

American Association of University Professors
UTK Chapter, Executive Committee Meeting
April 16, 2008
University Center 218

The meeting was called to order at 2:35 p.m. Members present: Richard Strange (President), Norma Cook (Vice President), Tom Hood (Treasurer), Laura Howes (Acting Secretary), Suzanne Kurth, Loretta Price.

Norma Cook announced that she would step down from the committee in fall 2008. Members noted her long dedication to the chapter and accepted her resignation with regret.

Old Business:

Richard Strange reported on his correspondence with Susan Martin regarding the 1999 and 2005 Faculty Evaluation Manuals. When the chapter receives these documents, they will be donated to Hodges Library for safekeeping.

Laura Howes reported on the co-sponsored event with the Association of Women Faculty, noting the critical need to improve communication with current members.

New Business:

Members discussed whether old evaluation manuals should apply to faculty hired before the current manual went into effect. The administration asserts that new manuals and faculty handbooks always supersede the old ones. Members noted that, because faculty work without legal contracts at UTK, only on the basis of letters of appointment, the administration can legally change evaluation procedures.

Members discussed possible fall program topics, including the situation of contingent faculty at UTK and the gender gap in salary and university support.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

Laura Howes
Acting Secretary

American Association of University Professors
UTK Chapter, Executive Committee Meeting
June 13, 2008
Hodges Library, 2nd floor study room

The special summer meeting was called to order at 10:05 a.m. Members present: Richard Strange (president), Norma Cook (vice president), Laura Howes (acting secretary), Suzanne Kurth, Loretta Price.

Following an announcement by the Interim Chancellor at UTK, Jan Simek, that budget constraints for 2008-09 dictated that several programs would be eliminated at UTK, the chapter's executive committee agreed to meet in special sessions to formulate a response.

Members noted a previous instance, in 2003, of program elimination at UTK. At that time as well, the administration initiated the program closures, but on November 17, 2003, the Faculty Senate passed a resolution stating that faculty must be involved in program evaluation, as it affects curriculum directly.

This time, one department slated for elimination, Audiology and Speech Pathology, holds seven tenured lines, which will be relocated "if possible," and several untenured lines, which will be terminated over the next 2 years. Members expressed deep concern with how these decisions were reached, since the Faculty Senate is charged with voting on all curricular matters and had not been consulted before this decision was made.

Members noted that this unilateral move by the higher administration violated section 1.5 of the Faculty Handbook, on shared governance, as well as a clear violation of AAUP principles. There should be an academic reason for discontinuing a program; and "financial exigency" may be used only in cases where the university as a whole is in crisis. The Faculty Senate operates an ongoing series of evaluations of programs, and these deliberations should be preparatory to any decisions about program closure for budgetary reasons.

Richard Strange agreed to contact John Nolt, the incoming President of the Faculty Senate, to see what, if anything, the Senate plans to do to respond to this announcement.

Respectfully submitted,
Laura Howes
Acting Secretary

American Association of University Professors
UTK Chapter, Executive Committee Meeting
June 19, 2008
Hodges Library, Starbucks study room

The second summer meeting was called to order at 10:08 a.m. Members present:
Richard Strange (president), Norma Cook (vice president), Tom Hood (treasurer), Laura
Howes (acting secretary), Suzanne Kurth.

Members drafted an open letter to UTK Administration and Faculty, which will be sent to
the Faculty Senate listserv, the Daily Beacon, the Knoxville News Sentinel, and posted
on VoxProf. The letter, which was revised via email after this meeting, follows:

AAUP UTK Chapter

June 23, 2008

An Open Letter to UT Administration and Faculty:

The executive committee of the UTK Chapter of the AAUP has been following and discussing, with some dismay, the recent proposal to eliminate three areas of instruction including Audiology and Speech Pathology. For those unfamiliar with the American Association of University Professors, we are a national organization whose purpose is to advance academic freedom and shared governance, to define fundamental professional values and standards for higher education, and to ensure higher education's contribution to the common good.

First, we want to state that our concern is about process. This is the third time in less than a decade (also 2000 and 2003) that budget cuts to educational programs were made without adequate faculty involvement. The AAUP "Redbook" Recommended Institutional Regulations on Academic Freedom and Tenure states in Regulation 4d, "1) The decision to discontinue formally a program or department of instruction will be based essentially upon educational considerations, as determined primarily by the faculty as a whole or an appropriate committee thereof. ['Educational considerations' do not include cyclical or temporary variations in enrollment. They must reflect long-range judgments that the educational mission of the institution as a whole will be enhanced by the discontinuance.]"

Further, our own Faculty Handbook states: "The Faculty Senate, through its Undergraduate Council, Graduate Council...gives approval for establishing new programs and for terminating existing ones. Administrative judgments about the costs of these programs inform this deliberation and in turn are affected by the judgments of the faculty as to the pedagogical and intellectual soundness of such proposals." [Section 1.8]

It is clear to us that those regulations were not followed in arriving at the proposed program closings. We call on the administration to allow sufficient time for discussion and we call on the Faculty Senate to begin full and open discussion on the future of the educational programs in question.

Sincerely,
UTK AAUP Executive Committee: Norma Cook, Tom Hood, Laura Howes, Suzanne
Kurth, Loretta Price and Richard Strange

The meeting was adjourned at 11:30 a.m.

Respectfully submitted by:
Laura Howes
Acting Secretary