

The Faculty Voice
Faculty Senate Newsletter
March 2011

Newsletter Editor: Stefanie Ohnesorg, Information Officer

This newsletter is provided to you as a means of keeping you connected to the activities of the UT Knoxville Faculty Senate, your representative body for the Knoxville campuses. The intent of this newsletter is to keep all faculty members informed about current issues before the Faculty Senate and to motivate all faculty to get involved. Questions regarding and suggestions for this newsletter may be directed to the Information Officer of the Faculty Senate, Stefanie Ohnesorg, at ohnesorg@utk.edu.

Items Covered in this Newsletter:

1. **UT Background Checks as Part of the Hiring Process**
2. **Update: Forum on the NRC Rankings Scheduled for March 9, 2011**
3. **New Service Learning Insurance Fee for Students**
4. **Update: Proposed Program Discontinuances (Majors in Russian & Italian)**
5. **Update: Faculty Senate Elections**
6. **Proposed Changes to the Faculty Handbook**
7. **Academic Outreach and Engagement Council**
8. **Employee Benefits: Healthcare**
9. **Update: Legislative Initiatives & Proposed Resolution on Guns on Campus**
10. **Proposed Amended and Restated Faculty Senate Bylaws to be Discussed in Faculty Senate on March 7, 2011**
11. **Faculty Senate Updates**
 - Links to Minutes, Agendas, and Reports
 - **Major Items on the Agenda for the March 7, 2011 Faculty Senate Meeting**
 - **Make Your Voice Be Heard! Provide Input via the Senators from YOUR Unit!**



1. UT Background Checks as Part of the Hiring Process

Faculty Senate President Joan Heminway has been attempting to get clarification on the status of the newly implemented policy on background checks (http://humanresources.tennessee.edu/011211_background.html), and she reported on this matter at the Faculty Senate Executive Council meeting held on February 21, 2011. Background checks apply only to new employees. The initial release offered as part of this policy was overly broad. A new draft will be released shortly. Some other issues that have been raised regarding this new policy, however, remain to be resolved. These include questions related to the processes that will be put in place when the background check turns up some negative information, or the procedures to be put into place when a candidate is from a foreign country where background checks cannot (or at least not in the same way) be conducted as they can be in the U.S. It also remains unresolved how the new policy might affect equity issues. The idea is to protect the university but not to invade the privacy of individuals unnecessarily. In order to find guidance on how these issues could be resolved, Heminway encouraged that

policies on background checks from other universities be studied. This will also allow us to assess how UT's policy compares to those from peer and aspirational peer institutions. Currently, the background check is conducted in the appointments process after the narrative summary is finished. It is initiated by requesting that each of the individuals in the final candidate pool sign a release form. The resulting background check reports will be reviewed before a final letter of appointment is released.

Human Resources is subcontracting the background checks to a private company, and information requested includes fair credit and police reports. Most background checks can be finalized in 24-48 hours, with a few extending to 3 days, and the overall delay in the hiring process due to background checks is estimated to be approximately one week.

2. Update: Forum on the NRC Rankings Scheduled for March 9, 2011

Dr. Carolyn Hodges (Dean of the Graduate School) and Dr. Ken Stephenson (Chair of the Research Council) will hold a forum on the NRC rankings data on March 9 at the Lindsay Young Auditorium in Hodges Library from 3:45 to 5:15 pm. Faculty Senate President Joan Heminway will chair the session, and Dr. Carl Wagner (Professor of Mathematics) and Dr. Tom Ladd (Associate Dean of Research and Technology in the College of Business Administration) will be the main presenters. They will explain the methodology underlying the NRC rankings and suggest ways to compare data on Ph.D. production at UTK internally and with the Ph.D. production at other institutions in order to assess where we are now and how we compare with our aspirational peers. Time will be reserved for questions from the audience, and all interested faculty are encouraged to attend.

3. New Service Learning Insurance Fees for Students

The university charges an extra \$32 per semester hour insurance fee for students enrolled in service learning classes, and all faculty teaching service learning courses are urged to alert their students to this insurance fee. Faculty Senate President Joan Heminway has urged the Provost's office to look into ways of cutting back or eliminating this fee for at least some service learning opportunities.

4. Update: Proposed Program Discontinuances (Majors in Russian & Italian)

Provost Martin reports that she received the report from the Department of Modern Foreign Languages that she had requested as part of the review process. She promised a quick response to that report.

5. Update: Upcoming Faculty Senate Elections

At the Faculty Senate Executive Council meeting held on February 21, 2011, Faculty Senate President-Elect, Vincent Anfara (vanfara@utk.edu) reported on the forthcoming Faculty Senate elections. The ballot with the names of candidates for the upcoming election was sent to Cary Springer (OIT) on February 21. She will create the online ballots for each of the colleges, and Rob Chance (Treasurer) will supply a list of eligible voters. The election will be conducted online in March.

