**SOUTHERN METHODIST UNIVERSITY**

**Faculty Senate**

**Executive Committee Meeting**

**Friday, July 19, 2013**

**237 Dedman Life Sciences Building**

**Present:** Santanu Roy, presiding; Steve Edwards; Michael Harris; Joshua Tate; Wei Tong; Steven Vik

**Absent:** Robert Howell; Jody Magliolo; Jeanne Stevenson-Moessner

**Guests:** Tom Fomby

1. The meeting was called to order at 10:02 PM by President Roy .

2. The minutes of the Executive Committee meeting on May 15, 2013 were approved. Schedules of the Executive Committee and Senate meetings in the coming year, and the tentative list of Senate Committee members were distributed.

3. Almost all members and chairs of the standing committees of the Senate have been selected. All of the chairs have been identified, and only a few of the committees lack proper representation from all schools. Additional charges can still be added to the regular charges of any committee. The rosters and charges will be voted on this Fall. The liaisons from the Executive Committee to each of the Senate Committees will be asked to make sure that the committees meet regularly.

4. President Roy reported that he met with Athletic Director Rick Hart, along with Dennis Foster, Chair of the Athletic Policies Committee and Paul Rogers of the Athletics Council. The issue regarding the tennis players was resolved with the students being allowed to continue with their scholarships. A lack of due process was acknowledged. A concern is how to prevent such situations in the future. It would be desirable if students were aware that any faculty member might help them resolve such issues. An ombudsman might be especially helpful, but it is not clear how to set up such a position. Rick Hart will come to hear about such concerns, and other issues at a Faculty Senate meeting this Fall.

5. President Roy reported that he met with Jeff Strese, Director of Human Resources, as did Ed Countryman, Chair of the Subcommittee on Faculty Benefits. This year there will be only a small increase in premiums. There will be a change in the prescription plan, as managed by Compass. He will come to a Senate meeting this Fall.

Human Resources no longer manages the retirement plans. Questions about retirement plans should be addressed to Diversified representatives. To clarify this situation, the Senate will invite Vice-President Bill Detwiler or Chris Regis to a Senate meeting this Fall. Hidden fees are a concern, as is the possibility that Transamerica products will be promoted in our retirement options.

6. A focus this Fall will be on doctoral programs. Dedman College Dean Bill Tsutsui will attend the first Senate meeting. Deans of the other schools, including Jim Quick, Associate Vice-President for Research and Dean of Graduate Studies, will be invited to later meetings. The central question is how to fund doctoral programs.

7. President Roy read from a letter he received from Provost Paul Ludden regarding the new offering of online courses, and the faculty advisory group he has set up, co-chaired by Beth Thornburg and Paige Ware. It appears that this should have been done in advance of offering the courses, since according to University by-laws the faculty should have sole control over the curriculum. These courses currently exist as free electives. Departments can consider whether individual courses will satisfy departmental requirements. This is similar to the approval of courses for transfer credit, or for study abroad. Some courses have already been examined by individual departments. Some are similar to available courses, but have not been approved for departmental requirements. Others have no equivalents among existing SMU courses. There are questions about how the course content will be delivered. In the short term, it is not clear that many students will be interested in these courses, but in the long term, such a system might undermine the strength of the faculty, if positions are eliminated due to substantial offerings of online courses from elsewhere.

It was suggested that the Senate set up an independent committee to monitor online courses. It could include a mechanism to review the online courses in advance. It might be desirable to require that each course be accepted by at least one department. We will ask the Provost’s advisory group to meet with the Executive Committee first, and then with the Senate. One concern will be the nature of any future contracts, when the current one runs out. A resolution should be considered that asserts the right of the faculty to control the curriculum.

8. Other business: A brief discussion was held concerning the slow progress in establishing Ways of Knowing courses for the new curriculum. The main problem being that departments cannot spare faculty to develop new courses, if they must give up teaching departmental courses.

President Roy also announced that Associate Provost Linda Eads will fund a student to keep the Senate website up-to-date.

9. The meeting was adjourned at 11:30 AM.