

Faculty Senate Executive Committee  
MINUTES  
April 6, 2009

Present: Vince Anfara, Doug Birdwell, Toby Boulet, Marianne Breinig, Donald Bruce, Jimmy Cheek, Becky Fields, Joanne Hall, Joan Heminway, Margo Holland, Becky Jacobs, Suzanne Kurth, India Lane, Catherine Luther, Beauvais Lyons, Susan Martin, John Nolt, Carl Pierce, Jan Simek, Anne Smith, and Tse-Wei Wang.

Guests: Scott Simmons (Graduate Assistant), Jeff Maples

## **I. CALL TO ORDER**

J. Nolt called the meeting to order at 3:32 p.m.

## **II. REVIEW OF MINUTES**

Beauvais Lyons requested that the comment attributed to him in the next to the last sentence of the first paragraph of the Senate President's Report be changed to: " ...not a focus *on individual positions.*" The Minutes of the March 9 meeting were moved, seconded and approved.

## **III. REPORTS**

### Senate President's Report (J. Nolt)

John Nolt reported Joan Heminway was elected to the position of President-elect. He and Toby Boulet attended the TUFS (Tennessee University Faculty Senates) retreat over the weekend. The organization's constitution has now been ratified by all the UT and four-year Board of Regents schools, except for Tennessee Technological University, which did not have a representative present. Nolt was elected TUFS President. Nolt reported that there was a belief that the discussions about reorganizing the structure of higher education in the state might lead Governor Bredesen to appoint a commission. A faculty seat on such a commission, if appointed, was the focus of a letter writing campaign.

Nolt and Jon Shefner, Chair of the Legislative Task Force, and others had participated in various meetings with constitutional officers and legislators. They worked closely with Hank Dye and Anthony Haynes.

Margo Holland asked if the discussion of reorganizing higher education included THEC (Tennessee Higher Education Commission). Nolt said there was talk of an independent commission because various models included elimination of THEC.

### Provost's Report (S. Martin)

Susan Martin indicated the administration was still trying to understand the stimulus package. She noted that the administration's knowledge of the stimulus package was continually changing. Ads had been placed in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* in an effort to backfill lecturer positions. She said Nolt would talk about the Program Review, Reallocation and Reduction document. The campus had more time to be deliberative about looking at programs, but serious planning needed to continue. She complimented the Faculty Affairs Committee on its good work. She noted that until May 1 admissions would be uncertain. She said that

commitments were coming in a little slower perhaps due to the date change. Wang asked about the enrollment goal. Martin said it was 4100-4200.

Lyons asked how much of the stimulus money could be used for improvements and maintenance. Jeff Maples stated there was a clear stipulation against using the funds for bricks and mortar. Money could be used for maintenance and for improvements associated with improving instruction and energy saving. The percentage used for maintenance would be monitored. Lyons asked whether maintenance activities were being prioritized, e.g., for energy saving. Maples indicated they were in the midst of listing the top 10. Jimmy Cheek said he had talked with Martin and Maples about renovation projects critical to address beyond that time frame.

Vince Anfara said as a representative of the Graduate Council that he thought while it was good to mention the quality of undergraduate admissions, that the quality of graduate students was unfortunately not mentioned. Awareness of the quality of our graduate students and graduate programs needs to be increased. Martin said he had a good point, but that for many years the campus had relatively open admission at the undergraduate level and the change in that was being addressed. She noted there was a need to provide updated data on graduate students. Also an effort to be more aggressive in soliciting funds for them was underway. Cheek said Martin was working closely with Oak Ridge to obtain resources to support students.

Doug Birdwell expressed concern that some people were essentially told that their positions were gone. Stimulus money helps to offer classes, but some people will not be rehired. Martin explained that there were always shifts in the employment of contingent faculty. She said there was a need for part time temporary people to teach courses in foreign languages, for example.

#### Chancellor's Report (J. Cheek)

Jimmy Cheek noted that he met regularly with President Simek. Progress was being made on the tuition increase. Cheek said he would like a 9% increase. He said he heard the concerns of the Executive Committee about conducting searches. He appreciated the frank comments and noted that two searches were underway.

