

MINUTES

University of Tennessee Faculty Senate Budget and Planning Committee Meeting 8:30 a.m. September 26, 2008 – Temple Court 202

Present: Stephen Blackwell, Don Bruce (Chair), Joneé Daniels-Lindstrom (for Denise Barlow), Nathalie Hristov, John Nolt, Harold Roth, Jon Shefner

Absent: Lee Han, Donald Lighter, Michael McKinney, Jay Pfaffman, and Karen Sowers

Campus Budget Update: The recently-circulated schedule of budget hearings should be discarded; those are actually closed meetings between the Deans and the Provost. We will be informed when opportunities for our attendance and participation become available. Regular budget hearings will take place in the spring, but the whole process has been moved up to improve planning for such things as additional program closures in the next round of budget cuts.

Discussion about this item centered on the need to continue to push for an open budget process, and for faculty involvement early and often. John Nolt reminded us about the program reduction task force that is considering a similar set of issues. He also suggested that we could ask the Provost to report on her conversations with the Deans in her upcoming reports to the Faculty Senate. John Nolt and Don Bruce will follow up with Denise Barlow and Susan Martin to clarify the budget process for this year.

Nathalie Hristov reported on her early efforts to gauge the impact of budget cuts on the number and size of class sections across campus. Preliminary numbers suggest that the average class size increased from 18.42 in 2006 to 19.24 in 2008, and more sections are being taught. The committee discussed the need to gather these data by college, and separating out undergraduate and graduate class sections.

Faculty Salary Study: Stephen Blackwell presented a preliminary version of the annual faculty salary study. He noted that he still needs to work with Donald Cunningham on improving the way in which instructors enter the study. Work is also under way to build in some new data on administrator pay relative to peer groups. Discussion considered the possibility of benchmarking new data against an older study for UTK done by Grady Bogue (which will be forwarded to the committee ASAP).

Don Bruce noted that UTK salaries are up relative to both peer groups (SUG and THEC) since the 2006-2007 faculty salary study. He also noted that the variation in the ratios of UTK averages to peer group averages is not necessarily troubling. We need to explore the reasons behind the lowest ratios. He suggested that we might want to identify the 10 units with the lowest ratios and schedule conversations with Department Heads to better understand the data.

The group voted to forward the report to the full Faculty Senate after revisions were made to reflect (a) the lack of median data for peer groups and (b) the fact that the varying ratios are not necessarily a problem, and that we would continue to look into the matter as a committee. John

Nolt agreed to check with David Patterson about what changes would need to be made to the report before it could be circulated. Specifically, we had concerns about the fact that salaries were revealed completely for units/groups with samples of one person, but not for larger groups. This unequal public display of actual salary data should be avoided if possible.

Living Wage: Jon Shefner noted that he had just begun looking into the issue and would need to better understand the tables that HR presented to our committee last spring. The committee noted that we first need to revisit the level of the living wage that is used in the scenarios provided by HR. This will involve going back to the original study and subsequent updates, as well as to the related academic literature on the issue. The committee also noted that we need to revisit the way in which other wage levels in various pay grades are adjusted in the HR scenarios in order to maintain progression in the pay system. Those scenarios often add the same amount (or percentage amount) across the board in order to preserve the pay distribution. This is almost certainly not necessary, and should be revisited this year as we work with HR to update the tables.

Differential Tuition: Joneé Daniels-Lindstrom noted that differential tuition could occur from campus to campus (the focus of the recent Faculty Senate Resolution and much of the subsequent media response), from college to college within a single campus (which is also being discussed), or even from class group to class group. The latter possibility generated some discussion about the merits of offering retention bonuses for second- and third-year students in the form of reduced tuition, but also of levying a tax on fifth-year-and-beyond students in the form of higher tuition. No action was taken on any of this.

Academic Common Market: Nathalie Hristov discussed issues related to whether or not we should promote ACM as a response to the budget cuts. On one hand, it could allow us to weather more of the budget cutting by sending students to other campuses to complete programs that are not available at UTK. On the other hand, it could send the message that we don't need to offer a full menu of programs at UTK. Another important issue involves the portability of HOPE scholarships for Tennessee students who attend out-of-state schools at in-state tuition rates through the ACM. (An e-mail from Joneé Daniels-Lindstrom after this meeting clarified this issue, and revealed that students have to be attending a Tennessee college or university within 16 months of high school graduation in order to be eligible for HOPE; those who start in Tennessee but transfer out via ACM become ineligible.)

If possible, the committee would like to see counts of students participating in ACM from both directions (UTK students doing programs in other states, and vice versa).