

MINUTES

Executive Committee Meeting

April 16, 2007

Present: Marianne Breinig, Toby Boulet, Mike Fitzgerald, Glenn Graber, Lou Gross, Ray Hamilton, Thomas Handler, Robert Holub, Nancy Howell, Suzanne Kurth, India Lane, Beauvais Lyons, John McRae, Kula Misra, Matt Murray, David Patterson, Owen Ragland, Candace White for Neal Schrick

Guest: Don Cunningham

I. CALL TO ORDER

L. Gross called the meeting to order at 3:36 p.m.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Minutes of March 19, 2007, had minor changes in wording to increase clarity. B. Lyons, Chair of the Faculty Affairs Committee, noted that the changes make it clear that the Faculty Ombudspersons are selected by the chief administrative officer in consultation with this body. Lyons moved and Murray seconded a motion to approve the minutes as distributed. Minutes approved.

III. REPORTS

President's Report (L. Gross)

Gross thanked Don Cunningham for attending the meeting to answer questions.

1. D. Patterson and Gross met with Chancellor Crabtree and discussed a variety of topics.

(a) They discussed the need to develop a mechanism for increasing shared governance by involving faculty in decision-making earlier and in a more regularized way. (b) E-mail problems persist. IT staff still are not a part of the campus. There is a need to hire someone on a permanent basis as IT Director, as Faye Muly cannot be expected to continue indefinitely. More consultants will be brought in. (c) The President is working on a non-discrimination statement that will be completed after the state budget is dealt with. (d) There is concern about faculty evaluation standards and how uniformly they are being implemented across departments and colleges. (e) In this post-Geier period, a number of programs have been initiated to attempt to continue the progress made on diversity in the student body. The funding is coming out of the base budget. (f) Campus-system communication remains a continuing concern.

2. The Chancellor will proceed with the Wellness Task Force requested by the Senate at its April 2, 2007, meeting.

3. Gross has asked the Vice Chancellor for Research how a major NSF proposal was submitted with major UT commitments and no Department Heads or Deans involved in the process of submission. The Provost indicated that the Vice Chancellor does not think the process was that unusual. C. White explored further the issue of the proposal coming from off campus. Holub clarified that the Joint Institutes do not report to the campus, although the faculty do. Gross noted that he had pursued the question at the request of two Heads.

4. Connie Baskette gave Gross information about proposals for retirement plans that will be distributed at the next Faculty Senate meeting. UT is re-bidding the retirement plan.

Gross noted that there is no guarantee that some of the companies currently being used will continue to be available as options, as there is a maximum of three allowed. Patterson expressed concern that our ability to recruit might be affected if TIAA/CREF were no longer available. N. Howell thought the intent was to improve the options available.

5. The University Faculty Council plans to meet in early May to create bylaws.

6. Gross received expressions of concern from Heads about being expected to pressure faculty to participate in the Faculty Campaign and from faculty members concerned about their non-participation being entered into a database. A discussion of the value of contributing even a small amount and/or focusing on departmental funds ensued, as well as the flow of information about giving and not giving.

7. Sharonne Winston's position has been upgraded (a higher percentage of time with more time devoted to assisting other committees, managing the listserv, etc.).

President-elect (D. Patterson)

Patterson reported that he was waiting for the election results from two colleges.

Gross sent out a request for committee preferences. The caucus chairs will be meeting to establish committee memberships for next year. That information will be provided at the next Senate meeting. Lyons suggested that alternates and non-Senators currently serving on committees be given the option of completing a preference survey. He further suggested that the committee chairs be consulted for feedback. White proposed making a more general request for faculty volunteers. The logistics of doing so were discussed.

G. Graber reported that Lyons had been elected to the University Faculty Council and J. Nolt to the position of President-elect.

