

Faculty Senate Newsletter

February 16, 2009

This newsletter consists of some recent updates from Faculty Senate President John Nolt followed by a synopsis of the January 26 Faculty Senate meeting by Faculty Senate Information Office Stefanie Ohnesorg.

I: Updates from Faculty Senate President John Nolt

Cumulative Losses of Faculty Positions

Whether the federal stimulus package will help us at UTK remains to be seen. Whatever the result, I remain deeply concerned about the cumulative loss of faculty. During this past year we have been unable to replace many faculty who have died, retired or left the university. These new losses have added to the losses we suffered from budget cuts in the second half of the 1990s, from which we have never fully recovered. In the college of Arts and Sciences, for example, the number of tenure-line faculty peaked at 523 in 1995. The cuts of the nineties reduced this to 463 in 2000. Beginning in 2002, we witnessed a slow recovery. But as of fall semester we were down to 455. (This number includes faculty from the department of Audiology and Speech Pathology, who remain for now in the college.) That's a net loss in tenure-line faculty of 13% since 1995. The pattern is similar across the campus.

At its January 26 meeting the Faculty Senate unanimously passed a resolution recommending to the Provost, Chancellor and President that:

1. The first priority for the use of any increased revenue from the uncapping of tuition or tuition increases in Fiscal Year 2009-10 be to retain current faculty or to fill faculty vacancies, and that
2. Savings achieved by efficiencies or cuts in administrative functions be applied not to other administrative functions but to retain current faculty or to fill faculty vacancies.

We will continue to insist on these recommendations.

Everyone agrees that tenure-line faculty and faculty lines should receive priority protection when jobs are lost. But there is also widespread concern about potential losses of lecturers and instructors, to whom the heaviest teaching loads typically fall. We cannot adequately staff classes with the teaching personnel we have now. Additional losses of lecturers and instructors would shift greater teaching burdens to the faculty who remain. Since lecturers and instructors are, moreover, the most cost-effective teachers, their loss does the greatest damage per dollar saved to the teaching mission of the University. One further point: about 58 percent of lecturers and instructors are women; yet women are a minority among all tenure-line ranks, from assistant to full professor—and their proportions decrease as rank increases. Losses of instructors and lecturers would therefore increase the gender disparity among teaching personnel.

Brownbag Lunches with the Provost and Faculty Senate President

Interim Provost Susan Martin and I invite faculty to join us for brown-bag lunches and discussion each month during the spring semester. The discussions will take place on February 20th, March 10th, and April 27th in 227 UC from 12:00-1:30. Please feel free to join us to discuss topics of mutual interest and concern to the university and faculty.

Help from Athletics

UTK will get some direct help this spring from the Athletics Department. This year, for the first time, Athletics will charge for tickets to the Orange & White Game, and proceeds will go to the UTK campus. I am grateful to Athletic Director Mike Hamilton for providing this assistance.

The Orange & White Game is scheduled for Saturday, April 18 at 3 p.m. Tickets are \$5 and are available online at <http://www.utsports.com/>. UT students will be admitted for free.

Chancellor Cheek plans to direct the proceeds from the Orange & White game to instruction.

Lobbying

The **Faculty Senate Legislative Task Force**, chaired by Jon Shefner, has been meeting with legislators and planning lobbying activities, with the assistance of UT's lobbyist, Anthony Haynes, and Vice President for Public and Government Relations, Hank Dye. Legislators with whom members of the task force have met so far include: Sen. Jamie Woodson, Sen. Dolores Gresham, Rep. Ryan Haynes, Rep. Harry Brooks and Rep. David Hawk. Our primary message has been the need for keeping teachers in the classroom and the need for tuition flexibility.

II: Synopsis of Faculty Senate Meeting

January 26, 2009

by Stefanie Ohnesorg

Faculty Senate Information Officer

1.) SENATE PRESIDENTS'S REPORT (JOHN NOLT)

A) Budget

News continues to be grim. While the size of the reductions for academic units remains unknown cuts of 8% reductions are considered a reasonable guess. With an 8% reduction, there would probably be a loss of over 300 positions (filled and unfilled) at UTK.

It is important that the UT budget situation continues to receive broad media coverage and that faculty voices are heard in this context. J. Nolt considers putting students first and arguing for keeping teachers in the classroom as the best strategy to deal with the budget crisis because UT is visible to the largest number of people through its students. In his view the best path to preserving the research and service missions is by keeping

teachers teaching. He pointed out that the following, if done or done more fully, could help alleviate the current budget crisis: releasing the rainy day fund, having flexibility in setting tuition, having the legislature reallocate money set aside for Governor's chairs (\$17 million) and Cherokee Farm development (\$32 million), and pursuing energy conservation (e.g., through performance contracting).

