

MINUTES

Faculty Senate Executive Committee
August 28, 2006

Members present: Denise Barlow, Toby Boulet, Marianne Breinig, George Dodds, Mike Fitzgerald, Glenn Graber, Louis Gross, Tom Handler, Robert Holub, Nancy Howell, Suzanne Kurth, India Lane, Beauvais Lyons, Bruce MacLennan, Kula Misra, Matt Murray, David Patterson, John Romeiser, Neal Schrick, Otis Stephens

Guest: Alberto Garcia (representing Way Kuo)

I. CALL TO ORDER

L. Gross called the meeting to order at 3:40.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Minutes of the Executive Committee meeting of April 17, 2006 were approved as distributed.

III. REPORTS

President's Report (L. Gross)

Merit Pay. The Summer Executive Council corresponded about merit pay during the summer via e-mail. Outgoing President Kennedy and Gross communicated with Chancellor Crabtree about faculty views on the distribution of merit pay. Gross posted merit pay messages to the President and Chancellor on the Senate President's web site. Other UT campuses handled merit pay differently from UTK; for example all faculty at UTC received at least a \$600 raise.

D. Barlow provided Gross with data on the percentages of lecturers, tenured and tenure track faculty receiving some fraction of the merit pool. For E&G funded accounts, 58% of lecturers and 30% of regular faculty received merit. For E&G funded accounts, 48% of Lecturers and 23% of regular faculty did not receive at least a \$600 minimum raise. UTK Department Heads sent lists of faculty members they recommended to receive merit increases to their respective Deans. The Deans ultimately were responsible for merit allocations. At UTK, 69% of Department Heads received merit raises (31% did not). Additional information regarding the distribution of Academic Salary funding across the System units is available on Gross' web site. Gross raised the merit pay issue at the Chancellor's Council Retreat. L. Crabtree indicated he would try to locate additional funds to make additional allocations; for example, for those faculty members that did not receive a raise of at least \$600 and to address inversion and compression.

Governor's Chairs. These positions appeared to be handled by the System administration, while the faculty positions will mostly be based on the UTK campus. The content of the national advertisements for these positions raised further questions. Gross corresponded with Chancellor Crabtree, President Peterson, and Vice President Millhorn. His communications about these positions are posted on his web site.

Security of Personal Data. Gross met with B. Bible about problems reported in the local press and announced in letters to UTK employees. The current and past Chairs of the Information Technology Committee have discussed security issues with Bible also. A plan of action is being developed, which involves a collaboration between the IT Committee and the administration.

Retreat Agenda. The document in members' packets is different from the one initially distributed (addition of Master Plan and breakout sessions) reflecting his conversation with President-elect Patterson. B. Lyons suggested he identify facilitators for the breakout sessions that would record the discussions. Gross requested volunteer facilitators.

Voting Machines. A request for support from faculty for having voting machines for early voting placed in the University Center was supported.

Mantra for the year: "The Faculty Are Doing Their Job Very Well." As evidence for this , externally-generated grant and contract funds, when averaged per faculty member, are more than the average cost per faculty member to UTK (salary and fringe benefits). In addition, the amount of grant and contract expenditures has been rising significantly over the past four years.

Provost's Report (R. Holub)

Having a quality faculty is important to a quality university. He noted that at Berkeley he was involved with the equivalent of the Faculty Senate. He supports shared governance and openness with faculty.

Changes in the Provost's Office. As Susan Martin is overburdened, the Provost is creating the position of Vice Provost for Academic Operations. Duties for the position will include performance of unit reviews, improvement of undergraduate education, and development of a plan for strategic use of summer school. The Graduate School (with Linda Painter as interim Dean) was re-established since excellent research universities have them. A search will be undertaken for a permanent Dean of the Graduate School.

Faculty Compensation. A plan should be in place soon to address this important issue for this year. He will establish a task force with a member from the Faculty Senate to develop a strategy or plan.

Governor's Chairs. They do not belong to the UT Knoxville campus, for they could be at other campuses, such as UTC. The Provost has taken control of the positions to be based here. The process was not as chaotic as it may have appeared.

Post Geier Plans. New initiatives are in process, such as Tennessee Pledge and Promise for limited income parents. Another program will target particular high schools in an effort to maintain campus diversity.

