

SOUTHERN METHODIST UNIVERSITY
Faculty Senate Meeting
Wednesday, Mar. 1, 2017 – 3:10 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Hughes-Trigg Ballroom West

Present: Adriana Aceves, *Sabri Ates, Karen Baker-Fletcher, Dick Barr, Neil Bhattacharya, Rhonda Blair, Michael Braun, Rajat Deb, Dennis Foster, Sean Griffin, Michael Hawn, Grant Hayden, LiGuo Huang, Susanne Johnson, Leanne Ketterlin-Geller, Elfi Kraka, *Paul Krueger, John Lamoreaux, Choon Lee, Matt Lockard, Luigi Manzetti, Cheryl Mendenhall, *Brian Molanphy, *Abigail “Abby” Pruitt, *Thomas Ritz, Tim Rosendale, Elizabeth Russ, Meghan Ryan, Canan Sabvaskan-Ebert, Susanne Scholz, Susana Solera Adoboe, *Jeanne Stevenson-Moessner, presiding, *Joshua Tate, Halit Uster, *Pia Vogel, Matthew Wilson

Absent: *Amit Basu, Alan Brown, Daniel Buraczeski, Betty Gilmore, Kevin Hanlon, Francesca Jones, Tom Knock, Tamara Lewis, Jody Magliolo, Andrew Quicksall, Dan Reynolds, Heather Stobaugh, Steve Weisenburger

Ex Officio: President R. Gerald Turner

Visitors: Tom Coan, Darryl Dickson-Carr, Kathleen Tibbetts, Doug Reinelt

1. The meeting was called to order by President Jeanne Stevenson-Moessner at 3:10 PM.
2. The minutes of the Senate meeting on Feb. 15, 2017 were approved. Minutes of the Executive Committee meeting on Feb. 8, 2017 were reviewed.
3. President Stevenson-Moessner reminded the Faculty Senate of the upcoming elections for President-Elect and at-large Senate candidates. She then updated the Senate on possible options to honor Dr. Anthony. It might be possible to donate money for a paver on the Laura Bush Promenade, either on our own or in collaboration with the Student Senate. A motion was made to donate \$250 toward the purchase of a paver. The motion passed.

President Stevenson-Moessner noted that the Faculty Senate has the right and responsibility under the University Bylaws to speak by resolution through the President to the Board of Trustees. She was able to present our recent resolution on libraries at the last meeting of the Academic Affairs Committee, and also to the full Board of Trustees. The resolution for Dr. Anthony was also included in the book for the Board of Trustees. We have a responsibility to ensure that our resolutions are presented to the trustees.

The Executive Committee decided at our last meeting that it would be advisable to appoint an ad hoc committee on non-tenure-line faculty. The Provost is on board with this and is very interested in what the committee has to say. Provost Steve and Mrs. Cheyenne Currall will be inviting members of the Senate to dinner at the Arboretum on Tuesday, April 18. We are each invited to bring a guest. The next meeting of the Senate will be on April 5.

4. Professor Tom Coan reported to the Senate on behalf of the Subcommittee on the Economic Status of the Faculty. He began by thanking the other members of the committee as well as Michael Tumeo and Vinay Ramachandra from the Office of Institutional Research. Salary data is not collected for the benefit of the Faculty Senate. There are gaps in the data (such as missing standard deviations), and there is limited granularity (e.g., no data by department). The data reflect means, not medians. There are two possible inflation benchmarks: DFW CPI-U (which is +2.4% for all items) and the PCE annual inflation rate (+1.6%). Averaging the two results in an inflation rate of about 2%. Professor Coan has gathered data on full-time instructional faculty salary raises, including data sliced by gender and with and without promotions. Our salaries have been compared to various other groups, but the comparisons are problematic. We also have data from our IRS Form 990 about certainly highly compensated and/or key employees.

The distribution of salary raises, including promotions, shows a big spike at 2%, reflecting the fact that the mean salary raise was 2%. There is a long high-side tail and a short low-side tail. Many of the comparisons made are “apples to tomatoes.” Mean salaries include former administrators, and comparisons are often made against the Colonial Group, which is not the same as our peer or aspirational groups. It’s not at all clear what the comparison actually means. The graphs for male and female faculty are similar in shape. Comparisons between schools within each rank show that salaries tend to increase with years in rank in some schools, but not in others. Comparing salaries of instructional faculty by school to universities in the Colonial Group suggests that we are doing better in some schools than in others, but there are many problems with the comparison to those schools.

