

# **Synopsis of Faculty Senate Meeting**

**September 5, 2008**

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**Faculty Senate Information Officer**

## **COMMUNICATION BETWEEN FACULTY SENATE AND CAUCUSES**

By now, all campus units should have formed caucuses and elected caucus chairs. In order to guarantee effective communication and timely flow of information between caucuses and senate, all caucus chairs need to send their contact information to S. Simmons ([ss@utk.edu](mailto:ss@utk.edu)) a.s.a.p.

## **SWITCH YOUR THINKING – HELP THE ENVIRONMENT AND SAVE!**

“Switch Your Thinking” is a major campus wide initiative calling on faculty and staff to change the way they look at energy with the expressed goal to reduce campus energy consumption by 10 percent this year and thus saving the university more than \$1 million from its campus energy budget. Each faculty member is urged to participate! Please go to <http://environment.utk.edu/index.html> in order to learn more about this initiative and in order to get involved in a campaign that not only benefits the environment and also helps to deal with the budget crisis.

## **CLIMATE NEUTRALITY ON THE UT CAMPUS**

Former Chancellor Crabtree committed the campus to the long-term goal of climate neutrality and in order to be in compliance, ideas about energy conservation need to be introduced into the curriculum of all campus units. Faculty Senate President John Nolt encourages faculty to send comments and suggestions related to energy conservation on campus to him ([nolt@utk.edu](mailto:nolt@utk.edu)) and Mary English ([menglish@utk.edu](mailto:menglish@utk.edu)), Co-Chairs of the Committee on the Campus Environment.

## **PROPOSED PROGRAM CLOSURES**

The Faculty Senate objected to the program terminations proposed in late spring, and as a result consideration of the program closures was delayed until the Board of Trustees meeting on October 23 and 24. Currently specially formed taskforces of the Graduate Council (contact & task force chair: Matt Murray, [mmurray1@utk.edu](mailto:mmurray1@utk.edu)) and the Undergraduate Councils (contact & task force chair: John Romeiser, [jromeise@utk.edu](mailto:jromeise@utk.edu)) are in the process of reviewing the potential academic impact that the proposed program terminations would have on the entire campus. The findings of these taskforces will be reported at the October 20 Faculty Senate meeting.

## **BUDGET CRISIS**

The budget situation for the coming year is dire, and the Chancellor asked the Deans to consider various scenarios to deal with this situation. Additional program closures might be proposed, and a new task force was formed by the Interim-Provost to establish criteria for identifying programs for closure. The Faculty Senate will continue to advocate

differential tuition and increased energy efficiency as measures to reduce the severity of the budget crisis.

### **CHANCELLOR SEARCH**

The search for a new Chancellor is underway and all faculty members are encouraged to attend the public forums held for all five chancellor candidates and/or to listen to the webcasts. Information on the five finalists, the schedule of the campus forums and the links to the webcasts are posted at <http://chancellor.utk.edu/search/finalists/index.shtml>. In addition, all faculty members are urged to consult with their colleagues at the candidates' home institutions for further input. It is important to have the entire campus community involved in this chancellor search, and everyone is encouraged to provide input and feed-back to the search committee via the following web-site <http://chancellor.utk.edu/search/feedback.shtml> , or by sending an e-mail to [chancellor-search@utk.edu](mailto:chancellor-search@utk.edu) .

### **TASK FORCE ON SENATE EFFECTIVENESS**

This new Task Force aimed at evaluating the work of the Faculty Senate is composed of faculty and administrators. It is chaired by Candace White (Former Faculty Senate President) and expects to present a report of its findings to the Faculty Senate by the end of the academic year. Faculty members are encouraged to participate in the process by taking online survey at <http://www.zoomerang.com/Survey/?p=WEB2289GFPHR5F>.

