

Dedman College Faculty Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, December 9, 2009
3:00-5:00 p.m.

Reception: (3:00-3:15 p.m.)

Staff Recognition Awards: After opening the meeting, Dean Moore presented a Three Year Service award to Jennifer Smith.

Additional Items Added to the Agenda: Dean Moore's motion to add two items to the agenda--one on the budget and the other on Medical Leaves---was approved.

Budget: Dean Moore indicated that the Board of Trustees had met and approved a budget for next year. In light of endowment losses, Dedman College is being asked to cover some of the endowment-related distribution losses. Non-academic units must make 2% cuts. In response to this budgetary shortfall, the goal of admitting 1400 students in the fall has been set. Dean Moore indicated that we might not be able to meet that goal (given the fact that we did not meet our enrollment goal for this year). Dean Moore also told the meeting that the Board approved a tuition increase of 5.9% for next year. The Dean said that the Board is in the process of considering 6% increases in intuition for each of the two years following next year. The Board set a 1.5% raise pool for the coming year. Dennis Foster asked if we would return to a 3% raise pool in subsequent years. The Dean said that the President would like to return to a 3% raise pool in subsequent years. The Dean also pointed out that the higher-than-expected costs for health care at SMU last year led to higher costs to SMU employees for medical insurance.

Medical Leave: The Dean discussed efforts to bridge a gap between policies covering medical leaves up to 12 weeks and the University's Long Term Disability program. The gap between these two programs has been addressed informally at the University-level. The University will now require that after one year of medical leave an employee who remains on medical leave must go on the Long Term Disability program. Furthermore, responsibility of handling the gap between the 12-week program and the Long Term Disability program will devolve to the schools/college. Dean Moore indicated two-step process for dealing with such "gaps" that might arise in the College: (1) the relevant Department will try to cover the absence with its own resources, and (2) in the event the Department's resources are insufficient, the College will attempt to guarantee the salary and benefits of the individuals on medical leave. The issue of whether or not a faculty member could return to his/her original position after a medical leave of more than one year was also discussed. There is currently no set policy on this issue. Dean Moore indicated that the deans at SMU prefer some flexibility in this area. Dean Moore intends to make the College policy in these matters a bit more precise sometime this year.

Gambrell Motion: The Gambrell Motion as well as the list of December graduates was posted. The faculty seconded the motion and accepted it by acclamation.

Approval of the Minutes: The draft minutes of the September 30, 2009, Dedman College Faculty meeting were approved as were the draft minutes of the November 11, 2009, Dedman College Faculty meeting.

Development Motion: Dean Moore reported on the results of the Development Motion that passed in the Fall 2009 meeting of the Dedman Faculty. The College will not receive additional help at this time in its Development efforts because of the budgetary situation of the University.

E-Portfolio Motion: The previously tabled Motion to recommend that E-Portfolios be made optional only in a new curriculum was put up for vote by the Dean. The Motion received 22 votes in favor and none against. There were 7 abstentions. Prior to voting, there was a discussion in which concerns about the cost, the effectiveness and the precise nature of an E-Portfolio program were raised. Dennis Cordell suggested that upper classmen might be able to help with the implementation of this program. Professor Adams suggested that program should be optional given that a mandatory program might be too costly. There was some discussion as to what "optional" might mean in this context with no clear indication of how to further specify how an optional E-portfolio program should be constructed. Dennis Cordell suggested that an E-Portfolio program should be phased in if it is adopted. Some faculty expressed doubts about the academic value of E-portfolios. Jasper Neel expressed the worry that we did not currently have enough information to evaluate the Motion. The Dean said that links to similar programs in other institutions had been emailed sometime earlier to the faculty.

Approval of Faculty Slate: The proposed slate for the Faculty Senate election was posted and approved. Alan Brown issued a call for nominations for Division 2. Dennis Foster was designated as a candidate for at-large Senator for Division 1 and Thomas Ritz was given the same designation for Division 2.

Grades and Graduation: Randy Phillips indicated that beginning this semester his office would be more involved in encouraging faculty to submit grades in a timely fashion, especially the grades of graduating seniors.

Digital Measures: Randy Phillips announced that a new web-based, menu-driven system for submitting yearly activity reports should be ready for use before the February 1, 2010, deadline for the submission of these reports.

Space: The Dean asked for email feedback on faculty willingness to teach at 8am, MWF 4-5 and TTH 3:30-5 in the fall of 2010 and beyond. He pointed out that shifting some classes to those time slots might make it possible to provide more adequate office space for faculty, including lectures and adjuncts.

Early Spring Events: The Dean announced that Simon Conway Morris would be speaking on January 28, 2010, at SMU as part of the University's series on Darwin. The Dean also announced that there would be 2 lectures on reductionism given by Jessica Wilson of the Philosophy Department of the University of Toronto on January 20/21 with a panel discussion of Reductionism on January 21, 2010. The Dean Office will provide 10 dollars dinner certificates (for dinner with faculty from other departments with some discussion of reductionism over dinner) for any faculty (up to the first 100) who attend the panel discussion.

Next Meeting: The next general meeting of the Dedman College Faculty will be on April 28, 2010.

As no other business was raised, a motion to adjourn was made, seconded, and passed.

Meeting Adjourned at 4:15 p.m.