

# ***The Faculty Voice***

## **Faculty Senate Newsletter**

### **February 2012**

Newsletter Editor: Stefanie Ohnesorg, Information Officer

This newsletter is provided to you as a means of keeping you connected to the activities of the UT Knoxville Faculty Senate, your representative body for the Knoxville campuses. The intent of this newsletter is to keep all faculty members informed about current issues before the Faculty Senate and to motivate all faculty to get involved. Questions regarding and suggestions for this newsletter may be directed to the Information Officer of the Faculty Senate, Stefanie Ohnesorg, at [ohnesorg@utk.edu](mailto:ohnesorg@utk.edu).

### **Items Covered in this Newsletter:**

- 1. Spring 2012 Mic/Nite**
- 2. Student Online Evaluations**
- 3. Faculty Handbook: Changes on Advising and Mentoring**
- 4. System-Wide Strategic Planning**
- 5. Center for Community Engagement**
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- 7. Branding**
- 8. Faculty Senate Updates**
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  - Info and links related to the **February 6, 2012 Faculty Senate Meeting**
  - **Make Your Voice Be Heard! Provide Input via the Senators from YOUR Unit!**

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#### **1. Spring 2012 Mic/Nite**

Spring 2012 Mic/Nite will take place Wednesday, March 7, 2012, from 5:30 – 9:30 pm at “The Valarium” (112 Ramsey Avenue). There will be 13 faculty presentations and abstracts, as well as more information on the event is available at <http://provost.utk.edu/mic-nite/>. For more information on Mic/Nite please contact Beauvais Lyons at [blyons@utk.edu](mailto:blyons@utk.edu).

#### **2. Student Online Evaluations**

UT converted the way students evaluate their instructors to a completely web-based, online system. While the Student Assessment of Instruction System (SAIS) developed as an in-class, scan form procedure, as of Fall 2011, all evaluations are taking place online, and it is expected that the online evaluation system will save 1.25 tons of paper each year, reduce overall costs and save countless hours of staff time. More information on the SAIS is available at <http://oira.utk.edu/sais/>.

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While only 34% of students had completed all of their evaluations online in spring 2011, the various measures that were implemented to increase students’ awareness resulted in a much higher overall participation: In fall 2011, 50.1% of students completed all if their instructor evaluations and 70% of students filled out at least one online evaluation. A work group is going to assess how the participation rate can be further increased. In addition, Provost Martin is in the process of appointing a task force that is charged to assess what other tools could be implemented to evaluate teaching.

### **3. Faculty Handbook: Changes on Advising and Mentoring**

The Faculty Senate has been concerned that the new section on “advising and mentoring” voted on in September 2011 (to go into effect in August 2012) had more language devoted to it than “teaching.” Two issues need to be resolved prior to the Board of Trustees’ meeting in June. First, “Advising and Mentoring” needs to be added to Section 3.11.4, the criteria on tenure. This can be done by adding a parenthetical to 3.11.4. The second change is more substantive: The definition of “best practices” needs to be included somewhere and may involve adding a footnote. For more information see the minutes of the Faculty Senate Meeting on Sept. 19, 2011 at [http://senate.utk.edu/files/2011/09/September-2011.min\\_1.pdf](http://senate.utk.edu/files/2011/09/September-2011.min_1.pdf) (p. 6-7); and the resolution from the Faculty Affairs Committee referred to in these minutes: <http://senate.utk.edu/files/2011/09/5-FAC Resolution Advising and Mentoring revised 20110826.pdf>

### **4. System-Wide Strategic Planning**

A strategic planning process for the University of Tennessee System is now underway, with a final plan anticipated by June 2012 (<http://president.tennessee.edu/strategicplan/>). As part of this process, it needs to be clearly defined what are ‘system issues’ and what are ‘campus issues.’ Currently these lines are blurred; the system-wide plan, for example, deals with the land grant mission even though the system is not a land grant enterprise. The only land grant institutions within the UT system are UTK and UTIA. The Faculty Senate is closely monitoring this situation, and efforts to empower the system to have more engagement across the board may require looking at taxation of campuses: If specific campuses want the system to have more authority, the money to do so would need to come from them.

