EXECUTIVE SESSION

An Executive Session of the Senate convened at 3:00 to vote on nominations for honorary degrees. Ballots were distributed to senators for their votes on the nominees before the beginning of the regular meeting of the Senate.

MEETING OF THE ENTIRE SENATE

The regular meeting of the Senate began at 3:15 in the Kendall Cram Room of the Lavin Bernick Center. 38 Senators were present.

Presiding: President Michael Fitts

ATTENDANCE:

NON-VOTING SENATORS: M. Davies, S. Ramer


DEANS:

FACULTY SENATORS:

Freeman School of Business: J. Page

Newcomb-Tulane College: L. Kaplan

Architecture:

Continuing Studies:

School of Law: A. Babich, J. Duggan

School of Liberal Arts: O. Sensen, A. Truitt, J. Wolfe.

School of Medicine: E. Boh, S. Landry, Z. Pursell, D. Mushatt, D. Majid.

School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine: M. Do, P. Kissinger


School of Social Work: C. Burnette.

Libraries, Academic Info & Resources:


STUDENT SENATORS: A. Gibbons, N. Fears, S. Levin, P. Wolfe for M. Payne.

STAFF SENATORS: N. Bush, A. Pick

COMMITTEE CHAIRS: H. Long, T. Cole, M. Davies, J. Lipman, D. Kehoe, E. Boh,


INVITED GUESTS, DIRECTORS & PRESIDENT’S OFFICE (NON-VOTING):

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF SENATE MEETING OF OCTOBER 10, 2016:

A motion to approve the corrected minutes of the Meeting of October 10, 2016 was seconded and passed unanimously.

INTRODUCTION AND REMARKS BY PRESIDENT FITTS:

President Fitts began by sharing good news on a variety of fronts. First, he is pleased with the appointment Ginny Weiss as our new Executive Vice-President of University Relations and Development. We can all agree that there are few things more important than this job. He mentioned as well that the last three years have been the best three fund-raising years in Tulane’s history. The research being done at Tulane is also garnering important recognition. We are members in American Association of Universities (AAU), which includes the top 62 research universities in the United States. He emphasized that this status and recognition is critically important to us on many levels. It means that we rank well among universities all over United States. The criteria for such recognition are clear. Going forward, it’s vital that we strengthen our position within the AAU. One criterion is research, and the level of research citation. This is a benchmark and report card of an institution’s standing. The AAU doesn’t ask institutions to leave the AAU easily, but it’s important that we show we belong there. Our research funding during the past year went from 115 to 160 million dollars, a reflection of the faculty’s hard work in securing research grants. We need this and higher numbers to retain our AAU membership, but it’s an extraordinary increase and we want to support faculty in every way possible. We’re looking to enlist donors to support research. He noted that Professor Maureen Lichtveld of our School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine was recently elected to membership in the National Academy of Medicine on the basis of her research and her role as a leader in the field. This kind of recognition is great for the faculty and the university at large.

President Fitts mentioned two other pieces of good news that concern the university’s finances. First, he reported that we anticipate achieving a balanced budget this year, which is a real achievement. As a part of this we refinanced money that was on a line of credit. Following the reaffirmation of our bond rating by rating agencies, we proceeded to refinance our debt just before the presidential election, when the rates changed. In this regard both the refinancing and its timing were winning strategies.

Here President Fitts added a quick note on early decision in admissions. Such early admission, he pointed out, is an excellent way to recruit students who have identified us as their first choice. We thought we would have a return of from 300-400 such applications, but in the end we got over 1000 applications for early admission. We’re now projecting about 350-400 early decision freshman students next year, which would reduce the overall freshman class to around 1700. So this has been a very special return that is a sign of our improving reputation.

Finally, President Fitts added a few words about the diversity of Tulane’s student body and faculty. Such diversity, he argued, is an important strength in great universities. It’s critical for us to achieve this together
with the kind of campus environment at Tulane that supports it. He acknowledged that we’ve made some real progress in this regard, but made it clear we still have a lot to do.

