The Faculty Senate was called to order by Professor Aimee Franklin, Chair.


Provost's office representative: Mergler ISA representatives: Cook, Hough UOSA representatives: Robison

ABSENT: Atiquzzaman, Conlon, Cox-Fuenzalida, Keppel, Kimball, Miller, Tabb, Trafalis, Wallach, Weaver, Yi

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**APPROVAL OF JOURNAL**

The Faculty Senate Journal for the regular session of September 14, 2009 was approved.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The following faculty will serve on the 2009-10 Campus Departmental Review Panel:
Michael Bemben (Health & Exercise Science), Catherine Hobbs (English), Jill Irvine (Women’s Studies), Mark Morvant (Chemistry & Biochemistry), Karen Schutjer (Modern Languages, Literatures & Linguistics), Mitchell Smith (Political Science), Victoria Sturtevant (Film & Video Studies), and Baxter Vieux (Civil Engineering & Environmental Science). The panel also will include associate deans Suzette Grillot (International & Area Studies) and Kevin Kloesel (Atmospheric & Geographic Sciences) and Graduate Council representative Jozef Raadschelders (Political Science). The units to be reviewed are Accounting, Finance, Management Information Systems, Marketing, Management, Journalism and Mass Communication, Art, Dance, Drama, Music, and Musical Theater.

Prof. Rong Gan (Aerospace & Mechanical Engr.) was elected to
complete the 2007-10 term of Prof. Fred Striz (Aerospace & Mechanical Engr.) on the Faculty Senate, representing the College of Engineering.


Prof. Jeff Stout (Health & Exercise Science) was appointed to a 2009-10 term on the Vice President for Research Advisory Committee. A formal membership structure was established recently that designates a faculty position selected by the Faculty Senate. Next year, this appointment will go through the senate’s regular committee nomination process.

Prof. Franklin introduced Mr. Jason Robison, the University of Oklahoma Student Association representative to the Faculty Senate, Diana Fitzpatrick, Staff Senate chair, and Melissa Lane, Staff Senate administrative coordinator.

STATE OF THE UNIVERSITY ADDRESS BY PRESIDENT DAVID BOREN

President Boren distributed several charts and a list of highlights (see http://www.ou.edu/admin/facsen/DLBFacultySenateOct2009.pdf). President Boren said he meets with the Faculty Senate Executive Committee every few weeks. There has been no shortage of items to talk about, given the challenges at the university and in the country. While we are facing a lot of challenges, especially financially, we are maintaining a good sense of momentum and continuing our progress.

OU is in second place in the Big 12 again in terms of the size of our library collection. Per capita, we are the largest library in the Big 12. Kansas was our benchmark, and we passed them some time ago. We are approximately double our sister university in total library volumes.
The average ACT score of our first-time students is almost 26. The capabilities of our students continue to increase. This year, we have 196 National Merit scholars, which broke our previous record by about 20. Those students have a great impact on their peers. Our graduation rate is the highest in the state of Oklahoma. We have come up about 22 points over the past 15 years, but we are not where we want to be. Factors that impact the rate include the preparedness of the students who come in and the selectivity of our student body. The average ACT and SAT scores for incoming freshmen are now approximately equal to those at the University of Texas, but the range of our student body is much broader. Oklahoma is well below the national average per capita in the number of college degrees. Many of our students are first-generation college students. In many cases, they do not get strong encouragement from home to stay in college. We try to help them understand that they need to stay in college and get their degrees.

We have maintained our position in the top three of the Big 12 in faculty salaries and benefits, adjusted for cost-of-living. Our student-faculty ratio has improved considerably since 2004. Because we are in a hiring freeze at this time, we are holding steady. This year, the freshman class went down by about 40, but the undergraduate population went up slightly because of improved retention. Some students are shifting to community colleges for financial reasons. Fortunately, our enrollment is roughly steady.

Endowed faculty positions are up to 544 for the Norman Campus and Health Sciences Center. Progress is slow because the state has stopped matching the endowed chairs. Legislative leaders have said they would like to pass a $100 million bond issue to match the backlog of endowed chairs. OU would receive approximately half of those funds but still would have over $100 million waiting to be matched. In terms of actual donations, we were above $125 million in private fundraising last year. There are challenges in fundraising because of the financial markets, but compared to others, we are doing extremely well.