### **5. Center for Community Engagement**

A Task Force under the leadership of David Schumann ([dschuman@utk.edu](mailto:dschuman@utk.edu)) and Bob Rider ([brider@utk.edu](mailto:brider@utk.edu)) has been charged with planning the creation of a Center on Community Engagement. The Center will serve as a central organization of community efforts of the campus. UTK is a member of TRUCEN (The Research University Civic Engagement Network) as are many of our peer institutions and top 25 schools. Rider will attend a TRUCEN meeting next month. The benefits of the Center will include increased retention, graduation rates, and visibility for UT. For more information see the following PowerPoint presentation that was prepared by David Schumann: <http://senate.utk.edu/files/2011/09/CE-Proposal-PP.pdf>.

### **6. Volunteer Spirit Statement Focus Group**

The Learning Consortium meets every 3 weeks to talk about student learning and improving it. The group would like to create a statement about what it means to be a volunteer. Schumann invites all members of the campus community to write down thoughts on what it means to be a Vol. Email your thoughts on what it means to be a Vol to [dschuman@utk.edu](mailto:dschuman@utk.edu).

### **7. Branding**

On Feb. 1, 2012, the new website for the campus was launched. The old one was created in 2007, and the new website is designed to be more user-friendly. University websites are becoming much more standardized in the fact that there are certain things prospective students expect to see when they come to a university’s website. The biggest change in the website is that it has been re-architected; it is now also more user-friendly for mobile devices. In February or March of this year, departments will receive templates for redesigning their own web-pages as time allows; there is no set deadline.

## 8. Faculty Senate Updates

The UT Knoxville Faculty Senate is the representative body through which the faculty participates in University affairs and shared governance. Through committees and a democratically elected legislative body, it promulgates policies and regulations regarding the general educational objectives of UT Knoxville. **It is, therefore, important that all faculty members stay 'connected' with the Faculty Senate by staying informed and by providing input and comments via the Senators who represent them in the Faculty Senate.**

**Please note that the Faculty Senate website (<http://senate.utk.edu/>) has been reorganized.** Please make sure to familiarize yourself with the new layout so that you will know where to find all current and past Faculty Senate documents and reports.

The **calendar for all 2011-12 meetings of the Faculty Senate and the Faculty Senate Executive Council** are posted here: <http://senate.utk.edu/calendar/>

### Important Resources on the Faculty Senate Website:

#### a. Links to Minutes, Agendas, Reports etc. for 2011-12

Main Page: <http://senate.utk.edu/current-session/archives-2011-2012/>

**Please make sure to scroll down to the bottom of this page in order to see the updates for all areas.**

Please check frequently for updates regarding the work of Faculty Senate because new items will be added as they become available!

Archived Senate Reports, Minutes & Publications are organized by academic year and can be found here: <http://senate.utk.edu/archives/>

#### b. Links to the **Agenda for the February 6, 2012, Faculty Senate Meeting**

(<http://senate.utk.edu/files/2011/09/FSAgenda-2-6-121.pdf>), and to the

**Faculty Senate President's Report for February 2012**

(<http://senate.utk.edu/files/2011/09/1-Faculty-Senate-President-Report-2-6-12.pdf>).

### → **IMPORTANT: Make Your Voice Be Heard!!**

**Provide Input & Feedback via the Senators from YOUR Unit!**

- a. The List of all 2011-12 Senators (incl. contact info) is posted here: <http://senate.utk.edu/files/2011/07/Membership-2012-2014-with-email-addresses5.pdf>
- b. All 2011-12 Senate Committee Assignments are posted here: <http://senate.utk.edu/files/2011/07/Committees-2011-201213.pdf> .
- c. The List of all 2011-12 Faculty Senate Caucus Leaders is posted here: <http://senate.utk.edu/files/2011/07/Faculty-Senate-Caucus-Leaders-2011-2012.pdf> .
- d. Contact information for the 2011-12 Faculty Senate President, Vince Anfara, and for all other Faculty Senate Officers in 2011-12 is posted here: <http://senate.utk.edu/senate-officers-2011-2012/> .