The Cameron University Faculty Senate met on Wednesday, October 4, 2004. Chairman Vitense called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m. in Room 106, Howell Hall.

I. ROLL CALL

Absent: Reynolds, Smith, Jones, Honeycutt, Labe, Fennema, Hagee, Adam-Rodwell, Zhao, Johari, Raborn, Penick, Lee.

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA
Heflin moved that the agenda be approved as written and Bursten seconded. Nelson noted that the following changes needed to be made in the Sept. 1 Senate Minutes:

1) Delete last portion of 2nd paragraph of old business so that it reads, “James Heflin motioned that this issue be turned over to the Academic Standards and Policies Committee. The proposal was seconded by Ted Snider and was approved unanimously.”

2) In new business Sept. 1 change “needs” to “need.” “Faculty need to know by what criteria they are being evaluated.” Lambert moved to accept the minutes as amended and Bursten seconded. It was approved unanimously.

III. OLD BUSINESS
Snider discussed making all committees membership terms fit in the same category in the Faculty Senate Constitution. It was proposed to add the following subunit to the Senate Constitution:

“All elected committee positions of Faculty Senate members (Faculty Senate Committees, University Committees, and ad hoc committees) shall have a term from the date of election to the first meeting of the Faculty Senate at the start of the next fall term.”

Heflin moved to add the above paragraph and it was seconded by Underwood. Snider proposed a friendly amendment to add “and appointed.” Heflin seconded it and the Senate members approved it unanimously. So now this subunit should read:
“All elected and appointed committee positions of Faculty Senate members (Faculty Senate Committees, University Committees, and ad hoc committees) shall have a term from the date of election to the first meeting of the Faculty Senate at the start of the next fall term.”

One committee appointment to the Faculty Committee is no longer in the faculty senate. Warren recommended that Mary Penick be appointed to that committee. Heflin so moved and Bursten seconded. It was approved unanimously.

IV. NEW BUSINESS
Lambert noted that we had a lengthy discussion over item one with President Ross. A major point of concern was whether the printed form in the Faculty Handbook was required or not. President Ross said the form was optional. Warren said that the faculty committee discussed it during their meeting this week and will provide language to clear up Section 4.2.5.

There was a discussion concerning the creation of an advisement center. Suggestions included that since it was just a straw poll when we met with the president that we take a more formal vote to see where the Senate stands on that issue. It was also suggested that we send a letter to Dr. Ross to let her know what the Faculty Senate thinks about this issue. Is it in the Strategic Plan 2008 to create an advisement center? Vitense volunteered to get more information about what they propose to do at the advisement center. It was noted that the faculty evaluation form was driven hard this fall and is a surprise that the President said it was optional. It appears that there is still a push to use form driven evaluations. There is a lot of importance in that document and the Senate needs to be involved in the shape the form takes. It acts as a template; however, because of this it has a tendency to guide people’s activities and is perceived as essential. Warren noted that we will use a form no matter how you write it up. The faculty committee is still working on it.

Snider noted that when we asked if the Saturday workshops were worthwhile we were given a resounding yes but the numbers given average out to one or two people for every staff and faculty that showed up on Saturday.

It was proposed to thank the president for her work for increasing faculty salaries. A formal resolution that the Faculty Senate send a letter of thanks to President Ross was motioned by Underwood and seconded by Reynolds. The motion passed unanimously.

Warren asked that if there are concerns, interpretations, or misunderstandings about the handbook the members should let him know. They have a list going of concerns already expressed by the faculty. If something in the handbook does not seem right or is misinterpreted, then faculty should let a faculty committee member know about it.
The problem with late advisement of faculty position was discussed. Departments are not allowed to advertise until the position is officially approved. It should be changed so that we can advertise in a more timely fashion and we can stipulate that it is pending on funding. The way we do it now it is so late in the school year that we will get less qualified personnel. Presently, they are holding all the positions until they are approved. It would be nice if we can take steps to get the best pool of applicants by submission of our announcements earlier in the school year. Crawford suggested that we ask VP of Academic Affairs to let us advertise the possibility of a position.

Currently, in some cases there is no salary to offer potential hires until June. Is this true across the board? This policy is inconsistent with the ideal getting a good pool of candidates in a timely fashion. Advertising in late April is often too late. Buckley plans to attend our meetings so we can discuss it with him at the next meeting. We need to get a policy that allows us to advertise sooner and fund the position and offer it in a timely way. It was suggested that Dr. Buckley be called after the meeting to advise him of our concerns.

Catterall noted that a member of the history department asked him if it is possible for the university to pay some percentage of health care of retirees through the age of 65. That would be a concern of the fringe benefits and retirement committee. Crawford is the chair of that committee and is aware of that question. It is being brought up with Dr. Buckley. At OU Health Science and OU, they pay for faculty health care through the age of 65. Because we are governed by the same regents, it should be possible to be governed by the same policy. Any proposed change should go through Mr. Pinkston as he is our university spokesman for that.

V. COMMITTEE REPORTS.
Fringe Benefits Report met twice and will have Pinkston talk to faculty on Monday about insurance options. Flex program. They have tentatively scheduled to have a state retirement representative discuss retirement benefits the 11th of Nov.

Faculty committee reports that they are meeting weekly and Penick is the secretary. There are lingering questions from last year. Evaluation, tenure, chair evaluation probably will be added to the faculty handbook.

Bachelor moved to adjourn the meeting and Snider seconded. The meeting adjourned at 4:50.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Wright-Smith
Faculty Senate Secretary