B) Program Review, Reduction and Reallocation Task Force.

The purpose of this task force is to develop a process that ensures adequate faculty input in situations where budget-based program closures may become necessary. It has drafted a procedure for budget-based program closures that takes administrative recommendations directly to the Graduate and Undergraduate Councils and then to the Senate. The proposed procedures were approved in both Councils and will be on the agenda of the February Senate meeting.

C) Faculty Senate Efficiency.

C. White is scheduled to report on increasing the efficiency of the Faculty Senate at the February meeting.

D) Research Council Policy Statements.

The Research Council chaired by J. Hall produced two important policy statements, one on research data and one on tangible research property. These policy statements are posted on the Faculty Senate website, and they were sent to all faculty members via the FACULTYINFO-LISTSERV on Jan. 13, 2009 with the request to review these statements and to send comments and input to jhall7@utk.edu. These statements will be brought to the February Senate meeting.

E) Faculty Senate Legislative Task Force.

An ad hoc Faculty Senate Legislative Task Force with the following members: J. Shefner (Chair), L. Gross, B. Lyons, H. McSween, M. Murray, and C. White. The Task Force will work closely with H. Dye and the system and on occasion travel to Nashville.

F) TUFSS. State Organization of Faculty Senates.

The statewide organization of faculty senates at four-year institutions will meet April 3-5, 2009, and J. Nolt anticipates some legislative efforts will be launched as an outgrowth of that meeting.

G) UT Faculty Council Report.

Nolt reported that it is his impression that the Board of Trustees and system administration are currently more engaged with faculty than at any time: T. Boulet met with the UT Faculty Council and President Petersen in Nashville, Boulet, B. Lyons, and Nolt met with the BOT's Efficiency and Effectiveness for the Future Task Force by teleconference, and Lyons and Nolt attended the BOT's Executive and Compensation Task Force Meeting. However, the degree of faculty influence remains to be seen.

H) Family Care Policies for Faculty.

The Office of the Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs has developed a revised Family Care Policies for Faculty. It stipulates that tenured faculty will be eligible for leave (one semester off with pay) and a one-year extension to the promotion and tenure clock for maternity, adoption, or foster care. The revisions codify what the campus has tried to practice for the past few years. The revised policy is posted on the web at <http://provost.utk.edu/policies/familycare.shtml> .

2.) CHANCELLOR'S REPORT (JAN SIMEK)

J. Simek noted that it was his last meeting as Chancellor and that it had been a privilege to serve the campus community.

When addressing the budget situation, Simek indicated the target for reductions kept changing but that currently plans were made for a 13.9% base budget reduction for the next fiscal year. Combined with the previous base budget reduction, this would result in an overall base budget cut of 20%. He noted that instruction should be emphasized for UT so that it could continue to be the strong comprehensive institution it wants to be. He said that all academic units had been asked to make 8% base budget reductions and that Facilities Services and other units would experience cuts of up to 17%. He emphasized that a tuition increase was needed, explaining that an increase of 7% would be needed to cover fixed cost increases alone. A higher increase could address other issues, with the understanding that the focus would be on the academic enterprise.

Simek noted that 220-230 positions on the UTK campus are at risk. He explained that currently less than 100 of these positions are occupied, and that the campus would do its best to retain employees. According to Simek, decisions regarding position cuts will be made as soon as possible, and programs to help and counsel affected employees would be put in place. He indicated that there are currently no plans to eliminate programs but that program consolidations and shrinkage were likely.

3.) RESOLUTIONS TO RECOGNIZE SPECIAL SERVICES

J. Heminway introduced two new Faculty Senate resolutions: one to recognize Chancellor Jan Simek, and another to recognize Vice Chancellor Denise Barlow for their services to the campus community. Both resolutions were approved by acclamation. And they are part of the January 26, 2009 Faculty Senate meeting posted on the Faculty Senate website at <http://web.utk.edu/~senate/minutes/2008-09/January%202009.min.pdf> .

4.) PROVOST'S REPORT (S. MARTIN)

S. Martin thanked Chancellor Simek and Vice Chancellor Barlow for their leadership. She explained that the Provost's Office is working on scenarios that will allow them to better understand how a smaller faculty will affect the future for the UTK campus. She also noted that S. Gardial is working on faculty job satisfaction issues, including the Family Care Policies for Faculty.

