

JOURNAL OF THE FACULTY SENATE

The University of Oklahoma (Norman campus)

Regular session – February 10, 2014 – 3:30 p.m. – Jacobson Faculty Hall, Room 102

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Note: The remarks of the Senators and others are summarized and not verbatim. A recording of this meeting is available in the Faculty Senate office.

The Faculty Senate was called to order by Professor Edgar O’Rear, Chair.

PRESENT: Apanasov, Atiquzzaman, Ayres, Bemben, Bergey, Bert, Burcham, Burns, Coleman, Cravey Stanley, Duncan, Elisens, Forman, Grady, Hahn, Halterman, Hewes, Irvine Johnson, Kong, Kornelson, Kutner, Laubach, Loon, Mackey, Miller, Mortimer, Nelson, O’Rear, Palmer, Raman, Refai, Riggs, Schmeltzer, , Sharma, , Smith, Snell, Stoltenberg, Strout, Terry, Warren, Wong

Provost’s representative: Mergler, Harper

ISA representatives: Cook, Hough

Others: Matt Hamilton, Brad Burnett, Gregg Garn

ABSENT: Clark, Cortest, Cracknell, Lamb, Marcus-Mendoza, Merchan-Merchan, Pigott, Schwarzkopf, Shelton

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APPROVAL OF JOURNAL

The Faculty Senate Journal for the regular session of December 9, 2013 was approved.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The following faculty members were elected to the Faculty Senate as of January 2014:

Norman Wong (Communication), completing the 2011-14 term of Misha Klein (Anthropology), representing the College of Arts & Sciences

Joyce Coleman (English), completing the 2011-14 term of Rita Keresztesi (English), representing the College of Arts & Sciences

Shannon Bert (Human Relations), completing the 2012-15 term of Yong-Mi Kim (Library & Information Studies - Tulsa), representing the College of Arts & Sciences

Luis Cortest (Modern Languages, Literatures and Linguistics) completing the 2013-15 term of Sherri Irvin (Philosophy), representing the College of Arts & Sciences

We also welcome via videoconference Betsy Martens, the new Faculty Senate Tulsa Liaison replacing Janette Habashi.

On behalf of the Faculty Senate, the Executive Committee approved the nomination of Su Fang Ng (English) to complete the 2013-14 term of Nancy LaGreca (Modern Languages, Literatures, and Linguistics) on the Arts and Humanities Faculty Fellowship Selection Committee.

The Faculty Senate is sad to report the deaths of retired faculty members Calvin Byre (University Libraries) on May 3, 2013 and H. Wayne Morgan (History) on January 29, 2014.

OU Sooner Flight Academy summer flight camp registration opens March 1. These camps challenge children and youth ages 6-18 to engage in hands-on activities, which demonstrate the science, technology, engineering, and math of the exciting world of flight. Children of OU Faculty/Staff receive a discount on tuition and partial scholarships are available. Learn more at <http://flightcamp.ou.edu> or contact the academy at flightcamp@ou.edu.

The call for volunteers for councils, committees, and boards was sent to faculty, chairs/directors, and deans on January 27, 2014. Nominations are due to the Faculty Senate office by Friday, February 28, 2014.

Proposals for the 2014 OU Arts & Humanities Faculty Fellowships (AHFF) program coordinated by the VPR's office are due on February 28, 2014. The purpose of the AHFF program is to support dynamic and innovative research and creative activity projects proposed by regular faculty in the arts, fine arts, and humanities by providing them the opportunity to focus on a scholarly and/or creative activity that significantly transforms the faculty member's research program and makes notable contributions to the field. More information is available at <http://vpr-norman.ou.edu/funding/VPR-funding-opportunities/arts-humanities-faculty-fellowship-program>.

Recently opened at the Art Museum on January 14, 2014: 100th Annual School of Art & Art History Student Exhibition. This competitive juried show is held each spring and highlights the diverse works of art created by art and art history students from the University of Oklahoma.

REMARKS REGARDING FLAT RATE TUITION

Prof. O'Rear introduced Matt Hamilton, Vice President and Registrar, and, Brad Burnett, Associate Vice President. Prof. O'Rear remarked how well the transition to flat rate tuition seems to have gone. VP Hamilton recognized the contributions of Glenn Hansen and Susannah Livingood.

