

MINUTES

Faculty Senate Executive Committee

October 9, 2006

Members present: Marianne Breinig, George Dodds, Mike Fitzgerald, Robert Glenn, Glenn Graber, Louis Gross, Tom Handler, Robert Holub, Nancy Howell, Way Kuo, Suzanne Kurth, India Lane, Kula Misra, Matt Murray, David Patterson, John Romeiser, Neal Schrick, Otis Stephens

Guest: Ray Hamilton for Denise Barlow

I. CALL TO ORDER

L. Gross called the meeting to order at 3:41.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Minutes of the Executive Committee meeting of August 28, 2006 were approved unanimously with addition of the following:

Lyons called attention to the 2003 Faculty Senate resolution on reforming the university's non-discrimination policy to include sexual orientation. Holub indicated that he strongly agreed with the Faculty Senate on this issue, and would work to advance this effort.

III. REPORTS

President's Report (L. Gross)

Faculty Senate Retreat. Gross drew attention to the two documents distributed to the Executive Committee: a summary of four breakout sessions and Andrea Loughry's report on the session with Board of Trustees' members that she distributed to the full Board. These will be posted on the Senate web site.

Discussions of Issues with Chancellor and Provost. Gross pointed out to Chancellor Crabtree and Provost Holub that there is no Faculty Senate representative on the Council of Deans. A lack of faculty representation in meetings with the Chancellor and other administrators impedes communication and reduces the likelihood that issues can be dealt with effectively before they become a problem. The Chancellor has decided that the Faculty Senate President will meet with the Provost rather than the Chancellor, unless a meeting is requested.

Salary. Gross has received no details about the Chancellor's proposal for the November Board meeting.

Equity and Gender Differences in Salary. Gross discussed gender differences in salary with the Commission for Women and noted that a new analysis is appropriate (obtaining the data is an issue). The Chancellor and the provost are considering whether pursuing this analysis is a good idea.

Lottery Scholarships' Impact. Data from the Admissions Office indicate 93% of incoming instate students have them and adding students whose applications are being processed the percentage rises to 98. Of the entering In-State students on athletics scholarships, 57% have lottery scholarships.

Governor's Chairs and Diversity. Recruitment procedures have been improved. (When the program was called Distinguished Scientists, diversity was notably absent.)

UTK Students. The quality of our students has increased presenting an opportunity for rethinking curricula.

GTA Positions and Graduate Enrollments. For a number of years UTK has increased the number of contingent faculty members. At one time there was a decision to move money from GTA positions to contingent faculty positions. A question that needs to be addressed is whether decreases in GTA lines has any relationship to the decrease in graduate student enrollment. In any case, are there plans to focus more funding on GTA lines than on contingent faculty lines?

Review and Redirection. The only activity appears to be the move of computer science to create a combine department within engineering. The Joint Institute for Computational Science does not seem to be working.

Heads vs. Chairs. There is interest in a chair system.

Activities of the Board of Trustees' Academic Affairs & Student Life Committee. Gross attended an introductory meeting. He pointed out that the UT scorecard linked to the Strategic Plan for the System has various items that involve our campus, for example, goals for increases in the numbers of African-American, Hispanic, Native American, and disadvantaged Tennessee counties' students. Faculty members were not asked to give input into the metrics used for the System scorecard.

Spousal/ Partner Accommodation Policy. The Provost's Office has established an "opportunity hire" plan. N. Howell noted that the Senate resolution on Spousal/Partner accommodation covered more than recruitment.

Appeals Process. Gross indicated that having received some questions, he has asked the Appeals Committee to look at the process.

Honorary Doctorates. Gross was contacted by Jan Simek about the process for awarding honorary doctorates. UTK does not appear to have a policy, as awarding such degrees has not been a campus practice. Who should make such a decision? The system has a rather generic process in which an unnamed committee has responsibility for approving their award. The question has a short time deadline, as the goal is to award one at this fall's graduation ceremony. Ultimately, the Board of Trustees has authority to award all degrees. R. Levy is checking to see if such a proposal needs to go to the full Board. R. Holub pointed out that UT Martin has already awarded such degrees. G. Dodds asked what criteria would be used for such awards. Howell said the Executive Committee should take responsibility in this case. After consideration of dates of Executive Committee and Board of Trustees' meetings, Gross was asked to bring a packet of information to the next Executive Committee meeting. M. Murray requested a copy of the System policy for awarding honorary degrees.

Provost's Report (R. Holub)

Retention. Holub noted that student retention at our campus is poor compared to all types of institutions. There are many possible causes of this problem during the first two years: 1)

undeclared student advising; 2) curriculum: a) courses should be interesting and stimulating as some students complain about not being challenged (and others fail out), b) lack of course sequencing in sciences (e.g., should students take biology before chemistry so teachers will know what students have had), and c) should there be courses for non-majors; and 3) student life—students should be made to feel part of a community. Campus has not been as concerned with retention as it should be.

