

UTK Faculty Senate
President's Report¹
(February 2011)

In light of the amount of business on the agenda at our meeting this month, I am scripting out most of my report here. Please review this report and come to the meeting with questions, if you have any.

I. Energy Science and Engineering Ph.D. Program Update

The Energy Science and Engineering Ph.D. program, which the Faculty Senate debated and approved in October 2010 has been approved by the Tennessee Higher Education Commission. The revised "Proposal for the Initiation of a Doctor of Philosophy of Energy Science and Engineering Program" is available at <http://web.utk.edu/~senate/docs/2010-11/2 - THEC ESE PhD proposal V41.pdf>.

II. Report on the Annual Meeting of the Coalition on Intercollegiate Athletics

From January 21-23, 2011, I attended the annual meeting of the Coalition on Intercollegiate Athletics (<http://wfu.me/cms/coia/index.php/Home>), a group of Faculty Senate Presidents and other faculty representatives designed to provide a national faculty voice on intercollegiate athletics issues. The meeting focused on the funding of athletics programs, academic success issues relating to college athletes, and compliance concerns. I sent my notes to the Chancellor, the Vice Chancellor for Finance and Administration, the Provost, the President-Elect and other members of the Executive Council of the Faculty Senate, the Chair of the Faculty Senate Athletics Committee, and the UTK Faculty Athletics Representative. I am happy to send them to anyone else on request.

III. NRC Forum

Thanks to Faculty Senate Research Council Chair Ken Stephenson and Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School Carolyn Hodges, the Research Council and the Graduate School are sponsoring a campus forum on the National Research Council ("NRC") Data-Based Assessment of Research-Doctorate Programs (a/k/a the NRC Rankings). The forum will take place on March 9 in the Hodges Library Auditorium from 3:45 pm to 5:15 pm and will feature presentations by faculty who have

¹ Please read this Outline together with the minutes of the January 24, 2011 Faculty Senate Executive Council meeting and *The Faculty Voice* Faculty Senate newsletter, both of which are available at <http://web.utk.edu/~senate/reports/index.html>.

analyzed the NRC data and by Dr. Hodges. Time will be reserved for questions from the audience. All interested faculty are encouraged to attend.

IV. Offer re. Warren Neel's Book

Warren Neel, Executive Director of the UT Corporate Governance Center, former Dean of the College of Business Administration at UTK, and former Commissioner of the Tennessee Department of Finance and Administration, has offered a copy of his recently released book on higher education, *The Accidental Dean*, to any member of the Faculty Senate who would like a copy. Please contact me at jheminwa@tennessee.edu to reserve a copy. As you may note in reading the Executive Council meeting minutes from January, Lloyd Rinehart, Chair of the Senate's Teaching and Learning Council, has read the book and recommends it. A press release is available at <http://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20101007006719/en/UT-Business-School-Dean-Recommends-Overhaul-Higher>.

V. UT Background Check Release and Policy for New Hires

A number of you have raised issues regarding UT's recently introduced background check policy for new hires. The background check policy is intended to ensure a safer campus for us all. But (as a number of you have observed) aspects of it are flawed or underdeveloped. In the past week, I have raised questions with UT system personnel regarding both the form of Fair Credit Reporting Act release authorization, which is overly broad, and the nature and effects of the background check process. An attorney in the Office of the General Counsel has informed me that the release authorization form is being reviewed and revised. I am following up with Vice Provost Sarah Gardial and others on additional questions about the policy and its implementation.

VI. 2010 Campus Work-Life Climate Survey

In connection with its endorsement of the 2010 Campus Work-Life Climate Survey, which is before the Senate today for consideration, the UTK Exempt Staff Council approved the following statement and transmitted it to Dr. Margaret W. Sallee:

US businesses have taken the lead in developing domestic partner benefits programs for their employees. They see this as an inexpensive way to attract and retain talent and to gain an advantage over the competition. Many of the nation's most competitive colleges and universities, including the institutions UT compares itself too, are doing the same. Emerging research is documenting that domestic partner benefits is a cost-effective strategy for fully harnessing workforce potential. UT administration and state policy makers need to understand what the competition already recognizes: that offering domestic partner benefit programs is a cost-effective

strategy to attract and retain faculty, staff, and administrators from a greater pool of talent. And of equal importance, offering these benefits is essential if UT is to demonstrate their commitment to social and economic justice, diversity, and inclusiveness.

I determined it may be helpful to have this statement in front of you as you review and reflect on the report.

VII. Faculty “Story”

VIII. This month, since the campus is honoring all of us with the second annual Faculty appreciation Week (February 14-18), I want to give a “shout out” to faculty in the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources (“CASNR”) for their teaching and related service to the Knoxville campuses. The faculty in this college taught **10%** of the freshman seminars offer in the fall 2010 semester. In offering courses ranging from “CSI Knoxville 1863” to “SEC Football,” CASNR faculty members contributed to teaching FYS 129 and University Honors 100 courses in higher numbers than their proportionate share of UTK full-time-equivalent teaching hours would dictate. One faculty member’s course, “A Bug’s Life,” featured an insect-tasting event open to the campus communities. The menu—not for those who are faint of heart or stomach—is available at <http://casnr.tennessee.edu/pdf/SmorgasbordFlyer101.pdf>. I hope that many of you will be inspired by this story to offer freshman seminars during the 2011-12 academic year.

IX. Other?

I will briefly cover any other reports orally at the meeting.