### **UPDATE REGARDING THE OMBUDS POSITION**

In spring 2008 the Faculty Senate approved substantial changes in the Faculty Handbook with reference to the Ombuds position. In the future, one full-time non-faculty person will fill this position instead of – as was formerly the case - three part-time faculty members. The search for an Ombudsperson is well underway: 9 telephone interviews were conducted, three candidates will be invited to campus shortly (announcements regarding these campus visits and possibilities for faculty input will be made via the Faculty Information listserv), and the expressed goal is to hire a full-time Ombudsperson no later than by the beginning of the spring semester 2009.

### **FACULTY HANDBOOK REVIEW & MANUAL FOR FACULTY EVALUATION**

The Faculty Affairs Committee is currently in the process of making suggestions for the following areas of the Faculty Handbook and the Manual for Faculty Evaluation: department head evaluations, the annual faculty evaluation process, and cumulative performance reviews. All suggested changes will require two readings at Faculty Senate meetings so that there will be ample opportunity for discussion and for submitting comments before any changes will be voted on. Comments, suggestions and concerns should be addressed via e-mail to Joan Hemmingway (Chair of the Faculty Affairs Committee) at [jhemingwa@utk.edu](mailto:jhemingwa@utk.edu) .

### **ATHLETICS**

Athletic Director M. Hamilton is scheduled to speak at the October 20, 2008 Faculty Senate meeting. Faculty members interested in providing input are encouraged to send

their questions, suggestions and concerns prior to the meeting to Athletics Committee Chair M. Holland ([msholland@utk.edu](mailto:msholland@utk.edu)).

### **SPECIAL RECOGNITIONS**

The Faculty Senate unanimously passed two resolutions during the Sept. 5, 2008 Faculty Senate meeting in order to recognize the services of former Faculty Senate Parliamentarian Otis Stephens and of former Faculty Senate President David Patterson were

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Below follow brief summaries of the President's, Interim-Chancellor's and Interim-Provost's reports. For a more detailed information on their presentation see the minutes for the Faculty Senate meeting of Sept. 5, 2008 posted at [http://web.utk.edu/~senate/minutes/2008-09/September\\_2008.min.pdf](http://web.utk.edu/~senate/minutes/2008-09/September_2008.min.pdf)

### **PRESIDENT JOHN PETERSON'S REPORT**

- The President commended the Chancellor's Search Committee for its excellent work
- He applauded the improvements in IT under the leadership of Jesse Poore
- He emphasized his preference of strategic cuts (as compared to across-the-board cuts) in order to deal with the budget crisis
- He recommended to collect data from institutions comparable to UT that have differential tuition in order formulate a rationale to build a case for differential tuition at UT
- He announced that he would continue to alert various constituencies around the state to the fact that UT employees do not receive competitive compensation packages
- He lauded the UT – ORNL connection as an immense asset
- He emphasized his commitment to make Cherokee Farm a sustainable green campus
- He emphasized a need to increase research productivity at UT
- He noted that Human Resources, under the leadership of L. Hendricks, will put major emphasis on helping units in their strategic planning processes

### **INTERIM CHANCELLOR SIMEK'S REPORT**

- The Interim Chancellor urged the entire campus community to join the "Switch Your Thinking" campaign and emphasized that this first phase of voluntary conservation would most likely followed by mandatory changes aimed at energy reduction on campus.
- He explained that if energy costs were not controlled they would translate into additional substantial and permanent budget cuts because of increased energy costs
- He strongly encouraged all faculty members to attend the chancellors forums and to provide their feed-back and input to the chancellor search committee candidates.

### **INTERIM PROVOST MARTIN'S REPORT**

- She urged faculty members to provide their feed-back regarding the chancellor's candidates to the members of the Chancellor's Search Committee
- She noted that this past summer a new program aimed at improving student retention had been introduced.
- She lauded the new Haslam Scholarships and new study abroad efforts and initiatives as major improvements for the UT campus.
- She pointed out that the Enrollment Management Committee is going to focus on the impact of transfer students
- She noted that Sarah Gardial is working with the Faculty Affairs Committee and the task force focused on program reductions.