Budget and Planning Committee Report (C. White)

Faculty Salary Report. White presented the report, as N. Schrick had research commitments. A faculty salary report was distributed. (The date should have been 2006-2007 rather than 2005-2006.) The only administrative stipends included were for department heads. A discussion about the timing of the report focused on the availability of Oklahoma State University (OSU) comparison data. If the Committee issued the report in August, the comparable annual data would be available from OSU. The category "Instructor" was examined, as it only included 32 persons. Discussion focused on the increased usage of the designation "Lecturer" on our campus and the comparability of our "Instructor" category with OSU's. D. Cunningham explained that inclusion in the report rests on whether funds are coming from instructional, as opposed to research, accounts. Lyons noted that the salary data includes salary supplements and longevity pay. Gross noted that the Committee receives additional data from Cunningham, but this format is the one that has been followed for several years. Lyons brought attention to the percentage of salary increase, noting that it did not appear to be 3%. Gross responded that we did not have a 3% increase, and of the increases awarded, 1% occurred after these data were collected. Lyons commented that in terms of cost of living we may be worse off than thought. White said Schrick had noted that in some departments the ratio moves down due to promotions from assistant to associate level. White reiterated the question from the Committee was whether a change in the timing of the report would be appropriate.

Cunningham said it would be helpful to his office because it is already preparing the 06/06 comparisons for the administration. Lyons proposed purging the "Instructor" category. Murray inquired about retaining without comparisons Instructors and Lecturers. Fitzgerald commented that the study showed how grossly underpaid the faculty is. Murray commented the good news is that new assistants are receiving market wages. Fitzgerald commented on the need for the campus to think about compression—expectations for older faculty are high and pay is not—and the possible age discrimination dimension. Gross said he and Patterson talked to the Chancellor and that he indicated that the campus cannot solve the compression problem at the Full Professor level, although some redress may be possible for those moving through the ranks from the associate to the full level. Fitzgerald reiterated that the administration needs to be sensitive to the issues involved. It was announced that the living wage snapshot will not be available this year. Discussion returned to the timing of the report. Patterson supported its being redone and presented at the fall retreat. J. McRae moved and Murray seconded a motion to move the report on faculty salaries to the fall. Motion approved.

Gender Study. Gross said he and the Senate Graduate Assistant (B. Johnson) are working on the gender salary study and anticipate having it done for the final Senate meeting. He asked if it should be distributed without the Executive Committee's oversight. Gross explained the study. Murray wondered if the study should be brought to the Executive Committee first, given that the study requires explanation. S. Kurth suggested sending it out electronically to the Executive and Budget and Planning Committees prior to the Senate meeting.

Provost's Report (R. Holub)

The Task Force is working on the student retention initiative and Holub anticipates its report this spring.

1. The Student Success Center is working more with students on Academic Review, e.g., providing 90-minute Academic Success Workshops. Next fall there will be Academic Recovery Workshops for those previously dismissed and now readmitted to the University. Also, there will be an increase in the number of courses for which supplementary instruction is available. Another initiative is a pilot study of the use of Learning Communities. Counselors that assisted students under the Geier Consent Decree will be moved to new programs.

2. An exit survey will be conducted of all students who inform UT housing that they are not returning. T. Strayhorn will conduct a baseline survey.

3. A new initiative is "Light the Torch of Academic Excellence at the University of Tennessee." Summer orientation will have programs from each college, i.e., special sessions on how to succeed in each college.

4. In the past the only academic program attached to Welcome Week was "Life of the Mind." This year there will be sessions focused on how to succeed in particular courses. The "Passport to Success" program involves students visiting their future classrooms.

Colleges will have open houses and there will be additional signage welcoming the class of 2011.

5. Once school begins, an initiative will be established so that students with more than one absence in a course will be called by phone to check on them. Another SEC school has resident assistants check on students. Numerous First Year Seminars will be available.

