

Faculty Senate President's Year-End Report

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Today, April 20, is the Faculty Senate's last meeting of the academic year. Below are some highlights of the Senate's accomplishments this year:

The Senate and the Budget

The theme of the Faculty Senate's beginning-of-the-year retreat last August was "Strategizing for Difficult Times." That has been this year's dominant concern. We are still under a 13.9 percent base budget cut that would—had Tennessee not received federal stimulus money this year—have resulted in the loss of over 300 positions at UTK. In two years that stimulus money will be gone. Most likely we will then face a budget situation much like what we were facing earlier this spring. Strategizing to mitigate that crisis will be a major task for the next two years. Our approach must be proactive. We will lose our values as a university if we resign ourselves merely to a corporate-style downsizing.

We must continue to insist that cuts take place first in administration. The Faculty Senate Budget and Planning Committee will bring to the Senate today a report that shows a sharp increase in spending in the category of "Institutional Support" (administration) in recent years. In my view this report demonstrates potential for significant administrative savings at the system level. Accompanying the report will be a resolution urging the Interim President to "exhaust any and all opportunities for efficiencies in Institutional Support and other administrative spending" before cutting programs, classes or research efforts.

The Faculty Senate also intends to participate in statewide efforts to save money and increase efficiency by reorganizing higher education. (More on this later in this report.)

Ultimately, however, public higher education in Tennessee will never receive adequate support until the legislature reforms our outdated and regressive tax structure.

Sustainability Initiatives

My motive for becoming President of the Faculty Senate was to move UT toward sustainability. The timing was fortuitous, since budgetary pressures have increased the need for energy conservation and efficiency. The Faculty Senate has played a role in the creation of UT's Energy Policy, and the Switch Your Thinking Campaign, which set an energy-saving goal of ten percent per square foot of building space over last year, has been steadily approaching that goal. Last month we achieved a saving of seven percent over March of last year. The Senate has also made its own contribution to sustainability by going paperless this year.

Senate Efficiency and Effectiveness

For most of my 30 years at UTK, I thought (not always accurately) that the Faculty Senate was ineffective. Many of you still do, as the Senate's survey of faculty opinion revealed last fall. But we are doing better. The effectiveness of the Senate was elevated during the administration of Chancellor Crabtree, who supported a policy of shared governance. That policy has continued under Interim Chancellor Simek and

Chancellor Cheek. Moreover, my predecessors and mentors in this office—Beauvais Lyons, Candace White, Deseriee Kennedy, Lou Gross and David Patterson—all increased the stature of the Senate by their dogged insistence on faculty representation in crucial areas of campus decision making.

Last summer the Senate organized under the direction of Candace White an Efficiency and Effectiveness Task Force, whose aim was to reform the Senate's structure so that each committee has the power to effect substantial change at one or more "policy intersections." The task force proposed extensive bylaws revisions, most of which were approved at the March Senate meeting. There remain a few loose ends, which will be addressed today. Expect a leaner and more effective Senate next year.

Policies on Program Review, Reallocation and Reduction

The turmoil surrounding last year's proposed closure of the Department of Audiology and Speech Pathology highlighted a campus-wide lack of both policy and planning for budget-induced program terminations or reductions. The Faculty Senate challenged the decision to close ASP. Ultimately (largely as a result of massive public outcry) that decision was rescinded. Administration of the department is now being transferred to the Memphis Health Science Center.

Both the campus administration and the Faculty Senate learned from this experience that we needed policies for joint administrative and faculty decision making in such emergencies. Interim Provost Susan Martin and I therefore collaborated in the creation of the Program Review, Reallocation and Reduction Task Force. The Task Force met over a period of months to create a set of criteria and procedures, which were approved by the Senate Executive Committee on April 6 and will come before the Senate today.

Modifications to Annual Review and Retention Review Policies

In the time since the creation of the current annual review and retention review policies, a number of glitches have emerged in the implementation of both policies. The Faculty Affairs Committee, under the able leadership of Joan Heminway, has been working to repair the glitches. Their revisions to the Faculty Evaluation Manual and the Faculty Handbook came before the Senate in March and discussion will continue in Today's meeting.

TUFS and the Potential Statewide Reorganization of Higher Education

Last spring Fred Alsop, President of the Faculty Senate at East Tennessee State University, organized a statewide meeting of faculty senates. This resulted in the creation in August of a new organization, Tennessee University Faculty Senates (TUFS). The TUFS constitution has since been ratified by the faculty senates all of the UT system schools and five of the six four-year Tennessee Board of Regents (TBR) Schools. I was elected President of TUFS at its spring retreat few weeks ago.

