

Faculty Senate Executive Committee  
MINUTES  
October 6, 2008

Present: Denise Barlow, Doug Birdwell, Marianne Breinig, Toby Boulet, Donald Bruce, Paul Crilly, Becky Fields, Joanne Hall, Suzanne Kurth, India Lane, Catherine Luther, Susan Martin, John Nolt, David Patterson, Carl Pierce, Scott Simmons, Anne Smith

Guests: Matt Murray, Jan Simek, Scott Simmons, Steve Thomas, Dixie Thompson

## **I. CALL TO ORDER**

J. Nolt called the meeting to order at 3:34 p.m.

## **II. REVIEW OF MINUTES**

The minutes of the August 25, 2008, meeting were moved, seconded and approved unanimously.

## **III. REPORTS**

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

*Program Closures.* The proposed closures of the graduate and undergraduate programs in Audiology and Speech Pathology, the graduate program in Industrial and Organizational Psychology, and the undergraduate minor in Dance involve three departments. The Graduate and Undergraduate Councils were asked to conduct expedited reviews of the programs based on AAUP and RRTF guidelines, but their reports later in the meeting indicate they did not have adequate time to do so. Nolt asked Provost Martin for a proposal before the Board of Trustees that would include a clause indicating that the proposed closures of these programs would be subject to regular channels of approval. Nolt expressed concern about Senate involvement in the closure of these programs being a "rubber stamp" of a "done deal." Thought needs to be given to establishing criteria for program reductions. The newly created Program Reduction Task Force has been charged with consideration of procedures.

*Differential Tuition Increase.* The proposed creation of a differential tuition rate has received push back. Legislators were unhappy about the timing of the proposal being made public. Efforts will continue, but a harder public press probably will be made after the election.

*Honorary Degrees.* Chancellor Simek requested that an Honorary Degrees Committee be appointed. The Graduate Council will create a subcommittee to serve that function.

*Energy Conservation.* Nolt turned over the numerous responses he received to the "Switch Your Thinking" memo. The Sustainability Manager will act on the suggestions. Nolt pointed out the availability of the link on the website for those with other recommendations. He also said preliminary discussions had occurred on how to infuse energy issues into the curriculum.

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

S. Martin announced the new Vice President for Student Affairs and Academic Success. The Board of Trustees' decisions on closing the programs in Industrial and Organizational Psychology and Dance were to be postponed, so reviews of them could be completed in the

normal way. She pointed out the system administration visit to the Knoxville campus would be the next day.

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

*Budget.* J. Simek noted information about the impoundment had been distributed. The system budget people reported the need for a budget impoundment this year, so the campus had prepared for an impoundment of 2%. Some questioned whether it was an impoundment or rescission. (The campus is treating it as an impoundment.) The \$6 million amounted to a 3.53% impoundment. Units would be held to 2% with funds from operations, travel, unfilled positions, etc. The remainder would be absorbed centrally. D. Barlow explained some of the sources. Reductions in next year's budget would involve hard choices, e.g., jobs. Human Resources is considering a reduction in force (RIF) by streamlining functions.

*Chancellor Search.* The Search Committee has sent names with comments on strengths and weaknesses to the President. Simek indicated optimistically a new Chancellor would be in place in January.

*Questions and Answers.* Some units report directly to Simek. Budget hearings would be after November discussions with Provosts and Deans. D. Birdwell asked whether background checks were conducted on Chancellor candidates. Simek said yes. Birdwell pointed out that research incentive funds often were really research operation funds, so serious consequences would result if they were used to meet impoundment. Martin said some departments were doing that. Barlow indicated there was no central move to withdraw research incentive funds. Birdwell also noted problems with faculty salaries. Simek said he was supportive of higher faculty salaries, but there is the issue of timing with the legislature. The public needs to be reeducated about what faculty members do. Patterson pointed out the annual salary report "kills us" and Simek agreed. C. Pierce commented that he assumed the University's endowment was tanking along with the stock market. Simek commented that because the University was in the midst of a capital campaign that the money being brought in helps to maintain the endowment. Pierce asked whether the campaign was meeting its goals. Simek said yes. P. Crilly expressed concern that a person was being paid full-time to pick up cigarette butts and wondered what the person was being paid. Barlow said that was a misunderstanding; the person is responsible for interior cleaning (e.g., sinks), as well as exterior cleaning.

