The Faculty Senate was called to order by Professor LeRoy Blank, Chair.


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

ABSENT: Atiquzzaman, Chapple, Cox-Fuenzalida, Devegowda, Gibson, Minter, Morrissey, Park, Ransom, Taylor

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APPROVAL OF JOURNAL

The Faculty Senate Journal for the regular session of October 11, 2010 was approved.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Responding to the Faculty Senate’s action on the academic integrity policy (see 10/10 Senate Journal), President Boren wrote, “I welcome and encourage discussion on this important issue.” The President is waiting for action from the Graduate Student Senate.

The Oklahoma Blood Institute has partnered with OU and OU Sooner Sports Properties to hold a Bedlam Blood Drive November 15-19 at the Armory. The faculty is invited to give blood 11 am–6 pm Monday-Thursday and 10 am–5 pm on Friday. There will be food, fun and prizes. Help OU win the Bedlam Blood Battle trophy by donating blood and encouraging your students and staff to give blood. You can schedule an appointment by clicking https://obi.membersforlife.org/obi/mobilesch/sc.php?act=search&sponsor_code=sooners1. All donors will receive a “Feel like a Champion” t-shirt, food, and a mini-physical, and will be entered in a drawing to win autographed footballs and a pair of tickets to the OU-OSU Bedlam football game in Stillwater.
A student-curated exhibition at the Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art, *Stare Stare Stereo*, opens on Friday, November 5, with a free, public reception at 7 pm, preceded by a lecture at 6 pm. See http://www.ou.edu/content/fjjma/home/main/exhibitions/upcoming_exhibitions/Stare_Stare_Stereo.html for more information.

The Faculty Senate is sad to report the death on October 30 of retired faculty member David B. Kitts (History of Science and Geology & Geophysics).

**STATE OF THE UNIVERSITY ADDRESS BY PRESIDENT DAVID BOREN**

President Boren started by saying in many ways this is the best of times and in many ways this is the most challenging of times. He handed out a press release announcing that Wick Cary, an OU graduate in geology, recently passed away and left an $11 million gift to OU. It will go to athletics, primarily for scholarships, geology, laboratory upgrades in the Energy Center, and positions in International & Area Studies. Additional gifts are coming in. Some will be used to provide scholarships.

Referring to charts he distributed at the meeting (available from the Faculty Senate office), President Boren said they showed where we have been and where we are going. During the last 12 months, we have had a 20 percent increase in the number of students studying abroad. Approximately 900 students study abroad each year. Our goal is to have 50 percent of our students studying abroad at some point during their college careers. About 20 percent of our students now study abroad (we were at five percent a decade ago). Students learn from the experience and come back stimulated in all areas of learning.

We are continuing to make progress across the board at the university in spite of tough budgetary years. The credit must go to the faculty for causing this to happen. In 1994 our graduation rate was 42 percent. Now we are at 64.4 percent. Our goal is to be above 70
percent. The average ACT of freshmen in fall of 1987 was 22; now we are at 26. Students in the Honors College are involving themselves with non-credit book clubs, which is another sign of the intellectual vitality on campus. The demand for honors classes has gone up 40 percent over the past five years. The students want intellectual challenges. The university had not changed its reimbursement to departments for offering honors classes for quite some time, so the reimbursement was increased from $1500 to $5000 per course this year. We will have 10-14 more honors sections offered in the spring and even more in the fall. President Boren wants to make it possible for units to be able to offer more honors sections and for faculty members to have a chance to teach an honors section and interact with students who are highly motivated to learn.

We have gone from 116 endowed chairs and professors in 1995 to 561, including 63 President’s Professors. The legislature put a moratorium on the matching program for endowed chairs, so we have approximately $150 million in endowed chairs remaining to be matched. This past year, a bond issue enabled us to take care of about $46 million, but we still have a backlog of $150 million. The chancellor of the state regents will be unveiling the higher education budget requests this week; it is likely to call for another bond issue for the endowed chairs. The endowed positions make a big difference in terms of faculty compensation, retention, and recruitment. We plan to continue that program and encourage it.

Ten years ago, we were eighth in the Big 12 in total library volumes. Kansas was our benchmark. We have had ten straight years of increases for the library, so we have been able to move up. We passed Kansas and are number two in the Big 12 (number one in volumes per student).

In 1995-96 we were ninth in the Big 12 in average faculty compensation (salaries and benefits, adjusted for cost of living) and almost $2000 below OSU. For 2009-10, we were in third place. The President wants us to stay firmly in the top three in compensation to be able to compete in recruiting and retaining faculty. Texas A&M has
fallen from first to sixth during that period.

