

Faculty Senate Executive Council  
MINUTES  
March 21, 2011

Present: Joan Heminway, Vince Anfara, Toby Boulet, Joanne Deeken, Stefanie Ohnesorg, Doug Birdwell, Jimmy Cheek, Chris Cimino, John Koontz, India Lane, Beauvais Lyons, Susan Martin, Carole Myers, Conrad Plaut, Lloyd Rinehart, Anne Smith, Ken Stephenson, Steve Thomas

Guests: Rich Boyer (ModernThink), Sarah Gardial, Dixie Thompson, Ron Tredway

## **I. CALL TO ORDER**

J. Heminway called the meeting to order at approximately 3:30 p.m. She asked the guests to identify and introduce themselves.

## **II. REVIEW OF MINUTES**

A motion to approve the minutes of the February 21, 2011, meeting was made by C. Myers and seconded by B. Lyons. Minutes were approved as submitted.

## **III. REPORTS**

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

Chancellor Cheek was pleased with Gov. Haslam's State of the State address. He feels Gov. Haslam's plan gives UTK more flexibility in raising money through tuition and fees (in the absence of sufficient state money). The Governor did propose a 1.6% raise for all state employees, including those at UTK. The Chancellor is hoping to eventually have an additional pool of money from fees and tuition out of which he can offer additional raises. The budget proposal also called for a \$3.4 million reduction in funding to UTK, but that reduction will be covered by tuition and fee increases. If there is a further reduction, it may be passed to the colleges. Central Administration is not able to contribute more. In addition, our deferred maintenance on the UTK campus can wait no longer.

Tuition and fees at UTK are generally lower than at any other Tennessee state university and lower than at most major universities. C. Cimino will include student input in developing the fee and tuition proposal. We cannot wait five years for the state economy to rebound. The science building at MTSU is the highest state wide need. Discussing fees for building construction is a new idea for UTK. Cimino is discussing these issues with students. It is possible that we could leverage money raised from fees to get partial support from the state for construction. UTK will ask, but there are no guarantees about the answer.

In response to a question, Cheek stated the Tennessee Pledge and Tennessee Promise scholarship programs will continue. Students whose family income is in the lowest quartile, on average, receive funds sufficient to cover full tuition and fees plus \$7000. Students whose family income is in the highest quartile pay, on average, \$24,000. Cheek is looking into a new funding model where we charge by credit hour taken. Currently, students pay for 12 hours and are taking 15+ hours per semester. He is talking about the new paradigm to the Governor. We need to adjust to that shift. Cheek is most worried about the children of parents whose income is in the middle quartiles.

Heminway asked if there were any updates on the proposed guns on campus legislation. Cheek said he hopes the right side will prevail. Heminway also asked about proposed legislation on immigration matters. Cheek called the bill on campus procedures regarding citizenship a non-issue from the standpoint of its substance, but stated some legislators are concerned. He will try to convince them that the issue is under control, which may defer the issue until next year.

D. Birdwell asked about the news from Washington. Cheek said he had spoken to our congressional group about the importance of Pell Grant funding and support for research funding. They are very supportive of UT. There will be no solution on the federal budget impasse until everything (including entitlements) is on the table. Cheek believes this will not happen until after the 2012 election.

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

S. Martin reported on the recruitment of Deans. Two new Deans (Nursing and Libraries) have been hired. Both top candidates accepted our offers, which is a really positive development. The search committee for the Dean of Architecture and Design has recruited interesting candidates. The Provost hopes to be hiring a Dean of Arts and Sciences in late April. Lyons asked about support for the Centaur exhibit by Library Dean candidates. Martin replied that all candidates embraced the exhibit.

#### Vice Provost's Report (S. Gardial and R. Boyer)

S. Gardial has been working for two years on a campus climate survey (Civility Survey). They have hired ModernThink as a result of their work with the Chronicle of Higher Education's "Great Colleges to Work For" program. The Chronicle has committed to this survey being an annual program. It began in 2008 and thus is in its fourth year. This semester, Gardial and others have been working with choosing a vendor (ModernThink) and customizing its survey for use at UTK. The survey will be released to faculty and exempt staff shortly. (This group matches with the groups surveyed by The Chronicle and allows comparisons.) Gardial introduced R. Boyer.

