

**XXXVIII Faculty Senate
President's Report
11/08/07**

The Academic Affairs Executive Council meeting for October, scheduled as a retreat at the Zoo Treehouse facility, was cancelled.

The regularly scheduled Executive Committee meeting with President Webb and Provost Radke was cancelled. Provost Radke was called out of town, and President Webb had a budget meeting called by the Regents.

I have had discussions with President Webb, Vice-Provost LaGrow (electronic), and Legal Counselor Morelli relating to the complexities of Bill 2103 as presented at the Oklahoma Regents for Higher Education Faculty Assembly meeting, which I attended on Saturday, October 27th.

At the Faculty Assembly, representing the Regents, were Vice Chancellor for Administration Debra Stuart and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs Houston Davis. The Chair of the Faculty Advisor Council was Jim Lambert.

Many significant points were made, but those that I believe we need to keep in mind include the following.

Oklahoma, competition and the global perspective: we have approximately 33-37,000 high school grads per year, while Texas has about 240,000 and China about 10,000,000. We have a small pool of graduates and need to keep as many of them in state as we can. There are clear correlations between BA & BS degrees and income/living standards.

In Oklahoma, the number of degrees granted has increased over the last five years (a 25% improvement with only a 9% enrollment increase). In general percentages, Oklahoma is roughly 33rd to 34th in the nation in terms of persons with college degrees. Our percentage of high school graduates has increased, but the overall income per capita is low compared to the rest of the nation.

It is distressing to note that 37.6% of Oklahoma high school graduates get remediation in the freshman year, and 14,600 do not graduate from high school with their peers.

The number of Oklahoma high school graduates is not going to increase in the forthcoming years. There are clear demographic projections which indicate generally dropping numbers, with a couple of small rises to nearly the current numbers. The trend is downward and all state institutions will need to consider ways to deal with this demographic reality.

There is a very obvious gender gap. There are many surveys indicating a large discrepancy between male and female enrollment and an even more dramatic discrepancy between male and female graduation rates. The problem is summed up in the descriptive phrase, "the disappearing male in higher education." This is a national trend, in which Oklahoma is statistically average.

Funding, state and federal, has been quite flat, with increasing costs being passed along to the students; hence, the amount students borrow has soared. There are really astounding charts presenting this information. In Oklahoma, over the last 20 years, the percentage of campus revenue from the state has gone from 75-76% of institutional operating costs to the current 40%. The rest has been picked up by tuition, hence loans.

I must emphasize that institutional cost increases are a national phenomenon, possibly resulting from, among other causes, the ever increasing technology expenses.

Many initiatives are underway to increase Oklahoma institutions' competitiveness in the academic marketplace, without diluting educational rigor. Among these initiatives is the Endowed Chairs Program: many Oklahoma institutions, UCO among them, have raised matching funds for the chairs, but the Regents have been unable to fully fund their side of the bargain. There will be a 125,000,000 dollar bond issue to deal with the under funding.

The opinion survey results I have distributed to you already. Discussion of the survey results emphasized the need for adjunct membership on faculty senates, a component of the widespread worries about adjuncts and our overdependence upon and exploitation of them.

I brought up the issue of health care for faculty dependents. This was a topic that, once raised, became clear as a major concern.

State Bills 2103 and 1804 were discussed. 1804 will cost money to enforce, and the requirements upon faculty are as yet unclear. 2103 is very difficult to interpret. We were told that faculty cannot require students to buy the latest edition of a textbook unless there are substantive changes: we can suggest but cannot mandate. This led us all to note that we may not have all the students on the same page. We will have to develop ways to deal with this. There is great doubt about the review for adoption copies supplied by publishers: there is a one hundred dollar limit on writing reviews of books for publishers, but it is unclear whether the dollar limit applies to review copies for adoption. I asked if the Regents' legal counsel had issued interpretations of the law, and was informed that they had not. This led to my conversation with Legal Counselor Morelli and President Webb. I believe that all institutions would be well served by having the Regents' counsel provide them with clear guidelines for operating within the boundaries of the law. President Webb indicated that he agreed with my suggestion and would propose it to the university and college presidents for Regents action.

Finally, one more item and I will conclude my report.

I attended the formal opening of the Leadership Lounge, in the Lillard Administration Building on Monday, November 5th. It is a lovely area, and the opening was well attended. Regional University System of Oklahoma Staff Executive Director Sheridan McCaffree and Regent Belva Howard were present. Regent Howard expressed great appreciation for the work of President Webb as UCO steadily moves toward greatness.