VP Hamilton stated that the objectives of the Flat Rate Tuition program were to increase graduation rates, to decrease time to degree thus reducing student costs and lower student loan debt, and to allow students to enter the workforce or graduate school earlier.

Implementation started with planning and discussion, including the evaluation of other models used at similar institutions. The implementation at the University of Texas, Texas A&M, and the University of Florida were studied in order to guide the execution. The announcement of the program was made on June 20, 2013. The implementation deadline was August 9, 2013, since fall classes began on August 19, 2013.

OU's Flat Rate Tuition Program features include:

- Undergraduate Only (Norman Campus, not OU-HSC)
- Per credit hour charges – up to 11 hours
- Flat rate tuition and mandatory fees 12-2X hours
- College program, college technology, and lab fees are not part of Flat Rate
- Summer banking when less than 30 fall/spring hours
- Exemption Process
- Work Assistance Scholarship Program
- December Intersession – included in Fall Flat Rate

A short-term outcome included an increase in the average number of credit hours taken by OU students, with the average credit hour load per student going from 14.18 to 14.57. Credit Hour Loads for all classifications were similar. It was anticipated that loads would be higher for Freshman, but that was not the case. There are currently 28,310 credit hours that students have banked for the Summer term.

There were 1,248 exemptions filed and 1,087 were approved; 74% of those were for graduating seniors with less than 30 hours left in their program. Additionally, there were Work Assistance Scholarships given to 187 students, totaling \$425,965.

The impact on December Intersession was an 18% increase in the number of enrolled credit hours, from 4633 to 5472. To date, the undergraduate Summer Enrollment has gone up by 19% for the coming summer.

As of today, 9,943 students have banked hours, with the chart below showing the distribution of banked hours.

Hours Banked Per Student	Number of Students
1	2,152
2	2,173
3	3,127
4	958
5	710
6	823

The Summer Survey done in October 2013 by Dr. Glenn Hansen surveyed the estimated credit hour demand for summer, summer changes, and how banked hours would be used. The analysis shows that 21.8% of students plan to not take summer hours, that 47% might take summer hours, and 31.2% plan to

take summer hours. Depending on actual behavior, there should be an increased demand for summer courses of anywhere from 15% to 42%.

VP Hamilton emphasized that it is important that we meet student demand for summer courses, especially for juniors and seniors. Significant resources have been committed to this program including new instructional costs, so we have to consider net revenue in everything, especially given the uncertainty of what summer will bring. He stated that the positive gain in retention and graduation is the most important aspect of the Flat Rate Program and that if students can graduate sooner, it will also reduce their student loan debt.

Prof. Grady stated that many of the students in the sciences come in with a significant number of AP credits, making it difficult to fill their Freshman year with 15 hours each semester. VP Hamilton said that is why they included advisors on the committee to design the OU Flat Rate program. If there is really no way to enroll in 15 or more hours, then the student can apply for an exemption. Prof. Terry asked if anyone is working to predict which upper division courses will be needed during the summer. Provost Mergler and Prof. Harper have been working on that information.

Prof. O'Rear asked how long it would take for enrollments to stabilize, based on the experience of other schools. VP Hamilton said it is speculation, but we can look at Texas A&M's experience where it took three to four years to stabilize. He noted that the Summer term will be a key to how successful this is. Prof. O'Rear questioned whether the program has any effect on Financial Aid for students. VP Hamilton said that in the past, students had all of their aid dispersed to them in Fall and Spring semester, and thus did not have any funding remaining for summer classes. Under the new program, they will have banked hours that they can use for summer enrollments.

Prof. Riggs reasons that the summer banking could end up being an institutional challenge since upper division courses that are needed in the summer will need to be taught by regular faculty, either in-load or as overload. He proposed including summer courses in-load, although this idea does not seem to be popular with many faculty members. VP Hamilton said that we would just have to see what the demand is for summer courses before considering that suggestion.

Prof. Bembien asked what would happen if students with banked hours are unable to find courses to take; would they receive a refund on those banked hours? He also asked about the availability of affordable summer housing. VP Hamilton said that about three years ago OU started to focus on the summer term. At that time, Housing developed a flexible, affordable summer housing program. Additionally, there is a summer working group that meets once a month to continue to address these issues. There are still many unknowns regarding summer banking, and it may be a challenge offering sufficient upper division classes during summer.

