

MINUTES

Faculty Senate Executive Committee
February 20, 2006

Members present: Deseriee Kennedy, Sam Jordan, Anne Mayhew, Carolyn Hodges, Catherine Luther, Nancy Howell, Sally McMillan, Bob Rider, Thomas Handler, India Lane, Candace White, David Patterson, Bruce MacLennan, Stefanie Ohnesorg, George Dodds, Beauvais Lyons, Lou Gross

Guest: Susan Martin, Bob Levy

I. CALL TO ORDER

D. Kennedy called the meeting to order at 3:35 p.m.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Minutes of the Executive Committee meeting of January 23, 2006, were approved without change.

III. REPORTS

President's Report (D. Kennedy)

Kennedy reminded committee chairs to decide whether they should make reports on their committees' activities soon at a Faculty Senate meeting and to remember that a report is due before the end of spring term. She then noted that she will attend the next Board of Trustees meeting March 15-16. She also reminded everyone that nominations for the position of provost are being sought.

Kennedy turned next to a draft policy statement (distributed at the meeting) from the system vice-presidents on the topic of tenure. The policy provides for an expedited process and for exceptions to normal procedures. A. Mayhew then reported that she had consulted on the matter with L. Crabtree and B. Levy. The latter said that he expects the new policy to be taken to the Board of Trustees meeting in March. She noted that the exceptions are intended to protect the university in the case of part-time faculty, such as those also employed at ORNL. In response to a question from Kennedy, Mayhew said she believes changes recommended by faculty representatives in January have been incorporated; she will check with Levy to be certain. L. Gross moved that the Executive Committee recommend to the Faculty Senate that the modifications in Appendix D and Appendix E regarding tenure not be brought before the Board of Trustees until (1) a full review is held by all appropriate UT Faculty Senates and (2) a rationale is provided for the modifications. B. Lyons seconded the motion.

C. White asked whether other faculty senates have had an opportunity to review the draft. Kennedy responded that UT Martin faculty seem not to be concerned because they believe the changes do not apply to their campus, but UT Chattanooga faculty have expressed concern about the timing and the process being used with the policy. Lyons suggested a friendly amendment to include in the motion a reference to the responsibilities given to the faculty by the Board of Trustees. Gross accepted the suggestion. In response to a question from D. Patterson about why this matter is arising now, Mayhew said she believes there have been problems and someone decided it is time to correct the situation.

S. McMillan noted that a lot of the discussion was being devoted to Appendix D, but Appendix E is of more concern. T. Handler noted that Appendix E is much needed because of uncertainty concerning the other employer of part-time faculty. Lyons noted that much of the discussion simply confirms the need to approve the motion. Mayhew then suggested that the Executive Committee approve Appendix D, but raise concerns about the process and Appendix E. Gross noted that the final version of Appendix D isn't even before us. Kennedy added that it is not even known what the two appendices mean.

At this point, Levy joined the meeting. Kennedy briefly informed Levy of what had been discussed and Gross read his revised motion. Levy said the new policy makes no changes to the tenure process and the late delivery is his fault. Nonetheless, he said he believed the policy will be considered at the meeting of the Board of Trustees in March. Kennedy noted that there is concern about the lack of time to think through the wording and its meaning and there is concern about adding a contingent form of tenure. Levy then said he would like to see a better document, but there are opportunities with some people at ORNL and some feel it is important to have the Board of Trustees consider the policy changes at the March meeting. In response to a question from Lyons, Levy said the General Counsel Office has reviewed the draft.

McMillan noted that Appendix D concerns matters that will not be relevant until after the Board of Trustees meeting in June. Levy's response revealed that the policy would apply to adjunct appointments as well as to part-time appointments, even though the policy does not say so. Mayhew then recommended again that Appendix E be delayed. After further discussion, Levy said the Executive Committee should do what it thinks it needs to do and then he would inform the president. Gross agreed to change the motion by having the recommendation go to the president of the institution. Then Patterson suggested strengthening the wording by adding the word "strongly" before "recommends." Handler suggested providing reasons for the recommendation.

White then expressed concern that no matter what was done today, the policy still would go to the Board of Trustees in March. Levy responded that, although he had been instructed to get it to the Board, he really did not want to take to the Board a document that the faculty on this campus are concerned about.

Gross then read the current version of the revised motion:

The Executive Committee of the UTK Faculty Senate strongly recommends to the President of UT that the modifications in Appendix D and Appendix E regarding tenure not be brought before the Board of Trustees until (1) a full review is held by all appropriate UT Faculty Senates and (2) a rationale is provided for these modifications as per Article 1, Section 1, of Power and Duties of Faculty Senates, Paragraph C, as delegated to us by the Board of Trustees. We urge the President to review and consider the concerns regarding the appendices set forth in the accompanying letter and engage in discussions with Faculty Senate Presidents regarding these policies.

Levy expressed concern about the tone of the motion. After some discussion, Lyons responded that he trusted Kennedy to convey the concern. The question was called and the motion was passed.

IV. OLD BUSINESS

UT University Faculty Council Charter (revised) (D. Kennedy)

Kennedy briefly reviewed the revisions (distributed at the meeting). McMillan moved adoption. The motion was seconded and approved.

Faculty Affairs Committee (B. Lyons)

Lyons noted that some material was distributed electronically during the weekend. He then discussed a Department Head Evaluation Form and noted that there was some disagreement on the committee about the form. The key change is the deletion of the column asking about the importance of each matter to the respondent. C. Hodges noted that every question on the form is important to deans, so the estimations of importance are not relevant to them. Lyons noted that the Office of Institutional Research said it did not have the resources to handle the evaluation on the Web. Patterson suggested that reviews could be done on Blackboard. McMillan agreed that deleting the "importance" column was appropriate and suggested distributing an interactive PDF version.

Lyons turned next to a document titled "Best Practices for Assessment and Evaluation of Faculty Teaching." He called attention to a statement allowing a tenure-track faculty member on a peer assessment team for another tenure-track faculty member. Kennedy asked about the service burden being placed on faculty. Patterson also expressed concern. S. Martin noted that the current policy uses terms, such as "normally" or "typically," when describing the frequency of class visits. After more discussion it was decided to delay further discussion to a later meeting.

Kennedy then reported that questions have been raised about Section 1.4.5 Annual Evaluation of Department Heads of the Faculty Handbook. The concerns focus on the requirement that a summary assessment, including goals established for the coming year, of each head be available for inspection by departmental faculty. Patterson suggested that the summary assessment be available and the list of goals be published and distributed to faculty.

Ombudsperson (D. Kennedy)

Kennedy noted that several nominations were provided earlier and one was distributed at the meeting. The committee then discussed the candidates. Kennedy will inform the chancellor about the committee's feelings.

Nominating Committee (C. White)

White announced that David Patterson and Richard Strange are the candidates for President-Elect.

The meeting adjourned at 5:35 p.m.