

TTU Faculty Senate Business Meeting
September 25, 2017

Members Present: Douglas Airhart, S.K. Ballal, Jason Beach, Tammy Boles, Troy Brachey, Chris Brown, Debra Bryant, Andrew Callender, Corinne Darvennes, Ahmed ElSawy, Billye Foster, Steven Frye, Stuart Gaetjens, Melissa Geist, Mark Groundland, David Hajdik, Jeremy Hansen,

class, which is about the same as last year. The first-year retention rate is also about the same as last year at 79%. The six-year graduation rate dipped a bit. We are still working through the financials, but appear to be in a healthy spot, budget wise. We are seeing a shift in less demand for lower level curriculum, and more emphasis on upper level curriculum, due to the Tennessee Promise. There are cost differentials between them.

Construction Projects Update

Multiple construction projects are moving along. The Roaden University Center project will take about a year. The science building will break ground the week of homecoming. Some site work is already taking place for the science building, as well as the new fitness center. Parking changed slightly around the library, because of underutilized gold spaces. Now some of the gold spaces are red. The shuttle service schedule is online, and there's also a phone app available. Dependability is stressed for drivers with shuttle schedule and stops. There seems to be

will probably still be errors in judgement and miscalculations. It's best to have ongoing dialog during the decision process. President Oldham takes issue with the last point in article he distributed at the retreat. He said the world was very different then, and now speed and agility is much more important which creates a natural tension. We need to find a new balance for our institution. Time is a very important commodity for us. We aren't operating in a vacuum, we have competitors pushing hard and fast. We need to move forward.

Senator Stretz commended Interim Provost Stephens for coming to the last Faculty Senate meeting to explain restructuring the CTLE and Innovative Institute. Another example of faculty involvement is seen this semester with the increase in graduate students due to the faculty-initiated new graduate programs.

Some Senators complained the HR policies still in effect make the search and hiring processes move too slowly. President Oldham said the biggest challenge is our discomfort with handling risk. We will probably make some mistakes along the way, but we are presently intolerant of any errors. Whatever time we spend should be in productive dialog, not bureaucratic hurdles. Senators want to ask the Huron Consulting Group who has to do a matrix, and who doesn't. It bogs down the hiring process. President Oldham said we are too far on the conservative end of this spectrum. Other significant improvements have been made in HR, but there is still more to be done. We need to also understand where HR is coming from to meet their goals and requirements, too.

There was concern that the default position is to move quickly, and not allow for dialog on important decisions and issues. President Oldham explained that in practice7 Tm Tm[)TJTm()20(,)TJ[h(mov

either at or better compensation levels than they have now. Currently, we have no back up expertise if someone is out for a time. Training is usually up to date with outsourcing companies. SSC, for the most part, has met our expectations. Services prior to SSC were good, and some not so good. It's been more cost effective, and overall better service with SSC, but during the last few months services have been degrading. There is not much incentive to do better right now, because they know they probably won't get their contract renewed. A new contract will cost us more because of higher salaries and wages.

Chartwells Proposed Fee

The proposed increase for students of \$300 per semester was a component of Chartwells' bid for their next contract of food services. It's not an obligation or requirement. If the University wants to do this, the increase would pay for dining services and new facility. The fee is 100% refundable at end of the semester. Chartwells employees said this is done on other campuses. The pros to this include that it's convenient, and assures that the student will be able to eat. Cons include students would be required to put money up front and must request a refund at the end of the semester.

President Oldham said he won't move forward until there is substantial student interest. This is in a very premature stage now. The SGA is aware of the proposal, but hasn't had a chance to explore this yet with student interest. There is no time frame or urgency now, but they are interested in expanding dining options on campus in the future. A new site is unknown at this time, but it would be outside of the RUC. Maybe for on-campus students. You can still put money on an account now. Anyone living on campus is required to purchase a meal plan. Tech should be handling the money, not Chartwells.

The TTU Board of Trustees will have a say on this.

The Faculty Senate may want to weigh in on this and move scholarships to more need-based in the future, and not strictly merit-based. If you break students down by economic status, the lowest income students are in pretty good shape with Pell grants, etc. The more affluent students benefit from merit-based scholarships. The middle income students have to take the biggest hit, as they don't qualify for federal assistance or merit-based scholarships.

Such Other Matters

Conversations with TTU Board of Trustees Members

Can faculty members talk to board members about administrators? President Oldham said yes, as long as it's truthful, preferably. Boards speak through their chairman, but they seek input from anyone. This Board will probably erect some kind of controls. This is one of the driving reasons for having a faculty representative on the Board. President Oldham defended that in front of the State of Tennessee Education Committee last year.

