**Minutes from Faculty Senate Meeting, 9/9/13**

CVM senators in attendance were Louise Abbott, Judy Ball and Karen Snowden

President Bowen Loftin was an invited speaker, who was first on the agenda. Topics of information that he presented included:

1) Dr. Bret Giroir has been appointed interim head of the Health Science Center, as announced in an email today. His title will be changed to CEO of the HSC at the next board of regents meeting.

2) The Board of Regents made several important decisions during a closed meeting on Saturday, Sep 7.

- The board approved the lease of university property to a private company for the development of new building construction including both research laboratory and office space. Engineering has already expressed interest in leasing research space. The land is near TIPS, just west of the vet school.

- The board approved the development of new student housing on West Campus. TAMU will lease 45 acres on Kimbrough Drive to a private partner who will construct housing for an additional 4,000 beds. They anticipate that facilities for 1800 beds will be ready for August 2014. Construction will be brick and timber rather than steel and cement, anticipating a moderate lifespan to the buildings. This housing is a significant addition to the 10,000 beds of existing dormitory space on campus. The impact of this construction on west campus traffic and facilities (such as the west campus library) is under study.

- It was recently announced that an internal audit showed lack of documentation and detail for the use of student fees. Apparently there are hundreds of fees that can be charged to students starting at the course level. Two possible options for revising management of these funds include:

a. dramatically decrease the number of various fees and increase tuition to simplify financial accountability. One problematic item with this approach is that the state requires 20% of all tuition funds to go to students with financial needs. Therefore, it would take a larger tuition increase to have the same net amount of financial resources than when using the multiple fee system.

b. restructure fees that would be linked to each college or to programmatic areas rather than on a course by course basis. This approach would be cost-neutral to students, but would simplify financial and audit accountability for fee usage.

The next immediate order of business was to pass a resolution to include senators from the Health Science Center and the law school. The number of senate seats was expanded from 100 to 120 representatives. The HSC was awarded 18 senate seats, and the law school was awarded 2 seats. Senators had already been elected, so new members were sworn in to represent their respective colleges.

Senate Speaker Walter Daugherity made a few comments:

- He has attended meetings regarding the MOOCs (massive on-line open courses) and the recommendations of a university committee to purchase management services from a company called EdEX.

- The presidential search committee has been named including a 7 member committee comprised of 2 regents, 3 faculty (including our own VTPP faculty member John Stallone) and 2 former students, and 2 non-voting members.

The Faculty Senate Meeting minutes from July 8, 2013 were approved. Those minutes can be found online at the http://facultysenate.tamu.edu website.

A number of new courses, course changes, course withdrawals, "W" course approvals, changes in curriculum, and items for special consideration were approved on the consent agenda. All documents and agenda items associated with senate approval of curricular items can be found online at the http://facultysenate.tamu.edu website.

For several months back in the summer, the Faculty Senate was requested by the university administration to endorse the development of the "Aggie Highway" which is a proposed new highway corridor from College Station to north Houston. Plans include the upgrade of some existing roads and the construction of new toll roads. Previously the Faculty Senate requested more detailed information before supporting a resolution for the proposed new road construction and tabled the motion. TXDOT just announced their support of plans for the construction of this new road. Therefore, the motion requesting support for the "Aggie Highway Resolution" was withdrawn by vote of the senators.

The senate voted to approve the posthumous award of one degree.

Several items were brought to the senate floor for comment/discussion during the Committee of the Whole:

- Information from Jason Cook (athletics staff) regarding Kyle field seating allotments for faculty & staff season ticket holders was presented. Several senators expressed their concerns on several points regarding the process of re-allocating season ticket seating in the renovated stadium.

- Questions were asked regarding a lack of information about the appointment of an interim university president when Dr. Loftin steps down in January. No information about that position/appointment was available.

- A senator expressed concern about bicycle traffic and pedestrian safety on campus

- A senator expressed concern over the very large "retirement" financial package given to Dr. Loftin and several other recently retiring members of higher administration.

- Senator Angie Price (Engineering) is a senator on the search committee for a new campus police/security chief. Please contact her if you have questions, interests or concerns about that selection process.

It was noted that the joint senate meeting between TAMU and University of Texas is scheduled here on March 3. Any items of particular interest for joint discussion by the two university senate groups should be brought forward to your senators or the senate executive committee.