

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT BROWNSVILLE AND TEXAS SOUTHMOST COLLEGE



Minutes – September 16, 2008

Senators Present: Graciela Abrego, Eloy Alvarez, Ricardo Camargo, Bernice Castillo, Sergio Chavez, Coral de la Cruz, Joe Escobedo, Maria Espinoza, Corina Garcia, Monica Garcia, Christy Garza, Nelly Gomez, Arturo Guerra, Brenda Martinez, Guadalupe Molina, Dalyn Ruiz, Orlando Ruiz, Leonardo Salazar, Emilia Taylor

Senators Absent: Diana Bustamante, Robert Cortinas, Flora Dietrich, Jaime Faz, Lynne Depeault, Olga Garcia, Rosa Garcia, Christy Garza, Guadalupe Molina

Guests:

Dr. James Storbeck, Maribel Saucedo, Terry Lopez and Janie Llanes

The meeting was called to order by Emilia Taylor, President, at 2:00 p.m.

Emilia Taylor thanked all the Senators that were present and expressed that without their presence their constituents would not have a voice.

Dr. Zavaleta reiterated Emilia's comment on how without the representation there would be no voice for Staff members. He continued by stating that he was appointed by Dr. Garcia to serve as the liaison between Executive Council and Staff Senate. He is to express the needs of Staff to the President. He acknowledge that before there was a discrepancy between Staff and Faculty issues and that with the Senate there have been tremendous strides towards equality at the institution.

Presentation-Study of the Economic Impact of UTB/TSC on the Brownsville and Regional Economy:

Dr. Zavaleta along with Dr. Storbeck will be conducting a survey on the impact that UTB/TSC has had on the Brownsville and Regional Economy. The City of La Feria, being the most western city of Cameron County, requested a meeting on how could the institution assist on conducting a market study at La Feria and what type of higher education it needs.

Dr. Zavaleta explained how the City of El Paso conducted a similar study in 2006 regarding the University of Texas at El Paso. The type of survey used in the 2006 study will serve as a base for the survey that will be conducted at UTB/TSC. Dr. Zavaleta stated that there is a need to know the economic impact in dollar amount that the institution has had in Cameron County.

The data collection phase will be launched in November. The survey will be on the condition of anonymity. There will be three questionnaires, Staff, Faculty and Students. Dr. Zavaleta asked for the Senates assistance in collecting the data from Staff.

Eloy Alvarez asked Dr. Zavaleta if he knew the outcome of the El Paso study. He replied that he remembered seeing an article in the Brownsville Herald about UTEP. Dr. Storbeck added that he spoke to the principal investigator and the study aided in rationalizing to legislature the need for expansion and the contribution to the community.

The Senate took a vote of affirmation on whether we wanted to assist Dr. Zavaleta and Dr. Storbeck, Eloy Alvarez moved to have the motion pass, Brenda Martinez seconded. Motion was passed.

Approval of Minutes:

The minutes for the August meeting (Senate Retreat) were reviewed and approved with minor grammatical corrections.

Committee Reports:

No reports were given.

There were corrections regarding committee point of contacts. Nelly Gomez reported that the aforementioned contacts were sent an email on who the new representative would be from the Senate. For the Standing Committees it was advised that the Senators try to meet with the Past Chair to see what was left pending.

An explanation was given regarding the UT System Employee Advisory Committee. The EAC consists of Olga Garcia, Juan Andres Rodriguez and a third individual. Dr. Zavaleta informed the Senate that we need to contact Dr. Marilyn Woods to submit the new name.

Old Business:

Status of Constitution:

Dr. Zavaleta informed the Senate that the second reading with Provost Council was not reading but a brief review meeting. He advised the Senate that we must meet with the Provost before December to continue the process.

ULEAD:

Dr. Zavaleta advised the Senate that we needed to contact Dr. Woods because the Senate needed a report on the ULEAD Program.

New Business:

Emilia Taylor advised all present that this initial meeting was going to set-up the agenda for the upcoming Senate.

Economic Impact Study:

With the Senate taking on the questionnaires for Dr. Zavaleta's economic study, this became the first agenda for the year.

Report on General Staff Assembly:

Emilia Taylor asked for a report from Maria Espinoza regarding the concerns brought up by Staff members at the General Staff Assembly. The basis of the Senate agenda would be based upon these concerns:

- Parking Situation
- Turnover Rate: skilled labor leaving to private industry because of pay
- Book Scholarships: staff members would like to know why family can't be included in the book scholarships
- Reclassification issues: some colleagues were reclassified to Administrative Secretary position and others were not
- Exceptional Merit: Staff members should not have to sell themselves to get a raise

- Salary Study: there remains internal salary inequality. Incoming personnel are given the same salary as personnel who have been working at the institution for a longer time
- Role in SACS accreditation process: Staff played a minor role
- More General Staff Assemblies

Dr. Zavaleta advised the Senate that the basis of a good agenda is to prioritize what is more attainable. He replied to several of the concerns. Regarding reclassifications, some personnel are able to negotiate with Supervisors for a raise. The major adjustments made were with the 85% increase due to the Salary Study, to go beyond the 85% would be harder to accomplish unless it was driven by the market.

Regarding parking, the parking issue would always be around and there would be not much that the Senate could do.

He advised the Senate that the Senate would need to ask for the SACS report to see how Staff aided in the collection of information and if any recommendations were made.

He agreed that the ratio between Staff and students is critical. The Senate would have to have access to the planning phase of the buildings to make sure that staffing is taken into consideration.

Ms. Nelly Gomez informed the Senate that we are at the 85%, approximately \$100,000 was given in increases. The new concern is that most job titles do not fit what the employee is doing and due to this employees are not happy.

Other News:

Registration:

The Senate was reminded that Spring Registration begins on November 18th.

Direct Deposit:

Nelly Gomez advised the Senate that employees could now sign-up for their direct deposit slips to be added to Scorpion On-line. In order to sign-up Payroll an employee could stop by the office or send her an email.

Letter of Appreciation:

A letter of appreciation from Dr. Garcia was read to the Senate regarding the assistance given to an ex-student. Ms. Brenda Martinez was the individual who started the chain of reaction to assist the student. The student was able to meet his agenda due to her help and other various staff members and administrators.

Our meeting dates were changed to the 3rd Thursday of the month due to conflicts in schedules.

Adjournment:

The retreat was adjourned at 4:02 p.m.