

Faculty Senate Meeting June 10, 2013

Meeting opened by Speaker Daugherty by asking senators and visitors to stand and recite the Pledge of Allegiance.

President Loftin was the guest speaker.

- 7,175 diplomas awarded in May
- Legislative news
 - Session ended in May
 - Special session called and we are waiting to see what happens
 - Governor has until 6/16 to veto bills on his desk
- Appropriations
 - Added money to the formula funding so the “pie” is larger
 - Current knowledge fund was increased from \$700,000 to 900,000/\$10 million. This is still below the funding level that we had several years ago of \$1 million per \$10 million.
 - Legislature has recognized the financial impact that the Hazelwood Act has had on the university and set aside \$2 million to help with the cost. This act allows veterans to attend college tuition free and allows them the ability to pass this to their dependents.
- Curriculum of high schools had changes made and President Loftin suggested that the senate ask Mr. O’Quinn to speak and answer questions on that regard
- A council on strategic budgeting has looked at the university’s priorities and recommended that the highest priority be the retention and attraction of quality faculty. Need a merit pool for compensation.
 - 2009 merit pool 2%
 - 2010 merit pool 0%
 - 2011 merit pool 0%
 - 2012 merit pool 1.5% units and 1.5 % one-time compensation
- Templates for FY14 budget have been distributed to the colleges
- Concern over graduate student/teaching assistant salary levels was raised by a faculty senator. Dr. Loftin said that he was concerned as well. He further stated that funding is decentralized and that the salaries are determined at the departmental level not central level. He stated that we need to be competitive to attract good students. He raised 2 questions: 1) how much money should be allocated to graduate stipends? and 2) how should the money be administered (university, college or departmental level)? He then deferred the question to Provost Karan Watson.

Provost Karan Watson also spoke.

- She stated there is no “TA budget”. Money is distributed to the colleges and they are allowed to decide how to spend the money. Since the amount of money is not unlimited, colleges and departments must make strategic decisions as to where the money will be allocated. According to a study done the TA salaries range from 85% to 105% of the national average.

- Second topic was the yield (new student enrollment) this year. The forecast was off on the plus side. A mathematical formula is used to determine the number of freshman matriculating each year. It is based on the number of offers sent and the typical percentage of acceptances. This year more students accepted than what was predicted. She said the university has a plan in place to deal with this situation.
- The colleges that are doing the heaviest teaching load will receive more of the money. Colleges that have a low teaching load will get less of the designated tuition. This year all colleges will be “held harmless” in regard to teaching levels. That will not be the case next year.
- Deans have been asked to provide the metrics for each department in evaluating teaching, research, and service. Higher administration does not support a one-size-fits-all approach. She stressed there should be a way to evaluate performance vs. excellence and that volume should not be the most important factor.
- Massive open online courses (MOOC)
 - Watson saw this as a way to advertise or as a way to cover holes/gaps in high school education. She stressed this was not a way to displace a first rate university education. It can’t replace the extracurricular experience or the student-faculty interface that occurs in a classroom. A question was “how can this strategically help us at TAMU?” A committee looked into this and suggested that TAMU join a group in order to share course material. The IP would remain with the originator. No decisions have been finalized.

Business meeting of the Senate

- May Minutes approved as presented
- Consent agenda approved
- Previous business was the Aggie Highway resolution
 - The resolution which had been tabled at last month's meeting was removed from the table and discussed. Senators still had many questions that could not be answered. The senate voted to postpone a vote on the resolution until September. At that time more senators would be present and Dr. Stadelman said he would attempt to get more information about the proposed highway toll road from College Station to Houston.
- Speaker Daugherty said that one of his goals was to improve the senate by beginning each meeting with an opening ceremony which would consist of the Pledge of Allegiance and an invocation. He had appointed a chaplain which would be an ad hoc committee of one since no position is outlined in the by-laws. The executive committee was in the process of discussing whether or not to have a non-ecumenical invocation. Several senators voiced their opinions both for and against beginning the meeting with an invocation.
- The meeting was adjourned.