**SOUTHERN METHODIST UNIVERSITY**

**Faculty Senate Meeting**

**Wednesday, Feb. 15, 2017 – 3:10 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.**

**Hughes-Trigg Ballroom West**

**Present: Present:** \*Sabri Ates; Richard Barr; \*Amit Basu; Neil Bhattacharya; Rhonda Blair; Michael Braun; Rajat Deb; Dennis Foster; Sean Griffin; Michael Hawn; Grant Hayden; LiGuo Huang; Susanne Johnson; Leanne Ketterlin-Geller; Tom Knock; Elfi Kraka; \*Paul Krueger; Choon Lee; Matt Lockard; Luigi Manzetti; Cheryl Mendenhall; Pavel Nadolsky; \*Abigail “Abby” Pruitt; Dan Reynolds; Elizabeth Russ; Susanne Solera Adoboe; \*Jeanne Stevenson-Moessner, presiding; \*Joshua Tate; \*Pia Vogel; Matt Wilson

**Absent:** Adriana Aceves; Karen Baker-Fletcher; Alan Brown; Daniel Buraczeski; Betty Gilmore; Kevin Hanlon; Francesca Jones; John Lamoreaux; Tamara Lewis; Jody Magliolo; Andrew Quicksall; \*Thomas Ritz; Tim Rosendale; Meghan Ryan; Canan Savaskan-Ebert; Heather Stobaugh; Halit Uster; Steve Weisenburger

**Ex Officio:**

**Visitors:** Nathan Balke; Robert Howell; Doug Reinelt; Claudia Sotomayor

1. The meeting was called to order by President Jeanne Stevenson-Moessner at 3:12 PM.

2. The minutes of the Senate meeting on Feb. 1, 2017 were approved. Minutes of the Executive Committee meeting on Jan. 18, 2017 were reviewed.

3. President Stevenson-Moessner updated the Faculty Senate regarding developments since the last meeting. The resolution we adopted regarding the libraries has been distributed to the Operational Excellence Committee and will be distributed to the Academic Policies Committee of the Board of Trustees at their next meeting. Dean Gillian McCombs thanked the Faculty Senate for the library resolution at a meeting with donors and friends of the libraries. The resolution in memory of Dr. Pamela Anthony was sent to her family and will be distributed to the Board of Trustees. President Stevenson-Moessner met with President Turner, and continued to push for faculty salaries to be kept competitive with our aspirant institutions.

President Stevenson-Moessner discussed the possible options with regard to a gift in memory of Dr. Anthony. One option would be to donate a tree, which would involve a $2,500 one-time investment from the Faculty Senate matched by an equal gift from the Student Senate. A motion was made to table the discussion of a possible gift in memory of Dr. Anthony. The motion passed.

4. Professor Nathan Balke reported on behalf of the All-University Finance Committee. The Committee met with Vice President Chris Regis and Associate Vice President Ernie Barry to discuss the financial situation of the University. Director of Institutional Research Mike Tumeo provided information as well. Each year, the plan is to have a balanced budget, but for the past three years there has been a surplus. Net tuition is around 60% of total revenue, and endowment distribution is around 14%, while gifts to the operating budget account for 8-10%. Compensation is around 60% of total expenses. Undergraduate enrollments show steady increases, while the graduate enrollments are flat. Growth in the number of full-time faculty is leveling off, and there is a continued decline in the number of full-time staff. Tuition revenue growth is slowing.

Total compensation fell significantly in FY 2016, largely due to a smaller number of staff. Total faculty salary growth has averaged 5.4% over the last 10 years, while total net tuition growth (after scholarships) has averaged 5.5% over the same period. SMU salary growth has been competitive with other doctoral institutions. The budget deficit in athletics is likely to remain for the foreseeable future. The budgeted deficits are around $10 million at least in the near future.

The administration sees the cost growing faster than the revenue. However, the situation may not be as bad as it seems. The administration has probably understated revenue growth. Budgeters tend to be conservative, since it is better to have a positive budget surprise than a negative one. In addition, the University can make changes to address budget concerns. Finding additional efficiencies is not likely to yield substantial cost savings, because the low-hanging fruit has been picked.

Professor Balke commented on budget efficiencies that may not be true efficiencies. For example, gains could be due to faculty taking on “shadow work.” He predicted that the raise pool policy will put a strain on recruitment and retention. He believes that the SMU administration is aware of competitive issues, and encouraged faculty to be proactive in monitoring recruitment and retention costs and gathering data on “market” salaries in each discipline. SMU is very expensive compared to cohort universities, which causes pressure to reduce tuition growth. Professor Balke thinks that SMU should explore using the endowment to address budget constraints, using additional resources to “grow” the university.

