

MINUTES
Faculty Assembly, Sept. 18, 2008
Science Lecture Theater

Chair Jeffrey DeLotto called the meeting to order at 12:18 p.m.

Ms. DeeAnn Day gave the invocation.

Old Business:

1. Approval of the Faculty Handbook: Chairman DeLotto reported that the amended handbook was presented to the Board of Trustees in spring 2008. At the same time, the Law School sent its faculty manual to the Board for its approval. The Board of Trustees has delayed approval of the Faculty Handbook until it can resolve several possible contradictions between the Law School manual and the Handbook. Chairman DeLotto reported that Provost Henderson expects that the Board will approve the Faculty Handbook at its fall meeting in November.

New Business:

1. Approval of the Faculty Assembly Minutes of April 30, 2008: approval was moved and seconded; no objections were made; the motion passed unanimously.
2. Approval of the Faculty Council Minutes of Sept. 2, 2008: approval was moved and seconded.
 - a. Several faculty members questioned item #7, the provision of merit pay. Chairman DeLotto reported that he has asked President Jeffcoat and Provost Henderson to come to the Faculty Assembly to clarify their ideas about the distribution of merit pay. President Jeffcoat plans to speak with the Dean of each School about the provision of merit pay.
 - b. Other questions arose about the departmental plans to revise the criteria for merit pay. Provost Henderson replied that each department should continue to review their criteria for merit pay and follow the current timeline for revisions.
 - c. Dean Kerr added that the faculty of the School of Arts and Sciences will set minimum standards for merit pay, but that each department should discuss the issue of merit within its own discipline and make recommendations for awarding merit pay. Dean Quintanilla reported that the School of Business is proceeding with the development of its merit pay system.
 - d. A question was asked about a possible connection between merit pay and the proposed peer review program. Provost Henderson replied that no connection currently exists between the two.
 - e. There being no further discussion, the question was called. The minutes were approved unanimously.

3. Chair DeLotto informed the faculty that Elizabeth Alexander had agreed to serve as Faculty Council and Assembly Secretary and the Carl Smeller had agreed to continue as Parliamentarian.
4. Provost Henderson reviewed the proposed peer review program.
 - a. He noted that the SACS committee had expressed concern about the university's lack of assessment and evaluation for both its tenured and non-tenured faculty
 - i. The current evaluation program provides little data on teaching effectiveness other than that provided by the student evaluations.
 - ii. Best practices as developed in many other universities indicate that peer review can improve instruction by providing instructor feedback from colleagues, allow faculty to observe other teachers, and use data to improve program delivery.
 - b. Provost Henderson noted that the Faculty Council called for development of a peer review program three years previously, but that no conclusive action had resulted.
 - i. He has researched other university programs and has put together a voluntary pilot program to test the concept of peer review at Texas Wesleyan. Through this voluntary program he hopes to receive faculty feedback on the issue of peer review.
 - ii. A question was asked about the availability of minutes from the Faculty Council and Assembly meetings that approved a post-tenure review program. Former faculty chair Carl Smeller agreed to provide those minutes.
 - c. The faculty had numerous questions about how the peer review system would be set up and how the results would be used.
 - i. Provost Henderson assured the faculty that participation in the voluntary program would have no adverse consequences. He emphasized that the proposed program was a pilot program.
 - ii. Provost Henderson agreed to send the proposed peer assessment forms to the faculty electronically.
 - iii. Provost Henderson reported that the Deans of the Schools are currently accepting volunteers for participation in the initial peer review pilot program.
 - iv. Chairman DeLotto noted that the faculty should focus on the benefits of peer review for a teaching institution. Peer review can reward excellent teaching.
 - v. Other faculty members noted that peer review is but one part of post-tenure review, a process that is currently required at all state universities and that is a main focus of SACS concern.
5. Beth Battles informed the faculty that the Honors Council will be accepting proposals from faculty who wish to teach Wesleyan Scholars Programs for upcoming semesters.
 - a. Currently, Brenda Matthews is teaching "Disease and Human Society" to the sophomore group, and John Hall is teaching "Human and Horse

Relationships” to the freshmen group. Next year, Bruce McDonald will teach a new freshmen class on the Middle East, and Linda Carroll will teach sophomores about Media Bias.

- b. Dr. Battles reported that the program has had excellent retention, with 11 current sophomores and 14 new freshmen. The classes currently meet at 1:30 p.m. on Mondays.
 - c. She reminded faculty that teaching a WSP course counts toward faculty course loads and that the Honors Program budget covers the cost of an overload course or an adjunct.
6. Connie Whitt-Lambert announced the first performance of Theatre Wesleyan for the fall semester. “Agnes of God” is alternating in repertory with “Stones in His Pockets” at the Thad Smotherman Theatre, beginning on Sept. 25 and running to Oct. 4.
 7. Chairman DeLotto announced that Bruce McDonald has agreed to serve again as Chair of University College Day. Dr. McDonald announced that the tentative date for UCD is April 7, 2009. Dr. DeLotto reminded the faculty that the 2008 papers from UCD will be published by the Texas Wesleyan University Press this fall, and participation in UCD provides the faculty and students with an opportunity for publication.

There being no further business, the Chair entertained a motion to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 1:08 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Alexander
Secretary