Boyer stated ModernThink had been on campus all day making presentations to many groups. Slides from his presentations will be made available to the Faculty Senate. This is part of a communication plan for the survey. The survey is scheduled to launch on March 28. The final report of results is due June 1. The survey began with a survey of 89 colleges and universities for The Chronicle; in 2010, the number had grown to 275 and currently it is surveying 290. Because of the length of time over which the core data has been collected and the number of schools using this survey instrument, a large amount of comparative data is available. Data on 13 of UTK's aspirational peers is available. ModernThink is constantly updating and refining the survey. The UTK survey will have some specific questions not included in the general survey that allow for comparisons among campus populations.

Gardial said this was a good time for a survey. The campus wants a happy work force. In addition, a good climate helps with accreditations and recruitment. The timing of the survey will tie in well with the implementation of recommendations from the campus civility task force and the Top 25/VOL Vision process. The survey has 60 core, 15 demographic, and two or three open-ended statements. In response to a question, the university needs to include demographic information in the survey in order to best use the data gathered for campus planning, but ModernThink will ensure information that might identify individuals will not be

included in its report to UTK. For example, if fewer than five replies are received, only aggregated data will be shared. Actual comments are not shared with the community as a whole.

J. Koontz asked how the campus would distribute information from the survey after June 1. Gardial replied there is a commitment to share information, but the entire report will not be shared with the entire campus. The format and form of the information distribution has not been finalized. The details are to be determined. The campus administration wants transparency, but is balancing that with the potential need for confidentiality.

A. Smith asked for the source for the open questions. Boyer replied they were derived from the "Best Colleges to Work For" survey. Smith asked if some of the questions related to employee benefits since her committee is considering a campus survey on that topic. Boyer said there were some questions, but they probably wouldn't align with the specifics of the committee's needs in this area. Gardial said the open questions are very broad. She indicated that themes for future surveys will develop from the replies. Boyer also said UTK will learn from this survey, and that learning will help inform and refine future surveys.

Smith asked if the survey would be online. Boyer said yes and noted that online delivery minimizes fear. The survey will come from ModernThink. Each person will have a unique log in. Only one person at the company would be able to link replies to an individual. Completing the survey should take 20-24 minutes. A respondent can partially complete the survey, leave and later continue using a "save and return" option. Once the "submit survey" button is clicked, no further editing is allowed. This will be a forced response survey, except for demographic information. In their experience, 8-12 % of respondents do not complete the demographic portion. K. Stephenson asked if UTK would get raw data or a report. Boyer said we would get the report only to help protect privacy. The company will do any additional analyses asked for by UTK.

Smith asked what they consider a good response rate for higher education. Boyer said the average response rate in their experience is 43%. That percentage is lower in larger institutions and higher in smaller institutions. Gardial said the faculty/exempt staff will each receive at least two emails encouraging responses: one from ModernThink and one from the Faculty Senate or Exempt Staff Council. Surveys distributed through the Deans, Directors, and Department Heads list have a 50% response rate at UTK.

T. Boulet asked if the survey included UTIA. Gardial said it would not at this time. However, she noted that there is a separate RFP out for a system-wide survey. UTIA would be included in that survey. Boulet then asked why the non-exempt staff members are not included in the survey. Boyer said that some of the cost of the survey for faculty and exempt staff is partially underwritten by the Chronicle of Higher Education. If UTK wanted to survey the non-exempt staff, they would have to bear the entire cost. The Chronicle used a Blue Ribbon panel to set the parameters. Gardial said that exempt staff would be included in the system-wide survey since that was included in the RFP.

Birdwell asked how fine-grained the data returned would be. Would it be categorized by department or by college? Boyer said the data will come as a total and broken down by college. It will not be broken down by department at this point. Gardial stated the privacy

problem is more acute at the department level. With this survey, UTK is creating a baseline. Later surveys could be done differently. Boyer reiterated that UTK could aim for collecting more detailed data in the future. Everyone wants us to feel good about the data and the results. Please contact Gardial with any additional questions. Heminway thanked Gardial and Boyer for their presentation and thanked Gardial for keeping her informed about this process the entire year.

#### Vice Chancellor of Finance and Administration's Report (C. Cimino)

C. Cimino reported on the campus Master Plan. It is a vision and a road map for facilities and infrastructure now and for the future (defined as the next 50 years). The last full Master Plan was done in 1999. There was an expectation of a new plan in 2004 that was not completed. The campus tried again in 2007 based on a THEC request for benchmarking. We participated in the process in 2008 and 2009. The result showed deficiencies in classroom space, classroom lab space, and research space. A 20-member committee composed of faculty, staff, and students was formed in 2009. The architectural firm of Bullock and Smith is working with the committee as consultants as they go through the process of building the new Master Plan. The plan is broken down into 20 categories (sectors). The committee is currently putting the category plans together to create a draft Master Plan. The committee meets next on Thursday (March 24). If the draft plan is accepted, it will be released to faculty, staff, and students at UTK and then be made public in April or May. Meeting announcements are forthcoming. Faculty and staff will see the plan at the first meeting. Heminway will help encourage faculty to attend the meeting(s). The plan needs more time for discussion than is available in a regularly scheduled Faculty Senate meeting. Lyons asked if the Master Plan is tied to the Top 25 quest. Cimino replied they are currently on parallel paths. The Master Plan group shifted its focus when the Top 25 goal was announced. The two groups are currently aligning their plans.