Professor Balke noted that there is a significant amount of unused funds within the restricted endowment. In FY 2016, unused restricted endowment distributions totaled approximately $3.5M. Accumulated unused endowment distributions total $54M. Finance and Development recently sent a letter to the Deans listing endowments with large fund balances and requesting a plan to utilize these resources. SMU could ask the original donors to change restrictions, or apply to State Attorney General to get the terms of an endowment changed.

President Stevenson-Moessner thanked Professor Balke for his presentation.

5. Claudia Sotomayor of International Student & Scholar Services spoke to the Senate regarding the work of her office and the impact of President Trump’s recent travel ban executive order. SMU currently has 49 students from the seven affected countries (Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Syria, Sudan and Yemen), with the largest number being from Iran. At present, Ms. Sotomayor’s office is advising students from the affected countries not to leave the U.S. until questions surrounding the travel ban have been resolved. If faculty have any questions regarding the hiring of international students, faculty, or research scholars, we should feel free to contact Ms. Sotomayor.

6. Professor Robert Howell reported on behalf of the Academic Policies Committee. He presented three proposed resolutions for consideration by the Faculty Senate. The first proposed resolution involved the introduction of pass/fail “gateway courses.” After discussion, the following resolution was adopted by voice vote with one abstention:

*Resolution to Introduce Pass/Fail “Gateway Courses”*

Whereas SMU students can currently only take courses as pass/fail that do not count for majors, minors, or elements of the core curriculum; and

Whereas this restriction essentially makes the pass/fail policy otiose; and

Whereas, students benefit from experimenting in areas without fear that it will negatively affect their GPA; and

Whereas a liberalized pass/fail policy would be likely to increase students’ exposure to areas and disciplines they were not familiar with before coming to SMU; and

Whereas departments are best positioned to decide which courses they offer, if any, are appropriate to be taken pass/fail; therefore let it be

Resolved that the Faculty Senate of SMU recommends a revision of the pass/fail policy for undergraduates so that:

1. departments can choose up to two “gateway” courses that can be taken for pass/fail while still counting for major/minor and general education requirements; and
2. Students cannot take more than one such gateway course per semester; and
3. Gateway courses must be approved as such by the CGE.

The second resolution involved elections to the Educational Programs Committee and the Council for General Education. After discussion and amendment, the following resolution was unanimously adopted:

*Resolution on Elections to the EPC and CGE*

Whereas faculty involvement is essential to a well managed curriculum; and

Whereas the Educational Programs Committee and the Council for General Education play crucial roles in managing the curriculum of SMU; and

Whereas a democratic process of electing faculty to those committees will help ensure faculty involvement and will provide a clear path for interested faculty to have a chance to serve on those committees; therefore let it be

Resolved that each school at SMU with representation on the EPC and CGE will hold elections to determine which representatives from that school will serve on those committees.

The third resolution involved the repeat policy for first-year undergraduate students. After discussion and amendment, the following resolution was approved by a vote of 26 to 2 with one abstention:

*Resolution on Revising the Repeat Policy for First-Year Undergraduate Students*

Whereas SMU is committed to giving its students opportunities to succeed; and

Whereas it is more important that students eventually succeed than that they never fail; and

Whereas many of SMU’s “aspirational” schools have more accommodating repeat policies than SMU does; and

Whereas many students who are admitted to SMU are nonetheless unprepared for the rigor of parts of SMU’s curriculum; and

Whereas SMU welcomes transfer students from community colleges and other universities; and

Whereas successful completion of SMUs curriculum requires skills that are often not imparted by community colleges and high schools; and

Whereas the current repeat policy excludes transfer students and is limited to a repeat of courses taken in the first-year; and

Whereas it is often the case that students realize that they lack important background and skills in advanced classes taken after their first year; and

Whereas it is not unusual for personal circumstances to result in poor performance in classes that is not representative of a student’s quality or career; therefore let it be

Resolved, that the first year repeat policy in which a student can repeat a course for a replacement grade be liberalized, so as to

1. Increase the number of classes that can be repeated for a replacement grade from 3 to 6;
2. Allow classes to be repeated during any year a student is enrolled at SMU, rather than just in the first year;
3. Allow transfer students to take advantage of the repeat policy.

7. President Stevenson-Moessner made some announcements regarding upcoming events.

8. The meeting was adjourned at 5:02 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Joshua Tate