From 2011 to 2015, the salaries of nine top administrators on the Form 990 (excluding President Turner, whose salary varies significantly from year to year) have received an effective annualized raise of 6.1%. Professor Coan is not sure why these salaries have increased at this rate. It would be interesting to compare that to other universities. The salaries of top-level administrators are determined by the Board of Trustees. The President’s Commission on the Status of Women gets more detailed salary information to monitor issues of gender pay equity.

President Stevenson-Moessner thanked Professor Coan for his report. Senators discussed whether the Subcommittee on the Economic Status of the Faculty might be given access to more granular salary data to resolve some of the ambiguities identified by Professor Coan. The Senate also discussed how the lists of aspirational and cohort peer universities need to be brought up to date to reflect the University’s improvement in recent years.

5. President Stevenson-Moessner provided more biographical information on some of the new members of the Senate who were introduced briefly last month. She updated the Senate regarding discussions with the Provost on aid to graduate students.

6. President Turner addressed the Faculty Senate. He explained that he had been provided in advance with three questions, which he would address in turn. The first question asked what are the specific ambitions of the administration regarding the balance of faculty ranks (full, associate, assistant, full-time non-tenure, & adjunct), first for the greatest efficiency and excellence in teaching and research, and second for improving our standing compared to peer and aspirant institutions. President Turner responded that, since federal legislation began to protect against age discrimination, the scale has increasingly tipped toward more senior faculty. Like most schools, we have a significant number of faculty at the senior level, and we tend to replace them with more junior faculty. Some schools, such as the law school, include very distinguished professionals as adjuncts. There is not an absolute number of any one group that we look to maintain. If a particular department is strongly weighted toward more senior faculty, often decisions are made to bring in an entry-level assistant professor. We have added close to 120 tenure-track faculty since 2000, while the student body has roughly stayed the same. Thus, the size of the student body hasn't changed, while the faculty has. If you look at the original fraction used to calculate the Stella Porter Russell grant, you can see that number has increased year by year.

The second advance question for President Turner asked how, as an integral part of the governance structure of the University, the Senate could become more involved in key strategic and planning discussions with the Board of Trustees as they set priorities for the University. President Turner noted that the structure of the University in the Bylaws allows more participation at the Board of Trustees level by both faculty and students than is the case for many other universities. However, the Board holds the President responsible for the University as the person through whom the faculty and students relate to the Board of Trustees. The Board does not make policy; the Board approves policy. The Strategic Plan is prepared by the administration and approved by the Board. The faculty has unusual access to the Board of Trustees, and the Board considers the faculty's input. The Board takes quite a bit of pride in the fact that they don't micromanage the institution.

The last question provided in advance to President Turner asked him to comment on how much money in the restricted portion is not spent, and how can that be more effectively deployed. He responded that, because of all the difficulties with regard to revenue that we have discussed, the Provost and Vice President Chris Regis have gone through the various restricted funds very carefully, and have sought to ensure that the maximum amount of that funding that can be spent is being spent. We don't want to spend the funds recklessly, and it has to be done in accordance with the restrictions. However, the Provost and Vice President Regis are meeting with each of the Deans to go over the specific restricted funds to determine how they might be utilized. If it is impossible to use the funds as they were originally intended to be used, the Attorney General can be asked to modify the restrictions under Texas law, but the University must be very careful in choosing when to make such requests.

Professor Matt Wilson asked if the administration has considered increasing the spending from the unrestricted endowment. President Turner responded that the investment committee does not plan to spend more from the endowment. There is a longstanding but very serious debate about the responsibility of the University to use endowments for the present rather than preserve the funds for the future. Individuals who give to the endowment typically do so with the expectation that they will benefit the University in perpetuity. Since the recession, it has been very hard for university endowments to meet their goals for earnings. Our goal is to earn nine percent, and that has been the standard for many years. However, if you have a balanced portfolio, some of your investments will be in bonds with a relatively low yield. A lot of schools have gone to a goal of seven-and-one-half percent, but inflation must also be taken into account.

Professor Susanne Scholz noted that President Turner's recently reported compensation is quite high relative to the salaries of other university presidents. She asked why, in light of the budget cuts resulting from OE2C and other financial difficulties, President Turner accepted this level of compensation. He responded that he does not consider the University to be in financial straits, and OE2C was designed to create efficiencies. The Board of Trustees felt strongly that President Turner should accept the compensation that he received at that time.

Professor Rhonda Blair asked President Turner to consider a more systematic gathering of data about the impact of OE2C, including displaced labor and "shadow work." He responded that the ongoing review of the effects of OE2C is gathering such data, and that the website is kept up to date with relevant information. By the fall, the University will be announcing some new expenditures to use OE2C savings in furtherance of the University's academic mission.

President Stevenson-Moessner thanked President Turner for his report.

7. The meeting was adjourned at 5:04 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Joshua Tate