

Faculty Senate Newsletter

March, 2009

Update On the Budget from Faculty Senate President John Nolt

While Tennessee's economic outlook remains dark, UT's has brightened somewhat. The UT system will get a significant two-year boost from the federal stimulus package—something in the neighborhood of \$100 million in each of the next two fiscal years—together with a restoration of state funding to 2006 levels. This infusion of funds will be more than adequate to enable UTK to retain all lecturers, instructors and GTAs for the next two years. I believe it is the intent of the UTK administration to do so, and I will continue to advocate for the continuation of all classroom teachers.

However, because the stimulus money is non-recurring and because state revenues will not be much higher after two years than they are this year, we are likely once again to face a serious deficit in fiscal year 2012. We cannot, therefore, responsibly add many new tenure lines, though it should be possible to fill some empty tenure-track lines next year.

It is likely, in addition, that UTK will benefit from a significant tuition increase. (That, of course, is a mixed blessing—as I know well, being a parent of an entering freshman.) But because fixed costs, most notably energy costs, continue to increase, even a seven percent tuition hike would be enough only to cover our cost increases. We cannot, therefore, hope for much new money from tuition. Some of the stimulus money may, however, be used for energy efficiency projects, which could buy us savings that could in the long run be used for hiring faculty.

Speaking of energy savings, UTK's new Energy Policy and the Switch Your Thinking campaign are showing results. We are now using about five percent less energy per square foot of building space than we were a year ago. This is good, but we have an additional five percent to go to reach our goal. Please do your part and encourage others to do theirs.

The Faculty Senate's twin messages of keeping teachers in the classroom and tuition flexibility have been heard far and wide. We have received a great deal of media coverage both in Knoxville and in Nashville and have been heard by key legislators and officials in the executive branch of state government. Most recently, members of the Faculty Senate Legislative Task Force have had constructive conversations with John Morgan, Deputy to the Governor, and David Goetz, the state's Commissioner of Finance and Administration.

In virtually all of our conversations with state officials, the subject of a statewide reorganization of higher education has come up. Nashville is abuzz with speculation about this, and at least two bills aiming to increase the efficiency of higher education administration have been introduced into the legislature. Faculty voices must be heard in any such reorganization efforts. Last August I was elected interim President-Elect of Tennessee University Faculty Senates (TUFS), a statewide organization consisting of representatives of the faculty senates of all the UT system and four-year Board of Regents schools. TUFS will be meeting April 3-5 at Fall Creek Falls State Park, in part to craft a statewide strategy for faculty participation in reorganization efforts. I will advocate these three goals: (1) increased administrative efficiency consonant with the core values of higher education (as opposed to merely economic or corporate values), (2) the return to higher education of all savings generated by administrative efficiencies in higher education, and (3) the maintenance of UTK's status as Tennessee's flagship university.

I welcome your input and advice.

Synopsis of the Faculty Senate Meeting of Feb. 23, 2009

**by Stefanie Ohnesorg
Faculty Senate Information Officer**

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

J. Nolt commented on the following two important events and their possible and actual effects for UT: The passage of the federal stimulus package, and the resignation of President Petersen which resulted in the interim appointment of J. Simek beginning March 1, 2009. In his comments, J. Nolt pointed out that it is not yet clear whether the federal stimulus package will prevent the elimination of jobs on the UT campus, and he cautioned that funds from the federal stimulus package will not help solve any of the long term problems that face the campus. He emphasized that the campus should make it its highest priority to keep teachers in the classroom. Keeping teachers in the classroom and allowing tuition flexibility were also presented as the top priorities of the UTK campus by members of the Faculty Senate's Legislative Task Force during their meetings with Senators Jamie Woodson and Dolores Gresham and with Reps. Harry Brooks, David Hawk and Ryan Haynes. In addition to the legislative Action Day that was held by the Tennessee University Faculty Senates on Tuesday Feb 24, a retreat is planned for April 3-5, 2009, to focus on strategies that will enhance coordinated lobbying and in order to discuss the potential reorganization of higher education in Tennessee.

2.) CHANCELLOR'S REPORT (J. CHEEK)

Chancellor Cheek indicated that the three weeks he had been in office had been busy with travel to Oak Ridge and Knoxville, as well as meetings with every Dean. He pointed out that he is planning to meet with the faculty of each college and in order to discuss strategic objectives. With regard to the federal stimulus package he said that it would still be unclear how the stimulus package will affect the campus, but pointed out that any money received would be put against non-recurring issues.

The budget document to be presented to the Board will be predicated on a 9% tuition increase and the Chancellor explained the necessity for a 9% tuition increase for the Knoxville campus as follows: Currently, the campus has \$10 million in fixed costs that are not covered. Despite the reduction in consumption, the costs of utility rose due to rate increases and bringing the Haslam Business Building on line (as it is substantially larger than the building it replaced). In addition money was needed for promotion and tenure raises and to cover an increase in graduate student health insurance. A tuition increase of only 7% would be absorbed completely by these \$10 million in fixed costs currently not covered, while a 9% increase would leave at least some modest flexibility to cover more than just fixed costs.

During the Q&A period the Chancellor received questions regarding the following issues: Whether he would ensure a broad participation of the faculty in planning and building projects (Lyons), what he would do to eliminate flaws in data and/or data collection, especially in data

that are used to evaluate the quality and productivity of programs (Birdwell and Crilly), and how he would address the recent phenomenon of encroachment by the system on campus boundaries (Patterson). While the Chancellor remained vague in this reply to Lyons' question regarding broad(er) participation in planning, he indicated that he had already planned a meeting with Institutional Research in order to discuss measures that will improve of the quality of data and data-collection. Cheek further clarified that programs listed in the "Report on Academic Program Consolidations and Potential Discontinuance of Academic Programs" would be programs whose performance was being reviewed; he added that being on this list would not mean that a program would be closed. In his reply to Patterson's question, Cheek explained that his position involved representing the campus everywhere, and in this context he also emphasized his good working-relationship with interim-President Jan Simek.