## **IV. OLD BUSINESS**

#### Graduate Council (M. Murray)

*Program Closures Report.* The report was distributed. The Executive Committee of the Graduate Council formed a special committee to address the information provided them by Nolt on Industrial and Organizational Psychology and Audiology and Speech Pathology. They did not address issues such as tenure as the Graduate Council does not normally deal with those. Also, there was concern that the RRTF criteria were never approved. Looked to see if information was provided about faculty and programs not meeting performance standards. Consideration of two programs without comparing them with other programs seemed inappropriate. The remainder of the report focused on process. No process is in place to make resource reallocation decisions. Nolt expressed appreciation for the committee's work and asked about the next step, as the intention was to bring a recommendation to the next Senate meeting. The report could be brought to the Senate or the Senate could be told a recommendation could

not be made. Murray pointed out the report would appear before the Senate as part of the Graduate Council Minutes. The Senate could act at that time.

Patterson asked about "fit" with Martin's report. Nolt pointed out that Audiology and Speech Pathology programs were not part of the package. The Board of Trustees would look at a plan, rather than voting up or down on programs. Simek said the goal was not to take down the programs right away, as normally 4 years are provided for undergraduates to complete programs. Traditionally, programs are eliminated when they are no longer operative. Murray asked whether departments would put forward initiatives to close programs and courses, noting that in any case courses not taught could eventually be dropped. Simek brought up the program viability/quality issue when there are budgetary constraints. Pierce pointed out the process issue. If the ad hoc committee submitted its report to the Graduate Council, then it should just go to the Senate. If an ad hoc committee had been formed by the Executive Committee, then the Executive Committee would have to make the decision. In any case, the report would be received. For recommendations to be made, motions would need to be made. If the Executive Committee acts, the report would need to show that. Nolt agreed with Pierce's assessment, but he indicated that since the Executive Committee started the process, he thought it should propose some action. Birdwell said that when the Senate receives the Graduate Council minutes, they are seen as adopted. Birdwell agreed with the decision not to make a recommendation given the lack of comparisons. He suggested separating the Report from the rest of the minutes and not having the Faculty Senate take any action that would have immediate adverse impact on students. Martin noted the catalog lasts 6 years. Pierce explained that when the minutes of the Graduate Council come to the Senate, they constitute a set of recommendations that can be separated. Amendments could be made from the floor, but they should be available before the meeting. Nolt said the issue was whether the Executive Committee wanted to take action. C. Luther moved the Executive Committee endorse the Report and recommend that the Senate approve it. Motion died. J. Hall asked whether the Executive Committee was in effect recommending "no recommendation," that is, taking a passive role. Birdwell and D. Patterson considered how discussion of the Report could occur.

#### Undergraduate Council (D. Thompson for J. Romeiser)

*Program Closures Report.* Thompson reported that the reactions of members of the Council were similar to those of Graduate Council members, that is, the Undergraduate Council members were uncomfortable with conducting a review driven by finances. The statement from the Curriculum Committee (indicating no action had been taken) was approved by the full Undergraduate Council without discussion. Pierce noted the report was really an information item rather than an action item in the form he received.

#### Faculty Affairs (S. Thomas for J. Heminway)

*Resolution to Revise Faculty Handbook.* The resolution distributed proposed changes in the "Reappointment of Department Heads" section. The word "dean" would be treated as both singular and plural. A couple of grammatical changes were proposed. The report was moved. The first reading would be at the October Senate meeting. Birdwell said he knew of four reappointment cases—two agreed and two disagreed. He expressed concern about elimination of a vote by the faculty. He argued a strong case should need to be made to retain in cases of a negative faculty vote. Thomas said the problem was that the current policy has the dean making a decision and then informing the faculty. The resolution has the faculty giving input first. Birdwell said his concern was about no vote. Crilly agreed with Birdwell arguing for

something stronger than “input,” for if a head lacks faculty support, a unit would be dysfunctional. I. Lane said the option for more input was available (e.g., in departmental bylaws). Birdwell moved to return the resolution to committee. Patterson seconded. T. Boulet asked about the Provost’s involvement. As Provost, Martin said she reviews reappointment decisions. All Deans have processes in place circumventing the Faculty Handbook by consulting the faculty beforehand. Pierce said he was not in a position to judge the implications to the document of change (input vs. vote). An alternative would be to send the resolution to the Senate and bring a motion to amend it to the Senate meeting. Motion to return the resolution to committee passed.

