

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT SAN ANTONIO

DOCUMENTS AND PROCEEDINGS OF THE GENERAL FACULTY AND

DOCUMENT and PROCEEDINGS OF THE UNIVERSITY ASSEMBLY

The minutes of the University Assembly meeting of May 4, 1999 published below have been prepared for the immediate use of the members of the University Assembly and are included in its Documents and Proceedings. They are also included in the Documents and Minutes of the General Faculty for the information of the members.

Betty S. Travis, Secretary
The General Faculty

SUMMARY MINUTES OF THE UNIVERSITY ASSEMBLY MEETING OF MAY 4, 1999

The fourth regular meeting of the University Assembly for the academic year 1998-99 was held in room 4.03.08, John Peace Library Building, on May 4, 1999, at 3:30 p.m. with Dr. Guy Bailey presiding.

I. ATTENDANCE

PRESENT: Ron Alexander, Deborah Armstrong, Guy Bailey, John Brown, Alan Craven, Eugene Dowdy, Rey Elizondo, Patricia Graham, Patricia Harris, Robert Hiromoto, Michael F. Kelly, David Larson, James McDonald, Lalatendu Misra, F. Alexander Norman, Walter Richardson, Jr., Clemencia Rodriguez, James Schneider, Betty Travis, Raydel Tullous, Jude Valdez, Arturo Vega, Matthew Wayner, Karen Whitney

ABSENT: Diana Allan, Donde Ashmos, Ron Ayers (excused), Monica Berry, Robert Burdick, Eric Denton, Jahan Eftekhari, Mansour El-Kikhia, Jane Findling, James Gaertner, Andrew Hall, Christina Hanson, Dwight Henderson, Kymberly Holmes, Ann Howell, Sheila Johnson, Samuel A. Kirkpatrick, Constance Lowe (excused), Monica D. Lumley, Susan Nordhauser, Tom Ricento (excused), R. K. Smith, Maggie Valentine (excused), Sandra Welch

Total members present: 24

Total members absent: 24

II. Minutes of the March 9, 1999, meeting were approved.

III. Reports

A. President - Dr. Samuel Kirkpatrick

None

B. Secretary - Dr. Betty S. Travis

Dr. Travis reported that the UT System Faculty Advisory Council had formed a watch group to follow legislation related to higher education, especially that dealing with academic or curriculum issues. During the current session, more than 370 bills have dealt with higher education. She said that a bill had been introduced relating to the field of studies legislation passed during the previous legislative session. The new legislation, Senate Bill 1261, directs the coordinating board that "it may develop a field of studies for the different curricula", instead of "it shall develop." The legislation also states that "an institution shall consult with the faculty of the institution before nominating or recommending a person to the board as the

institution's representative on an advisory committee." The bill defines a faculty member as "a person employed full time by an institution of higher education as a member of the faculty whose primary duties include teaching, research, academic service or administration. However, the term does not include a person holding faculty rank who spends a majority of the person's time for the institution engaged in managerial or supervisory activities, including chancellor, vice-chancellor, president, vice president, provost, associate or assistant provost, or dean." The bill also says that the Coordinating Board will conduct a study to see if there is even a need for the field of studies legislation.

Dr. Travis reported on other legislative areas of interest: 1) House Bill 1952, which reserves the rights of non-tenure faculty members to grieve their non-renewal; 2) House Bill 2079, which stipulates that public higher education institutions must provide full-time faculty with an employment contract by a certain date; and, 3) House Bill 893, which prohibits higher education employees from engaging in any conduct or behavior that a reasonable person would believe could cause psychological or mental harm to a student of higher education.

Dr. Travis reported that there appears to be progress on the UTSA grievance policy approved by the Faculty Senate and University Assembly. The UT System Office of General Counsel suggested modification, which will be reviewed by a committee of the Faculty Senate.

