Questions Concerning Academic Support for Sex Week Activities
April 26, 2013

These questions have been distilled from various messages received by the Faculty Senate President between March 21, 2013 and April 22, 20012. With the consent of the Executive Council, these questions are being presented to the Senate during the meeting on May 6, 2013.

- Which of the Sex Week programs were inappropriate uses of state funds? Why were these programs not appropriate? What criteria or standards were used to evaluate appropriateness? Specifically, was consideration given to the fact that all of the content in the programs presented during Sex Week also is available to students at the University Libraries, through other educational and cultural events on campus, and via UT-supplied (state-funded) Internet connections?

- Before the decision was made to withdraw the promised academic funding for the Sex Week programs, what consideration was given to the potential impact on the academic freedom of the faculty members who were participating in these programs?

- What type of evaluation was done concerning the academic value of and research support for the Sex Week programs?

- How was the decision to withdraw state tax dollars supporting Sex Week consistent with the publicly stated Volunteer Spirit value (http://www.utk.edu/aboutut/vision/) of "intellectual curiosity, pursuit of knowledge, free exchange of ideas, and academic freedom and integrity" in the campus VOLVision strategic plan?

- In determining that unit commitments of state funds was inappropriate, to what extent was consideration given to the potential for those programs to contribute to the campus principles of civility and community (http://civility.utk.edu/) and their role in creating a diverse and inclusive community of administrators, faculty, students, and staff on campus (through, e.g., hiring, admissions, and retention)?

- Was this action by Chancellor Cheek a violation of the principles of shared governance, particularly with respect to the established roles of deans and department heads to control academic expenditures within their units? More specifically, Section 1.4.1 of the UTK *Faculty Handbook* (http://provost.utk.edu/facultyhandbook/pdfs/2012-faculty_handbook.pdf) provides that the "university looks to the dean for definitive recommendations about . . . all financial aspects of college operation." Similarly, under Section 1.4.2 of the UTK *Faculty Handbook*, a department head is charged with "providing leadership for the infrastructure necessary for support of the academic programs through . . . authorization of all expenditures from the department budget." The Chancellor's decision seems particularly problematic when viewed in the context of the values inherent in shared governance in Section 1.5 of the UTK *Faculty Handbook*—values like communication between the faculty and the administration and among administrators, as well as transparency, accessibility, adequate time, opportunity, and consistency—these provisions create a structural balance that supports open decision making deriving from a relationship of mutual trust.

- Would it have made a difference if campus academic units had wanted to support this programming using non-state funds? Do we know whether any of the funds withheld were, in fact, from non-state sources?

- What are the implications for future student-sponsored programs that seek to address other subject matters that might be just as controversial with segments of our campus population and the greater Tennessee community? What are the implications for student-generated comprehensive programming (i.e., multi-program events that have academic/educational, cultural, and social programming)?

- Given the possible violations of academic freedom and shared governance evident in the Chancellor's unilateral decision to revoke commitments of academic funds for Sex Week, what are likely or foreseeable deleterious consequences for the campus in its upcoming SACS accreditation review?

Respectfully submitted,
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Faculty Senate President