Anfara voiced concern about the small number of names submitted as candidates for the upcoming Faculty Senate elections. Most colleges do not have two names for each vacant position (the number called for in the Faculty Senate Bylaws). The ballot will therefore contain blank lines for write-in candidates in order to meet the two-name requirement for each vacancy as outlined in the Faculty Senate Bylaws (<http://web.utk.edu/~senate/docs/2009-10/Bylaws%202009.pdf>).

6. Proposed Changes to the Faculty Handbook

At the Faculty Senate Executive Council meeting held on February 21, 2011, Steve Thomas, Chair of the Faculty Senate's Faculty Affairs Committee, introduced the following changes to the Faculty Handbook (<http://provost.utk.edu/facultyhandbook/>), and the Faculty Senate Executive Council unanimously decided that these proposed changes should be presented for adoption to the full Faculty Senate at its March 7, 2011 meeting.

- **Proposed Amendment to Section 1.4.1 of the Faculty Handbook**

(http://web.utk.edu/~senate/docs/2010-11/4-FAC_Resolution_Dean_Search_%282-21-11%29.pdf):

It is proposed that Section 1.4.1 of the Faculty Handbook is revised by replacing the third paragraph in full with the following text:

"Deans are appointed after an internal or external search conducted according to guidelines published by the Office of Equity and Diversity (OED). The chief academic officer selects the chair of the search committee from outside the college and appoints members of the committee from persons nominated by tenured and tenure-track faculty members of the college. A majority of the search committee is composed of tenured and tenure-track faculty members of the college, chosen to represent a balance among the academic areas of the college. The committee may include representation from non-tenure-track faculty members, departmental staff members, students, and where appropriate faculty members from outside of the college, as covered by collegiate bylaws. According to university requirements for upper-level searches (department head and above), membership of the search committee must be diverse, particularly in terms of gender and race."

- **Proposed Amendment to Section 8.1 of the Faculty Handbook**

(http://web.utk.edu/~senate/docs/2010-11/3-FAC_Resolution_Revising_FH_MFE_%282-21-11%29.pdf):

It is proposed that Section 8.1 of the Faculty Handbook is revised by deleting the previous text and replacing it with the following text so it reads in full as:

"The Faculty Senate Faculty Affairs Committee may initiate a proposed revision to the Faculty Handbook, after consultation with the chancellors of UTK and UTIA. Each recommendation of the Faculty Senate Faculty Affairs Committee will be presented to the Faculty Senate Executive Council in the form of a resolution briefly outlining the reason(s) for the proposed revision and specifying the precise change(s) to be made. With the acceptance of the Faculty Senate Executive Council, the resolution will be presented for consideration and action at the next meeting of the Faculty Senate. Adoption of the resolution by the Faculty Senate constitutes a recommendation of the Faculty Senate to the chancellors for revision of the Faculty Handbook."

- **Proposed Amendment to Section 1.1 of the Faculty Handbook**

(http://web.utk.edu/~senate/docs/2010-11/5-FAC_Resolution_Anit-Discrimination_%282-21-11%29.pdf) with the additional change that the words "*or gender identity*" should be inserted immediately after the words "sexual orientation:"

It is proposed that section 1.1 of the Faculty Handbook is revised by inserting into the second paragraph the sentence *“The university does not discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity in provision of educational or employment opportunities,”* so that it reads in full as:

“As the state’s leading comprehensive research and land-grant institution, UT’s primary purpose is to move forward the frontiers of human knowledge and enrich and elevate society, as further elaborated in its Mission Statement. The university does not discriminate on the basis of race, gender, color, religion, national origin, age, handicap, or veteran status in provision of educational opportunities or employment opportunities or benefits. The university does not discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity in provision of educational or employment opportunities. The institution welcomes and honors people of all races, creeds, cultures, and sexual orientations, and values intellectual curiosity, pursuit of knowledge, and academic freedom and integrity. Faculty prepare students to lead lives of personal integrity and civic responsibility.”

7. Academic Outreach and Engagement Council

In 2010, the Academic Outreach and Engagement Council submitted an application for Carnegie Community Engagement Classification. The application from UTK was denied, although 115 out of the 154 institutional applications were approved for this classification in 2010. In the report that provided feed-back on UTK’s application and its rejection, it was noted that the UTK campus community engages in a large number of high-quality outreach activities, but that UTK did not provide sufficient university-wide coordination. The latter was stated as the major reason why UTK currently does not qualify for Carnegie Community Engagement Classification. The Academic Outreach and Engagement Council is currently assessing how an improvement with regard to university-wide coordination of outreach activities can be achieved, and it plans to resubmit an application for Carnegie Community Engagement Classification once this issue has been resolved. Any input on this matter should be directed Dr. Nan Gaylord, Chair (ngaylord@utk.edu) and/or Dr. Carole Myers (cmyers9@utk.edu) from the Academic Outreach and Engagement Council.

