

SOUTHERN METHODIST UNIVERSITY
Faculty Senate Meeting
Wednesday, January 29, 2014 – 3:10 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Hughes-Trigg Ballroom West

Present:

Ex Officio: Paul Ludden

Visitors: Al Niemi, Rick Hart, Linda Eads, Lisa O'Donnell, Harold Stanley, Dennis Foster, Rhonda Blair, Tom Fomby, other faculty

1. The meeting was called to order by President Santanu Roy at 3:12 PM.
2. The minutes of the Senate meeting on December 4, 2013 were approved. Minutes of the Executive Committee meeting on November 20, 2013 were presented.
3. As part of the Focus on Doctoral Programs this year, Dean Al Niemi of the Cox School of Business was invited to make a presentation. He first spoke about his background, having been Dean at Cox for the past 17 years, and his extensive experience in reviewing and accrediting programs around the country. He then provided some details about the students and programs in the Cox School. They have over 800 Masters students, and are the second largest business school in Texas. Including the BBA students, they graduate over 800 students each year. They offer a variety of Masters degrees, including several in conjunction with other schools on campus. Others, such as in business analytics, are in various stages of discussion or planning, and represent significant opportunities in the future. A key consideration for any degree program is whether graduates can find employment. With respect to offering a PhD degree, SMU is one of only 5 schools in the top 50 that does not offer a PhD, the others being Notre Dame, Georgetown, Wake Forest and Dartmouth. Both Baylor and TCU have begun offering the PhD. The possibility of offering the PhD degree at SMU has been discussed regularly. Among the advantages, he felt, would be to enhance the reputation of SMU by placing our graduates at other schools around the country, or world. The degree might attract faculty who would otherwise not come. The disadvantages include the cost of the tuition waivers, the extra effort, and the potential change in culture among the faculty, with less collegiality.

Dean Niemi emphasized that all schools and programs contribute towards the recognition of SMU nationally and internationally, and so the success of any program is important. He pointed out two interesting aspects of an improving university. Current demographic trends show that the population of Texas and other southern states is increasing, and that makes it easier to increase the quality of the student body. In addition, the better economic climate for employment in states such as Texas makes it more likely that students will be inclined to come here.

4. The Senate welcomed a second guest, Athletics Director Rick Hart. He first spoke about his father and grandfather, who were both athletics administrators. Before coming to SMU he had been the Athletic Director at the University of Tennessee-Chattanooga for 6 years. He was attracted to the quality of life in Dallas, and the leadership of the university here, and also the potential that the experience here could offer. He then described the structure of his organization, including student athletes and staff. He briefly described an incident that was in the news this week, about an apparent improper grade change on the transcript of a student that was admitted to SMU for last Fall. He said that the student, who is currently on the men's basketball team, was admitted on the basis of the original transcript, and this grade change occurred after his admission.

Over the past several years the university has supported the athletics department (8.1, 7.3, 7.1, 5.5, 4.9, and 4.7 million dollars per year), but a graph that he presented showed that this increased to 8.5 last year and to a projected 9.9 this year, conditional upon about an additional \$4 million in fundraising. Two factors contributed to this apparent spike. First was a change in the accounting of donated funds, in which now the income is spread out over the years in which the funds are actually spent. Second, is that investments were made in anticipation of increased television revenues upon joining the Big East. In the conversion to the American Athletic Conference, the revenues decreased dramatically, by about 7-8 million dollars. There might be an opportunity to re-negotiate the television contract soon. Overall he expects the conference situation to be stable for several years, but further re-alignment is likely eventually. He also spoke about his efforts to develop standards and expectations among the athletes and staff. He cited a competition to have the highest GPA among women's sports teams. He was asked if there are any studies demonstrating what the benefits of supporting Division I athletics are. He noted that only about 20 of more than 300 schools break even or turn a profit. Reducing the athletic deficit has been a priority for many years at SMU.

5. One announcement concerned the upcoming campaign to solicit donations from faculty and staff.
6. The meeting was adjourned at 4:58 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Steven Vik