I. CALL TO ORDER

The Cameron University Faculty Senate met on Wednesday, March 7, 2007. Chair John Bachelor called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m. in Howell Hall, Room 106.

II. ROLL CALL

Present: John Bachelor, James Lambert, Monika Linehan, Sherry Reynolds, Sue Fuson, Keith Lavender, Phil Adrian, James Heflin, Mike Davis, Sarah Janda, David Fennema, Phil Schroeder, Gabriela Adam-Rodwell, Sharon Christensen, Ted Snider, Mary Penick, Jeanne Gaunce


III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Faculty Senate members reviewed the minutes from the February 7, 2007, meeting. James Heflin motioned to approve the Faculty Senate minutes from February 7, 2007. Chair-elect James Lambert seconded the motion. The motion carried.

IV. REMARKS FROM OFFICERS

Chair John Bachelor remarked that the Faculty Senate officers are members of the President’s Planning Committee. He informed the Senate that the Planning Committee had recently met to discuss the success of Plan 2008 and to initiate discussion of Plan 2013. He noted that Dr. John Morris is Chair of Plan 2013.

Chair Bachelor stated that Cameron has already seen a significant result of its fundraising campaign for the Centennial Commission.

Chair Bachelor also remarked that Vice President McArthur had emailed all faculty advertising the Faculty in Residence position available through the Faculty in Residence program. He will be vacating this position at the end of the semester.

Chair-elect James Lambert distributed a copy of an article published in The Oklahoman entitled “Colleges Lack Smoking Ban.” The article noted that a growing number of colleges nationwide are banning smoking, but no Oklahoma colleges are on the list. It also stated that while the University of Oklahoma, the University of Central Oklahoma, and Oklahoma City University are discussing tobacco bans, no plans are in place at this time. Only Tulsa’s OSU Center for Health Sciences has prohibited tobacco use. The article mentioned that banning smoking on campuses is a nationwide movement and that it is a cost, health, and aesthetic issue. Chair-elect Lambert stated that Cameron should ban smoking and try the next 100 years as a smoke-free university. He emphasized that this could be our legacy.

Chair-elect Lambert also referenced another article in The Oklahoman that addressed the issue of funding for the Oklahoma Higher Learning Access Program (OHLAP). It stated that OHLAP was running out of funds and there was a need for designated funding. Chair-elect Lambert emphatically stated that funding should not come from gambling revenues.
Chair Bachelor agreed that the funding of OHLAP was indeed a major issue. He stated that it was a line item that could be skimmed off the top of the higher education budget and that universities should designate specific funding.

V. COMMITTEE REPORTS

Ad Hoc Academic Honesty Committee
Chair John Bachelor reported that the Academic Honesty Committee would meet on March 26, the Monday after Spring Break, at 3 p.m. He confirmed that Gabriela Adam-Rodwell and Jeanne Gaunce had volunteered to serve on the committee.

Fringe Benefits Committee
James Heflin reported that the Fringe Benefits Committee recently met with Vice President Glen Pinkston. He stated that Vice President Pinkston will attend the April 4, 2007, Faculty Senate meeting to address questions regarding retirement issues. He asked that questions for the Vice President be sent to him, and he would forward them to Vice President Pinkston prior to the meeting. He also informed the Senate that Tommy Beavers will give a presentation regarding Oklahoma retirement on April 27 in the Cetes building.

Long-range Planning Committee
Chair-elect James Lambert reported that the Long-range Planning Committee is tackling Plan 2013. He noted that the Centennial Commission, which consists of community members, would meet on Friday, March 9, 2007, to discuss the Plan. Chair-elect Lambert also stated that the committee was in the process of revising Plan 2008, as it was very lengthy. Some items in Plan 2008 may be consolidated or dropped entirely.

Faculty Committee
Chair-elect James Lambert reported that the Faculty Committee has identified three items to address: 1) reassignment of professors to departments outside their field; 2) guidelines for coverage of classes during a professor’s absence; and 3) usage of data collected through IDEA course evaluations. He asked for input on whether there should be a statement in the Faculty Handbook calling for mandatory peer evaluations.

Lectures and Concerts Committee
Chair-elect James Lambert reported that $25,000 in funding has been approved for next year. He also stated that students were well represented on the committee.

Rules Committee
Ted Snider reported that the ballot for the approval of changes to the Faculty Handbook would be distributed to the faculty during the week. He noted that faculty would receive an electronic copy of the Handbook revisions, but voting would be by ballot, not on the computer. Ted also mentioned that committee nominations for next year would be distributed in the near future.

Academic Standards & Policies Committee
Mike Davis reported on feedback concerning the IDEA course evaluations received at the IDEA training sessions in February. He distributed a list of issues derived from this feedback that the AS&PC will address. These issues include the following:

- Inclusion of information regarding written comments on the evaluation forms
- Use of the IDEA short form to avoid “survey fatigue”
- Development of a Web page containing instructions for the use of IDEA forms and explaining policies relating to the administration of the IDEA process
- Development of standards for the consistent use of additional questions on the IDEA forms.
VI. OLD BUSINESS

Deadline for submission of final grades

Mike Davis reported on the issue of the shortened deadline for submission of final grades, which was referred to the Academic Standards & Policies Committee at the February 7, 2007, Faculty Senate meeting. He stated that the tight deadline between finals and grade submission directly related to the length of time between the Fall and Spring semesters. A possible solution to the time problem could be to move the Spring semester back one week, extending the length of the break between semesters. Faculty would trade a week of summer for an extra week in winter. Discussion of this issue ensued.