8. Employee Benefits: Healthcare

The Faculty Senate considers periodic and ongoing feedback from the campus community on employee benefits as an important means to assess the quality, importance, and perception of these benefits. The Faculty Senate is one of the possible venues to voice concerns about the continuation of and possible changes to programs and plans related to employee benefits as the opportunity arises. While no immediate efforts are underway to make specific changes, recent comments have prompted Faculty Senate President Joan Heminway to seek feedback from the UTK faculty on the following:

- our new prescription drug program through CareMark (especially drugs for which you are being denied coverage); and
- our new healthcare plans through Blue Cross Blue Shield and CIGNA (including the new ParTNers for health program)

Please send any comments you may have on these new programs to Joan Heminway at jheminwa@tennessee.edu.

9. Update: Legislative Initiatives & Proposed Resolution on Guns on Campus

In the February 2011 Faculty Senate Newsletter, it was noted that Senator Campfield is sponsoring legislation to allow faculty and staff to carry firearms on campus. Hank Dye, UT V.P. for Public and Government Relations, has alerted the campus community that he anticipates that very shortly the legislature will discuss a number of bills relative to permitting guns on campus. UT is opposing legislation that would allow faculty, staff, and students to carry firearms on campus, and Hank Dye is interested to hear from faculty groups, SGA, employee groups and others on campus who share the institution's concerns on this matter. Toby Boulet and Carole Myers intend to propose a Resolution on Guns on Campus to the Faculty Senate at its March 7, 2011 meeting. You may also direct your input on this matter to Faculty Senate President Joan Heminway (jheminwa@tennessee.edu) who will make your feedback available to Hank Dye.

10. Proposed Amended and Restated Faculty Senate Bylaws to be Discussed in Faculty Senate on March 7, 2011

A memorandum explaining the proposed ministerial changes to the Faculty Senate's Bylaws and an amended and restated version of Faculty Senate Bylaws containing the proposed changes (clean and marked) are available at http://web.utk.edu/~senate/docs/2010-11/Bylaws_Revisions-EXPLAIN.pdf, <http://web.utk.edu/~senate/docs/2010-11/FSBylaws%28clean1-31-11%29.pdf>, and <http://web.utk.edu/~senate/docs/2010-11/FSBylaws%28trackchanges1-31-11%29.pdf>. Vincent Anfara, President-Elect of the Faculty Senate had already introduced the ministerial conforming changes contained in this document to the Faculty Senate at its February 7, 2011 meeting. All of these changes will be discussed at the March 7, 2011 meeting of the Faculty Senate. The Faculty Senate Executive Council expects to approve proposed changes involving substantive matters at its March meeting and present those for review by the full Faculty Senate at its April and May meetings.

11. Faculty Senate Updates // **MAKE YOUR VOICE BE HEARD!**

The UT Knoxville Faculty Senate is the representative body through which the faculty participates in University affairs and shared governance. Through committees and a democratically elected legislative body, it promulgates policies and regulations regarding the general educational objectives of UT Knoxville. **It is, therefore, important that all faculty members stay 'connected' with the Faculty Senate by staying informed and by providing input and comments via the Senators who represent them in the Faculty Senate.**

i. Links to Minutes, Agendas, Reports etc. for 2010-11

Main Page: <http://web.utk.edu/~senate/reports/index.html>

Please make sure to scroll down to the bottom of this page in order to see the updates for all areas.

Please check frequently for updates regarding the work of Faculty Senate because new items will be added as they become available!

ii. Items on the Agenda for the Faculty Senate Meeting on March 7, 2011

(<http://web.utk.edu/~senate/docs/2010-11/FSAgenda%283-7-2011%29.pdf>), and items addressed in the Faculty Senate President's Report for March 2011 (<http://web.utk.edu/~senate/docs/2010-11/FSPresReport%283-7-2011%29.pdf>) include the following:

- ➔ Proposed Amended and Restated Faculty Senate Bylaws (V. Anfara)
- ➔ Proposed Resolutions from the Faculty Affairs Committee (S. Thomas)
- ➔ Report on UTK Application for Carnegie Community Engagement Classification (N. Gaylord)
- ➔ Faculty Senate President-elect Candidate Statement (V. Anfara, S. Thomas)
- ➔ Proposed Resolution on Guns on Campus (T. Boulet, C. Myers)
- ➔ Remarks from UT President, Dr. Joe DiPietro
- ➔ Remarks from the UTK Football Coach Derek Dooley

➔ **IMPORTANT: Make Your Voice Be Heard !!**

Provide Input & Feedback via the Senators from YOUR Unit!

- a. The List of all 2010-11 Senators (incl. contact info) is posted here:
http://web.utk.edu/~senate/docs/Membership_2011-2013_updated.pdf.
- b. All 2010-11 Senate Committee Assignments are posted here:
http://web.utk.edu/~senate/docs/Committees_2010-2011_updated.pdf.