Prof. Bercham asked if the additional revenue from this program could result in the ability to develop more courses. Prof. Nelson asked how many other universities are offering flat rate tuition. VP Hamilton said that it is in the hundreds, but that we focused on what similar universities to OU were doing. Prof. Bert asked if we anticipate more students declaring a second minor or a double major. VP Hamilton thinks that this is likely.

There were no additional questions. Prof O'Rear thanked VP Hamilton for speaking to the Senate.

REMARKS REGARDING OU'S STEM INITIATIVES

Prof. O'Rear introduced Gregg Garn, Dean of the Jeannine Rainbolt College of Education. He described the status of STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) education in Oklahoma. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, Oklahoma is below the national average in science at both the fourth and eighth grade level and the gap widens from fourth to eighth grade. The percentage of Oklahoma high school students that are prepared for college-level courses in mathematics

and science are below national averages. For science, only 26 % of Oklahoma students are prepared compared to 31% nationwide. For mathematics, only 37% of Oklahoma students are prepared compared to 46% nationwide.

In Oklahoma, there is a focus on EOIs (End of Instruction) exams, which do not seem to align well with college readiness. The 2012 Fordham Institute's Report "The State of State Science Standards" (<http://www.edexcellence.net/publications/the-state-of-state-science-standards-2012.html>) gave Oklahoma an "F" grade. Fortunately, we have faculty here at OU who are trying to improve Oklahoma students' science performance by working with curriculum and next-generation science standards. The state is in the process of adopting a new set of science standards called the Oklahoma Academic Standards, that are closely aligned to Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) and Common Core State Standards (CCSS).

OU's K20 Center has several STEM projects that increase connections with the K-12 system and produce K-12 teachers who excel in both content and practice to improve STEM learning. K20 outreach to schools in STEM education allows students to think like a scientist, engineer or mathematician and to use tools and technology to investigate the wonders of their world; it helps students to critically view the world in which they live, preparing them for deeper studies at the universities. K20 STEM initiatives have impacted over 6,000 teachers and almost 100,000 students in Oklahoma.

Currently, the K20 Center partners with the Oklahoma State Department of Education to identify and support elementary schools as they implement STEM learning, working with the teachers so that they more deeply understand STEM, how to integrate the concepts among math and science, and so that they can experience how scientists, technology experts, engineers, and mathematicians conduct their work. K20 also helps them develop lessons to teach in their classrooms that engage students in STEM learning. Schools host STEM Family Nights where the parents, grandparents, and community members can come together to learn about STEM education.

K20ALT stands for K20 Authentic Learning & Teaching (<http://k20alt.ou.edu/>). The website has visitors from all 50 states and 80 countries. There are approximately 10,000 subscribed users nationwide using lessons created by Oklahoma faculty.

Another long-term project at K20 involves a partnership with the Oklahoma Educational Technology Trust (OETT) to provide professional development to teachers in schools across the state. These schools receive a grant for \$40,000 for technology in their schools. Teachers receive help to develop interactive learning activities with technology in their classrooms. The technology that you see in Norman is not representative of the technology available in the rest of the state. The OETT Grants to Schools program works with 181 schools, 5,320 teachers, and 76,893 students.

Provost Mergler began her section of the presentation by focusing on OU undergraduates as they come into the system. Data was captured at the 3rd week census on initial interest in STEM among freshmen as they entered OU. She also looked at data from each freshmen cohort as to retention at OU in a STEM major and retention at OU and OU's six year graduation rate data in STEM compared to other highly selective institutions.

For her analysis, STEM was narrowly defined based on CIP codes used at the federal level. At OU, the STEM definitions included Engineering (all undergraduate majors), Earth & Energy (all undergraduate majors), Atmospheric & Geographic Sciences (all undergraduate majors), Continuing Education (aviation majors) and Arts & Sciences (physics/astronomy, chemistry/biochemistry, microbiology, plant biology, biology, mathematics, and information studies).

There are more women than men in the 2011 Cohort at OU. For STEM, 19.4% are men entering in STEM and 10.5% are women entering in STEM. STEM students have higher ACT scores than other entering students. STEM freshman come into OU slightly better prepared than other students, but are retained at only slightly higher rates. Overall, we are not retaining them well in a STEM major. They

often change their major to non-STEM majors, and this is more pronounced for women. In 2011, we lost 16.4% of STEM freshman to other majors; however, the loss was 22.3% among women and only 13.3% among men.

