May 31, 2018

To: Chancellor Victor Boschini  
    Provost Nowell Donovan  
    TCU Faculty

From: Ted Legatski, 2017-18 Faculty Senate Chair

Re: Faculty Senate Chair’s Annual Report for 2017-18

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It has been a distinct honor and privilege to serve as Chair of the Faculty Senate during the 2017-2018 Academic Year, the 51st year of the TCU Faculty Senate. In particular, I want to thank the other officers and committee chairs that served so effectively this year.

OFFICERS:
Jesús Castro-Balbi, Past Chair
Greg Stephens, Chair Elect
Jan Quesada, Secretary
Greg Friedman, Assistant Secretary
Krista Scott, Information Officer

COMMITTEE CHAIRS:
Joddy Murray, Academic Excellence Committee
William Meier, Committee on University Committees
Daniel Juan Gil, Creative Activities, Research and Scholarship Committee (CARS)
Clark Jones, Educational Evaluation Committee
Dan Williams (fall) and Andrew Ledbetter (spring), Faculty Relations Committee
Layne Bradley, Governance Committee
David Bedford, Horizon Committee
Adam Schiffer, Student Relations Committee

End of year reports for the various Faculty Senate Committees, along with minutes from each of the monthly meetings of the Faculty Senate, may be accessed on the Faculty Senate webpage at www.fsn.tcu.edu.

GOALS FOR 2017-18

In addition to continuing to represent the interests of the teaching and research faculty of TCU, five major goals were identified for this past academic year.

1. Increase the visibility and stature of the Faculty Senate.
2. Establish closer ties to the Board of Trustees.
3. Change the perceived role of the Faculty Senate from a body that is informed after a decision to one that is consulted prior to a decision.
4. Explore issues related to part time faculty (adjuncts).
5. Protect fundamental issues of academic freedom and freedom of speech.

**ACTIONS ON GOAL 1**

The first action taken toward improving the visibility and stature of the Faculty Senate actually occurred before the start of classes for the fall semester. As the orientation sessions for new faculty have become increasingly crowded in recent years, the opportunity for the Faculty Senate Chair to address new faculty was lost. However, with the cooperation of Romy Hughes, Assistant Provost for Educational Technology and Faculty Development, Faculty Senate Officers and Committee Chairs joined new faculty for a breakfast session, which allowed much greater opportunities for establishing relationships with new faculty members and introducing them to the role of the Faculty Senate. This practice will be continued for 2018 and, presumably, thereafter.

In order to increase the visibility of the Faculty Senate among the general faculty and in continuation of practices in prior years, congratulatory letters were sent to faculty members who were recognized during the course of the year for achievements such as being awarded a grant, major research publication or achievement, awarding of tenure or promotion, or other special recognition. Also, all guests making presentations to the Faculty Senate were sent a letter of thanks and a Faculty Senate Horned Frog flash drive as a gift of appreciation.

During the year, the Faculty Senate passed Sense of the Senate Resolutions (1) expressing support for victims of natural disasters and criminal activities such as Hurricanes Harvey, Irma and Maria, wildfires in California, and the mass shooting in Las Vegas, (2) expressing support for TCU students and families impacted by potential discontinuance of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program and urging the U. S. Congress to act quickly to resolve the issue, and (3) expressing opposition to proposed taxes on university endowments. These resolutions introduced in order to express the concerns of the Faculty Senate and were publicized in both TCU news outlets and the Fort Worth Star-Telegram and received many statements of support from TCU faculty and others.

Two ad hoc committees established in 2016 became permanent Senate Committees at the beginning of the 2017-18 academic year. The Creative Activities, Research and Scholarship Committee (CARS) is chaired by a sitting Senator and is comprised of senior faculty from across campus. Its standing charge is to create concrete proposals for improving support for research and creative activities at both the college and university levels. The Horizon Committee is also chaired by a sitting senator and comprised of senior faculty from across campus. Its standing charge is environmental scanning and the identification of emerging trends and issues that might impact the faculty and mission of TCU.

Other actions taken in support of the remaining goals for 2017-18 will also have an indirect effect on Goal 1.

**ACTIONS ON GOAL 2**

During the fall and spring meetings of the Board of Trustees, the Chair of the Faculty Senate has been invited to briefly address the Academic Affairs Committee of the Board in order to update the trustees on the activities of the Faculty Senate. During the fall presentation to Academic Affairs Committee, as Chair of the
Faculty Senate, I chose to share information from a survey by the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges and an article on shared governance by Steven Bahls, President of Augustana College that focused on five simple steps for improving communications and relations between Trustees and Faculty. In particular, I sought to emphasize the shared goals of faculty and Trustees and the benefits to TCU of a closer relationship between the two groups. Building on the efforts of prior Senate Chairs and due in large part to the support of Chancellor Boschini and new Board of Trustees Chair Mark Johnson, several of the steps suggested during the fall presentation have been or are being implemented.

Actions in support of closer relations between the Faculty Senate and Board of Trustees include presentations to new members of the Board, invitations to Faculty Senate officers to lunch with the Board during the fall meeting, invitation to Faculty Senate officers to join members of the Board of Trustees Executive Committee for breakfast, a private luncheon meeting between the Chair of the Faculty Senate and Chair of the Board of Trustees to discuss initiatives for greater communication, and advanced publication of the Board of Trustees spring meeting agenda.

**ACTIONS ON GOAL 3**

For several years there have been efforts to make the TCU Faculty Senate more proactive rather than reactive in fulfilling its mission of representing the interests of the teaching and research faculty of TCU. In short, shared governance requires the Faculty Senate fulfill a consultative function rather than just being a medium for communication to the faculty. There have been a number of instances this year in which dramatic progress has been made in make shared governance a reality rather than just an abstract concept.