Referring to the highlights for 2008-09, President Boren said we have
an extraordinary talent in our student body, and we have increased our lead in National Merit Scholars. The number of students studying abroad is up by about ten percent. One of our goals is to double the number over the next five years. We are number one in the nation in exchange agreements, and now we want to make sure our students are taking advantage of the exchange programs. The president said he thinks it is a moral imperative to prepare our students to function in an international environment and to expose our students to international experiences.

We continue to do well in the Goldwater Scholars program. In our entrepreneurship program in the College of Business, we moved up to seventh in the rankings nationally. We continue to rank very high in the Princeton Review. For the third year in a row, we were named one the top 10 of most wired colleges in America. We have maintained very high rankings in terms of the ability of our undergraduates to go into the top graduate professional programs in the country.

Our goal for student retention over the next 3-4 years is to get our graduation rate up to 68 percent. We really ought to be beyond the 70 percent mark. President Boren thanked the Faculty Senate Executive Committee for suggesting ways that faculty can help with retention. Many of our academic resources are now gathered together in Wagner Hall, which will help us intervene early when a student is in need. We are looking into getting the midterm grade reports to faculty sooner in order to identify students who are having problems. Faculty can help by counseling students and letting them know about the resources that are available. The attitude has change in the last 20 years from letting students sink or swim to doing everything to keep students in college. Many students do not know what to expect in college or how to prepare themselves for college. We call students who do not enroll for the next semester. If it is for financial reasons, we have an emergency fund for short-term financial emergencies to help keep those students in school. One of the main reasons students do not continue on is they get into difficulties with the courses in their chosen majors. It is important for us to develop their potential in a different direction. A special staff of advisers has been set up to help students
who need to change programs. Faculty can encourage students to email majorchange@ou.edu or go to the graduation office. The faculty is the front line and can offer encouragement and advice.

President Boren said it was a wake-up call to read Paul Krugman’s October 8 column in The New York Times. Mr. Krugman, an economist, said the biggest jump in productivity in the U.S. economy occurred in the 20 years after 1945. The real purchasing power of the average American family doubled in the 28 years after World War II. Productivity increased because education was increased dramatically. Until about ten years ago, the U.S. was at the top of the developed world in terms of the people who had a college degree. Now we are in the middle of the pack. Mr. Krugman said, “Education made America great; neglect of education can reverse the process.” One of the problems is so many more students in the U.S. have to work long hours to put themselves through school, whereas other countries provide sufficient assistance. Trying to improve the graduation rate is a national struggle. He appreciates the help of the Faculty Senate in encouraging faculty to get involved.