Provost Mergler compared our performance to other “highly selective” institutions, such as Texas A&M, Oklahoma State, University of Texas, and Baylor. Our rates of total graduation of STEM freshman are not quite as high as other “highly selective” institutions. However, there is a greater disparity when we look at graduating STEM freshman in STEM majors. Some questions we must ask ourselves about why we are not doing as well as our peers include:

- Is the curriculum for the lower division science and mathematics courses sufficiently engaging for today’s undergraduates?
- In our concern with getting students graduated from OU, have we been too quick to counsel STEM students having trouble in their science, math or engineering courses into other majors?
- Do we create an appropriate and welcoming environment in our lectures, teaching labs, and tutoring sessions for all STEM students? Do we remind instructional faculty and graduate teaching assistants to be welcoming and encouraging to all students?

Prof. Forman asked if the Provost’s data included OU-HSC. The Provost stated that it was only for the Norman campus, but did include the 2+2 students.

Associate Provost Harper addressed STEM initiatives at OU. These include ways to inspire and educate K-12 students on STEM professions, graduate K-12 teachers with strong fundamentals in STEM fields, offer professional development workshops for math and science teachers, and communicate that STEM is not only for the gifted students, it is for everyone.

He presented examples of K-12 outreach at OU including the summer academic camps offered by Precollegiate Programs. Those Summer Academic Camp Opportunities include:

- Architecture Summer Academy
- Aviation Summer Academy
- Chemistry Summer Academy
- CSI: Forensic Science
- Engineering Summer Academy
- ExxonMobil Bernard Harris Summer Science Camp
- Horizons Unlimited
- Meteorology Summer Academy
- Mini College
- Oklahoma Mesonet Weather Camp
- Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry “STEM to Store Academy” Summer 2013

He also highlighted the hosting of K-12 schools at the National Weather Center and the Rawl Engineering Practice Facility (REPF). At the REPF, there are hands-on activities for groups of K-12 students to excite them about the engineering professions. They have hosted school group visits from schools in Oklahoma, Missouri, Kansas, and Texas. They also have a High School Open House and summer camps. Because of this effort, our K-12 visits have increased rapidly in the past four years. In 2013, there were 70 visits from 47 different schools, totaling 3,200 K-12 students

Concurrent Enrollment (CE) is also an option for high school students. OU has increased communication with high school students about CE opportunities through a new website at <http://ou.edu/ce>. There is now an assigned representative in each area that is involved in the CE process at OU (Recruitment Services, University College, Admissions, and Parking) to provide individualized support to help students transition from high school to college courses. The application process has been simplified and there is a discounted cost for high school seniors of approximately \$80 per credit hour. On the new website, courses will be featured each semester based on unique curriculum, flexible scheduling, and professor

engagement with students. In addition, Janux courses give students who do not live nearby options to take CE at OU and still interact with other students and professors.

Prof. Harper stated that OU is also bridging the gap to help students succeed through the Developmental Math program and Summer Bridge program for engineering students. Transforming STEM education at OU will include making first-year STEM courses more engaging and encouraging communication across STEM disciplines. There will also be a push to incentivize and reward faculty adopting innovative and effective instructional strategies and engage high-performing students with research opportunities. In addition, the K20 Center's Virtual Learning Experiences (VLE) development team, in collaboration with OU faculty, is creating game-based learning experiences to be used in undergraduate courses such as Calculus. There has been a redesign of the BIOL 1114/1121 courses and the development of the ChemBiochem Honors Research Program, which will promote early engagement in undergraduate research.

Prof. O'Rear opened the floor up to questions. Prof. Burns noted that students change their major for a variety of reasons, some of which are beneficial and suggested that there may be students that do not start out as STEM majors, but decide after arriving at OU that they would like to major in STEM. He asked if there are there any programs to encourage non-STEM freshman to enter STEM and to help prepare them for the courses. Provost Mergler stated that she understands Prof. Burns' points, but that the greater concern is that OU's students are not comparing well to other "highly selective" schools in terms of graduating majors in STEM. Our entering freshman profile is similar to these schools; however, we are losing more of our STEM majors. Prof. Kornelson speculated that there might be specific majors such as Meteorology that attract many students who might not realize the level of scientific intensiveness in these majors.

