

Faculty Senate  
MINUTES  
April 8, 2013

Absent: Katherine Ambroziak, Vincent Anfara, Itamar Arel, Bob Blitt, Stan Bowie, Ralph Brockett, Ernest Brothers, Jason Brown, Feng Chen, Chris Cimino, Christopher Clark, Michael Clark, Paul Crilly, Lt. Brian Delamater, Seddik Djouadi, Gerd Duscher, Jerzy Dydak, Jeff Fairbrother\*, Jennifer Fowler, Alberto Garcia, Iris Goodwin, Matthew Gray, John Haas, Federico Harte, Noriko Horiguchi, Baoshan Huang, Wonjae Hwang, Becky Jacobs, Mike Jones, Ron Kalafsky, Ramki Kalyanaraman, Kurt Lamour, Baldwin Lee, Susan Martin, Larry Miller, Stephanie Noble, Tulio Prado, Suzy Prentiss, Nathan Preuss, Susan Ratliff, Jennifer Richards, W. Tim Rogers, Fernando Schwartz, Robert Sklenar, Curtis Stewart, Adam Taylor, Matthew Theriot, Ahmad Vakili, Christian Vossler, Jeanine Williamson, Mark Windham, Songning Zhang, Mary Ziegler

\*Alternates: Gregory Petty for Jeff Fairbrother

### **CALL TO ORDER**

S. Thomas called the meeting to order at 3:32 p.m., noting that a quorum was now present.

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS AND REPORTS**

#### President's Report (S. Thomas)

- On March 7<sup>th</sup>, along with D. Golden and P. Daves, met with the Non-Tenure-Track Faculty Advisory Group to consider possible revisions to the *Resources Manual* as well as the participation on non-tenure-track faculty within the Senate. Additional details may be presented at the May meeting. **[Reminder: The Senate's May meeting will be held in the Hodges Library Auditorium.]**
- Attended the spring meeting of the Tennessee University Faculty Senates, held at Tennessee Tech in Cookeville on March 22<sup>nd</sup> through 24<sup>th</sup>.
- Gave nominees to Provost Martin for our representative to the HR Policy Review Committee. P. Daves has accepted this appointment.
- Beginning on March 21<sup>st</sup>, received several messages from faculty regarding financial support for Sex Week activities. Because these messages were all received after the Executive Council meeting on March 18<sup>th</sup>, this issue is not on the agenda for today's meeting. The Executive Council will consider this matter when planning for the May Senate meeting. However, any Senator wishing to make a motion on this topic today may do so during the new business portion of the meeting.
- Will attend University Faculty Council meeting, currently scheduled for May 9<sup>th</sup>. The chair of the council has indicated concerns about Sex Week will be on the agenda for that meeting with President DiPietro.
- Was also contacted by one alumna (class of 1971) who urged the Senate to reconsider providing support for Sex Week as an annual event. In point of fact, the Senate has not even considered this latter issue. The only contact with the Senate by SEAT (Sexual Empowerment and Awareness at Tennessee) was a presentation to the Executive Council on September 10, 2012. Because SEAT was, at that time, an unofficial student organization, the Executive Council made no recommendation to the Senate for action on the group's request.

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

- The official dedication ceremony for our formal participation in the Confucius Institute will be at 3:30 PM this Friday, April 12, 2013. Representatives of the UT administration and the president of Southeast University in China will be participating. The program is planned for the International House, with a reception to follow at the Hodges Library. The Confucius Institute

will increase our abilities to teach about Chinese language, history and customs. It is a very prestigious step for our university.

- Although an amendment has been offered to the state budget to exclude University of Tennessee employees from the 1.5 percent salary increase for state employees, this amendment is not expected to pass. The state is still expected to fund 55 percent of the salary increase, with the balance to come from tuition.
- Because UTIA is a non-formula unit, it was not included in the Governor's budget initially; this has been rectified.
- The UT Botanical Gardens has been designated as the official gardens of Tennessee.
- The Incentive Plan for Professors, scheduled for discussion during today's meeting, will be an important mechanism for improving salaries within this segment of our faculty. Data show that it is within this portion of our faculty that we are the most behind our peer and aspirational peer institutions. We have made recent gains at the associate professor level.
- Progress has been seen in promoting sponsored department chairs and professorships. Over the past 18 months, through an unofficial campaign to incentive contributions for this purpose, we have funded 32 such positions. This is more progress than we saw in the previous seven years.
- Acknowledged that some have disagreed with the decision to withdraw academic funding for Sex Week activities. The Chancellor's Cabinet spent many hours discussing these matters. While fully supporting the rights of students to organize groups and for those groups to plan events using student fees, the use of state tax dollars and/or tuition dollars for these purposes is a different matter. Concerns about this issue were raised by several legislators and other constituents (parents, students, faculty members, staff, alumnae and supporters). After weighing all this input, I made the decision that I believed was in the best interests of the university as a whole. My goal is always to keep the university moving forward, to be a greater university. Take, for example, the recent accreditation of our music program; we have a very good program now, but we should want it to be better tomorrow than it is today.
- In response to a question about funding for Space Institute: these salary increases was already a part of the governor's budget.
- In response to a question about merit increases: we have to wait until the state budget is finalized, but the hope is to have the same range of increases as the past two years.