Lyons commented that the Budget Committee could perhaps provide comparative salary information for the merit pay discussion. In addition to non-discriminatory statements appearing for searches for Governor's chairs, efforts to be non-discriminatory should go beyond simply having sexual orientation in a welcoming statement. Other campuses in the state have explicit policies on non-discrimination regarding sexual orientation. He also asked if the Provost could speak to the Faculty Handbook provision about the reappointment of department heads that have served five years. Holub responded that he would check. He expressed the hope that a simple reminder would be adequate.

Governor's Chair Searches. D. Patterson asked whether the Governor's chairs were biased toward the natural sciences and whether there was a possibility of one in the social sciences. Holub said that a social scientist did not appear to be a possibility given the current partnership with Oak Ridge (50% of the positions are funded by ORNL) and it is unlikely that Oak Ridge would be interested in a social scientist. He and the Chancellor are sensitive to any bias toward "big" science. The goal is to make the institution better by attracting good people to the campus.

Provost Office Searches. Gross asked whether the Graduate Dean and Vice Provost for Academic Operations searches would be internal. Holub indicated they would. Susan Martin has a new title, Senior Vice Provost for Academic Affairs. Gross noted that last year Crabtree indicated he hoped for external/national searches for high-level appointments. Holub indicated his lack of familiarity with the campus meant it was most advantageous to recruit internally.

Gross questioned whether the campus is better off this year given the limited tuition increase, i.e., the campus could not get a 9% increase. Barlow responded that the lower increase made students and their parents happy. Yet, Geier and salary money had to be found.

Lyons brought up the change in who meets with the Senate (the Provost rather than the Chancellor) noting that the Senate addresses issues that extend beyond academics. Gross noted that he has had no answer to his request that at some point the Chancellor address the Senate.

IV. OLD BUSINESS

Department Head Evaluation Process

Evaluations are to be made of department heads at five-year intervals. A. Garcia noted that the two department heads that had served five years in Engineering were not reappointed and thus no summary evaluations were provided. Lyons indicated he and Kennedy met with the General Counsel's Office about the form developed by Faculty Affairs. Faculty response to Head evaluations may be low due to concerns about confidentiality.

V. NEW BUSINESS

Faculty Salaries and Merit Pay. Is there an appropriate Senate response?

M. Fitzgerald expressed the view that how it was handled created a serious morale problem. Patterson suggested people will seek money elsewhere and decrease effort at UT. Various actions were proposed. Last year's Senate resolution could be reaffirmed. Committees could meet at the Retreat and develop a position for the next Senate meeting.

Each member was asked to express her or his views with overlap in opinions; the comments are summarized here: Skepticism and cynicism are growing; Department Heads and Deans are caught by annual shifts in criteria; Criteria should not be kept secret; Are we hiring gunslingers?; Are we becoming too dependent on Oak Ridge to the point that we are losing our identity?; The Senate needs to pursue the merit pay issue, as it is a serious faculty concern. Following the Retreat, it is expected that the Faculty Affairs and Budget Committees will bring suggested responses to the Executive Committee.

Information Technology Committee (M. Breinig)

Both hardware (IBM) and software problems have occurred with the email transition process. The Senate needs to respond. The Committee will draft a response for Senate action. The Exchange transition was stopped last week for a limited period of time due to the problems (7,000 people out of approximately 40,000 have had their email transitioned). Quotas on the size of mail folders will have to be enforced.

University Strategic Plan (L. Gross)

Discussion of the campus role in issues raised should be discussed by the Executive Committee following release of the plan.

System Faculty Council (B. Lyons)

This is still in process, with Gross and Kennedy having met with and corresponded with Vice President Levy several times over the summer. A revised draft charter is being approved by the President's staff.

UT System Priorities

Gross had distributed comparative budget data and raised the question of why the UTK academic salary line showed a lower level of increase than other System units. First, Barlow indicated the 3.6% academic salary budget line increase for UTK included longevity pay, new hires, promotion raises, etc. Barlow indicated the data from different campuses are unlike, as other campuses adjust budgets to expenditures. She also noted the impact of authorized but unfilled positions.

Academic Outreach Council

S. McMillan, Council Chair, had requested Senate support. L. Champion had discussed Outreach Council proposal with Gross. Gross indicated he might appoint a small task force to explore the proposal. N. Howell provided a brief history of the outreach committee. Lyons said the Faculty Handbook Committee had met with the outreach group while revising the manual. He questioned creating a whole new committee.

Meeting adjourned at 5:10 p.m.