He said the campus was fortunate that the Governor and the legislature were using the stimulus money. He agreed with Anfara's comment about graduate education. He said he was committed to finding additional resources and hoped to have them in August.

Higher education reorganization was critical, although there was a need to wait before staking out a position. The campus holds a special position given its research and economic development potential that differentiates it from other public universities and that needs to be protected. The state should not develop a second major research university when there was inadequate funding for the first one. He noted President Simek was meeting with the Governor the next day.

As the President had left, other business was discussed while waiting for his return. Joan Heminway asked whether people would be available between 1:30 and 2:30 (day of the week to be determined) for a meeting with the search committee. Lyons asked Cheek about his impressions after meeting with the Deans and their faculties. Cheek said one issue was dropping courses. Other issues were graduation rates, moving students through more quickly,

and recapping full-time as 15 hours (not 12) rather than uncapping. Newly approved fees were expected to provide additional revenue. Anbara wanted to acknowledge India Lane's receipt of her doctoral degree and an award for the best dissertation in his college.

#### President's Report (J. Simek)

Jan Simek said it was his official visit to the Executive Committee. He reviewed what he had said at other campuses. His goal was to do the best for all four campuses. He had no mandate to dramatically alter anything. It was made clear to him that he could shrink the number of positions to be more efficient, while recognizing that maintenance of some activities was expected. There were accomplishments in recent years that no one wants to overturn. While a decision was made five years ago to sell the President and the presidency, now the emphasis is on the University's accomplishments and its students. Simek indicated that he was getting ready to meet with various state commissions addressing governance. UTK's survival is tied to the UT system. It might sound attractive to say UTK is the flagship institution, but such a stance could devolve into a battle over resources. The system has political authority because UT Martin, for example, brings in their area legislators, as does UT Chattanooga. One problem is the push to have the University of Memphis become a second Research 1 institution in the state. The campus needs to talk up the positive things it does.

The budget remained a serious concern. The stimulus money delayed rather than saved the University from budget cuts. The stimulus money would allow the University to gently diminish resources. The amount of reduction required did not change, but the timing of the reductions did. Having additional time might provide the opportunity to increase tuition over more than one year. Fixed costs remained a problem. There would be layoffs.

Nolt indicated that he had reported on the meeting of TUFs. He expressed the hope that if the Governor formed a commission that TUFs would have a seat at the table. He asked Simek to communicate that message to the Governor. Simek said if he were asked he would say it was never a bad idea to look at reorganization, but that it would be important to consult with numerous constituents and to examine models in other states. He stressed the importance of not acting precipitously.

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

##### Faculty Affairs Committee: Update on Changes to *Faculty Handbook* and *Manual for Faculty Evaluation* (J. Heminway)

Joan Heminway noted a set of amendments to the Faculty Affairs Committee's resolution (proposed by Doug Birdwell) were passed by the Senate at its last meeting. She had incorporated any changes associated with the amendments into the form. Birdwell had proposed an amendment to the proposed Pulsinelli amendment. The proposal was to add in consultation with right of appeal, "pursuing possible rights of appeals under Chapter 5 of the *Faculty Handbook*." She asked for responses. Birdwell said he thought it was fine and left flexibility for changes in Chapter 5. The Committee also discussed clarifying the role of the Ombudsperson. The Committee members wanted confidential consultation with the Ombudsperson included as an option. Lyons said the hope had been that consultation with the Ombudsperson might prevent an appeal. Heminway noted that the date of the process starting varies. Tse-Wei Wang asked with reference to including consultation with the Ombudsperson whether the Office of Equity and Diversity (OED) should be explicitly listed. Heminway said the question was when such conversations would be proper.

Program Review, Reallocation and Reduction (PRRR) Task Force: Procedural Framework for Academic Program Discontinuance and Reorganization (J. Nolt)

Nolt reported that the Task Force had pursued its task in two parts: development of procedures and development of criteria. At the same time the system was developing a document. The PRRR Task Force used it in drafting the campus document. Its goal was to have faculty involved throughout the process, not just at its end.

