

## **Faculty Address – General Faculty Meeting (August 26, 2015) – Douglas Reinelt**

President Turner, Provost ad interim Stanley, and members of the faculty, it is an honor to serve as the President of the Faculty Senate for the coming academic year.

Before beginning my remarks, I would like to introduce the Executive Committee for the 2015-16 academic year: Jody Magliolo, (Past President – Cox School of Business), Jeanne Stevenson-Moessner (President-Elect – Perkins School of Theology), Josh Tate (Secretary – Dedman School of Law), Jennifer Dworak (Lyle School of Engineering), Buck Hampson (Division II of Dedman College), Robert Howell (Division I of Dedman College), Debora Hunter (Meadows School of the Arts), and Leanne Ketterlin Geller (Simmons School of Education and Human Development). Thank you all on behalf of the faculty for your service.

Past President Magliolo has written a report outlining many of the activities of the Faculty Senate during the last academic year that is included in your booklet. I will only discuss one of those issues here today.

As outlined in Jody's report, the Faculty Senate Ethics and Tenure Committee embarked on a lengthy, ambitious (and very important) agenda relating to the promotion and tenure process. This report examined policies at SMU in light of AAUP and SACS standards and gathered extensive input from associate deans and department chairs. This three-year process culminated with a list of recommendations that Professor Hawn, chair of that committee, presented to the Faculty Senate in May 2015.

During the summer, Prof. Hawn and representatives from the Faculty Senate Executive Committee met with Associate Provost Eads to review and prioritize these recommendations. There are four that we suggest should be implemented during this coming academic year. I have met with the deans individually and Prof. Hawn has met with them collectively at the Provost's Retreat to discuss these recommendations.

1. For the benefit of pre-tenured faculty, Dean's Advisory Committee, and Provost's Advisory Committee, the Faculty Senate recommends that the Deans assure that criteria for "outstanding (substantial achievement)" and "high quality" in research and teaching be developed by each department and/or school and that this document be included in each dossier.
2. As mentoring plays a significant role in nurturing pre-tenured faculty, the Faculty Senate recommends that each school, college, or department develop an explicit mentoring policy.
3. The Faculty Senate recommends that each school provide a clear outline of the documents that are required for the Promotion and Tenure dossier and number them in the order that they will appear in the dossier. This document also helps pre-tenured faculty better understand the process.

4. The Faculty Senate recommends that peer (faculty) evaluations of teaching be included in each dossier and that schools balance the weight of teaching evaluations between student and peer evaluations of pre-tenured faculty.

We are optimistic that there will be substantial progress on implementing these recommendations this year.

As you know, the Faculty Senate Executive Committee also conducted an informal four question survey this summer concerning OE2C (Operational Excellence for the Second Century) that was sent to all faculty. The questions were

1. In what ways have some of the OE2C changes in travel, procurement, and contracts had a positive impact on your ability to do your job well?
2. In what ways have some of the early initiatives had a negative impact on you?
3. What concerns you most about future OE2C initiatives in the areas of finance, information technology, and facilities?
4. SMU has promised that most of the savings from OE2C initiatives will be used to improve academics. What areas would you like SMU to target with these new resources?

We received quite a few responses even though the request was sent out in the middle of the summer. We thank those of you that responded. Your thoughtful answers were helpful. In addition, there have been many conversations about OE2C issues that have occurred over the summer between faculty members and groups of faculty members (both within schools and across school lines).

Based on your responses to the survey and these faculty conversations, it is clear that there is considerable concern and anxiety among the faculty about how OE2C changes will impact the academic mission of the university. Some of these concerns are the shift of staff responsibilities on to faculty, a fear that the new procedures will severely constrain the ability of faculty members to directly manage and utilize research funds, lack of flexibility for those traveling to remote places to do fieldwork, arbitrary reduction of staff head count without being sufficiently cognizant of their impact, and the use of shared printers in clinics that require confidentiality. Other concerns relate to process such as lack of communication and consultation with department chairs, little or no faculty involvement on key committees, and a general lack of transparency about the purpose of and expected gains from these changes.

