Faculty Senate Minutes for
Wednesday August 11, 2010

In Attendance: Bennett Amaechi, Yidong Bai, Margaret Brackley, Krista Bowers, Sara Gill, Keith Krolick, Kaparaboyna Kumar, Mark Nadeau, Barry Norling, Catherine Ortega, V Sreenath Reddy Mark Soucy, and Rajeshwar Rao Tekmal,

Absent: Allison Beck, Diana Beckmann-Mendez, Nandini Ghosh-Choudhury, Peter Gakunga, Donna Gardner, Daniel Johnson, Joe Conner, Sally Combest, Christopher Franka, Qitao Ran, James Roberts, and Brent Shriver

The Meeting was called to order at 4:00 PM by the Chair, Dr. Ben Amaechi.

University Topics: Campus Update: Dr. Theresa Chiang, Vice President for Academic Administration gave the campus update. Graduate School Dean Search three candidates selected for visits. Decision will be made about which candidates to bring back for second visit. Promotions for 2009-2010 cycle are being voted on by the Board of Regents this week. A new designation has been approved by the UT System recently. The title is: Distinguished Teaching Faculty. Members of the Academy of Master Teachers were eligible. Ninety names were sent to the System office for approval. These faculty members have been approved and can now use this title. Each year, new names will be submitted to the system for review.

Dr. Chiang commented on other agenda items. HB 2504 is a rule for academic campuses and does not include Academic Health Science Centers. We have placed syllabi and CVs where there is public access to these. As for criminal background checks, the HSC already conducts criminal background checks on new employees or people changing positions in the university.

Schools/Budget Reduction: Dr. Amaechi asked Senators to report on how the individual schools were handling budget reduction and the nature of faculty involvement. The School of Health Professions: Senators reported faculty involvement on many levels. The Faculty Advisory Council had the budget and looked department by department for ways to tighten spending. A larger task force looked at ways to be more efficient by decreasing duplication of tasks. They looked at how to combine coursework. There was a town hall meeting that asked for all ideas to be brought to the table for discussion. It was noted that the school has an Interim Dean who may be more open to faculty involvement in decisions.

Dental School: Senators reported a more top down approach that lead to combining department. Faculty were not as involved in decisions. Many of the decisions were questioned as to the whether or not the goal of budget reduction was achieved. A website was available for faculty to provide their input, however questions were raised as to how these suggestions were used.

Medical School: Senators reported little knowledge of how changes are being made and what the plans are. No faculty involvement was reported. Some concern about the use of the XYZ
plan that may reduce salaries during these trying economic times. It was noted that the new Dean may take a different approach now that he is on campus.

Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences: Senators reported no faculty involvement in the decisions. An emphasis is now on increasing federal grant funding as the target goal.

Nursing School: Senators reported a decision in Faculty Council to reduce “entertainment expenses” which has been implemented. An administrative decision to reduce from 3 to 2 departments was revealed to senior faculty and faculty leadership groups. Faculty were not involved in these decisions. Like the Dental School, the question of whether or not this change will this save money since no positions were lost is unanswered. There is a renewed emphasis in the school on seeking both research and other federal grant funding plus increasing clinical practice contracts and clinics. Faculty have been involved in lots of grant writing.

Voluntary Exit Incentive Plans: A plan was circulated from the College of Arts and Sciences at UT-Austin. The plan encourages faculty to retire with twice their salary if they meet the 93 rule-age plus years of service must equal 93. Discussion focused on whether or not this plan or one similar to it is a possibility on this campus. Dr. Chiang said she had no information on this. President Henrich did mention in his Town Hall meeting that all options were being discussed by the Executive Committee, including a plan such as this one.

The meeting was adjourned by Dr. Amaechi at 5:15 PM.