Prof. Johnson asked if there are ways to develop a math and science intensive middle school here in Norman. Since OU is located here and could serve as a resource, could we not use that to develop the math and science skills of our local students? Dean Garn reminded the senators that the bond issue on tomorrow's ballot includes funding for a "freshman academy" and that the local school district is still in the process of developing what this "freshman academy" will include. Prof. Johnson said that the bond issue gives a significant amount of funding to the high schools, but it would be beneficial to focus on math and science skills earlier, at the middle school level.

Prof. O'Rear asked about the state's results on ACT tests. Dean Garn replied that the state average for all ACT takers is a 21 or 22. However, the ACT average for OU freshman is about 25. Dean Garn indicated that poverty complicates many issues within Oklahoma and that approximately 60% of Oklahoma students qualify for free or reduced lunch.

Prof. Terry asked Provost Mergler where the STEM freshman move to when they leave STEM, as he suspects that many of them come into Psychology. Provost Mergler noted that we want students to graduate, but she is concerned that we do not compare favorably in STEM to other schools. Prof. Burcham asked if Provost Mergler had any data on STEM majors at other schools that drop out of STEM. Provost Mergler said there are much data and many ways of analyzing it; there is even an annual conference on the topic. For her purposes, she looks at rough aggregates on STEM Freshman and in her experience; when we are "off" from our peers, there is a reason.

Prof. Irvine stated to Prof. Harper that she is very excited about the Concurrent Enrollment changes he mentioned, both in navigating the system and in keeping the fees down. However, she wonders what is offered for students that do not live in the Norman area. Prof. Harper stated that there is a lot of variety in the needs of the high schools within Oklahoma. For example, high schools in Norman and Edmond do not need access to college-level calculus, because they already offer AP calculus courses in their schools, but they want enrichment courses such as film and media. On the other hand, rural high schools that do not offer many AP courses do need access to college-level math and science courses. For high school students that are more distant from Norman, OU may be able to offer courses in an online format; the answer is variety.

Prof. Bergey asked if students might do Concurrent Enrollment in the summer. Prof. Harper stated that the Regents would reimburse it like any other semester. This is especially true for students between their junior and senior year. There were no additional questions. Prof O'Rear thanked everyone for speaking to the Senate.

SENATE CHAIR'S REPORT, by Prof. Edgar A. O'Rear, III

“Faculty Senate Chair Edgar O’Rear represented the Norman campus of the University of Oklahoma at the December 17 meeting of the OSRHE Faculty Advisory Council. The Faculty Advisory Council includes representatives from the research universities, regional colleges/comprehensive universities, community colleges, and also independent universities such as the University of Tulsa. Business centered on work plan topics for 2014 with a wide range of candidate issues. Five items emerging from this initial discussion included, briefly described, college student competence in key areas, improving success of transfer students, advisement and retention, faculty workload impact on academic efficiency, and current State Regents initiatives such as Complete College America and Online Education Task Force. At the January meeting of the same group on the 21st, use of MERLOT course materials at Oklahoma colleges and universities was encouraged. MERLOT stands for Multimedia Education Resource for Learning and Teaching and offers free instructional materials in electronic media for a wide range of subjects. The State Regents for Higher Education pay so that institutions of higher education in Oklahoma have free access. They would like to see greater use of MERLOT resources. Members of the Faculty Advisory Council also reviewed the work plan topics from the December meeting and spent additional time prioritizing and revising the topics.

“Members of the Faculty Senate Executive Committee who were in town the day after New Year’s Day met to discuss a proposal to higher administration for graduate student support. At the beginning of academic year 2013-14, the Executive Committee had identified graduate student support from a group of over 25 issues as being the foremost concern. Units understandably would like to have funds made available without any strings attached, but connecting a request to administrative goals was deemed more likely to be successful. From the discussion at this meeting, an idea evolved around fellowships for instructional enhancement. A proposal along with a short summary of talking points was prepared subsequently in anticipation of the next meeting with President Boren.

“On January 13, the Faculty Senate and the Office of the Senior Vice President and Provost hosted a reception for senators and members of OU’s higher administration. The purpose was to promote shared governance through one-on-one informal discussions on substantive issues. Turnout was good with over 80 people attending. Director of Women and Gender Studies and Faculty Senate Secretary Jill Irvine stated afterwards that she had set a goal of meeting five new administrators. Early responses favor continuing the event next year.