The organization's highest priority is to serve as a faculty voice in the potential statewide reorganization of higher education. Chancellor Manning of the TBR system and Interim President Simek of the UT system have begun assembling a task force to study the reorganization issue. I and Ed Stevens of the University of Memphis Faculty

Senate (a TUFS affiliate in the TBR system) have received invitations to serve on this task force.

Legislative Task Force

The Senate initiated this year a Legislative Task Force under the leadership of Jon Shefner. The Task Force has been active this spring carrying our messages of keeping teachers in the classroom, tuition flexibility, and the need for faculty participation in any reorganization of higher education to state officials. We have had many conversations with legislators. Some of these were arranged on campus by Hank Dye, the UT system's Vice President for Public and Government Relations. But we also organized our own legislative Day on the Hill; last Wednesday we traveled to Nashville with students from the Student Government Association and met in two teams with 21 senators and representatives from the House and Senate education committees. We have also had constructive conversations with Deputy Governor John Morgan and David Goetz, the state's Commissioner of Finance and Administration.

Faculty Rights

This year we have seen an increase in Cumulative Performance Review (CPR) cases. CPR is triggered when faculty receive poor performance reviews over a period of five years. One possible outcome is termination of tenure. Consultation with the Faculty Senate is a crucial part of the CPR process. We examine each case carefully and do our best to judge it on its merits.

Some of these cases (as well as other kinds of faculty concerns) find their way to the Faculty Senate Appeals Committee, chaired this year by Doug Birdwell, a staunch defender of faculty rights. For reasons of confidentiality, the work of this committee is largely behind closed doors, but it has been active. The Appeals Committee began the year with four active cases. During the year it received three new appeals and closed five cases. As of April 7, there were two active cases. In addition, the Appeals Committee is reviewing one CPR case.

Research Policies

The Research Council, chaired by Joanne Hall, this year completed work on two new policies governing research data and tangible research property. These were passed by the Senate at its March meeting.

Media Coverage

The Faculty Senate has been prominent in the media this year. Almost all the coverage has been positive. As spokesperson for the Senate, I have been interviewed (in many cases repeatedly) by the three major television stations in Knoxville, the *Knoxville News-Sentinel* (for which I also wrote an op-ed column), *MetroPulse*, the Associated Press, the *Chattanooga Times Free Press*, the *Nashville Tennessean*, the *Memphis Commercial Appeal*, the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, *Athletic Business* and ESPN.

The Senate has also made an effort to more communicative with the faculty, issuing quasi-periodic newsletters with the help of Senate Information Officer Stefanie Ohnesorg.

Cherokee Campus

I was appointed this year on the Master Planning Committee for Cherokee Campus (the former ag farm located across the river). There have been three positive developments with respect to that important part of UT. First, I believe that under the leadership of Interim President Simek, it will be more closely tied to UTK than it would have been under President Petersen. Second, the Faculty Senate's proposal for a childcare center on that campus has been accepted by Chancellor Cheek and passed on the UT system. Third, the campus will be designed as a state-of-the-art sustainable facility. Buildings will be oriented for use of solar energy and separated to allow the installation of geothermal fields.

Diversity

I have served this year on the Commission for Women and the Commission for Blacks, and Toby Boulet has represented the Senate on the Commission for LGBT People. I also have been a member of the Intercultural Leadership Group. Diversity concerns abound at UTK. Of special concern for the faculty is that budget cuts tend to disproportionately affect traditionally underprivileged groups. Women, for example, form a relatively high fraction of contingent faculty—the group most likely to lose their jobs in budget cuts.

Athletics

The Faculty Senate Athletics Committee, chaired by Margo Holland, serves as an important link between the faculty and the Athletics Department. They have played an important role this year in maintaining good relations with Athletics.

Faculty and Staff Benefits

The Senate's Faculty and Staff Benefits Committee, chaired by Becky Fields, has worked on family and medical leave policies and on several issues involving retirement accounts.

University Calendar

One of goals I listed in my presidential candidacy statement was to align spring break for UTK with spring break for Knox County Schools. David Patterson, who represented the Senate on UTK's Calendar committee, reports that the committee has made this alignment for the year 2010-11.

Next Year's Senate

The Faculty Senate has recently chosen Joan Heminway as President-elect. She will serve as President during the 2010-2011 academic year. Next year's President is Toby Boulet. Toby will take office on July 1. Toby and Joan are both energetic and judicious leaders whose contributions to the work of the Senate have been enormous. For the next two years, at least, the Faculty Senate will have excellent leadership.

More details on many of the items above can be found on the Faculty Senate's website: <http://web.utk.edu/~senate/>.