While the Faculty Senate Executive Committee met briefly at the close of the 2016-17 academic year with members of the Administration about the redesign of TCU’s web pages, that redesign progressed over the summer of 2017 with very little faculty input. During an Open Forum at the September 2017 Faculty Senate meeting, a number of serious concerns were presented about how the web page redesign process was progressing and significant negative unintended consequences being experienced by some departments, in particular English, due to a lack of faculty involvement in the process. These concerns were shared with Chancellor Boschini and, as a result, a web pages advisory group with significant faculty participation was formed to provide input and oversight of the entire redesign process.

Registrar Mary Kincannon approached the Faculty Senate in November 2017 seeking approval of a new final exam schedule for spring 2018 that had been developed in conjunction with associate deans. While the Faculty Senate did not have time to review the entire issue, the Senate voted to approve the revised final exam schedule for spring 2018 as a test and have the Academic Excellence Committee review the entire realm of final exam policies during the 2018-19 academic year. Registrar Kincannon was very supportive of this approach.

During an Open Forum at the April 2018 meeting, concerns were raised about changes in TCU’s international travel policy and the potential effect on faculty with young children. This led to increased involvement of Faculty Senate in the policy making process.

Another major area in which Faculty Senate has played a more prominent and proactive role has been in the realignment of Academic Affairs, particularly with regard to Faculty Senate’s oversight of the Core Curriculum. During meetings with Chancellor Boschini, Provost Donovan, and Vice Provost Susan Weeks, Faculty Senate leaders were consulted concerning reporting relations during the reorganization and the Faculty Senate’s control of the curriculum was strongly reaffirmed.
ACTIONS ON GOAL 4

In response to reports from a number of sources, including the Provost’s Office, deans and department chairs, prior work by the Faculty Senate Faculty Relations Committee, and individual TCU adjunct faculty, the need for a comprehensive evaluation of the role of adjunct faculty at TCU became obvious. In response, the Faculty Senate approved the establishment of an ad hoc task force to study the issue, including, but not limited to, types of adjuncts, compensation, reliance on adjuncts for core courses, institutional support and training, and other topics concerning adjuncts. The task force will operate under the authority of and will be responsible to the Faculty Senate Executive Committee. The task force will bring a report and recommendations to the Faculty Senate Executive Committee by March 15, 2019.

Task Force Membership:
- Danyelle Ackell, Neeley School of Business (MANA), Instructor
- Manochehr Dorraj, AddRan Social Studies (POSC), Professor
- Sally Fortenberry, College of Fine Arts (IDFM), Associate Professor
- George Gilbert, College of Science & Engineering (MATH), Associate Professor, Chair, Department of Mathematics
- Ted Legatski, Chair, Neeley School of Business (ENTR), Associate Professor of Professional Practice, Interim Chair, Department of Entrepreneurship
- Hylda Nugent, Harris College of Nursing & Health Sciences (NRAN), Associate Professor of Professional Practice
- Ray Pfeiffer, Neeley School of Business (ACCT), Professor, Associate Dean for Undergraduate Programs
- Matthew Pitt, AddRan Humanities (ENGL), Associate Professor
- Chris Sawyer, Bob Schieffer College of Communication (COMM), Professor

ACTIONS ON GOAL 5

Due in no small part to policies established by Chancellor Boschini, TCU escaped much of the disruption, violence, and threats to the core principles of academic freedom and freedom of speech and expression that were observed at other colleges and universities in recent years. Therefore, this issue did not materialize in any significant form. However, the Faculty Senate did revive the Open Forum during which any faculty member may speak for five minutes at a Faculty Senate meeting on any topic of concern to them.

MAJOR INITIATIVES FOR 2018-19

In addition to the Special Task Force of the Status of Adjuncts mentioned above, two other major initiatives will be addressed during the 2018-19 Academic Year.

The first is implementation of an office of an Ombudsperson for faculty and staff of TCU. Jointly approved by the Staff Assembly and Faculty Senate, the resolution recommends the Provost and Chancellor of the University establish an Ombudsperson program to provide an informal mechanism to assist staff and faculty in determining the institutional channels most appropriate for the resolution of a conflict or complaint, to assist staff and faculty in seeking resolution of a conflict or complaint through normal institutional channels, and to facilitate the informal resolution of conflicts or complaints through the assistance of University mediators. The Ombudsperson will serve both faculty and staff at the University, and will be designated a non-reporting position, filled by an impartial, neutral, and confidential third party. The Ombudsperson shall report to the Chancellor of the University through the medium of an annual, public report, the purpose of
which will be to identify general trends in conflicts and complaints in the University while avoiding identification of any individual. The Ombudsperson program will serve as a first line of response for parties needing or wishing the assistance of a neutral third party.

The second is the ongoing realignment of the Academic Affairs division under the Provost and the search for a new Provost to succeed Nowell Donovan, who has announced his retirement at the end of the 2018-19 Academic Year. Senior leadership of the Faculty Senate will play a major and proactive role in this process.

FINAL ACTION REPORT

At its last meeting of 2017-18, the Faculty Senate created the position of Senator Emeritus and named Provost Nowell Donovan as the first recipient of that status. The resolution reads as follows.

“For his extraordinary service to TCU and the TCU Faculty Senate as Chair of the Senate in 2000-2001 and, for the past fourteen years as Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and Provost, serving as a wise advisor and tireless advocate on behalf of the Senate, the Faculty Senate of Texas Christian University bestows upon R. Nowell Donovan the title of Senator Emeritus, together with all the rights and privileges pertaining thereto.”

Respectfully submitted,

Med. W. Ligotzi, II

Faculty Senate Chair, 2017-2018