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

Heminway thanked Stephenson et al. for a very interesting forum on the NRC data (March 9). There were approximately 25 people at the forum. The audience was engaged with the presentations. Slides and forum materials are available through the Research Council Web site (for which a link is provided on the Faculty Senate Web site). The Faculty Senate also has two different audio tapes of the forum, one of which will be posted with the other forum materials. Liz Tramm was thanked for her work on the Forum.

As earlier report, work is ongoing to clarify and improve the process for the new UT background check policy for new hires.

In addition, Heminway will continue to pursue information about and a resolution of the earlier reported issues regarding the campus service learning insurance fee.

Heminway, Boulet, and J. Nolt will represent UTK and UTIA at the forthcoming Tennessee University Faculty Senates (TUFFS) meeting March 25-27, 2011.

The press followed our resolution on guns on campus. Vanderbilt has expressed interest in our resolution and the related background research, since they share our concerns about the effect of guns on campus safety.

### Election Report (V. Anfara)

V. Anfara gave a brief report on the status of the election process. Ballots were sent to the faculty on March 20 and 339 people already had voted before today's meeting. The results will be available on March 28. If anyone has problems/issues, contact Anfara. Anfara announced he had conducted the Faculty Senate President elections by electronic ballot (working with the Office of Information Technology—OIT—to ensure that this ballot only went to senators). Anfara stated that he had not been aware of the time requirements of both finding candidates and working with OIT. Stephenson asked if the ballot counted if no names were included in the "write in" section. Anfara responded affirmatively. He indicated that there is a serious problem with attracting candidates, which has made write-ins a viable approach. One of the caucuses in the College of Arts and Sciences, for example, did not have enough candidates for the number of vacancies it must fill. There were many write-in lines on that ballot. Anfara pointed out the Net IDs are necessary for voting. However, only one person in OIT can make the connection between a ballot submitted and the person submitting that ballot. That person in OIT will not share the information and will destroy it after voting closes.

### Benefits and Professional Development Committee (A. Smith)

Smith, acting on behalf of the Benefits and Professional Development Committee, participated in a meeting with a committee of the LGBT Commission before Spring Break regarding soft benefits for domestic partners. Some of the choices warranting further research include:

- a) use of sick leave bank due to illness of a domestic partner
- b) allowing domestic partners such privileges as checking out books from the Libraries
- c) extending the tuition waiver benefit to domestic partners
- d) funeral and bereavement leave for domestic partners
- e) inclusion of domestic partners on insurance plans if they pay the total cost

The LGBT Commission will discuss the group of benefits. C. Myers asked if the Commission had included other kinds of insurance (auto, disability, long-term disability). Sick and funeral/bereavement leave were of a different nature than these other benefits and were deemed to be more important as a starting point.

### General Education Task Force (D. Thompson)

S. McMillan, Vice Provost for Academic Affairs, formed a task force in December 2010 to examine the status of General Education at UTK. A handout was distributed with details and is included with these minutes (at the end). The group will continue to work in the spring by surveying the faculty. Engaging students is a big issue. How to comply with the Complete College Tennessee Act will be a major focus. By law, general education must be transferable between colleges in Tennessee. The group will send a final report to McMillan in the Fall.

The College of Arts and Sciences has established a group to address General Education issues separate from this group.

