

FACULTY SENATE

Minutes

March 3, 2014

Absent: Benjamin Auerbach, Joe Bailey, Rob Blitt, Marianne Breinig, Ernest Brothers, Jason Brown, Theodore Brown, Jr., Gregory Button, Patricia Carter, Margaret Casado, Christopher Cherry, Courtney Childers, Chris Cimino, Christopher Clark, Jim Conant, Matthew Cooper, Ray Degennaro, Mary Derrington, Ian Down, Gerd Duscher, Neal Eash, Jeff Fairbrother, Alberto Garcia, Lauren Gellar, Hansjoerg Goeritz, John Haas, David Harper, Tricia Hepner, Noriko Horiguchi, Sally Hunter, Sadie Hutson, William Jennings, Mike Jones, Dayton Lambert, Kurt Lamour, Lt. Col. Brian Lancaster, Bob Legg, Jon Levin, Fangxing (Fran) Li, Jeanie Lim, Bruce MacLennan, Joseph Majdalani, Crystal McAlvin, Angela McClure, Bharat Mehra, Samantha Murphy, Gichingiri Ndigirigi, Kim Newkirk, Stephanie Noble, Agricola Odoi, Stefanie Ohnesorg, Stephen Paddison, Jessica Poore, Tulio Prado, Suzy Prentiss, Andy Puckett, Jennifer Richards, Lloyd Rinehart, Amadou Sall, Fernando Schwartz, John Schwartz, Steve Smith, Marlys Staudt, Curtis Stewart, Ahmad Vakili, Christian Vossler, Micheline Westfall, Mark Windham, Philip Ye, Mary Ziegler

I. ESTABLISHMENT OF QUORUM

Quorum was not be established by D. Golden. Due to weather conditions many senators were unable to attend.

II. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by D. Golden at 3:32 p.m.

III. ANNOUNCEMENTS AND REPORTS

Chancellor's Report (J. Cheek)

J. Cheek was unable to attend.

Provost's Report (S. Martin)

- The Promotion Policy for Lecturers was approved at the UT Board of Trustees meeting last week. The approved policy will be added to the UT Faculty Handbook and the Manual for Faculty Evaluation.
- The Board also approved an honorary doctorate of letters and science for John Noble Wilford, a world-renowned science journalist and 1955 journalism graduate. He will receive the degree during spring commencement ceremonies.
- Presentations on student retention and academic performance of athletes were well received by the Board.
- A task force has been developed on administration and funding of graduate stipends and waivers. T. Lee will chair the task force. They will conduct research on practice across the university (internally) and collect policy information on peer and aspirant peer universities. S. Martin stated that she would like UT policies to be more in line with our top 25 aspirational peers.

President's Report (D. Golden)

- D. Golden stated that J. Cheek's presentation on the academic success of student athletes received a round of applause at the Board of Trustees meeting. He stated that UTK was the only school that had student athlete GPAs above 3.0. The coaches and the Thornton Center (J. Scogin – Director and Assistant Provost) were recognized for their roles in this achievement.

- D. Patterson is serving on the University Faculty Council and his term will be completed in June. D. Golden indicated that a replacement will be needed for this position.
- At the end of his term as Faculty Senate President, D. Golden will be serving on the UT Board of Trustees for two years.

IV. MINUTES

The minutes of the Faculty Senate Meeting, held February 3, 2014, were not approved because quorum was not established. They will be presented at the next Faculty Senate meeting (April 7, 2014) for approval. The unapproved minutes of the Faculty Senate Executive Council Meeting of February 17, 2014, have been posted for review. These will be approved at the next Executive Council meeting (March 24, 2014).

V. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

UT Coalition for Responsible Investment (D. Golden)

The UT Treasurer's Office decided earlier that it was not feasible to divest from fossil fuel funds. D. Golden pointed out that there is a difference between divestment and investment. The Coalition has contacted Golden about meeting again for discussions. J. Hall pointed out that this situation is different from efforts to divest from S. Africa many years ago, due to their practice of apartheid, in that we do not have alternative energy technologies in place.