Provost's Report (S. Martin)

No report.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

S. Thomas asked for additions or corrections to the minutes for the Faculty Senate on March 4, 2013. He noted that in the minutes March 4, 2013, and February 4, 2013, the lists of Alternates present were incorrectly labeled as "Guests." Since no other changes were suggested, by common consent this correction will be made to both sets of minutes and the minutes from March 4, 2013, were otherwise accepted as presented.

### **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

Athletics Committee: Change in Charge (J. Koontz)

S. Thomas noted that the new charge for the Athletics Committee had been posted as an attachment for the March 4, 2013, meeting but this matter been postponed until this meeting. J. Koontz explained the new charge, which describes the committee's functioning and oversight of the relations of student athletes and academics in a less proscriptive manner than the previous charge. While noting that there was no vote required on this matter, he offered to address any questions about the charge or the committee's functions.

Noting that the women's athletics had an excellent record as a separate program, J. Hall asked if any problems have been reported to the committee since the men's and women's programs were merged. Koontz cited Donna Thomas (who has been in her position as a Senior Associate Athletics Director for about eight months) as saying she had not seen gender bias in the Athletics Departments' operations. However, if anyone has specific examples of problems, the committee is open to receiving such reports and will investigate them as fully as possible.

C. Shepherd reported being approached by students who are unhappy about religious and/or homophobic attitudes by some in leadership positions with the Athletics Department. Koontz repeated that the committee needed specific incidents to investigate. It is sometimes suggested that faculty members are being coerced to give student athletes better grades. Again, specific examples of such incidents are needed. He promised that the committee would ask the hard questions; he could not promise that all the questions would be answered.

J. Koontz observed that the Thornton Center tracks progress made by student athletes towards graduation, to insure that certain minimum requirements are met. In his opinion, one of the most impressive comments by the new director of the Thornton Center (made during his interview) was that he did not want to just reach these minimum requirements but he wanted to strive for excellence on the part of all the student athletes.

#### Benefits and Professional Development Committee: Response to Chancellors' Letter (S. Milewski)

S. Milewski noted that the committee had used the comments provided during the March Senate meeting to revise the response to the January letter from Chancellors Cheek and Arrington concerning the Senate's resolution on benefit equality. He asked if there were any questions about the response as it now stands. The discussion that followed considered a number of facets.

- Clearer input from the senate would help the committee determine what the next steps should be.
- The Vice Chancellor for Diversity should be involved in this discussion, once he is in place.
- There will be no quick and easy answer. It will be a long process, but we need to keep pressing forward and keep attention on how peer institutions are progressing.
- Disappointment was expressed with the politics of the situation.
- Our individual involvement in the political process, personally meeting candidates to share concerns and to learn their stands on issues, is our best hope for change.

M. Griffin observed that the second sentence in the first paragraph was actually a sentence fragment. By common consent, the words "are due" were inserted, so the sentence now reads as "Special thanks are due ..."

S. Thomas called for a vote on the committee's response, as revised. The response was accepted by voice vote, with two abstentions noted.

#### **REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES**

##### Committee on Nominations and Appointments (D. Golden)

D. Golden reported that delays have been experienced in some election of new Senators when the caucus listserv lacked non-tenure-track teaching faculty. These lists are being updated so elections may proceed soon. Candidates are still needed for the position of president-elect.

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

##### Resolutions from the Faculty Affairs Committee (P. Daves)

- (a) P. Daves presented a resolution from the Faculty Affairs Committee to remove from the *Faculty Handbook* all the current appendices. The contents of these appendices have not

been approved by the Senate or by the Board of Trustees. Rather, they are administrative policies of the UTK campus. After brief discussion, S. Thomas called for a vote. The resolution passed by voice vote.

- (b) P. Daves presented a resolution from the Faculty Affairs Committee to amend both the *Faculty Handbook* and the *Manual for Faculty Evaluation* to implement a performance incentive plan for professors. The plan would reward senior faculty holding the rank of professor for outstanding performance and provide an incentive to continue these high levels of achievement. It would aid in the retention of senior faculty by making their salaries more competitive with peer, target and aspirational groups. The plan is not an entitlement, as any salary increment will be awarded only after thorough and substantive review, once every seven years for the preceding seven-year period. After brief discussion, S. Thomas called for a vote. The resolution was passed by voice vote.

Resolution to Amend Senate Bylaws (S. Thomas)

S. Thomas presented a resolution from the Executive Council to amend the Senate's bylaws. Currently, per Article II, Section 3, "the third Monday in January shall be reserved for a meeting, to be used if deemed necessary by the Faculty Senate President or Executive Council." Since the third Monday in January is usually a holiday during which the University is closed, the resolution would change "the third Monday in January" to "the second Monday in January." Since the bylaw revisions require 28 days advance notice, the vote on this resolution will occur during the Senate's May meeting.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 4:50 p.m., with a second reminder by S. Thomas that the location for the May Senate meeting will be the Hodges Library Auditorium.