## **IV. OLD BUSINESS**

### Proposed Approval of Amended and Restated Faculty Senate By-Laws

Anfara introduced a resolution asking for approval of the Amended and Restated Bylaws and submission of the same for approval and adoption at the next meeting of the Faculty Senate. Anfara reminded the group that at our last meeting, we had discussed and decided that there

would be a separate document that tracked changes to the Bylaws. The existing log of changes needs to be updated. Heminway suggested that L. Tramm may be able to assist him in updating it. S. Thomas moved and Boulet seconded a motion that a sentence be added to the amendments section of the Bylaws to reference the log of changes and that the wording of the sentence be delegated to the President-Elect of the Senate. The motion was unanimously approved. Heminway suggested that the Executive Council also consider adding to the Bylaws a provision expressly allowing for an electronic voting process for President-Elect. She also noted that the current section on elections does not state that election of senators is by a plurality. Stephenson moved and Myers seconded a motion to defer work on the revision of the election provisions to the fall semester. The motion passed unanimously. After the discussion, Anfara moved and Stephenson seconded a motion to approve the document as amended, and the following resolution was unanimously approved:

RESOLVED, that the form of Amended and Restated Bylaws circulated to this Faculty Senate Executive Council in advance of the meeting as amended at this meeting is approved and adopted and that this Executive Council introduce the Amended and Restated Bylaws for approval and adoption at the April Faculty Senate meeting for a first reading with a vote to be taken at the May meeting of the Faculty Senate.

## **V. NEW BUSINESS**

### Proposed Amendments to the *Faculty Handbook* and *Manual for Faculty Evaluation*

Thomas introduced a series of changes as recommended by the Task Force on Advising and as revised by the Faculty Senate Faculty Affairs Committee and accepted by the Undergraduate Council Advising Committee and the Academic Advising Leadership Group.

Lyons expressed concern about the language of the resolution. He felt the strength of the current *Faculty Handbook* lay in its' brevity and clarity. He prefers the brevity. The suggested revision adds an entire paragraph. Is there a way to include information while still keeping the provision to one paragraph? The reason he's worried is that it could lead to a more verbose *Handbook*. If we have two paragraphs for teaching, would the one paragraph each for research and service remain? What impression are we giving with that approach? Is there a way to add that extra paragraph in an appendix and not the *Handbook* itself?

The *Manual for Faculty Evaluation* opens the door to documentation. Are we going to allow many letters of reference (e.g., from several students)? Would that make the portfolio too bulky? Should we look at peer review for advising and mentoring? Are we creating lots of not terribly useful data?

Heminway suggested a summary of letters from students, not the inclusion of the letters themselves. This could work with cooperation of Deans and Department Heads.

Martin stated they are getting pages of glowing praise already, but they are not "of helpful utility." They are already seeing lots of text on advising. The work is valued, but is overbalanced. She suggested perhaps a Task Force could be established to work on the issues.

Birdwell suggested an approach for the revision that has a category of "advising/mentoring" and defines in one sentence how it is to be applied. The current version seems repetitive. L. Rinehart agreed.

The proposal was returned to the committee for further work.

## **VI. ADJOURNMENT**

T. Boulet moved and J. Koontz seconded a motion for adjournment at approximately 5:15 p.m.

Update from General Education Task Force  
March 21, 2011

*Background*

In fall 2010, Dr. Sally McMillan called together the General Education Task Force and charged them with examining the status of General Education (GE) on this campus. The members of the task force are: Dixie Thompson (Chair), RJ Hinde, Missy Parker, Chuck Collins, and John Haas. In January 2011, the group attended the AAC&U meeting in San Francisco. This meeting generated a great deal of discussion about possibilities for GE on our campus.

*Summary of Observations to this Point*

There is no single General Education model that fits all campuses. Small liberal arts schools typically have a different type of GE experience compared to larger, comprehensive institutions. Even among doctoral-granting, research institutions like UTK, GE varies widely. An overview of GE models from 'top 25' schools was prepared. UTK's approach is not unlike many others. Although groups like AAC&U have generated lots of information on GE, there is no single 'best practices' in GE that fits all schools.

UTK does not communicate its GE message to students very well. There is confusion on many fronts including what courses count toward GE requirements and what is the role of GE in the overall education of students. The university needs to do a better job of defining GE and then messaging GE to students.

The Complete College Tennessee Act is a complicating factor. Transparency will be critical if any changes in GE are made. Students who transfer from another TN school will likely have a different GE experience.

Assessment of learner outcomes from GE courses needs attention.

*Plans for the Next Several Months*

Our goal is to continue with fact finding during spring 2011. The fact finding process will include:

- A survey of faculty is planned. In this survey, we hope to gather information about how faculty members feel about GE in general and also about their specific opinions regarding GE at UTK.
- Faculty focus groups are planned to gather more in-depth information than we can gain from the survey. In addition to tenured and tenure-track faculty, groups of lecturers and graduate students who teach GE courses will be included in this process.
- Student focus groups are planned to gather information about students' GE experiences. Groups will include students from across colleges and across years (freshmen – senior).

In fall 2011, the Task Force will generate a report for Dr. McMillan and recommend next steps.