College of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences
BS in University Studies – Honors

Attachment I
FS.32.54
Motion Passed

W-COURSES
September 17, 2014
Courses submitted for W re-certification
ASGM 439 Management of Agricultural Systems II
FINC 350 Ethics in Financial Decision-Making
MARE 405/MASE 319 Fundamentals of Naval Architecture
MGMT 464 The Political Environment of Business
MEEN 360 Materials & Manufacturing Selection in Design
PHIL 480 Medical Ethics
RPTS 474 Management Programs and Services for Youth

Courses submitted for C Course re-certification
ASGM 440 Management of Agricultural Systems II
MGMT/IBUS 452 International Management
SPAN 310 Oral Expressions

Attachment I
FS.32.55
Motion Passed

CORE CURRICULUM COUNCIL
Committee Report
Attachment K
FS.32.56
Motion Passed

COMMITTEE REPORTS
System Employee Benefits Advisory Committee (SEBAC)—Attachment L
In committee reports, Walter Daughery reported from SEBAC that the system general counsel said same sex marriage rulings had not affected state regulations. Also, 94 percent of A&M employees did have annual exams to avoid higher health insurance premiums.

Academic Affairs/Budget Information/Planning Committee short updates
For the Academic Affairs Committee, Chair June Martin reported the panel had met once. The committee has been given two new charges: examining the change to Chemistry 111 labs, a concern raised at a previous Faculty Senate meeting, and recommending what types of curricular changes should go through the Faculty Senate. The committee is also looking at the monitoring of on-line tests to prevent cheating and the proposed consolidation of advising.

Chair Greg Heim reported that the Budget Information Committee had three major meetings with those involved in outsourcing. The committee is attempting to understand the scope of outsourcing, which is quite broad given the number of contracts the university has, looking at the benefits and impacts, and gathering information on questions that have been raised.
Planning Committee Chair Doug Biggs said the panel is discussing the adequacy of emergency lighting when there is a power failure and looking at the issue of faculty input for building renovations.

Research Committee Chair Ergun Akleman said his committee was preparing a survey to help understand the research climate in university.

End of Consent Agenda

Informational Items Only

Unfinished Business

Old Business
Proposed Revisions to Student Rule IX—Attachment M

New Business
Faculty Senate Critical Initiative Task Forces
Speaker, Jim Woosley, noted that the Faculty Senate Executive Committee is working on convening two critical task forces related to Vision 20/20 measures and asked any Senators interested in participating on these committees to respond to a survey they received the week prior.

In new business, Senator Clare Gill also moved to require a letter from an affected department before a change in the title of the course in attachment C is approved. The motion was adopted.

Committee of the Whole
Speaker Woosley then turned the meeting over to Speaker-elect Strawser for the Committee of the Whole.

Senator Richard Carlson of Geosciences said he wanted to register a complaint about colleagues leaving the Faculty Senate meeting before it's adjourned.

Senator Price said the Engineering caucus was preparing a survey for college faculty and encouraged the Faculty Senate to do the same.

Speaker-elect Strawser turned the meeting back to Speaker Woosley.

Adjourn
The meeting was adjourned at 5:15 p.m.