Private giving for the university this last year, in spite of the tough year, was one of the five best years in our history, and so far, private giving is running ahead of last year. Applications for admission are about 50 percent higher than last year. We are over the $100 million mark in research, going up $29 million from last year. The regents have approved two new private research partnership buildings on the research campus. These partnerships have generated over 350 private sector jobs, 95 percent of which are held by our graduates. *The Chronicle of Higher Education* recently had an article about OU that noted we were in the top of all universities in Fulbright scholars (25 in the last decade), National Science Foundation Career Awards (22), American Association for the Advancement of Science Fellowships (5), and National Endowment for the Humanities Fellowships (5). It is a remarkable record of achievement.

The freshman class includes 223 National Merit Scholars this year; our previous record was 196. Students are continuing to win in every kind of area, from the Governor’s Cup Business Team to the Entrepreneurship Program to the Petrol Bowl Championship. The Debate Team has won three national championships in the last four years, and our Drama School won over half the awards in a national competition. The Honors College is emerging as a catalyst outwardly and inwardly and is seeking to be involved in all the disciplines across the campus.

In the area of challenges, President Boren remarked that it was mixed news that State Question 744 did not pass. We want excellence in K-12 education so we have students coming to OU fully prepared. It is disgraceful that Oklahoma teachers make less than those in surrounding states. However, had SQ 744 passed without any tax increase, higher education would have been cut $260 million over the period; the OU-Norman campus alone would have been cut $33 million over three years. Very little Stimulus money and Rainy Day money remain, which would have meant an annual budget shortfall above $20 million for three years in a row for OU. We could have been facing tuition and
fee increases of 15-17 percent for three years running and still be facing very deep cuts in the University. President Boren hopes to form an education coalition that will find a way to better finance public schools in the state.

The state regents are expected to make a budget increase request in excess of $100 million. Without the Stimulus funding, the increase would be slightly over five percent and would leave the OU-Norman campus $2 million below where it was in FY 2008. It is remarkable what the faculty has contributed and the sacrifices it has made in compensation and hiring freezes. The administration is doing everything it can to find savings without cutting into the core academic mission. We have not had to have layoffs or furloughs. The last two years in a row we have had cuts, even with the Stimulus funding. Over that two-year period, we had only a 5.5 percent tuition and fee increase, which brought in about $6 million net. However, we had $40 million in cuts. We are facing probable additional cuts this year unless the economy rejuvenates or the legislature finds new revenue sources. The legislature will look at ways to raise revenues without impacting economic growth. We must prepare, though, for another year or two of tough budgetary situations. President Boren said it is remarkable how we have continued to move forward, and he thanked the faculty members for what they have contributed to the well-being of the university. We may be dealing with future reductions to the university. Health care costs over the last ten years have more than doubled. We cannot control many of our other fixed costs, so we have to prepare for another possible five percent reallocation in the next budget year. Going into the third year of reallocations is a daunting challenge. A letter will go out to faculty and staff tomorrow that will give a brief update on the process for planning for another five percent reallocation. The vice presidents and president are voluntarily taking compensation reductions in the range of 2-6 percent until compensation increases can be given to the general faculty and staff. As we look to the next year, the first goal remains to start back on a compensation program for faculty and staff. The freezes in compensation cannot continue indefinitely. The administration will be monitoring on a case-by-case basis exceptions that may need to be made to maintain the
integrity of academic programs. Startup funds must be available for some people who have been recruited to replace faculty, primarily faculty who have retired. Situations that require startup funds are forwarded to the President and Provost, and they do their best to find money for really important strategic reasons. A salary plan remains the top priority. Another priority is salary compression. New people very often are brought in at the market salary rate. We have had three different compression programs since the President has been here. The longer we go with a compensation freeze, the more likely we will have problems with compression. It is a serious problem that has to be analyzed department by department and college by college. He has asked the provost to work with the deans to bring forward the more egregious cases, and the administration will try to address those.

President Boren introduced Brian Ellis, the new director of Facilities Management (formerly called Physical Plant). Mr. Ellis is trying to make things more cost effective in that area. A number of people in his area and in Housing & Food Services were at minimum wage. Those employees will be brought up to $9/hour. The administration also addressed a similar situation at the Health Sciences Center and will be working, as he said, on the compression problem.