At this point President Fitzts turned the floor over to the two co-chairs of the Presidential Commission Race and Tulane Values: Professor Tanya Tetlow, Vice-President and Chief of Staff, and Professor Michael Cunningham, Associate Provost for Graduate Studies and Research. Professor Tetlow spoke first, indicating that the Presidential Commission on Race and Tulane Values included a broad representation of student and faculty leaders and staff across the entire university. The commission members broke immediately into committees. They were anxious to address student concerns as well as questions of faculty and staff diversity. As far as admission is concerned, Professor Tetlow reported that we have made progress in accepting more students of color. Although our yield witnessed a slight uptick, it was unfortunately not as great as we had hoped. Tulane has diversified the admission staff, she reported, and we are working to recruit students of color both locally and nationally. In order to foster an increasing enrollment of students of color, she stated, we will devote more of our financial aid to need, which is a change. Overall, our admissions office is working hard to recruit students of color.

We also want to create a campus climate that is welcoming to all students at Tulane as well as provide better support for students of color when they get here. We want to figure out ways to provide specific spaces for students of color. For example, she suggested that we might be able to use the Rathskeller during the daytime for this purpose. We also want to increase the availability of emergency funds for students who may need it. We have a center for academic equity that focuses its efforts on students who are the first generation of their families to attend college. We’ve expanded TIDES classes to include questions of diversity. She posed the question of whether we should have a diversity requirement in the core curriculum as part of our effort to change the overall climate on the campus. We are also conducting surveys to try and measure the current campus atmosphere more closely.

Associate Provost Cunningham then spoke about the efforts of the subcommittee on increasing diversity within the faculty. One thing we’re doing, he pointed out, is working with search committees to identify diversity candidates that might be available in the pool. Professor Cunningham mentioned that he is working with deans to figure out ways that could enable us to hire more faculty of color. For example, we are seeking to provide more materials that would enable search committees to educate themselves about recruiting from a diverse pool. We want to raise money to make ourselves more competitive in hiring faculty of color. Professor Cunningham expressed particular interest in creating mentorships and hiring a faculty trainer to improve support for faculty of color here. The Office of Institutional Equity will also try to make sure that we are making progress in encouraging the companies with which we have contracts to adopt inclusive policies. Professor Lipman asked how we regard Sodexo and what minimum wage Sodexo pays its workers. (The answer is $10/hour). Professor Allison Truitt asked
what is being done not only for recruitment, but for the retention of faculty of color once they have been recruited. Professor Cunningham responded that we are focusing on ways to increase our admission for particular groups, particularly students of color. This really calls upon us to bring more mentors on board. We’ve spoken in our deliberations about a number of other ideas of creating and keeping faculty of color. Professor Tetlow mentioned that some of the ideas involved hiring not simply junior faculty but senior faculty with broader research records. We need to find ways to broaden support for advising duties and so on.

Professor Michele White is excited about supporting students and junior faculty of color by having more senior faculty of color. But, she asked, are there opportunities and financial support to make this possible? Professor Cunningham answered that we’re one task we have undertaken in this regard has been to look at faculty that have left in the past few years and ask: what could we have done to keep them at Tulane? Professor Tetlow mentioned that the broader issue is money, both to recruit and retain. We have been emphasizing this in our fund-raising, and certainly we will need money to compete in hiring and retaining such high profile senior faculty or color. Professor Cunningham added that we anticipate that some colleagues of color will move on, but this in itself does not reflect badly upon us. Another senator addressed the problem of hiring senior hires who can serve as mentors. He wanted to caution members of the commission that, however reasonable this sounds, it tends to assume that faculty not of color cannot serve as mentors. The idea that mentors have to be of persons color, he argued, isn’t real. No one person should have to shoulder the burden of mentoring everyone. All members of the faculty should be involved in mentoring, but we need as well people who may have a better understanding of just how to do this most effectively. President Fitts acknowledged that senior professors of color are often inundated with mentoring and administrative duties. He agreed that we need to make sure that such work gets spread out and isn’t dumped on a few individuals.