#### Tennessee University Faculty Senate (TFUS) (J. Nolt)

Nolt attended a meeting with representatives from other state colleges and universities that led to the proposal to form a statewide organization that would meet twice a year. It would be independent of the Board and Trustees and Regents. Nolt suggested sending a resolution to the Senate recommending the Knoxville campus join the organization. Birdwell asked whether the organization existed. Nolt said a constitution was approved and colleges and universities were in the process of voting. Lane asked about representation for the Ag Institute on this and other bodies. Nolt explained that it was a body of Senate representatives from four-year colleges and universities. Pierce wondered about the timing, given the recent Knoxville proposal for differential tuition. Nolt gave an example of what was being proposed for joint action—cases where academic departments were dissolved and faculty members subsequently treated as staff rather than faculty. It was moved and seconded that the Executive Committee recommend joining the organization to the Senate. Motion passed.

#### Faculty Council (J. Nolt)

*Proxy for Beauvais Lyons.* Lyons cannot attend two meetings and asked that someone be appointed in his stead. Moved, seconded, and approved that Patterson replace Lyons on the Faculty Council.

#### Committee Reassignments (J. Nolt)

Nolt reported that Birdwell asked that O. Stephens be appointed to fill a vacancy on the Appeals Committee. R. Darling asked Nolt to be placed on the Student Concerns Committee. A motion to accept the appointments was made, seconded and approved.

#### Alcohol on Campus Task Force (D. Patterson)

The Task Force has looked at laws applicable to the sale of alcohol on campus. President Petersen made the serving of alcohol within the purview of Chancellors. Chancellor Crabtree approved Tyson House, McClung Museum, and Clarence Brown Theatre. A vote on sale of alcohol at Thompson-Boling was scheduled for Wednesday. Any student purchasing alcohol at Thompson-Boling would be in violation of the campus student conduct policy. Patterson wanted a reading of views on sale of alcoholic beverages at non-athletic events. (A vote “for” would require many levels of change in Code of Student Conduct.) In any case, the Task Force’s decision would not be the final word on whether alcohol would be sold. Nolt suggested having either a straw poll or sending comments to Patterson. A straw poll was taken and sentiment was evenly split.

#### Faculty Salary Survey (D. Bruce)

The annual faculty salary survey was distributed as an information item.

Teaching Council (I. Lane)

*SAIS.* The Council is working with SAIS. Institutional Research is considering what is happening on other campuses. Lane said she wanted to have E. Pemberton give a brief presentation at a Senate meeting.

*Chancellor's Teaching and Advising Awards.* Nominations are due November 7.

*Teaching Panel.* Lane drew attention to the October 15 panel of recent award winners to be held in collaboration with the new Teaching Learning Center.

Information Technology Committee (M. Breinig)

M. Breinig reported that J. Poore had appointed a committee to look into outsourcing student e-mail, suggesting there were more pros than cons to such a change. (There will be a survey of students.) She questioned how much faculty input should be sought, as the change would be for students. Nolt suggested she communicate with Paul Crilly as Chair of the Student Concerns Committee. Birdwell said it needed to be an appropriate system.

Research Council (J. Hall)

The Council is concerned about financial support for graduate students. There is interest in co-sponsoring a forum, e.g., with the Graduate Council, to address how to get graduate students involved in faculty research.

Faculty and Staff Benefits Committee (B. Fields)

*Wellness Task Force Report.* The Task Force would like to stay intact because of the current budget limitations. The Task Force recommends at least one FTE person. A. Chesney plans to put the position in his budget next year. Fields indicated it was their final report and had been submitted to the Chancellor. The Task Force hoped for follow through on some of the proposed initiatives. Pierce asked if the Executive Committee needed to take action. Nolt replied it was an information item.

Athletic Committee

The Athletic Committee Report was distributed.

**V. NEW BUSINESS**

None.

Meeting adjourned at 5:08 p.m.