It was stated that one reason for the Spring semester’s beginning and end dates was to ensure retiring faculty received the best deal financially.

It was noted that the Spring 2008 semester does start one week later.

It was stated that Cameron’s Spring break coincides with that of the public schools.

The question was asked what effects the Spring semester beginning a week later would have on the submission of Spring semester grades. Mike Davis replied that, administratively, only the submission of Fall semester grades is effected by the start date of the Spring semester.

Mike Davis stated that there are many solutions to this issue, and the AS&PC does not have enough information to make a recommendation.

Chair Bachelor noted that dead week was an issue previously and is under consideration now.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

AS&PC’s recommendation concerning GPA and honors graduation

Mike Davis stated that on February 7, 2007, Vice President John McArthur requested a recommendation from the AS&PC concerning graduation honors for Cameron students. Mike distributed a handout outlining the committee’s recommendations. He explained that Cameron’s current policy for determining honors designations is to use both GPA and class rank. The use of class rank complicates matters for the registrar’s office and is unfair to students because the same GPA may be valued differently depending on the semester a student graduates. Furthermore, Cameron is one of only two universities in Oklahoma that use class rank to determine honors designation. Mike stated that the purpose for considering class rank along with GPA was to level the playing field across disciplines, overriding the effects of suspected grade inflation. He explained that the AS&PC reached two conclusions. First, it is acceptable for Cameron to be out of step with other institutions by using both GPA and class rank to determine honors if it keeps the playing field level. Second, the current system of using both GPA and class rank is administratively unwieldy and has the potential to alienate students.

Mike then presented the AS&PC’s recommendation that the GPA for all graduating students be calculated twice. The first calculation would be the student’s overall GPA of all courses; the second would be the student’s GPA of only the general education courses. Mike referred to the chart on the handout that explained the GPA requirements necessary to meet each honors designation. Mike also explained that the majority of Oklahoma institutions do not reserve a perfect 4.0 for a summa cum laude designation, and the AS&PC concluded unanimously that Cameron consider the cutoff of 3.9 for summa cum laude. Discussion of this issue ensued.

It was stated that General Education courses should not be factored into the GPA since they were lower level courses. It was conversely stated that factoring in General Education courses was a logical way to level the playing field.

There was concern that calculating the GPA twice would create extra work for the registrar.

The question was raised as to how to handle transfer students. It was stated that transfer students must have their last 15 hours from Cameron to qualify for honors.

Many felt summa cum laude should be awarded only to students with a GPA of 4.0.
It was suggested that the AS&PC’s recommended policy be tracked for 3 to 5 years to determine if the policy was necessary. It was also suggested to track previous years.

Another suggestion was to calculate honors designations using the current method as well as AS&PC’s new recommendation and then compare the two.

**Other issues**

**Dean and Department Chair evaluations.** Sarah Janda stated that the mandatory Dean and Department Chair evaluations are not anonymous, raising the possibility of faculty completing less-than-honest evaluations. She asked which committee would address this issue. Discussion of this topic ensued.

It was stated that this was a big problem in small departments, where it was difficult for faculty to disguise their evaluations. It was also stated that some departments track who has completed an evaluation.

The question was asked who should evaluate Deans. It was noted that many faculty do not have enough contact with their Dean to complete an in-depth, knowledgeable evaluation. On the other hand, it was also stated that some departments have a great deal of interaction with their Dean.

There was consensus that the evaluation process should be overhauled. A suggestion was made that small departments consolidate faculty comments. Some thought this would lead to misguided speculation about who made specific comments. Concern was also expressed regarding who would compile the comments.

**Faculty evaluations.** The statement was made that the Faculty Senate should go on record to say that evaluations are “the tail wagging the dog.” It was emphatically noted that far too much time is spent on evaluations. An animated discussion of this issue followed, centered on the question of what evaluations really mean. It was suggested that the Faculty Committee take on this issue.

It was suggested that the timing of the faculty evaluation should be changed and that evaluations should be based on the faculty plan and what was accomplished. The evaluation should reflect the accomplishment of set goals.

It was recommended that the faculty plan and evaluation be consolidated into one step to be completed in February.

There was consensus that evaluation form ratings are not applied in a uniform manner across campus.

**University retirements.** Chair-elect Lambert inquired about the university retirements that would take place at the end of this school year. He stated that this information was necessary in order to formulate the committee structure for next year. Information on resignations is also necessary to see how it impacts the Faculty Senate. Chair Bachelor stated that Vice President Glen Pinkston could provide this information.

**VIII. ADJOURNMENT**

Chair Bachelor adjourned the meeting at 4:30 p.m.

**IX. NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Faculty Senate will be on Wednesday, April 4, 2007, at 3:30 p.m. in Howell Hall, Room 106.

Respectfully submitted
Monika Linehan
Faculty Senate Secretary