Professor Justin Wolfe agreed that CELT and other campus-wide groups are bringing in speakers to address diversity issues, but he wondered whether there isn’t a way to bring such efforts down to the level of departments or schools. Those who attend programs sponsored by all-campus institutions come because of their interest in the subject and programs. Inevitably, however, success in recruiting and so on requires the participation of entire departments, which means educating those who aren’t coming to the meetings. Professor Cunningham agreed with this and emphasized just how important this broader participation is if we are to experience any success. Educating people is part of the process. Faculty orientation with new people can also foster changing attitudes. Professor White wondered whether there has been a related move to adapt the criteria of the tenure and promotion committees. She cited reports that women and people of color are not evaluated the same way as white heterosexual males. Maybe, she suggested, there is some broader institutional way in which we can address this problem. What have we done to look at the reasons why some women and faculty of color have not made it through this process? Professor
Tetlow responded that a lot of work was done on this as the commission focused on faculty retention. She believes the standards themselves are vague. Provost Foreman argued that the problem is retention more than recruitment, so the issue of mentoring is vital. The question of how we evaluate teaching is also serious, so we need to figure out ways of improving that evaluation. We need to assess classroom work better. He reported that conversations on all of these things are taking place in multiple settings. His job as he sees it is not to start initiatives but rather to coordinate them. The criteria for tenure are pretty clear, so we have to do better jobs of checking up to make sure our colleagues of color are doing well. Professor White is convinced by the numerous studies which demonstrate that women are not evaluated the same way as white men are. She frequently encounters skewed comments on teaching in evaluations. Professor Cunningham argued that we need to educate committees as to how they evaluate teaching. Professor Dennis Kehoe interjected that he has been on the Promotions and Tenure Committee four different times. On the basis of this experience, he insisted that P&T committees don’t evaluate teaching on the basis of the regular teaching evaluations. The basic evaluation is done inside the departments. There are departments who don’t properly mentor junior faculty, but he doesn’t see the problem at the tenure committee level. It’s the department that is chiefly responsible here, and the care and skill with which departments operate varies a lot among individual departments. President Fitts thanked the members of his commission for their work. Work here varies a lot among departments.

SENATE COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Senate Honors Committee: Professor Martin Davies, Chair.

Professor Davies explained that the Honors Committee meets twice per year with the honors committee of the Board of Administrators to consider the nominations for honorary degrees that come to the committees. Those approved with a super majority of seventy-five per cent in the Senate are then forwarded to the honors committee of the Board. His task is simply to advise us how the committee works. He pointed out that every one of the candidates that came to the Senate got the seventy-five per cent support requisite to go on to the Board committee. He emphasized that the committee welcomes a larger number of nominees and made it clear that there is no maximum or minimum number of those who can be honored at graduation.

Senate Committee on Budget Review: Professor Hugh Long, Chair.