The economic downturn has hit higher education very hard. Yale’s endowment is down over 30 percent, so the cuts in their budgets are now ten percent. The California system of higher education has been decimated. When we are trying to absorb a $6-8 million shortfall while holding tuition steady, we need to think about the situation in other states. California has had to cut the number of courses by 10-15 percent, Berkeley and Cal Tech cut faculty compensation by 6-8 percent, and the University of California had to lay off 600 staff. While we have challenges, and they are serious, we will continue to work on beating them. He will work closely with the leadership of the Faculty Senate and Staff Senate. We are not in a crisis. We had planned for what has happened. For each of the first two months of this fiscal year, the Norman Campus was hit with $600,000 budget reductions because of state revenue shortfalls. One of the major factors was natural gas revenues were below the estimates. We were granted a standstill budget for this year, which really was about a $12 million cut because of the cost increases in benefits, utilities, etc. A series of reallocations
was done on a college-by-college basis. The administration will continue to work with the deans whenever there is a particular hardship. We have been able to hold our own with no layoffs, furloughs or increases in tuition. Obviously, we cannot go too long without raising tuition. No mid-year layoffs, furloughs or tuition adjustments are anticipated in this academic year. When we received our $6 million in stimulus funds, President Boren did not put the funds into the operating budget. By holding back the stimulus funds, making additional savings, and using small pools of one-time money, we should be able to plug any holes during this year. If revenue estimates continue to fall short, we can weather the situation until the legislature goes into session. The state has approximately $600 million in the Rainy Day fund, which the legislature has not yet tapped. For academic year 2010-11, we will continue to get stimulus funding, and the Rainy Day fund should be used to cover any shortfalls. After this year, there may need to be some tuition increase, but it would be modest. In the third year, the stimulus money goes away. Hopefully, recovery will come within the next two years and state revenues will have returned to some kind of normalcy. The governor and legislative leaders have protected us against cuts and shown their intention to keep a priority in educational funding. If the economy does not recover by then, we have to look structurally at ways to save money. We are not in an immediate crisis, which means we do not need to make changes instantly in health care. We cannot ignore long-range problems, but we have time to think through the options. Also, we do not know what is going to happen nationally with regard to health care. It would not be wise at this point to make major changes in our health policies until we know what will happen at the national level. In mid summer, we stopped some of the bonding of construction projects, which saved us maybe $20-30 million in potential costs. President Boren’s policy for the next couple of years is “no unpleasant surprises.” It is extremely important that we are prepared, we work through these things together, and everything is transparent. He will not present any big change to the regents without giving plenty of lead time. With regard to the retiree medical proposal, the administration will try to develop a web site so employees will be able to see how the proposed changes might affect them. President Boren said, “We have a wonderful sense of teamwork
on this campus.” We have a sense of family, and whatever we do, we have to do it together. It cannot be a top-down approach. It is very important that we all feel a sense of participation. We are not going to make any hasty move that turns out to be a problem, not a solution. We are not ignoring the fact that ultimately we will need to get our long-term liabilities down, but we need to know what the national decisions are. President Boren is guardedly optimistic about where we will be three years from now.

State Question 744 sets a salary target for teachers in common education (K-12). It was by initiative petition and will be voted on approximately a year from now. On the advice of counsel, President Boren cannot speak on this issue on behalf of the university to influence the outcome of a state question. Also, he cannot use any institutional resources or facilities. Speaking as a private citizen, he is very concerned about what SQ 744 would do because it does not grow the pie. The portion going to common education would increase, and the rest of the pie would be severely reduced. The possible impact on higher education is the OU Norman campus could face a $35 million shortfall within ten years, assuming revenue remains about stable. Other agencies also would be affected. The president has been a strong advocate for common education, but we would not improve the situation by drastically reducing the money for other vital state services. It could have an enormous financial impact on all the colleges and universities in the state as well as other functions of state government. It has been tried in other states and resulted in large tuition increases. He hates to see any education proposal voted down. If the proposal had identified a revenue source to enlarge the pie, then the citizens would have a real choice.

In closing, President Boren said, “Our momentum is still very strong, and we are continuing to do very innovative things.” We want to continue to set goals and think about the future. We should not stop thinking about the things that require resources, because the resources will return. We have a spirit of working together and helping each other. We want to be sensitive that all of us have needs. What we do should be done together, with a sense of fairness, with transparency,
and with no surprises to anyone. We should continue to make the kind of progress that has brought the university a long way in the last few years. President Boren encouraged the senators to email him if they had questions or advice.

Prof. Milton asked President Boren if he would like to comment on the grade OU received on the green initiatives report card (see October 27 Oklahoma Daily article, “OU receives average grade in sustainability survey”). President Boren noted that we are making our buildings environmentally responsible, we are part of the Chicago Climate Exchange, we have been changing our fleet of vehicles, and we are one of the first universities in the country to get all our electricity from wind power. They [The Sustainable Endowments Institute] said our students are not active enough, yet Our Earth and other student groups have had a lot of initiatives. Low grades were given on our investment portfolio. Our OU Foundation is an independent organization of trustees who make their own decisions, and those decisions are not controlled by the university. The president said he did not agree with the rating and thought the group had an investment policy agenda. We are continuing to put energy-saving devices in buildings, the new buildings will be LEED certified, and windows in classrooms are being renovated. We received Bs in transportation, climate change and energy, and food and recycling. The bad grades were in investment policies, where we have little control.