Questions: The level of funding for diversity enhancement fellowships was discussed. Lyons indicated that Dean Hodges reported that the level of support for them is comparable to what we had in the past. Holub said we need more, but it is not clear who has been doing the fund-raising. Lyons asked whether we have fewer resources in the post-Geier era. Holub said we have fewer resources, as more resources went to Tennessee State University. The availability of resources has to be pursued by the System. Murray, as Graduate Council Chair, pointed out that Hodges is concerned and that the overall number of fellowships is too low.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

1. M. Fitzgerald brought a resolution from the Athletics Committee prohibiting smoking in all areas inside the gates of Neyland Stadium to the Executive Committee.

Be it resolved that smoking be prohibited in all locations within the gated entrances of Neyland Stadium, including all concourses, walkways, seating areas, restrooms, and areas currently designated as smoking areas.

K. Misra stated that the resolution was in keeping with University policy, but he thought the possibility of enforcement was questionable. Gross inquired about the Athletic Department's view of the resolution. Fitzgerald stated that there were some members of the Athletic Department serving as ex-officio members of the Athletics Committee. The applications for season tickets have already gone out, so that would be a problem. Gross asked about other athletic facilities. Fitzgerald said baseball has smoking on the concourse. T. Handler said M. Hamilton indicated he wasn't sure whether the stadium was subject to the campus policy. Discussion ensued about the relative priority of this issue compared to others currently being pursued and other problems, such as alcohol consumption in the stadium. Lyons moved to table and Handler seconded the motion. The motion to table was approved unanimously.

2. N. Howell, Chair of the Faculty Staff Benefits Committee, presented the issue of child care planning for the Cherokee Campus. If there is support for the idea, it would then be taken to the University Faculty Council. The rationale is that the time to make provisions for child care is during the planning. Lyons asked if the Cherokee Farm campus is envisioned as a campus or system component. Howell responded that it appears to have been a System component. Gross indicated he was unsure whether it should be sent to our Faculty Senate or the University Faculty Council. Howell indicated her committee wanted it forwarded to the Senate as a report and, if the idea receives support from the Senate, it would be forwarded to the President and any other appropriate officials. Boulet moved and

McRae seconded bringing the idea to the Senate with the Executive Committee's endorsement. Motion passed.

3. The Bylaws require formation of a summer Executive Council. The President, President-elect, Past President and Secretary serve on it, along with four other members of the Executive Committee. Boulet, Howell, Lane, and Lyons were elected to serve on the Executive Council.

4. Misra introduced a resolution to honor the Lady Vols Basketball Team. It was agreed to simply bring the resolution to the next Senate meeting.

5. Gross received a letter from unnamed Electrical and Computer Engineering (ECE) faculty members after the last Senate meeting. The letter focused on the merger of ECE and Computer Science. Questions about how it should be handled and by whom were discussed. Fitzgerald asked if there were procedures or policies that govern departmental mergers. Gross said he had found no guidelines in the past. Discussion concluded untenured faculty members were protected in the merger and the Computer Science faculty had voted in favor of the merger. The possibility of creating an ad hoc committee was raised, but it was argued that would set a precedent. In response to Boulet's question about a meeting in early spring, Holub stated that a meeting did occur. Discussion addressed the presumed expectation that there would be a vote and that a negative vote would have stopped the merger. Howell said it seemed the merger had been in process for a number of years and is scheduled to be effective July 1. Any action the Committee might take would be potentially harmful, as a consequence. Lyons asked what could be done to address faculty concerns to be supportive of the new unit. Holub indicated he had met with the faculty to try to address concerns. He explained there would be no salary cuts, but no automatic increases were programmed either. Handler commented that if a committee were to be formed it should perhaps focus on creating guidelines for mergers, as this merger is essentially completed. Patterson said that such guidelines might be a task for next year's Faculty Affairs Committee. Gross stated that he needed to respond to the letter he received. His response would indicate that at this point it would not be appropriate for the Senate Executive Committee to take any action. Further, the presentation of an unsigned letter should be noted as part of the problem. O. Ragland introduced the idea of referring the complaint to the merger committee, but several people pointed out problems with doing that.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 5:33 p.m.