Before discussing some of the initiatives and issues in more detail, I thought it would be useful to examine the perspective of Bain & Company (the company that SMU hired to help us bring about OE2C changes). If you go to the Bain & Company website and search the words “higher education,” the primary Bain article that you will find is titled “The financially sustainable university.” It was written by Jeff Denneen and Tom Dretler in 2012. Jeff is the leader of Bain’s Higher Education practice and a partner in the Atlanta office.

The article starts off by stating “Few industries in the United States have achieved unquestioned global leadership as consistently and effectively as our higher education system. US colleges

and universities are the cornerstone of our economic prosperity and the key to realizing the American dream.”

A few sentences later, the authors add “Despite this success, ... annual tuition increases several times the rate of inflation have become commonplace. The volume of student loan debt has surpassed \$1 trillion and is now greater than credit card debt. Most college and university presidents, as well as their boards, executive teams and faculty members, are well aware that a host of factors have made innovation and change necessary.”

Most of us realize that the large tuition increases in recent years at many U.S. universities are not sustainable (SMU has scaled back those increases in the last few years). We also understand that asking parents or students to take on more and more student loan debt to support these increases is also not the right thing to do and will only make a college education less affordable for many young people. I give credit to the administration and the Board of Trustees for their willingness to tackle this difficult issue.

During this same period of rapid tuition growth, the authors discuss how support and administration costs have grown faster than the cost of instruction on most campuses. As many of you know, shifting resources from support and administration to instruction has been one of the administration’s selling points to the faculty of SMU’s OE2C effort.

Given that change is going to happen, I was most interested in learning the authors’ perspective on how to successfully bring about that change at a university especially in light of frequent faculty complaints that Bain is treating SMU more like a corporation than a university. Under the section heading “*Leading the change necessary to be successful*”, the leader of Bain’s Higher Education practice and his coauthor state the following: “Creating change on campus is harder than creating change in a corporate setting. In the corporate ecosystem, power resides largely with the executive team and cascades down. In academia, power usually emanates from the faculty and works its way toward the central administration. The concept of shared governance, combined with academic autonomy and tenure, leads to an organization where broad change cannot be mandated. Instead, change on a large scale can only be achieved by working with faculty to build a compelling case and a clear path forward – one that supports the mission of the institution, but copes effectively with fiscal constraints.”

I do not think that many of us in this room would view the description in the Bain article about how to successfully bring about change at a university as an accurate description for how OE2C changes have been made at SMU. Most of the initiatives have had limited faculty involvement and there is no faculty member on the four person OE2C Executive Committee that makes the final decisions. I agree with Jeff Denneen at Bain that change on a large scale at a university can only be achieved *successfully* by working with faculty to build a compelling case and a clear path forward. I am sure that many of you would also agree with his perspective.

The Information Technology Initiative is one of the few initiatives that did have significant faculty involvement particularly on the academic computing side of this initiative. A critical component of this group’s recommendations was the establishment of councils to advise and play a significant role in IT decisions. The Academic Technology Council will be responsible

for monitoring the academic computing needs of the campus and the IT Leadership Council will have a broader campus wide role. There will be a faculty member from each school and the Faculty Senate on the Academic Technology Council. These councils plan to meet for the first time in October.

It is vital that faculty be willing to serve on the Academic Technology Council as there are still many critical IT decisions related to OE2C that have not been made. Some of the questions that have not been answered are: How many devices can faculty members purchase with SMU funds? What are the standard configurations that will be offered to faculty? What kind of flexibility will there be for purchasing non-standard configurations? How many IT staff will there be in shared services? Is the IT staff providing adequate service for both classroom and faculty computers? The IT Initiative Academic Computing Subteam has made recommendations in each of these areas, but the Academic Technology Council will also have significant input before final decisions are made.

