

## MINUTES

Executive Committee Meeting

March 19, 2007

Present: Denise Barlow, Marianne Breinig, Toby Boulet, Lou Gross, Thomas Handler, Robert Holub, Suzanne Kurth, India Lane, John McRae, Matt Murray, Neal Schrick

### I. CALL TO ORDER

L. Gross called the meeting to order at 3:35

### II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Minutes of February 18, 2007

T. Boulet proposed that the word *had* be added to the minutes.

Revision of Tenure Guidelines. Gross sent out electronically changes in the tenure guidelines proposed by S. Martin. Gross *had* engaged in an exchange with the Provost about the proposed changes.

B. Lyons moved and Boulet seconded motion to approve. Minutes approved with the addition.

### III. REPORTS

President's Report (L. Gross)

Gross passed around a summary of the Revised Total Budget data for UTK for the past five years. He pointed out that while tuition and fees had increased 33%, state appropriations had only increased 13.9% and grants and contracts had increased 27%. Assuming that the faculty are responsible for the grants and contracts, faculty contributions are coming close to keeping up with tuition increases.

*March Board of Trustees' Meeting.* Gross passed around a notebook he received before the Board of Trustees' meeting in Martin. He noted the meeting included discussion of safety plans and XAP (an online application system for prospective students). J. Simek described plans for the Governor's Academy to be established on the campus of the Tennessee School for the Deaf. The P16 Council in which K. High is involved is making suggestions about requirements for Tennessee high school students (e.g., requiring four years of mathematics). The Space Institute was discussed. Gross noted he and former Senate President B. Lyons had talked with President Petersen about it about two years ago and was told it was necessary to get UTSI on track. At the Board the plans for UTSI were still declared to be on track (with the easy tasks completed). There is an initiative to create the equivalent of the University Faculty Council for students. J. Britt reported on outreach. He noted that 35 counties in Tennessee had local UT payrolls of over \$1 million. UT is increasing awareness of the economic benefits of its activities, e.g., jobs supported by grants and contracts. The online outreach survey faculty have been asked to complete is a System initiative.

At the Board meeting, President Petersen announced UT was 13<sup>th</sup> in the country in fund-raising the past year. R. Levy is retiring and a search for a replacement may soon be underway. Petersen discussed various organizational changes. The President also described phase one of the development of the Cherokee Farms property. Phase 1 includes three buildings: JIAM, a

privately donated building, and a “self-funded” (F & A supported) building. The “biofuels” initiative was also covered. In the state of Tennessee, UTK is the most cost effective among all higher education campuses when the amount of money the state contributes per student that graduates is calculated.

*Commission for Blacks.* At its most recent meeting, R. Darling reported on the challenges faced in maintaining students’ success in the post-Geier period, i.e., funds for scholarships and support services staff. A letter regarding tenure issues was in preparation.

*Other.* A meeting on sexual orientation policy organized by the Chancellor will be held. The meeting will include President Petersen, Hank Dye, Student government leaders and Gross.

B. Lyons commented that sexual orientation is now addressed in the job search context. His understanding is that the campus could include sexual orientation in its policies without system approval. R. Holub had a member of his staff look at other school’s policies, particularly those schools we would like to be like. Lyons noted that three Board of Regents schools have non-discrimination statements.

Gross completed his report by noting that the appointment of the Senate Administrative Support Assistant is still in process.

T. Handler suggested that the development of Cherokee Farms may require the President to ask the Governor for more money. He asked what appeared to have happened to previous visions for the property (e.g., those involving physics and chemistry). Holub stated that one sketch involved more buildings, but that had not been approved by anyone. There is now a modular or pod plan. The concept is for different emphases to be developed in different areas of the property. What Gross reported on earlier was the first module or pod. They will not be academic units, but mixed research and industrial units. Gross then noted that Petersen stated there would be three emphases: energy, environment and materials. Handler asked the Provost about the possible consequences of separating research and academic functions. Holub expressed the hope that this would not be the case with this development and noted that was always a danger.

*Elections.* President-elect D. Patterson could not attend the meeting due to airplane delays. Gross reported for him that the election process was not going as speedily as desired, but it was in process in all units. G. Graber’s Nominations Committee is in the process of identifying President-elect candidates. Suggestions should be made to him. Gross noted one faculty member contacted him about the University Faculty Council position. Anyone interested in serving should contact Graber or C. White.

#### Budget and Planning Committee (N. Schrick)

Based on the recent budget hearings, three priorities could be deduced from the presentations: salaries, faculty lines, and graduate stipends. The Committee will meet Monday with the Provost. Schrick agrees with the Provost that some presentations are not realistic, but based on his experience over several years, he believes a lot of useful information is disseminated.

Lyons noted Gross had referred to “in sourcing” of custodial services in his report. Lyons argued we need to continue doing so. D. Barlow reported six buildings were “brought on line”

this academic year. UT's custodial contract is up this summer. One question is whether UT could use some of that money to increase the level of starting pay (currently \$7 an hour plus benefits). While the benefits may be attractive to potential employees, they cannot eat benefits. The campus might have fewer workers, but they would be being paid at a higher rate. Lyons pointed out that the minimum services specified in our contract are often not being provided. Late fall semester there was a "staph" outbreak in the Art and Architecture building due to poor cleaning. Gross clarified that the service problems appear to be somewhat building specific. Barlow informed the Committee that she and Chancellor Crabtree met with S. Lee from the cleaning service and discussed problems with current service and the costs involved in providing the specified level of service.