“The Dean’s Council meeting for January took place on the 15th of the month and began with an announcement that Angela Hawpe would be handling Nick Kelly’s responsibilities temporarily upon his retirement. Associate Provost and Director of Institutional Research and Reporting, Susannah Livingood, gave a demonstration of the new IRR website. The URL for the new website is <http://www.ou.edu/irr>. Several handouts were distributed including one on 2013 Funding Formula from the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education, one on a proposal for residential colleges, and a third on Weathernews, Inc. The material from the OSRHE consisted of slides from a December presentation summarizing findings of a Performance Funding Formula Task Force. Formulas from other states including Tennessee, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Hawaii had been examined with the recognition that the use of peer factors was outdated. The task force conducted twenty funding formula scenarios and assessed their fiscal impact on institutions. They listed eight formula performance measures: degrees and certificates conferred, first year retention, first year retention of

Pell students, 24 hours of college level credit in the first academic year, percent of the CCA (Complete College America) target reached, college completion plan, program accreditation, and graduation and Two-Year progression. The various measures carry different weight and the weighting changes with time.

“A proposal to create residential colleges at OU has been prepared. These housing systems provide an environment that creates stronger communities, identities, and tradition. They are based on models at the University of Oxford and the University of Cambridge in England and at Yale and Rice Universities in the United States. SMU recently adopted elements of the residential college system. Residential colleges would enhance the sense of community already at OU and help to set OU apart from peer institutions. Vice President for Enrollment and Student Financial Services & Registrar Matt Hamilton gave an update on applications. The new application process seems to be going well, though there are some issues with startup. His office is examining the effect on selectivity and yield. At Ohio State, the number of out-of-state applications went up and in-state went down. Analysis is complicated, since OU is somewhat isolated in this region among those using the common application. Dean Joe Harroz mentioned the new LLM degree program at the College of Law. The program is slightly ahead of expectations. Daniel Pullin, Vice President for Strategic Planning and Economic Development and Interim Dean of the Price College of Business, spoke enthusiastically about the launch of the Executive MBA in Energy. Members of the first class of 18 come largely from industry, typically with 8-12 years experience. The program is hybrid in nature with in-person and online components. Students receive a heavy dose of international business.

“At the Monday, February 3 meeting of the Faculty Senate Executive Committee, principal items on the agenda included examination of the Faculty Appeals Board Book of Procedural Guidelines, graduate student support, Flat Rate Tuition, and OU’s STEM Initiative. Kurt Ockershauser from the OU Office of Legal Counsel provided the Faculty Senate Executive Committee a copy of the Faculty Appeals Board Book of Procedural Guidelines with changes highlighted to facilitate further review. There was a general impression that the revision was clearer. No one raised substantive issues and only a few suggestions were made to improve clarity of the document. As noted previously, the Faculty Senate Executive Committee has been encouraging Higher Administration to improve graduate student support. One suggestion involves incorporating a solicitation in some future fundraising campaign to endow fellowships aimed at instructional enhancement. Strategy for the request was reviewed by the Executive Committee. Member-at-Large and College of Education Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies Lawrence Baines made the intriguing suggestion of fellows creating a think tank for pedagogical innovation. Vice President and Registrar Matt Hamilton and Associate Vice President of Enrollment and Student Financial Services Brad Burnett described the startup of the Flat Tuition program with comparison to experiences at the University of Florida, TCU, Texas A&M, and the University of Texas. OU avoided many of the problems encountered elsewhere through effective dissemination of information about the program, an exemption policy, and creation of scholarships for those working. The Faculty Senate Executive Committee had particular interest in the demands placed on faculty and the departments for summer school as a result of credit hour banking. Enrollment for summer school this year could be up 30%; however, it may take several years to know the real impact of flat tuition on summer school. Senior Vice President and Provost Nancy Mergler and Senior Associate Vice Provost Kyle Harper gave an overview of the STEM initiative. The comprehensive effort includes substantial outreach in K-12 by the College of Education and a number of departments in the Colleges of Engineering and Arts & Sciences. OU loses STEM students at a higher rate than other institutions although the cause is not clear. Women drop out at a higher rate than men do. Advising students not to give up on a major too soon may be one route to improve retention. The Executive Committee also discussed the recent scare with the report of possible gunshots and guns on campus as well as a policy by the Kansas Regents empowering state universities to fire faculty for comments on social media.

