

2014-2015 Annual Report  
Library and Information Technology Committee  
University of Tennessee Faculty Senate  
Kathi Wong, chair

We considered a resolution draft which some members hoped would help begin to address problems of insufficient technology in some classrooms on campus. We could not come to agreement on the kind of technology which should be considered "minimal," however, and learning of efforts of OIT and the UT Classroom Upgrades Committee to resolve similar issues as well as planned efforts of the Registrar to centralize scheduling of classrooms caused the resolution to die in committee. One technology that was discussed was the use of the document camera. Some teaching faculty have made it known that they find it indispensable for teaching, yet some committee members felt that newer technologies are in the pipeline and money should not be spent on this kind of "dated" technology. Concerns were also raised that the work on our committee in this regard is redundant to that of the Classroom Upgrades Committee. I personally believe, however, that by discussing the problem in the committee extra attention was focused on the issue. Many faculty members on the committee, for example, were unaware that other faculty (particularly in the humanities) teach in classrooms all over campus with different technology availability. Joel Reeves, assistant vice chancellor and chief information officer for UT as well as an ex-officio member of our committee, reported at our final meeting that the most significant result of this year's OIT Customer Satisfaction Survey noted a problem with classroom technology availability. Among other things OIT has done to address the issue is that a rule that prevented OIT from spending student tech fees on classroom technology upgrades had been changed to be more flexible in that regard.

Our member at the Space Institute facilitated a contact with the library to get assistance for organizing the library at the Space Institute.

Our committee facilitated the appearance at a Senate meeting of John Zomchick, vice provost of faculty affairs, and Holly Mercer, associate dean for scholarly communication and research services at the library, to update faculty on the implementation of Elements. This was in response to a faculty member concern sent to the Senate president. Zomchick was able to clear up some questions and rumors that were circulating on campus and Mercer talked about how the library could assist, in some cases, in finding data for faculty input into Elements.

We continue to have low numbers of Senate committee members attending our meetings. We did not achieve quorum at least three times this year. Our ex-officio members (in addition to Reeves, that includes Steve Smith, dean of libraries) attend without fail (or occasionally send a representative). We implemented Zoom to be able to bring in the member from the Space Institute, and she was able to attend regularly because of it. Our two student members (representing graduates and undergraduates) attended on a fairly regular basis and both contributed to discussions.

We have 16 members on the committee (including the chair but not including ex-officio or student members). The bylaws notes that we should have 10. The larger number makes it difficult to find a time to meet and, I think, gives members at least a subconscious reason (there are so many, I won't be missed) to not attend. As another member of the Executive Committee noted in one of those meetings, it also feels as though committee members do not put enough importance on committee attendance (it is noted here, however, that some have class and other conflicts that are, indeed, unavoidable).

Since we are not the only committee with attendance problems, I think that finding ways to improve committee participation would be an important goal for the Executive Committee.

Kathi Wong