The "Preface" and "Guiding Principles" sections were different. The procedures were reviewed and approved by the Graduate and Undergraduate Councils and subsequently the Senate. They were incorporated in the document. Focus was expanded by the PRRR Task Force to include mergers and other changes that would seriously impact academics. Faculty involvement was included throughout the process, even for the suggestion of a merger. The remainder of the draft paralleled the system document, but the criteria, though similar, were in some cases different. An issue previously raised was the usage of CIP codes in the system document, i.e., anything with a CIP code could be closed. Nolt pointed out that an individual faculty member like himself could be the only person in a CIP category. The Senate already passed a definition of "program" that was incorporated into the document instead of CIP codes. Birdwell noted that the campus tenure and promotion guidelines had specific sentences about inserting comments. He thought that everyone should be able to come to the table and be heard. He raised the question of whether any parties have the right to write comments. Nolt suggested Birdwell could propose an amendment at the April 20 Senate meeting. Birdwell mentioned a potential place on p. 4 based on his experience with false comments being made. Nolt said an insertion might belong on p. 2 under the discussion of mergers.

Lyons noted the stipulation was for all academic units reporting to the Provost and wondered about the Agriculture Campus. Martin explained that that campus had submitted a document for the last Board of Trustees meeting. Lyons sought clarification of the 15 factors listed on pp. 3-4. He said he assumed they were unranked but because they were numbered he sought clarification of their relative importance. Nolt suggested that Lyons introduce an amendment at the next Senate meeting. Lyons noted 3.11.7 of the *Faculty Handbook* discusses what happens to tenured faculty when a program is closed. Boulet pointed out that the tenured faculty issue was addressed in the system document.

Anfara referred to previous discussion about the location of the document and asked whether it would be posted on the website. Martin said it would. Heminway noted that when discussion on the PRRR Task Force started, she had raised concerns about the availability of quality comparable data. Report approved.

Elections and Committee Appointments (T. Boulet)

Toby Boulet distributed information about the recent election of Senators, noting he was contacting write-in candidates in cases of vacancies. He reported that the response rates for the online ballots appeared to be reasonable. Wang asked about comparative data. No historical data were available.

Athletics Committee (M. Holland)

Margo Holland reported that the Committee had not met yet to discuss possible changes, but committee members had expressed some concern about consolidating the Athletics Committee

and the Athletics Board. There currently was interface between the two. She noted that the Board meets twice a year. Holland said she attended the meetings and was vocal at them. She also noted that the Thornton Center handles academic issues for student athletes and that no other entity was eligible to put an academic program in place for them. The Athletics Committee continuously works with the Thornton Center.

## **V. NEW BUSINESS**

### Budget and Planning Committee (D. Bruce)

Don Bruce reported that the Committee had been reviewing the system budget for months. A tremendous increase in spending for "Institutional Support" occurred over the previous five years. The Committee presented a resolution. Bruce noted that Jeff Maples and Chris Crimino had been very helpful. Growth in institutional support was faster than the growth in overall spending. Two-thirds of the increase was at the system level for personnel and benefits (not capital expenditures). The Committee compared spending with UT's selected peer group. Based on its findings, the Committee developed a resolution asking the acting President to cut the expenditures. India Lane asked about older data. Don Bruce said they had not accessed it yet. Recent data were easier to obtain. Wang asked about interpreting Figure 3. Bruce said how it was distributed could not be easily ascertained. Birdwell said he suspected there were other instances of misuse, noting a fancy office for a system official in his area that had never been used. Resolution approved.

Nolt asked for advice for responding to Haynes and Dye. They had mentioned bills that might be of interest to the Faculty Senate that were perhaps less relevant than efforts to permit guns on campus. He sought advice on how involved the Senate President should be in the legislative process. He brought up two issues: suspending students for hazing and extending notification of parents of students who engaged in drug and alcohol abuse to students at private institutions. It was agreed that those were student affairs issues and not issues of concern to the Faculty Senate. Lyons commented that some concerns about textbook selection seemed to run counter to Simek's assertion that at UTK students learn from students who write the textbooks. Bruce cautioned that the comments made by the Senate President should be clearly differentiated from Senate actions. Simek suggested that any proposal that suggested anyone other than the faculty should make the decision should be opposed. Catherine Luther emphasized the importance of voicing an opinion.

A motion to adjourn was made, seconded and approved. Meeting adjourned 5:14 p.m.