Prof. Bass inquired about the decrease in our endowment. President Boren said the endowment had decreased about 15-16 percent, but it has rebounded. We are fortunate to have Guy Patton, a former top executive at Fidelity, as president of the OU Foundation. He has hired a full-time investment manager. The foundation converted a lot of assets to cash at the right time, and we have rebounded more quickly than others. The percentage of our budget that comes from endowment is in the six percent range, compared to the 40-50 percent range at places like Harvard and Yale. When their endowments decline by 30 percent, they take a huge hit. Our endowments are an important additional asset to us, but we are not nearly as endowment sensitive as other institutions. It helps that the foundation bases its giving to the
university on a three-year average. They had to reduce the university by about $2 million last year, but they helped the university four or five years ago to bring faculty salaries up.

Prof. Muraleetharan asked for a clarification about using university email to express views about SQ 744. President Boren responded that university employees should not use university email to advocate a certain political position. They may use non-university email. Guidelines will be provided as we approach the time to vote. University counsel is not trying to squelch free speech. Individuals may express their views as private citizens. President Boren said he feels very torn because the university has never lobbied against common education. He is disappointed that common education did not consult with higher education to identify a resource base for education in the state.

Prof. Kershen commented that the university seems to be facing a continuing decline in state support. He asked President Boren if he thought the university would become a sort of state/private institution in the long term. President Boren said the percentage of our budget from the state has dropped below 20 percent. It would be a long time, though, before we could do without that state support. One of the problems is the amount the federal government gives to the state for social services and health has declined as the government has gotten into financial trouble, and the state has had to increase the portion of the state budget going into those areas. President Boren would like to see scholarships such as Pell grants increased at the federal level. The U.S. has not fallen in the number of students enrolling in college but in the number receiving degrees. Higher education used to receive 26 percent of the state budget, but it is down to about 14 percent now. Parents need to understand that as higher education appropriations go down, tuition goes up. Changes at the federal level would be a great help.

Prof. Taylor said she thought it was interesting that the University of Texas decided to end the National Merit program. President Boren replied that they still award scholarships on merit and give it to many of
the same people. The National Merit program is good for us to continue because those students have an impact on the quality. It is a credential that students understand. Our need-based programs are growing more rapidly than our merit-based. President Boren said he welcomed the input of the faculty. He said we have time to work through the challenges and do it together. Prof. Franklin said she appreciated his openness and receptivity and strongly supported his commitment to communication and partnership in these challenging times.

**ELECTION, COUNCILS/COMMITTEES/BOARDS**

The Faculty Senate approved the Committee on Committees’ nominations to fill vacancies on university and campus councils, committees and boards (attached).

**RESEARCH COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION: PROCESS FOR HIRING RESEARCH FACULTY**

The Research Council recommended a slight revision in the process that is used to hire research faculty. The modification would apply only to research faculty appointments, those that typically do not have teaching obligations. The new hire would be vetted by the department and reviewed by the Vice President for Research instead of the Research Council. The Research Council decided there is enough oversight in the process to remove the Research Council endorsement and voted unanimously to recommend this change. (See VPR’s letter – http://www.ou.edu/admin/facsen/RC Faculty Senate Letter.pdf – and recruiting form – http://www.ou.edu/admin/facsen/request to hire research professor.pdf.) If the Faculty Senate approves the recommendation, the following changes would need to be made in section 3.5.3(A) of the OU-Norman *Faculty Handbook* (deletions crossed through; additions underlined):

“Once the academic unit has made a recommendation and the academic dean has endorsed this recommendation, the credentials
of the candidate and the final recommendation to hire the candidate for the research faculty position shall be reviewed by the Research Council Vice President for Research, whose recommendation shall be forwarded to the Senior Vice President and Provost for review prior to presentation to the President and the Board of Regents. All subsequent practices currently in place for temporary faculty appointments would apply in these cases as well. Contractual documents shall state clearly these appointments will not become tenure-track.”

The Faculty Senate will vote on the recommendation next month. Prof. Franklin asked the senators to discuss the proposal with their constituents and send her any concerns or questions. Prof. Joe Rodgers, chair of the Research Council, would be happy to respond to any questions before the senate votes.

SENATE CHAIR'S REPORT, by Prof. Aimee Franklin

On a sad note, former Governor Henry Bellmon passed away on September 29. He endowed a faculty chair in the OU Political Science department.