On this summer's Faculty Senate Executive Committee survey, the Travel Initiative and the use of the Concur website received the widest variety of responses. This was the only initiative that had multiple comments indicating that this change had a positive impact on your ability to do your job well. On one end of the spectrum was the response "I used Concur for reimbursement of my trip this summer and it proved to be much improved over the old system. It took me some time to figure it out, but once I did it was a worthy tradeoff." On the other end of the spectrum was the comment "the new travel system is cumbersome, inefficient, overly complex and confusing, and user unfriendly.... Basically, the new system is an abomination and never should have been introduced."

Based on the results of our survey, there have been a lot of problems with the rollout of Concur. The Executive Committee received a half page of positive comments about Concur and three and a half pages of negative comments. Some examples of the problems are: inability to book a conference hotel at the conference rate, inaccurate names in the system, no simple options for expensing costs for faculty recruiting or a visiting speaker or for having them purchase their own airfare, some international airfares being much higher on Concur than other websites, and lack of flexibility for faculty and students involved in fieldwork.

I attended a recent Concur training session and many of these issues are being examined and fixed. Assuming that these issues get resolved and we become familiar with using the system, I expect that most of us will believe that it was a worthwhile change. A colleague recently told me that his deposit arrived in his bank account only three days after he submitted the travel receipts.

There are still many issues related to OE2C initiatives that have yet to be resolved. In the coming weeks, the Faculty Senate will be working to find ways for faculty to have greater input into the decision making process and ways to evaluate whether changes are helping or hurting the academic and research mission of SMU. It is important that the university be willing to take faculty recommendations into consideration and make necessary modifications when it is determined that changes are having a negative impact on reaching the university's greater goals.

Another issue is how to use the savings from OE2C initiatives to improve academics. Thank you for the many good ideas that you included in your survey responses. The Faculty Senate will be looking at your suggestions and getting input from others over the next few months. It is important that the faculty participate in this process to help make sure that the savings are invested wisely in the academic mission of the university. Former Faculty Senate President Santanu Roy began this effort two years ago by persuading the university to invest the first half million dollars of savings in graduate education, but there is more work that needs to be done.

Finally, I want to address two issues not related to OE2C. The first one is the University Curriculum. As Peter Moore, Associate Dean for General Education, outlined in a recent e-mail, three exemptions from UC requirements have been extended for another two years by the University Curriculum Council. He also suggested in that e-mail that the UCC may implement further structural changes in the upcoming year. While we all recognize the heroic efforts that Peter has made to make the University Curriculum work, major permanent changes to that curriculum should be approved by the entire faculty. The Faculty Senate Academic Policies Committee will be examining this issue during the upcoming year.

The second issue is SMU's new strategic plan, which is currently being created. A group of deans made a presentation to the Board of Trustees outlining their vision and ideas for the strategic plan. The Faculty Senate plans to invite them to one of our fall meetings in order to explore whether there are some common goals that we can all support. It is essential that faculty play a role in the development of the strategic plan.

This is a very exciting time to be at SMU. In less than a month, we will celebrate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the arrival of the first entering class. Later this year, we will celebrate the end of our Second Century Campaign with a goal of raising one billion dollars to support student scholarships, academic programs, faculty positions, and academic improvements. A new vision for the beginning of our second century will be created. Sophomore students will return to their same Residential Commons for the first time this year fulfilling the vision for a new residential model where students spend their first two years in the same residential community.

Even in the midst of this celebratory year, we face serious challenges. Many staff members are no longer at SMU and others have been reorganized into different jobs. The consequences of these and other OE2C changes will not be known for some time. Further changes are on the horizon. As we move into our second century, this is an important time for faculty to stay engaged and share your opinions so that we can all work together to fulfill the academic and research mission of SMU and also create a financially sustainable university.

Thank you.