Professor Long presented his report, the extended version of which is posted on the Senate website. At its November 30, 2016 meeting, the Senate Committee on Budget Review took only one formal action, which was to make a motion that the Senate recommend the administration’s FY2018 budget assumptions to the Finance Committee of the Board of Administrators. Professor Long made it clear that the remainder of his report is the observations of the chair rather than a formal report of the Committee.
Professor Long first emphasized that this is the first time that he has actually enjoyed making this report. The tide seems to have turned in Tulane’s finances. We got great reviews from rating agencies and our bond issues were oversubscribed. The budget assumptions project a budget that will allow for both a faculty/staff salary merit pool as well as some capital reinvestment. The assumptions that came to us from the administration embody two significant changes from the past. First, the assumptions appear wholly realistic and transparent, including a projected athletic deficit that matches reality as the Committee perceives it, namely an athletic deficit for the coming year of 12-14 million dollars. Second, for the first time in over a decade the assumptions create a bottom line that is real rather than artificial. This, together with an improved salary pool, is welcome. It now seems quite possible that Tulane will successfully climb back to fiscal stability. Also, for the first time in recent history, we anticipate having a capital budget as well as an operating budget. The compensation pool has been increased to 2%, a figure that doesn’t yet match inflation. But, Professor Long pointed out, it is a move upward from this year that seems to be a good faith effort to share the fiscal improvement in the face of many competing needs. Moreover, it includes a separate pool for promotions instead of taking them out of the general merit pool, which previously was the case, making past increases smaller than stated. The motion that the Senate recommend the Administration’s proposed FY2018 budget assumptions to the Finance Committee of the Board of Administrators comes from the SCBR and thus requires no second. The floor is therefore open for discussion.

Professor Allison Truitt recalled how hesitant the University has been to increase tuition and room and board. In the budget assumptions, however, she noted that there are such increases. Professor Long responded that the increase in undergraduate tuition is slightly higher than last year, but it was approved by Board this fall. The increases in room and board on the other hand are simply a continuation of recent practice. The market is sensitive most of all to tuition. Vice-President Patrick Norton spoke to the issue of overall tuition increases. Members of the administration believed that they had to increase tuition this year, but he agreed that we cannot go on forever raising prices above inflation. President Fitts remarked that he had looked carefully at room and board and found that we’re barely up with our competition. This is likely to be the last time for a tuition increase at this level. The tuition discount rate for undergraduates within the assumptions is 40%. Professor Michele White urged that more of the tuition increases should be devoted to raises. She pointed out that the modest increase in tuition is still higher than the proposed faculty raises. She urged the administration to recall that housing, insurance, and other living expenses are not decreasing for faculty or staff. If you want to know why retention is a problem, she argued, then look at the money for raises. Professor Justin Wolfe asked whether the athletic deficit reported in the budget assumptions constituted any kind of improvement. Professor Long responded that the actual deficit last year was 17 million dollars, so progress is being made here on reaching Athletic Director Dannon’s goals. He added that we are engaged in seeking some renegotiations on the use of Yulman Stadium,
but we can’t count on that for FY 2018. There are some other efforts going on that are taking longer than originally anticipated. Only the senior administration can speak to what policy position the board may wish to consider.

Professor Long expressed his own view that the 14 million dollar athletic deficit is expected to shrink, but that it will never get back to the old “allowable” deficit of 7.5 million dollars that had not been the reality for years, but we might be able to bring it closer to 10 million dollars over time. Professor White would like to have some guarantee we aren’t going to enter another cycle of hiring and firing coaches that will cost us millions. She’s concerned that in such circumstances the athletic deficit could indeed escalate. President Fitts noted that when he came here the stated assumption was that there was an allowable deficit of 7.5 million. The actual losses, however, were much higher. What he and his colleagues have been trying to get is a full analysis of the actual costs. The transparency here is intended to show that we’re making every effort to move things in the right direction. Another senator asked: Do we have a specific goal in mind? Are we comfortable with the figure of 12-14 million? Vice-President Norton responded that he has looked at this, and the estimated range of the athletic deficit is 12-14 million dollars as we look out into the foreseeable future. We thus have some more work to do in this regard.

Professor Truitt asked what expenditures for the athletic program are in fact recorded as expenses under some other program. Is financial aid counted as part of the subsidy? Professor Long replied that the committee has the information on the tuition discount for athletes compared to the entire undergraduate population. The committee is working to get a comprehensive economic picture of athletics to include the athletic scholarships as well as the expenses for tutoring and related academic support items that are part of the Provost’s budget.