Martin emphasized that the profile of student applicants for the coming academic year is very good. She also pointed out an article in the daily newspaper that highlighted the fruits of a new student fee supporting international travel, and she reported on the high quality of Honors Program recruits. Finally, she noted that she and Faculty Senate President John Nolt are planning to sponsor a series of monthly brown bags to improve communication between faculty and administration.

5.) REPORT OF VICE PRESIDENT OF AGRICULTURE **(J. DiPIETRO)**

DiPietro pointed out that there are many joint-activities in place between UTIA and UTK that emphasize the benefits that these collaborations bring for both campuses, for example, the new Master's degree program in Landscape Architecture, a Master's in Public Health in collaboration with Veterinary Medicine, a program with Business, and one with Social Work.

DiPietro noted that UTIA is currently facing a budget reduction of about 13%, and that the focus will be on retaining faculty positions. According to his estimate, the RIF affecting UTIA will be about 100 positions of which 55 are currently vacant. In his view, one consideration of how to approach these reductions is the design of an "incentivized" separation plan. DiPietro emphasized the need for UTIA to secure funding for much needed improvements, like for example the remodeling and expansion of the Veterinary Colleges' teaching hospital for large animals, and he noted that fundraising will become more and more important in order to be able to secure finances for such projects.

6.) REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

Teaching Council Report on SAIS (I. Lane)

I. Lane introduced Elizabeth Pemberton who explained that there are 11 different student evaluations forms that faculty members can chose from. She encouraged faculty to use the online version of these forms because they not only provide instructors with feedback much more quickly but also save costs. An effort is under way to eliminate paper reports to the faculty but instead create an online site from which faculty can download reports from various years. Those with questions can contact Elizabeth Pemberton at epembert@utk.edu.

7.) NEW BUSINESS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

A.) Faculty Involvement with the Legislature (H. Dye)

Hank Dye, Vice President for Public and Government Relations, who works in Nashville with Anthony Haynes explained that the dynamics are going to change with a new Speaker and a Republican legislature working with a Democratic Governor. He noted that both Education Committees will have new chairs and in this context emphasized the importance of the constitutional officers. He noted that the budget will drive everything

and that funds from an economic stimulus package would most likely be funneled into projects that are “shovel ready.”

He encouraged faculty to look for possible damaging outcomes that result from the budget cuts and to articulate their concerns to legislators. He stressed that faculty members can aid UT’s representatives in Nashville by communicating their concerns to them and by keeping them informed about their direct contacts with legislators. Dye pointed out that it is planned to give legislators scenarios with different levels of tuition increases showing the respective impact of each on UT. One model will be with a zero tuition increase. The goal is to show cuts that have already been made, and to demonstrate that further budget cuts will make inroads to the core. Hank Dye’s e-mail address is hank.dye@tennessee.edu .

B.) Faculty Reductions Resolution (D. Bruce)

The resolution from the Budget and Planning Committee was approved and it is contained in the minutes of the January 26, 2009 Faculty Senate Meeting, posted on the Faculty Senate website at <http://web.utk.edu/~senate/minutes/2008-09/January%202009.min.pdf>

C.) UTK Honorary Degrees Policy (V. Anfara)

The UTK Honorary Degree Policy was approved by Graduate Council on December 16, 2008, and it was adopted by Faculty Senate. The UTK Honorary Degree Policy is posted on the Faculty Senate webpage as pages 8 and 9 of the agenda for the January 26, 2009 Faculty Senate meeting at http://web.utk.edu/~senate/docs/2008-09/SenateAgendaJan_26.pdf

D.) 2009-2010 Faculty Senate Calendar (T. Boulet)

The proposed calendar for 2009-2010 meetings was approved, and it is posted on the Faculty Senate webpage at <http://web.utk.edu/~senate/docs/2008-09/calendar.pdf>

E.) Faculty Senate Elections (T. Boulet)

T. Boulet stated that the elections for Faculty Senate would begin in February.

F.) Other

Update regarding the Ombuds position: In response to a question from J. Malia, J. Simek stated that the person who was offered the position had declined the offer for financial reasons and that the second candidate’s salary expectations were also too high.

Next meeting of the Faculty Senate: Monday, February 23, 2009, 3:30-5 p.m., Shiloh Room, University Center. Senate meetings are open to the public. A full agenda will be posted soon at: <http://web.utk.edu/~senate/>.