“Senior Vice President and Provost Nancy Mergler suggested giving OU graduate students background on shared governance from the faculty perspective. It is thought that some individuals

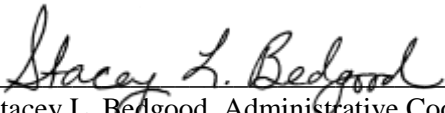
will benefit from this knowledge as they select institutions to pursue an academic career. On January 30, the Faculty Senate Chair made an overture to Graduate Student Senate Chair Jerry Overton to explore several options for this purpose. The level of interest will be assessed and a presentation and/or a series of informal discussions arranged.

“The Faculty Senate Executive Committee met with President David Boren and Vice President Nick Hathaway on Wednesday afternoon, February 5. Discussion began with the legislative outlook. As the Oklahoma Daily had noted that very morning, higher education in the state of Oklahoma was slated for a 5% cut. This clearly disappointed President Boren with the challenge of also absorbing increases of about \$4 million in fixed costs and with the prospects for a raise program dimming. He noted that the Oklahoma economy is fine, but we have created a hole through revenue reduction. Higher education had saved \$450 million, a point highlighted in the Governor’s State of the State address, and yet we still received a large cut in budget. Tuition would have to be increased 6 to 9% as well as reducing funds to units to make up for all the losses. Very cold weather and increased demand for natural gas may help to increase revenue projection by the Oklahoma State Board of Equalization and thereby mitigate the size of the budget cut. The President may send a signal to the colleges and departments that a reallocation could be forthcoming. At present, the only signal is “don’t hire anyone right now that you do not absolutely need”. A question was asked about the resignation of T. W. Shannon. President Boren gave his thoughts on possible successors for Speaker of the House and noted that Rep. Scott Martin of Norman would likely remain as chair of the Appropriations Committee. That could place him in line to become Speaker in the future. The subject switched to guns on campus and the recent report of shots fired on campus, subsequently deemed not to be a shooter or gun. After-action analysis was continuing with some issues related to emails and texting. Over 4,000 people have updated their contact information. Everyone responded well with OU Police, S.W.A.T. teams and emergency personnel arriving in minutes. Some members of the University community did not understand what “shelter in place” meant. Norman Police were also doing a retrospective including recognition that some officers had not known where Gould Hall was on campus. President Boren added that there were several bills in the legislature the next day and that a survey of a large group of OU students had been 10 to 1 against allowing guns on campus. With the topic of safety, the President brought up the issue of tornados and ongoing assessment of buildings. Also under consideration is a shelter near the dorms on campus. Chris Ramseyer, attending on behalf of the Faculty Welfare Committee, suggested that an above-ground shelter might be a better option than one underground, since the above ground shelter could withstand an F5 tornado and function well with dual use as a meeting place. Lastly, the Faculty Senate Executive Committee asked President Boren to consider graduate student fellowships as part of fundraising initiatives. GTA budgets have suffered with multiple years of cuts. Ed O’Rear described how the fellowships might be used in a decentralized approach to improving retention and graduation rates. Much of OU’s investment has rightly been focused in University College and lower division courses, but this does not meet the needs of all students. The challenge of further improvement in graduation rates will only grow, as more marginal students require greater attention in meeting their academic needs. The role that graduate TAs can play in helping students understand complex concepts is often overlooked. President Boren was receptive to the idea while also noting that most donors relate better to undergraduates.

“Lastly, Chair-Elect Randy Hewes and Chair Ed O’Rear attended a webinar on “Effective Faculty Governance” hosted by Senior Vice President and Provost Nancy Mergler on February 6. Larry Gerber, Professor Emeritus of History at Auburn University and Former Chair of the AAUP Committee on College and University Governance made the presentation. The talk broke down to four sections titled: Current Challenges to Higher Education; Reasons for Development of Faculty Governance; Traits of Effective Senates; and Future Challenges to Faculty Governance. The established structure and procedures of the University of Oklahoma Faculty Senate compared favorably with the description of effective senates given by Dr. Gerber.”

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 5:36 p.m. The next regular session of the Faculty Senate will be held at 3:30 p.m. on Monday, March 10, 2014, in Jacobson Faculty Hall, Room 102.



Stacey L. Bedgood, Administrative Coordinator



Jill Irvine, Faculty Senate Secretary