VI. REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

Nominations Committee - Upcoming Senate Elections (J. Hall)

- J. Hall received a message from the Office of Information Technology (OIT) that last year's Faculty Senate elections were conducted as one large survey that had been separated by units. She plans to do something similar through OIT this year. The deadline is March 26, 2014.
- Dates have been proposed for the 2014-2015 meetings of Faculty Senate and the Executive Council. The Faculty Senate Retreat has been scheduled for August 29, 2014. Please contact J. Hall if there are problems with the proposed dates.
- J. Hall made an appeal to those present to encourage faculty with leadership potential to run for Faculty Senate. She stated that serving as a senator is an important duty. For example, current issues have implications for first amendment rights, academic freedom, and green resources. D. Golden reiterated the importance of serving and mentioned that many leadership development opportunities are available to the President-Elect and President of Faculty Senate.

Faculty Affairs Committee – Open forums (J. Fowler)

Open forums were held to discuss the initial resolution on academic freedom. P. Daves and J. Fowler are working with J. Zomchick to bring a resolution forward.

VII. NEW BUSINESS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

UT System Government Relations Office (Carey Whitworth)

- Due to weather conditions, the presentation by C. Whitworth has been postponed.
- D. Golden reminded senators about UT Advocacy, a group that supports the university and follows legislative activity and its potential effects on UT. Their website is <http://advocacy.tennessee.edu/>.

"Sex Week" Repercussions

Various resolutions and bills have been proposed by Tennessee legislators regarding use of student activity fees. These include:

- House Bill 2450 and Senate Bill 2493 (<http://www.capitol.tn.gov/Bills/108/Bill/HB2450.pdf>), which prohibits use of institutional funds from any source to be used to engage and pay visiting guest speakers for events at the university, unless the speaker holds a faculty position at another university and they are conducting classes or giving class lectures;
- House Joint Resolution 661 (<http://www.capitol.tn.gov/Bills/108/Bill/HJR0661.pdf>), which condemns the administration of the University of Tennessee for permitting "Sex Week" to be held on the UT-Knoxville campus; and
- Senate Joint Resolution 626 (SJR626 - <http://www.capitol.tn.gov/Bills/108/Bill/SJR0626.pdf>), which directs the UT – Board of Trustees to implement changes to the assessment and allocation of the student activity fees within the University of Tennessee system. Essentially the resolution would give students an opt-in for allocation of fees to student organizations for student programming.

Discussion followed. In response to questions concerning the most desirable option, D. Golden replied that Senate Joint Resolution 626 was the least destruction to functioning of a public institution of higher learning. This option allows the UT Board of Trustees to set policy on this issue. M. Griffin asked about the constitutionality of such bills regarding freedom of speech. Questions arose about whether the student activity fee is collected at the same time as tuition and whether the fee could be separated from tuition. The merits of opting-in versus opting-out were discussed. T. Handler suggested that opting-in is a more conscious act. Questions were asked about the practicality of an opt-in or opt-out situation. D. Golden stated that it would likely make less money available to support an activity like "Sex Week." Golden stated that he had explored the list of student activities that were not funded to determine whether there appeared to be a conservative or liberal mindset to the decision. He found that for the majority of activities that were not funded, the decision was based on the fact that this was a repeat of a very similar activity. J. Hall asked if a student decided not to opt-in, would that mean that the student would not be allowed to participate in that activity. D. Golden replied that students whose fees do not support the activity, as well as the general public, could still participate. Discussion continued on the impact of such legislative actions on future university programming. Golden emphasized that the University of Tennessee is an institution of higher learning and we should provide space for student activities. He also stated that the Resolution asks for 50% non-students on the board that funds student activities. Currently the membership of that board is almost 50% non-students. Senators raised concerns that our students should know that we support them. D. Golden suggested that Faculty Senate could develop a resolution to that effect, but also indicated that a vote could not be taken today because quorum had not been established. M. Fry asked whether the students have asked for support. Golden replied that they had not directly asked for support. M. Fry suggested that perhaps this is a battle the students should fight, but we could support them. R. Spirco responded that not using university monies to support invited speakers on campus was not a student fight. Discussion followed on whether the phrase "Sex Week" as the name of the activity was a problem. J. Hall stated that students use such names to attract students to activities. The students do not want to change the name as there are "Sex Week" activities at other universities. D. Gardener and others suggested that the Faculty Senate should develop a resolution on this issue for the record. D. Golden added that considerable time had been spent by many on both sides of this issue.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 4:32 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Bonnie H. Ownley,
Secretary