Lyons asked Schrick if the campus would again have an annual faculty salary study. Schrick said there would be one. Lyons followed up with a question about the "living wage snapshot." Schrick indicated it was not planned to report on this. Lyons volunteered, as a task force member, to provide the information needed. He expressed the desire to not lose all that work. Gross stated that it was not lost effort, as one member of the Board brought it up, by asking if the University was vulnerable to the charge that it was not doing what it should to maintain a living wage for its employees.

Schrack identified the three committee foci: faculty salaries, administrative salaries, and F & A.

Gross noted that he had electronically distributed his thoughts on the budget hearings.

#### Provost's Report (R. Holub)

He is continuing to pursue strategies aimed at increasing the retention of first year undergraduates. T. Diacon has made proposals intended to improve retention that would begin this fall: increasing the academic focus of Welcome Week, expanding Early Alert to a greater percentage of first year students, offering first year seminars, having more learning communities, and expanding supplementary instruction, such as that provided for mathematics.

He has raised a series of issues with the Undergraduate Council:

*Changing Course Grade Options.* The proposal to have both plus and minus letter grades has been tabled, while council members consult with their colleagues.

*General Education Requirements.* He has proposed that the students that complete an Associate's Degree at a community college will not have to meet UTK's general education requirements. He believes that this change would facilitate student applications and provide more seamless education.

*Catalog.* He observed that substantial portions of Undergraduate Council meetings focus on the catalog. Holub is interested in expediting the process of curricular change. He believes the current process focuses on dates set in order to produce a printed catalog. He would like to move away from having a print version of the curriculum in a catalog as the standard.

Lyons asked the Provost about the diversity fellowship announced at the Graduate Director's Workshop. He has been trying to obtain more information about it to use in recruiting students. He has heard the fellowship is under review in the General Counsel's Office. He is

concerned about the delay. Holub replied that he was not aware it was being held up and would look into it. The money has been budgeted. Lyons asked what the amount was. Holub replied that he tried to make the amounts comparable to those available under Geier. The other post-Geier initiatives (Pledge scholarships for undergraduates and opportunity hiring for faculty members) are in place.

M. Murray asked about the Provost's desire to expedite curricular change with reference to the *Graduate Catalog*. He requested that the Provost provide some guidance, some ideas about "where to go" in changing the processes. The Graduate Council and its Curriculum Committee would likely embrace his recommendations. Holub replied that he does not seem to understand what leads to the hold ups that occur. Murray noted that problems may be historical artifacts that now serve as a form of overkill. One problem the Provost noted can currently be addressed, that is, departments can accommodate new faculty members' course under current options. Holub reiterated that he does not understand hold-ups. He is particularly concerned about the lag between review of a course and when it is part of the official curriculum, i.e., in the catalog. Boulet commented that one resolution would be to decouple degree requirements that are official catalog based and course approvals. Gross said changes always involve trade-offs (e.g. potential stepping on toes). Breinig noted one source of delay is that the dates of Graduate Council and Faculty Senate meetings are out of synch. Holub suggested that some types of changes could be delegated to the Curriculum Committee, for example, changes in punctuation.

#### **IV. OLD BUSINESS**

There was no old business.

#### **V. NEW BUSINESS**

##### Faculty Affairs Committee (B. Lyons)

Lyons had received e-mail approval from committee members for the proposal regarding ombudspersons. The proposal changing the number of Faculty Ombudspersons from three to two was in part due to conversations with the Provost and the lead Ombudsperson. Lyons explained that the number of hour's faculty used their services, combined with the need for the Executive Committee to select ombudspersons in consultation with the Chief Academic Officer, led to the proposal. Holub said that on further reflection, saying "two or more" might be a better resolution. Lyons responded that the version for first reading presented at the next committee meeting would say "at least two." I. Lane queried whether this modification would affect the appointment process. Lyons stated the Executive Committee working with the Chief Academic Officer selects the Ombudspersons and they serve staggered terms. Gross clarified that one Faculty Ombudsperson's term is up this year, so no change in personnel may need to be made at this time. J. McRae moved and Lyons seconded a motion to approve the proposal. Motion approved. It will be sent to the full Senate for consideration.

##### Faculty and Staff Benefits Committee (N. Howell)

N. Howell presented a postdated resolution from the Faculty and Staff Benefits Committee. There has been considerable interest in looking into what wellness programs are provided by other Universities. Some of those reviewed were University of Kentucky, University of California (Berkeley), University of North Carolina, and several Tennessee Board of Regents schools (ETSU, TTU). The state of Tennessee has a robust program for state employees that specifically excludes higher education employees. Many resources are available on our campus.

Efforts might be focused on bringing them together online and pursuing options, such as modest cash incentives. The Committee identified units involved with wellness and research that indicates money spent on wellness initiatives might help an organization with the costs of insurance. The resolution proposes that the Chancellor appoint a chair and a task force.

Handler noted that his physician at UT Hospital is seriously involved in the pursuit of weight loss for patients. In Howell's assessment the University has strong health-related resources. As a point of information, Gross noted that the University has 200 faculty members in the area associated with the School of Medicine. There was a brief discussion of other efforts to have a campus wellness center. Handler moved and McRae seconded approval of the proposal. The proposal was endorsed by the Executive Committee and will go to the full Senate for action.

## **VI. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 4:44 p.m.