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

S. Martin clarified that the "Report on Academic Program Consolidations and Potential Discontinuance of Academic Programs" that was presented to the Board (Tab 13) would list those programs that were identified by the Tennessee Higher Education Commission's (THEC) as low producing programs. She explained that such lists would be prepared by THEC on an annual basis, and that many of the low producing programs identified this year had been included in these lists for years. What is different as compared to previous years is that she had asked the Deans to take a closer look at the programs identified as low-producing programs in this year's THEC Report. She assured the campus community that no program would be recommended for closure without following proper procedure that ensured faculty involvement, and she emphasized that the Program Review, Reduction and Reevaluation Task Force (PRRR) had been working hard on developing criteria for program review, reallocation or termination. She further pointed out that she expected the Deans to consider each unit's missions and the role of individual academic programs within this mission before making recommendations regarding the consolidation or closure of academic programs.

4.) TASK FORCE ON FACULTY SENATE EFFECTIVENESS: PROPOSED BYLAW CHANGES (C. WHITE)

C. White explained that the key focus of this Task Force had been to optimize delegated authority and to identify gaps, that is, occasions when the Faculty Senate has not had a representative at the "table" in major decision-making processes. It was one of the goals of the Task Force to better align committees with policy intersections than is currently the case. Implementation of the recommendations presented by the Task Force will require several changes to the Faculty Senate Bylaws, and in addition to proposing modifications to fit the new committee structure the Task Force also "cleaned up" the Faculty Senate Bylaws. President-elect Boulet presented the proposed Bylaws changes in a first reading at the February 23, 2009 Faculty Senate meeting, and these changes will be voted on at the March 23, 2009 Faculty Senate meeting. The document entitled "Proposed Amendments to the Proposed

Changes to the Faculty Senate Bylaws” dated March 9, 2009 is posted on the Faculty Senate website at <http://web.utk.edu/~senate/docs/2008-09/Agenda%20Addendum%203-9-09.pdf> .

5.) **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The following sets of minutes were approved at the February 23, 2009 Faculty Senate meeting:

- a) The minutes of the January 26, 2009 **Faculty Senate** meeting posted at <http://web.utk.edu/~senate/minutes/2008-09/January%202009.min.pdf>
- b) The minutes of the January 29, 2009 **Graduate Council** meeting posted at <http://gradschool.utk.edu/GraduateCouncil/Minutes/20090129GCMinutes.pdf> with the amendment specifying the definition of the term “program” in the PRRR Task Force Resolution as mean “degree program, minor or concentration.”
- c) The minutes of the January 27, 2009 **Undergraduate Council** meeting posted at http://web.utk.edu/~ugcouncil/docs/minutes/UGCMinutes1_27_09.pdf with the amendment specifying the definition of the term “program” in the PRRR Task Force Resolution as mean “degree program, minor or concentration.”

The minutes of the February 9, 2009 meeting of the **Faculty Senate Executive Committee** posted at http://web.utk.edu/~senate/docs/2008-09/Agenda_2-9-09.pdf along with 3 attachments were shared as information items. These attachments are posted on Faculty Senate webpage (<http://web.utk.edu/~senate/reports/index.html>) and contain the following documents:

- Chart of Revised Faculty Senate Committee Structure
- Procedure for Review of Administrative Proposals to Terminate Programs
- Annual Performance Reviews and Retention Reviews (Proposed Changes to the UTK Faculty Handbook and Manual for Faculty Evaluation)

6.) **REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES**

A) Library Committee: UT Digital Repository (L. Phillips)

L. Phillips, UT Libraries Head of Collection Development & Management, presented a concept for a UT Digital Repository that is intended to increase the visibility of scholarly work at UT. Many services will be available through this digital repository, including the archiving of materials for preservation. Within this digital repository, materials are assigned meta-data tags, so that they can be picked up by Google. L. Phillips offered to meet with interested individuals and/or departments in order to discuss how their visibility can be enhanced through the UT Digital Repository. The contact information for Linda Phillips is lphillips@utk.edu .

B) Teaching Council: Tennessee Teaching and Learning (D. Schumann)

D. Schumann, Director of the Tennessee Teaching and Learning Center gave a brief Power Point presentation to the Senate on the various services and resources that the new Tennessee Teaching and Learning Center (located in Aconda Court) will make available to UT faculty, like for example space for private consultation, a mock classroom, and a research library. Activities planned by the Center include a lecturer certification program, and a fall luncheon series. Further

details will be announced to the campus community shortly. Schumann further explained that each department had been asked to nominate a Teaching and Learning Center ambassador in order to facilitate communication and in order to enhance collaboration between the Center and individual departments. The contact information for D. Schumann is tenctlc@utk.edu.

7.) NEW BUSINESS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Faculty Senate Elections (T. Boulet)

T. Boulet pointed out that some units had already completed elections of new Faculty Senators, and he reminded the caucus leaders of all other units to do the same as soon as possible.

Next meeting of the Faculty Senate:

Monday, March 23, 2009, 3:30-5 p.m., Shiloh Room, University Center. Senate meetings are open to the public. A full agenda is posted at: <http://web.utk.edu/~senate/>.