President Fitts mentioned that the stadium, including its operating expenses, along with our transfer to a new conference, have all increased our costs. Adding sports teams in order to conform to NCAA rules has also increased our costs. In short, the deficit is by no means attributable to football alone. Professor Lipman asked what the subsidy would be going forward. President Long answered that the 14 million dollars is the subsidy projected 2018. This is in line with what we’ve actually been spending over the past few years. Vice-President Norton remarked that now, at least, we have a realistic estimate of what the subsidy is; our task at this point is to move this number down as much as we can. President Fitts noted that he would not be happy if this subsidy were to exceed 14 million dollars. Another senator asked: “How can we bring this down?” President Fitts responded that unexpected things happen, but that no one should be going over their budget without a justification for this: it shouldn’t happen. In fairness, avoiding such excesses is what this current budgeting process is supposed to foster. Professor White noted that 12-14 million is a pretty big spread: could we demand that it be 12 million? President Fitts reminded her that this is ultimately a decision made by the Board of Administrators. We’ve brought the deficit down, and we’re working to bring it down further by finding revenues and cutting expenses. We’re very much focused on
doing this. But to specify a hard number here, he argued, would not be helpful.

Vice President Norton added that we’re looking beyond 2018 now to 2019. Professor Wolfe asked: Is the new budget model in this budget we’ve been discussing today? Will we get a report on how much the new budget model will save us? Will that come this year or next year? Professor Long replied that the new budget for this year is a shadow budget. When we get to April of this coming year we’ll be able to see the two budgets side by side. In the subsequent year we’ll be able to see whether the new budget model and its savings devices are working and producing the effects we want. Professor Wolfe repeated his question: will we see the comparative figures for this in the coming year? The answer to this, Professor Long indicated, is “yes”. Professor White asked about today’s vote on the budget assumptions. The question is: If a “yes” means that we recommend these assumptions to the board, what happens in case of a “no” vote? Professor Long responded that we could make alterations or amendments. Professor White stated that she would like to recommend that we review the assumptions on salaries and on the budgeting on athletics. Professor Long noted that in practical terms this would be difficult. The Finance Committee of the Board will make its recommendations to the Board of Administrators on Thursday of this week, so we couldn’t get such revised recommendations to that committee by Thursday. These are assumptions, after which there will be six months of active work to realize the assumptions. The Board’s action could change the assumptions, and the Administration could determine later this year that the assumptions need to be altered. If they did so, then the revised assumptions would have to come back to the Committee and to the Senate. Professor Truitt asked whether the 1720 students anticipated in the fall plus 100 transfer students is a larger entering class than earlier assumptions indicated. The response was that this assumption is still lower than number we had in the class that entered this fall. At this point a senator called the question. Professor Long repeated the motion, which was to recommend the assumptions to the Finance Committee of the Board. The motion passed with one dissenting vote.

Senate Library Committee: Professor Elisabeth McMahon, Member, Senate Library Committee and Dean of Libraries David Banush in place of Professor Jim Boyden, who has a class scheduled at the Senate meeting time.

Dean Banush asked that the Senate go directly to questions, since the committee’s report is posted on the Senate website. Professor McMahon could then answer questions. Professor McMahon noted that space is becoming a major issue. The voluntary separation program has meant that 1/3 of the library staff vacancies are not being filled. The Library Committee believes that this could create a long-term problem in services provided. Professor White urged that she has encountered problems in subscribing to new research journals, something she sees as a teaching as well as research problem. Dean Banush urged faculty members to send journal suggestions to the liaison officer for their respective departments. He also noted that, since subscriptions are often bundled, the very nature of those subscriptions makes it difficult to cancel a single title
since it is part of a package. Dean Banush acknowledged that in the separation program the library lost one librarian position.

**Senate Educational Policy Committee:** Professor Teresa Cole, Chair.

Professor Cole noted that the Educational Policy Committee has a meeting scheduled for January 30, and the committee will be formulating recommendations at that time. Professor Lipman asked whether that report will come to the Senate, and Professor Cole assured her that it would.