It will be another year, perhaps two more years, before economic growth comes back enough to put us above the 2008 funding level. The administration hopes to work closely with the Budget Council, Benefits Committee, and other special groups to make budget decisions in partnership with each other. The President will have ongoing discussions with the Faculty Senate Executive Committee. The most important thing for us to do is do as little harm as possible while keeping our eye focused on our goals. We need to have a plan in our back pocket if we have to have a 3-5 percent cut. President Boren continues to believe that the glass is more than half full when he thinks about our faculty recognition, research expenditures, and private donor support. The Princeton Review put us in the Top 10 public universities in terms of our academic quality and affordability. Many other indexes continue to recognize the improvement we are making.
President Boren thanked everyone and all they represent for the university. We have a lot to be proud of and to be thankful for, and we need to continue to build on our strengths. There is not another situation in the U.S. that he knows of where the Faculty Senate and President and executive officers work so closely together. He asks for advice and shares the most sensitive problems, and it is enormously helpful to the university to pool together the whole talent of the university to find the best answers. He said faculty could email questions, comments, or advice to him. He thanked the faculty for everything it does and said it was nice to come to work with people who are his friends.

SENATE CHAIR'S REPORT, by Prof. LeRoy Blank

Prof. Blank reinforced what the President said, that the Faculty Senate Executive Committee has open communication with President Boren on a regular basis. Senators are welcome to send issues to the Executive Committee to bring up in meetings with the President.

The Retirement Plans Management Committee (RPMC) has spent a lot of time trying to educate everyone about the forthcoming changes in the defined contribution plans. The RPMC indicated recently that it will postpone a recommendation to the regents from November until March so people will have more time to understand the proposal and have input. Prof. Blank encouraged the senators to spend some time reading the proposal. It is an enormously complex issue and is overwhelming. The committee is responding in a prompt and efficient manner to the requests made by the Faculty Senate.

Enrollment in the 2011 health plan is scheduled for November 4-12. No action is required unless an employee wishes to make changes to current coverage or establish or continue a flexible spending account. For next year most over-the-counter drugs will not be eligible for FSA reimbursement without a prescription. The rates for the BlueCross Blue Shield HMO are increasing 11.1 percent.
The Budget Council has been looking for new sources of revenue. Ideas may be sent to Prof. Blank. The Budget Council also expects to be involved in any decisions about cuts. The Faculty Welfare Committee recently reviewed the RPMC proposals and made the recommendation to postpone the presentation to the regents. The Faculty Compensation Committee is looking into mechanism for salary enhancements. The committee also will be clarifying some language in the *Faculty Handbook* that pertains to OTRS credit when someone is on a full sabbatical. The Information Technology Council was asked to look into the scanning of computers for personally-identifiable information.

The Graduation task force talked with the Faculty Senate Executive Committee about possibly altering some of the withdrawal policies to enhance our graduation rate. The Executive Committee referred the proposal to the Academic Regulations Committee and asked the committee to bring any recommendation back to the Faculty Senate to consider if appropriate.

Prof. Blank met with some Student Congress representatives to discuss their interest in revitalizing the test files. Prof. Blank said he would try to get faculty support and help them re-establish the test files. The students also had some concerns about the withdrawal proposal. Prof. Morvant asked whether the students had mentioned where and how they would get the test files and how they would give access to students. Prof. Blank said they were just beginning the process and were hoping for some cooperation and help from the faculty.

As reported in the Announcements, it is likely that the academic integrity recommendation will come about. If it does, five faculty members will need to be appointed to serve on an oversight committee. Prof. Blank asked the senators to forward names of people who are particularly interested in academic integrity and would be willing to serve on the committee.

The Vice President for Research Kelvin Droegemeier is proposing
some new research awards and is also looking at the possibility of enhancing the regents’ awards for teaching, research, and service. The problem of start-up funds remains an issue and is affecting some of our recruiting.

Prof. Baer asked whether the postponement of regents’ consideration of the retirement management would cause the whole timeline to be pushed back, that is, will the enrollment period be later than the July 1 date that was originally proposed? Prof. Blank said he could not answer that. He thanked everyone who had submitted comments to the RPMC or Faculty Senate Executive Committee, because it made a case for postponement. Some members of the RPMC and Executive Committee met before this meeting to discuss questions that had been raised, and the RPMC opted to postpone their presentation to the Faculty Senate until they had more answers. The main questions are why the proposal is being recommended and what the cost savings are. Prof. Blank asked the senators to send him any other questions. Prof. Remling said his department was concerned about the lack of transparency and would like to have the actual data on which this decision was based. Prof. Blank said the RPMC now understands the concern about the lack of details and wants to maintain transparency.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 4:30 p.m. The next regular session of the Faculty Senate will be held at 3:30 p.m. on Monday, December 13, 2010, in Jacobson Faculty Hall 102.

____________________________________ Sonya Fallgatter,
Administrative Coordinator

____________________________________ Amy Bradshaw, Faculty Secretary