**Faculty Senate Meeting, July 9, 2012, Notes taken during the meeting.**

Comments from the Speaker of the Senate:

 Reading of a resolution passed by the Senate Executive Committee concerning the departure of Dean of Faculties Antonio Cepeda-Benito. The resolution will be posted on the Faculty Senate website.

Provost Karen Watson who presented and took questions on three topics took up most of the meeting:

1. The Biodefense Center Grant
2. Allocations and Merit Raises
3. Merger of TAMU and Law School in Dallas.

Prior to Provost Watson speaking, it was announced that the August meeting is cancelled, so the next Faculty Senate meeting will be September 12, 2012.

The merger of the Health Science Center and TAMU is still in the discussion stage. The faculty survey sent out indicated alot of faculty knew little or nothing about the proposed merger and therefore did not know how to respond. A new survey with a summary of the advantages and disadvantages identified by the joint TAMU-HSC "merger committee" will be forthcoming.

Provost Watson:

1. Biodefense Center Grant was awarded to the TAMU System. The federal government pulled funds from other programs for one year, albeit the intent is to fund for many years.

The TAMU System was awarded the largest of 3 grants ($260 million for 5.5 years). Each year the center will be evaluated for productivity to receive the next year’s funding. **KEY** – they are NOT funding basic science, but the manufacture of vaccines. These vaccines are to have a very fast turn-around time and produced in large numbers (such is in a biodefense emergency). They are looking for an industry outcome. There will be industry and manufacture connections. Those involved currently are working to put in place people and buildings. Toward this goal, some partnerships are established.

Question: What role does TAMU have?

Answer: TAMU’s rule is to pay for faculty time. This has been ongoing as many TAMU faculties were involved in obtaining the center, i.e., meetings, writing the proposal, etc. TAMU also committed to help set up the entity by providing equipment. These charges will be paid back to TAMU. Further, Research Park renovations will be completed and paid for by TAMU. President Loftin has agreed to a “minimized risk” of ~1 million.

Having the Center in College Station will be prestigious. Eventually, the manufacture industry will build here and bring jobs to the area.

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1. Merit pay increases and reallocation of funds to pay for it was the next topic discussed. Provost Watson began by giving a brief history of all of the efforts of President Loftin to obtain a 3.9% tuition increase for merit raises. As you know, the Board of Regents did not approve the tuition increase.

Administration then had all Deans and Vice Presidents complete a cost computation of a 3% pay increase each year based on current budgets. It came back as follows: All agreed a 1.5% recurring merit increase (added to base salary) was possible for one year only. Continued increase of salaries from current budgets would be extremely detrimental to the fiscal viability or even existence of some college and departments. President Loftin then asked for a fee increase and a change in the structure of the fees so that money from the fees can be moved to the highest need – rather than designated to the library, etc.

Ultimately, there will be a MERIT increase for some faculty. Deans and chairs are to look at the past three years. There will be up to a 3% increase, with 1.5% recurring and a one-time 1.5% (from TAMU). Some faculty will receive less than 3% and some none at all. It is strictly merit.

Question (really a comment): On June 20, 2010, it was published that the Regents consider faculty members as over-priced “hired hands” that are neither trusted nor respected. Most of the same Regents are still in place.

Answer: There have been some changes and some progress in the mind-set of some Regents. In a recent Regent meeting, it was stated that most faculty (95-99%) work extremely hard. Ideologically, there is no real change but the Regents think they are helping us. This is a nation-wide problem, not just a TAMU problem. Money, revenue-streams and efficiencies are questioned in higher education across the country. “We are failing as educators.” We have not educated the public nor the Regents of the value of higher education, qualified faculty and what our job entails. My personal belief is “we now have the opportunity to be in the top 10” since everyone is struggling. To be in the top 10, we need top 10 faculties and how to define that is complicated. Provost Watson said in her opinion Top 10 faculty are committed to:

1. Balanced personal life and life style (get rest)
2. Excellence in their field
3. TAMU while they are here and doing what is needed.

Fees can be very specific and have to be given to whatever it has been designated for example, GI bill will only pay certain fees and not others. We are told to increase efficiency, yet we cannot move fees around. That is the reason that “other” fees are being considered. The hope is that these fees will be more flexible, can be pulled together and spent as needed.

Today, President Loftin wants as much of the mandatory fees that are legally allowable to be available for re-allocation. He wants increased flexibility on how the fees are spent. If reallocation goes forward, many people will be involved – he is looking at both fees and designated tuition. This policy will have consequences. It will be up to the President to decide what is important.

Question posed and answered by Provost Watson: What affects learning the most? Motivation of the learner – we are not good at this and need to improve.

This resulted in a short exchange on grade elevation. Provost Watson said if we had hard data (not just impressions) she would look at it.

1. Why do we need a Law School? 45 of 61 AAU schools have a Law School and it is part of Vision 2020. The state says we do not need more law schools. TAMU is just investigating the possibility. No decision to ask for a Law School has been made. There are many hurdles – The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board and SACS both must approve the addition and finances need to be studied.

Other Items:

The Dean of Faculties Successor:

 Interim is Dr. Michael Benedict.

 An internal search will be launched.

Minutes from the June 11, 2020 were approved

Five new graduate courses were approved. Geosciences had 10 graduate courses removed and the College of Liberal Arts had 7 graduate courses withdrawn.

Six new undergraduate courses were approved with 9 courses withdrawn. Four additional courses were approved for W certification and 2 were approved for C certification. Recertification of HIST 280 as W was approved.

Approved: Leaning objectives are now in the minimum syllabus requirement.

Adjourned