

2011-2012 Faculty Senate University System Relations Committee Final Report

This was the third year of the existence of this committee, which has the following membership and charges:

University/System Relations Committee. Membership shall consist of at least eight faculty members including the elected campus representative to the University Faculty Council. During years when the campus has a faculty representative on the UT Board of Trustees, that person will also serve on the University/System Relations Committee. The Chairperson shall be a faculty member.

The University/System Relations Committee will provide for faculty input (a) into activities of The University of Tennessee system, Research, ORNL, Information Technology, and the Cherokee Campus and (b) with the Board of Trustees and the Tennessee legislature. The University/System Relations Committee shall work with the Budget and Planning Committee to monitor The University of Tennessee system budget and Athletics Department budget.

At the end of the year, members of the committee included: Beauvais Lyons, Chair, Toby Boulet (UT Board of Trustees), Guoxun Chen, Lloyd Davis, Hillary Fouts, Greg Petty, Tricia Hepner, Susan Speraw, Svetlana Zivanovic, Doug Blaze, David Patterson (UTFC Representative), and Sam Swan. The committee typically met on Wednesday afternoons at 3:30pm. Attendance at meetings was mixed, and some attention might be given to finding a meeting time that works better.

The committee met regularly throughout the year with a number of system level administrators and the chair of the UT Faculty Council. The primary goal of the committee has been in keeping lines of communication open, and advocating for clearly articulated campus/system functions. Minutes are posted on the Faculty Senate website. No specific recommendations by the committee were made.

Below is a summary of our meetings:

1. In September the committee met with Katie High, Vice President for Academic Affairs and Student Success to discuss a variety of issues; from UT Trustees' perceptions of the value of protecting the tenure system; the role of her office in helping the campus faculty and administrators in working with the Office of the General Counsel to implement changes to the Faculty Handbook; reforming THEC's system of assigning "low" producing programs to include metrics other than the number of majors; the Complete College Tennessee Act; Lottery Scholarships; and the redundancy of national accreditation and the THEC mandated program reviews for many disciplines. The value of having faculty meet as part of the statewide curriculum planning and articulation was discussed. No specific actions were taken, though several of these matters are ones the committee should monitor in 2012-2013. (<http://president.tennessee.edu/staff/katiehigh.html>)
2. In November we met with Vice-President David Millhorn. Building on conversations in the prior two years discussion stressed the Cherokee Campus plan and fostering academic and research connections between Cherokee Farm and UTK, the Institute of Agriculture, ORNL and especially UT Health Sciences. Two issues regarding residency and tuition burden on graduate students were discussed, and could be a

topic for future attention by the committee. System and campus relations regarding research activities is an area that needs continued attention by our committee and in concert with the Research Council as well as the Vice-Chancellor for Research. (<http://president.tennessee.edu/staff/millhorn.html>).

3. In January we met with Vice-President Hank Dye to discuss approaches to the 2012 legislative session and the role faculty can play in advocating for the university. Good relations with Vice-President Dye have been a key success for this committee since 2009, with cooperation on issues such as handguns and state support for higher education. (<http://president.tennessee.edu/staff/dye.html>)
4. In February, the week of the Board of Trustees meeting at UT Martin, the committee conducted a conference call with George Cook (UTHSC) who is the chair of the UT Faculty Council. Discussion mostly focused on the operations of the UTFc and the UT Strategic Plan. (<http://web.utk.edu/~utfc/>)
5. The March Meeting with Vice President Catherine Mizell of the UT General Counsel's Office was postponed to May. Since its formation in 2009, this was the first time the committee will have met with Vice President Mizell. As there are a number of ways that the activities of the General Counsel's Office impacts campus operations, this is a relationship that should be cultivated by the committee in future years. (<http://president.tennessee.edu/staff/mizell.html>)

Finally, leadership of the committee is in transition, as Beauvais Lyons is concluding his terms as a Faculty Senator. Continuing members of the committee will hopefully be Guoxun Chen, Lloyd Davis, Hillary Fouts, Greg Petty, Tricia Hepner, Susan Speraw, and David Patterson (UTFc Representative).

Guoxun Chen, who represented the committee at a Senate Executive Council meeting for Beauvais Lyons has agreed to chair the committee if asked. Several other continuing members of the committee are also capable of leading the committee next year if compelled.