The Vice President for Research and Graduate College Dean positions were decoupled. Lee Williams will devote full time to the Graduate College Dean position, and Kelvin Droegemeier will be the Vice President for Research. One of the initial issues Dean Williams will be exploring is the graduate admissions process. During the transition to the oZONE system, there were a lot of delays in the admissions process. We also have a new director of admissions, Mark McMasters, who, hopefully, will work with the Graduate College to smooth the graduate admissions processing this year.

The senate Executive Committee met with Becky Heeney (director of the graduation office) and Nick Hathaway (vice president for executive and administrative affairs) about student retention. One of the biggest losses is from the sophomore to the junior year and forward. If an
instructor can intervene when a student is missing class, we have a very good retention outcome. If students have trouble passing a core course in a major, instructors should have the students contact the graduation office, where people can advise them about changing to a major that would still be in their area of interest. Any suggestions can be forwarded to Prof. Franklin, who will send them to the appropriate office.

Over the past six weeks, the senators have been submitting issues that the Faculty Senate might work on this year (see September Chair’s Report). More than 20 issues were suggested as possible action items; an additional 15 issues have been placed on a monitoring list. In attempting to prioritize the issues, the senate Executive Committee realized that most of the issues could be referred to an existing committee. It is important, therefore, that the faculty has effective representation on those committees. The Executive Committee also concluded that the faculty should be more proactive in providing early input into decision-making processes. The number one priority is to find ways to have more effective representation of the faculty perspective on issues that face us across the campus. Certainly, a number of current issues are of faculty concern: budget cuts and the retiree medical proposal as well as ongoing issues such as employee wellness, the responsible conduct of research training, green campus initiatives, and faculty salaries on grants. The list is likely to evolve through the academic year. It is not mutually exclusive or exhaustive.

The senate Executive Committee will meet in November with Brad Burnett, the lead on the oZONE transition. Next semester, instructors will have some obligations in oZONE. They will report their grades electronically, not by the hard copy grade sheet. Faculty members have access to oZONE already and are encouraged to go to the portal and find out the features available in the system. Students will register for the spring semester through oZONE after they have been advised.

Together with the Campus Tenure Committee, the Faculty Senate office has been exploring the possibility of having digital tenure dossier review. We could be greener by uploading the documents instead of
making multiple copies of a large number of documents. Dossiers could be uploaded to a safe site for internal review and perhaps even for external review. Surveys have been sent to schools that currently have electronic systems, and the Big 12 schools have been asked about their procedures. The information will be assembled and reported to the Faculty Senate.

When the Human Resources director made his presentation to the senate last month, some questions were asked about the proposed record keeper for retirement funds. The Faculty Senate Executive Committee is going to meet with the committee to get more information about the proposal and will report back to the Faculty Senate in December.

Prof. Strauss said he thought Prof. Franklin had mentioned something in the last meeting about instructors’ access to class rolls or picture rolls in the spring. Prof. Franklin explained that she had said instructors would not have access to photo rosters in iThink during the transition to the oZONE system. Provost Mergler knows they are a useful tool for faculty, so she is exploring whether it would be possible to preserve the photo roster. Class rolls still will be available electronically. Provost Mergler noted that oZONE Alert 18 is particularly important. We are in a transition right now. This is the first time students will enroll in the new system. In January, Financial Aid will go live in the new system. Spring is the first time faculty will be really engaging with the system, primarily to look at the class roster and then to report grades. Instructors have to wait until the students get enrolled before they can look at the features. She is compiling a list of things that people want in the new system. Prof. Moses pointed out that many instructors are not receiving the oZONE alerts. Provost Mergler said she would send the information to deans, chairs, directors to forward to the faculty. Prof. Franklin added that the alerts also are available online [see http://www.ou.edu/portal/home/ozone_alerts.html.]

ADJOURNMENT
The meeting adjourned at 5:05 p.m. The next regular session of the Faculty Senate will be held at 3:30 p.m. on Monday, November 9, 2009, in Jacobson Faculty Hall 102.

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Sonya Fallgatter,
Administrative Coordinator

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Amy Bradshaw, Faculty Secretary