Holub the responded to questions. D. Patterson asked whether interventions were being designed before adequate data is collected about the reasons why students leave. Holub replied that the last survey was in 2002 and it was not informative. He indicated he was starting with some things that will help whatever a survey might reveal. (Retention rate is highest for students with the highest GPAs, although at other institutions these students have even higher retention rates.) Patterson followed up by commenting that the campus needs to identify at risk students and intervene with them and their families. Holub noted that the Lottery scholarships might contribute to turnover. M. Fitzgerald noted that he had worked on earlier student surveys. Students with good academic standing left because they didn't connect with faculty. He went on to ask whether the campus administration counts advising and quality undergraduate teaching when awarding salary increase. He queried whether a rapid increase in the number of contingent faculty and a directive to have GTAs and contingent faculty teach lower division courses may have resulted in fewer students having contact with "regular" faculty. Finally, he suggested that the staffing and atmospherics (e.g., voice menus) at offices serving students (e.g., Financial Aid) might contribute to a sense of alienation. Holub responded that he is seeking input from faculty. In any case the problem is not new as it basically has not changed over the last 10 years. Rather than rewarding faculty for advising, he likes a system of good professional advising, as faculty members are not necessarily better at advising. Holub does agree that faculty should be involved in teaching lower division students, for example in seminars for first year students. T. Handler noted that one way the original Distinguished Scientist program was "sold" was that those individuals would teach lower division students and they did not. Gross seeks to know if System student success efforts are linked to retention. Holub responded that if the System feels those objectives are important, that the System would need to provide funds.

IV. OLD BUSINESS

University Faculty Council Charter. Gross indicated that our campus would need to elect a representative to a three-year term. The process of setting up the Council has taken longer than expected, so we have five expressions of interest in the position solicited last year should the Senate or the whole faculty make the selection. Gross will contact those who responded last year to make sure they know it is a three-year commitment and to seek information from them to be distributed. (Fitzgerald withdrew his name from the list.) Patterson indicated that the Senate needs to develop procedures and the Bylaws will need to be changed. Handler asked when the first meeting of the Council would occur, as the timeline might require that an interim person be selected. K. Misra suggested that the Executive Committee recommend two names to the Senate for a vote. Gross said he has not yet distributed the statements of interest written last year and those statements were shaped by the limited information available at that time. The Council does not have staggered terms for the elected members from campuses. The campus Senate Presidents serve one-year terms. Misra asked Gross for his recommendation. Gross indicated that the full Senate could be asked to vote within one week after meeting. Patterson opined that it would be reasonable to have a one-year term and

moved: The Executive Committee should take the names of candidates to the Senate. Senators would vote within a one-week period following the meeting. The successful candidate would be elected to a one-year term. During that year a process for selection of representatives would be developed and the Senate Bylaws amended accordingly.

The motion was seconded.

Gross noted that we would ask each candidate to supply a statement that would be distributed. The motion was clarified to specify that a plurality rather than majority of votes would be required. The motion passed (Graber abstained).

Department Head Evaluation Process. The Committee had expressed concern that all department heads in their fifth year be evaluated. Holub said his understanding was the Arts and Sciences had so many who needed to be evaluated that all of them were not done last year, as the Dean's office did not want to do too many at one time. Gross noted that part of the concern was with the procedures—faculty access to a public summary of the evaluation. Holub indicated that he would need to see the relevant documents. Gross queried whether Holub could assure the faculty that the evaluation process procedures are being followed. Holub indicated he relies on the Deans.

Misra asked what the status of heads being redesignated chairs is. Holub indicated he sees no real difference in the two designations. He does see a difference between indefinite appointments and five-year appointments. Dodds asked Gross what his thoughts were. Gross responded that he thinks of a chair position as one that is rotated among senior faculty. Issues appear to be service at the pleasure of the faculty and/or Dean and control over funding including distribution of F & A. Holub noted that at his previous university the Dean would appoint the chair after consultation with the faculty. McRae pointed out a recent book on chairing an academic department treated much of the difference as semantic. Graber reminded the group of a report generated a couple of years ago about moving toward a chair system. Holub reiterated that he does not see differences in the two.

Faculty Salary – "Merit" Pay Questions from the Senate Budget and Faculty Affairs Committees. N. Schrick indicated he did not have a resolution for this meeting. The Committees wanted information about what the Chancellor was going to propose. (B. Lyons could not be at the meeting to report). The Budget Committee will meet October 16. The Provost's task force has not yet met, as membership not completely established.

Information Technology—Discussion of Potential Responses Regarding Security/Privacy of Personnel Data Issues. (M. Breinig)

The Committee does not have a resolution yet.

Two objectives: eliminating all unencrypted social security numbers (problem is how to do it—OIT is considering this) and getting people (e.g., faculty) to get new ID cards with new numbers. (They have discussed going building to building with the ID service.) Gross noted that B. Bible indicated that if a specific resolution were passed, that the process could be expedited. Holub said he has been pushing the issue. The student population because of its

continual changeover has a higher percentage with new ID numbers than faculty. Holub stated that we need unique identifiers.

Patterson asked whether the Information Technology Committee is working on the email migration. Breinig indicated the migration has temporarily stopped due to hardware problems. Patterson asked if there were any cost data, that is, the actual expenditures to date versus those projected.

V. NEW BUSINESS

Gross welcomed the new representative from the AAUP, Bob Glenn.

Report from Ombudspersons. It was in members' packets as an information item. The Faculty Affairs Committee is discussing the issues.

Teaching Council (I. Lane)

The Teaching and Advising award nominations have November 1 deadlines. The nomination form is on the web. The committee encourages nominations particularly of part-time and adjunct faculty. Another project the Committee is pursuing is support for teaching across the campus. And, they hope to have a panel of award winners speak on November 6 and to have a book discussion next semester.

Gross noted UT Press recently published a book entitled the *Art of College Teaching*.

The meeting adjourned at 5:05 p.m.