**Senators’ Opportunity to raise questions about any of the Brief Committee Reports on issues committees anticipate in the coming year.** The reports have been posted on the Senate website.

There were no questions at this meeting of the Senate.

**Old Business**

**Second Reading and Vote on Proposed Revision in Faculty Handbook: General Counsel Howard Boyd and Associate Provost Ana Lopez.**

The Senate vote on this motion passed unanimously.

**Second Reading and Vote on Proposed Amendment to Senate By-Laws:** The Committee on Equal Opportunity and Institutional Equity recommends that its membership be expanded to include the Assistant Vice President for Student Resources and Support Services and the Title IX Coordinator as ex officio members. Dennis Kehoe presents the amendment for a second reading.

The motion to approve the amendment passed without objection.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**Second Reading: Proposed Amendment to Senate By-Laws:** The Committee on Equal Opportunity and Institutional Equity recommends that its membership be expanded to include the Assistant Vice President for Student Resources and Support Services and the Title IX Coordinator as ex officio members.

**Current Language as posted on the Senate website:**

- 3) In addition, (i) the Senior Vice President for Operations and Chief Financial Officer, the Budget Officer, the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost, the Senior Vice President and Dean, School of Medicine, the Executive Vice President for University Relations and Development, and the Vice President for Enrollment Management or their designees shall serve as resource personnel for the Committee and shall meet with the Committee regularly, and (ii) the President, in consultation with the Committee Chair, may designate additional representatives of the
University’s central administration to meet with the Committee regularly.

Proposed Language:

- 3) In addition, (i) the Senior Vice President/Chief Operating Officer, the Vice President Finance/Controller, the Director Institutional Budgets & Planning, the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost, the Senior Vice President and Dean of the School of Medicine, the Senior Vice President for Advancement, and the Vice President of Enrollment Management are ex-officio non-voting members of the Committee; and (ii) the President, in consultation with the Committee Chair, may designate additional representatives of the University’s central administration to meet with the Committee regularly.

- The proposed amendment passed unanimously.

Senate Vote on New Associated Student Body Constitution.

Student senators reported here, summarizing the reasons for this change.

- The change proposed here has been approved by the Senate Student Affairs Committee. Such proposed changes would normally be presented by Professor Rebecca Marks, Chair of the Student Affairs Committee, who is unable to attend this Senate meeting. The proposed change is brought before the Senate by Vice-President for Student Affairs Dusty Porter, Nick Fears, ASB President, and Autumn Gibbons, USG President, all voting members of the Senate. The Senate must approve these changes before they are sent to the Board of Administrators for final approval.

- Overview of Current Constitution as posted on Senate website:

- The original Associated Student Body Constitution maintains an Associated Student Body President who represents all students at Tulane and chairs the Associated Student Body Assembly meetings. The Associated Student Body President is given control of 1% of all student activity fees. The constitution also calls for a Graduate and Professional Student Association (GAPSA) and a Undergraduate Student Government (USG) that each have their own President, Executive Board, and Assembly. Each government is allocated 99% of their constituents’ student activity fees. These two governments operate independently of each other and only interact when it benefits both governments. The interaction between the USG and the GAPSA governments can occur with or, as happens most often in practice, without the involvement of the Associated Student Body President.

- Overview of Proposed Changes

- The proposed Associated Student Body Constitution shall remove the position of Associated Student Body President and facilitate communication between the Graduate and Professional Student Association and the Undergraduate Student Government through a joint
cabinet of equal graduate and undergraduate student representation. This joint cabinet will be made up of the Presidents and Executive Boards of each student governments. Each government will receive 100% of their constituents’ student activity fees.

After a brief discussion, these proposed changes in the Constitution of the Associated Student Body passed unanimously.

In the absence of other business, the meeting adjourned at 5:10p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Samuel C. Ramer
Secretary of the Senate