Dr. Travis reported on the status of the Faculty Senate Bylaws, reminding the Assembly that revisions, developed by a specially elected Faculty Senate Committee, were approved in April 1997 by the Faculty Senate, in May 1997 by the University Assembly and then sent to the President. She explained that the Committee had carefully discussed and analyzed the bylaws of faculty organizations in all UT System institutions, as well as other universities across the state. Dr. Travis expressed concern that the Faculty Senate bylaws had been rewritten and presented as a report to the University Assembly. She said that shared governance should mean that the wishes of the faculty, made known through their elected representative, would be respected and the work of the faculty valued.

Dr. Travis said that the year had been a productive one for faculty and staff, who are the foundation of the university and who have the responsibility for building the best university for the students. She wished Dr. Kirkpatrick best wishes and farewell.

C. Committees

Human Resources Committee - Dr. Eugene Dowdy

Dr. Dowdy reported that the University Assembly Human Resources Committee had been charged to investigate the issue of domestic partner benefits at UTSA. This investigation broadened to include first the UT System and then the State of Texas. The Committee looked at several reports as well as input from faculty. He reported that domestic partner benefits are impossible to obtain under the current legislative code of the State of Texas. However, some systems across the country have been able to create a new level of beneficiary entitled, "domestic partner." Dr. Dowdy said that the Committee found that administrators in the UT System had sent memoranda to various directors of human resources at UT System components explaining how the Texas Legal Code prohibits the UT System from offering health care benefits to domestic partners. The Committee also discovered that cities, private corporations and private universities are able to offer domestic partner benefits because they are not state supported. Dr. Dowdy reported that the Human Resources Committee recommends that a study be conducted during the Fall 1999 semester to determine what benefits are offered by private industry in Texas and the nation. The committee has determined that more research is needed to determine if state colleges and universities are not able to attract competent and able employees because of the lack of health care for their families. Dr. Dowdy made a motion requesting that the University Assembly ask the Human Resources Committee to continue to study the recommendations in their report. Motion passed.

D. Other

Chair of the Faculty Senate - Dr. Art Vega

Dr. Vega stated his gratitude for the tremendous work done by Dr. Patricia Harris, who chaired the Faculty Senate's Academic Policy and Requirements Committee during the time it developed the Senate's Report of Academic Restructuring.

Dr. Vega expressed warm wishes to Dr. Kirkpatrick in his future endeavors.

IV. Consent Calendar: Faculty Senate

- A. Recommend approval of Proposal for a Pilot Program: Concurrent Enrollment for High School Students in Introduction to Engineering Proposal approved
- B. Recommend approval of undergraduate degree program: Bachelor of Arts in Classical Studies Program approved
- C. Recommend approval of graduate degree program: Ph.D. in English Program approved

V. Unfinished Business

Report on Bylaws and Shared Governance

Dr. Schneider noted that the Attachment D did not appear to be a report but rather a document with no explanation or recommendation given. It is not clear how the Assembly is expected to proceed.

Dr. Vega made a motion to refer the document back to the Faculty Senate since the Faculty Senate had not been able to review the document nor have adequate discussion to consider its merits.

Ms. Karen Whitney noted that multiple organizations were included in the document and recommended that it be referred back to the various constituencies involved. She said that this would be more efficient and relevant than referring the entire document back to the Faculty Senate.

Mr. David Larson agreed that there are obviously other constituencies involved in the proposal who are not represented in the Senate. Their input of these organizations should also be represented.

Dr. Betty Travis called the question on the motion to refer the document back to the Faculty Senate.

Dr. Richardson said that the Faculty Senate Bylaws should be referred back to the Senate but the portion dealing with the University governance structure should be referred to President Romo.

Dr. Vega stated his willingness to accept a friendly motion to refer the areas of the document that do not deal with the Faculty Senate to the affected constituencies. Motion passed.

VI. New Business

Dr. Richardson requested a copy of the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology Report on the Division of Engineering. Dr. Bailey said that information received to date was confidential but when the final report was received it would be made public.

VII. Meeting Adjourned

Comments or questions to spottorff@utsa.edu

Last updated: Sept. 1, 2005