

CAMERON UNIVERSITY FACULTY SENATE APPROVED MINUTES

March 11, 2011

I. CALL TO ORDER

The Cameron University Faculty Senate met on Friday, March 11, 2011. Chair Matt Jenkins called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m. in Burch Hall, Room 107.

II. ROLL

Present: Matt Jenkins, Abbas Johari, Monika Linehan, Brad McCoy, Frank White, Andrew Baker, Michael Dunn, Syed Ahmed, Paul Crandon, Chris Keller, Sheri Jenkins-Cruz, Tanisha Billingslea, Lynda Robinson, Marie-Ginette Baillargeon, William Carney, Phil Adrian, Sarah Janda, Jeffrey Metzger, Mandi Smith, Irene Corriette, Gregory Herring, 2LT Arlanza Lewis, Linda Smith, Roy Couch, Jan Logan, Keith Vitense, Joanni Sailor, David Fennema

Absent: Stacey Treadway, Ali Soylu, Mike Estep, Terry Shannon

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Faculty Senate reviewed the minutes from the February 18, 2011, Faculty Senate meeting. William Carney moved to approve the minutes without amendment. Abbas Johari seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

IV. OLD BUSINESS

Progress of Investigation Into Adoption of New Faculty Handbook

Chair Matt Jenkins reported that VPAA John McArthur and his team of three faculty members are continuing to meet for two hours every Friday to review the revisions made to the proposed Faculty Handbook. They are making progress, and it is likely that they will only need to meet one or two more times to complete the comparison of the old and new versions of the Handbook. Once the review process is complete, VPAA McArthur will provide the Faculty Senate with the administration's response to the revised Handbook.

Report from Going Green Committee on Excessive Paperwork Study

Sheri Jenkins-Cruz reported that the Going Green Committee is continuing to study the amount of paperwork generated by the University. The committee has collected preliminary data and is studying how other universities cut down on excessive paperwork.

Report on Student Excused Absence Policy

Keith Vitense reported on the proposed attendance policy developed by the Academic Standards and Policies Committee. He provided copies of the policy, which states that students are expected to regularly attend classes, and faculty are expected to maintain fair and consistent attendance policies and explicitly post them in course syllabi. The policy allows for a limited number of absences for legitimate reasons (which are listed) unless sound pedagogical practice mandates otherwise. Students must provide appropriate documentation to verify excused absences and will be held responsible for any missed work. Students are also responsible for initiating requests to make up work or examinations.

Chair Jenkins provided copies of the current University attendance policy found in the Student Handbook and on the common syllabus attachment. This policy broadly states that the instructor is responsible for clarifying the attendance policy in their course, to include excused absences and makeup work, while the student is responsible for the course content and following the attendance policy.

Vitense emphasized that the new policy should be used as a set of guidelines for faculty, not a “you must follow” policy. He stated that the Senate should recommend to the administration that this policy be adopted as the official attendance policy and placed into the Faculty Handbook. Vitense moved to forward the attendance policy to the VPAA for the appropriate action. Lynda Robinson moved to amend the motion by replacing the word “policy” with “guidelines.” Chair Jenkins called for discussion of the motion and much discussion ensued.

Michael Dunn asked whether the Senate was moving the policy along or endorsing it. Vitense replied that by endorsing the new policy, we are moving it along.

Chris Keller stated that he is uncomfortable with putting a new policy for attendance into his syllabus. He also questioned the nature of a policy that isn’t a policy. Vitense explained that the policy merely gives faculty criteria that can be interpreted as they see fit. The policy is not meant to impinge on individual academic freedom.

Abbas Johari asked whether this proposed policy would be added to the current attendance policy. Vitense replied that the proposed policy would not supersede the current Student Handbook policy.

Chris Keller commented that curriculum methodology should not be put into the Faculty Handbook and asked whether voting on the policy today would mean agreement to put it into the Handbook. Vitense explained that a vote to adopt the policy is not a vote to put it into the Faculty Handbook. Chair Jenkins noted that it would be up to the VPAA to make that decision and that he would then send it back to the Senate.

Sarah Janda asked what would be gained by adopting the new policy, particularly if it does not change existing policies and questioned whether the policy was only clear and useful language for the faculty. Vitense suggested that the new policy would be useful for new faculty and could be used in faculty orientation and Jenkins concurred.

Syed Ahmed suggested that the proposed attendance policy be sent to department Chairs for review. Lynda Robinson suggested posting it to AggieAccess. Frank White recommended tabling the motion until the next meeting, providing Senate members the opportunity to discuss the proposed policy with their departments.

Syed Ahmed moved to table the motion to forward the attendance guidelines to the VPAA for the appropriate action until the next meeting on April 8, 2011. Chris Keller seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Syed Ahmed thanked Keith Vitense and the Academic Standards and Policies Committee for their work on developing the proposed policy.

Recognition of Dr. George Stanley

Chair Jenkins distributed a copy of the letter sent to Mrs. Gwen Stanley, wife of the late Dr. George Stanley, formally recognizing Dr. Stanley’s outstanding contributions and service to Cameron University by the Faculty Senate.

2011 Faculty Senate Election

Chris Keller reported that he had only received about twenty completed Faculty Senate election nomination forms and will, therefore, extend the nomination deadline until March 23. He encouraged all Faculty Senate members to remind their peers to participate in the nomination process. Chair Jenkins promoted running for the position of Chair-Elect. He emphasized that in this position, a faculty member has the privilege of working closely with the administration for two years and the opportunity to meet faculty from all schools and departments.

Several questions were raised regarding the nomination process. Lynda Robinson asked if there is a list of current committee members available. She also inquired if there are rules regarding the nomination process and eligibility for nomination. Sarah Janda asked if someone could nominate themselves.

Keller responded that a current list of committee members is available under Governance on AggieAccess. He stated that anyone is eligible for nomination, and anyone can nominate

themselves. He assured everyone that the nomination process is completely anonymous. Furthermore, anyone may recuse themselves if they are nominated but do not wish to run. Robinson suggested that a statement be added at the beginning of the nomination form clarifying that the nominations are anonymous and that one may nominate or recuse themselves.

University Email Policy

Chair Jenkins provided copies of the current Cameron email policy forwarded by VPAA McArthur, which was adopted in August 2010. He also provided copies of a memorandum sent to VPAA McArthur from Chris Keller (2009-10 Faculty Senate Chair) regarding the response to the request for faculty input on electronic communication policies. The memo, dated May 2010, states that the Faculty Senate voted unanimously in support of the Faculty Committee's recommendation of two policies addressing electronic communications: 1) an official email address for university communication with students; and 2) the use of distribution lists.

The policy addressing the use of distribution lists states that these lists ("All Facstaff" and "All Students") should only be used when the email content is relevant to all users on the email distribution list. Otherwise, the information should be distributed via AggieAccess. To prevent unsolicited email, all emails sent to these distribution lists are first routed to a university designated reviewer for approval. The Office of Public Affairs approves faculty/staff emails and the Student Help Desk approves student emails. Senders will be notified if a message cannot be sent, and there are avenues in place to appeal a decision.

Chair Jenkins suggested that the Faculty Committee review this policy again if there is a perceived need for modification.

V. NEW BUSINESS

Concealed Weapons/Open Carry Legislation

Chair Jenkins stated that the administration has asked the Faculty Senate to review its position on the State's concealed weapons and open carry legislation. Linda Smith moved that the Faculty Senate restate its position on the proposed gun legislation. David Fennema seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Chair Jenkins provided the Senate with copies of Jim Lambert's (Faculty Senate Chair 2007-08) March 2008 letter to President Ross stating the Senate's official resolution opposing amendments to Oklahoma HB 2513, which would allow students to carry handguns on college or university campuses. He also provided copies of a resolution passed by the Seminole State College Faculty Senate in January 2011, which strongly opposes any legislation permitting handguns on college and university campuses and prohibiting institutional policies regarding such. In addition, he distributed copies of an article by Michael McNutt of the Capital Bureau entitled "House Panel Oks Three Firearm Bills – Measure Would Let Voters Dictate Open Gun Carrying" and summarized the legislation. Of particular concern is HB 2087, which would allow concealed weapons on college and university campuses. Jenkins asked the Senate to state its position on the legislation. Without debate it was agreed that the Cameron Faculty Senate was opposed to the proposed handgun legislation. Michael Dunn asked if the Senate could legally comment and voice an opinion on the handgun legislation. Chair Jenkins explained that in this instance the Senate could legally voice its opinion because the vote was by the legislature and not by the public. It was suggested that the Faculty Senate invite the Cameron University Chief of Police and the Lawton Chief of Police to talk to the Senate regarding the handgun bill and its impact on campus.

David Fennema moved that the Faculty Senate write a resolution similar to the resolution adopted by the Seminole State College Faculty Senate. William Carney seconded the motion. The motion was amended to read that the Faculty Committee draft a resolution regarding handguns on campus, based upon the previous one, to bring before the Faculty Senate. The amended motion carried unanimously.

HB 1610 – Higher Education Faculty Accountability Act

Chair Jenkins informed the Senate of HB 1610, which would require every full-time faculty member to maintain a minimum of 20 teaching hours per week. Even though the bill was defeated this week, Jenkins emphasized that we need to be aware of what the State legislature is proposing. He stressed that if this bill had passed, shared governance and scholarship would be virtually impossible to maintain. On the bright side, he noted that as long as Cameron is under the umbrella of OU and OSU, we would be safe from this type of legislation.

HB 1497 – Higher Education Employee Merit System Task Force

Chair Jenkins briefed the Senate on HB 1497. The purpose of this bill is to study the establishment of a merit system for employees within the Oklahoma higher education system. Jenkins questioned what this would mean for faculty. At issue is who will decide who is doing a good job and who will get pay increases.

Senate Open Floor Discussion

Chair Jenkins opened the floor to discussion of additional topics.

Funding Increase for OLAP

Jan Logan asked if anyone had read the newspaper article concerning the increase in the level of funding for OLAP from \$50,000 to \$100,000. She questioned how this significant increase would be funded.

Report from Teaching and Learning Committee

Abbas Johari reported on the January 21 and February 25, 2011, meetings of the Teaching and Learning Committee and provided copies of the minutes from these meetings. Topics discussed at the January 21, 2011, meeting included the following: 1) revisions to the guidelines and application form for Innovative Instruction grants; 2) library book budget allocation formula and collection development policy; 3) Dimdim and ooVoo video conferencing tools; and 4) Blackboard video capture feature. Topics discussed at the February 25, 2011, meeting included the following: 1) results of Lisa Restivo's meeting with Blackboard representative; 2) most common student ITS Help Desk needs; and 3) possible Cameron Collegian story on preventing student "runaround" when they ask for help.

VI. MOVE TO ADJOURN

David Fennema moved to adjourn the meeting. Abbas Johari seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 3:43 p.m.

VII. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Faculty Senate will be on Friday, April 8, 2011, at 3:00 p.m., in Burch Hall, Room 107.

Respectfully submitted,
Monika Linehan
Faculty Senate Secretary