

Faculty Senate Executive Council  
MINUTES  
April 27, 2015

Present: Mark Collins, Jennifer Fowler, Patricia Freeland, Joanne Hall, Bruce MacLennan, Susan Martin, Bonnie Ownley, Michael Palenchar, Rebecca Prosser, Jennifer Richards, Tina Shepardson, Candace White, and Kathi Wong

Guests: Jimmy Cheek

## **I. CALL TO ORDER**

J. Hall called the meeting to order at 3:31 p.m. and a quorum was established.

## **II. ANNOUNCEMENTS AND REPORTS**

### President's Report (J. Hall)

- The resolution to support fire and building safety for workers in the Bangladesh apparel industry was passed by the Faculty Senate.
- The resolution on the student-initiated proposal to impose a \$5 fee on undergraduate students to support undergraduate research internships, and conference travel awards was passed by the Faculty Senate
- J. Hall has inquired about the status of the family leave policy for Non-Tenure Track faculty, and is waiting to learn when this will go into effect.
- Faculty members have expressed concerns about upward evaluations (evaluations of administrators). Faculty do not feel like they are given any feedback when administrators are evaluated.
- Caucus chairs are needed who are more proactive about informing their faculty about highlights of Senate meetings. Caucus chairs also need to respond in a more timely way during the Senate elections process.
- Better communications are needed between the Graduate Council and the Faculty Senate.
- The backlog of applications for IRB/IMedRIS has not improved.
- Faculty need to "reclaim their time" in the Senate, rather than listen to multiple presentations during each meeting. J. Hall received many requests to speak before the Senate. If important issues require discussion, they are valid. Many requests for presentations could be redirected to a Senate committee, or another faculty group with relevant expertise.
- The recent legislation allowing firearms in parks in Tennessee has not been applied to universities, but the conversation continues. J. Hall posed the question of, "What will the faculty voice be on this issue?"
- J. Cheek asked for clarification on the phrase "upward evaluation." J. Hall replied that this refers to evaluations of department heads, which are not coming back to faculty as a summary. This is clearly described in the Faculty Handbook.
- S. Martin stated that the Provost Office is checking on the status of the resolution on Non-Tenure Track family medical leave.

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

- The Tennessee General Assembly has adjourned. Sex week was not an issue. The Science Lab will be funded and the money will be available in July. There is additional money for formula funding and 1.5% raises. It was a good legislative session for us. We are expecting an outstanding freshman class. K. Wong posed a question about the space issues that would be created when the University Center closes. S. Martin replied that

there are three task forces working on this issue. They are trying to develop an effective classroom resource tool, and she expects greater nationalization of space on campus. She also stated that when classes are nationalized, resources have to be available to maintain the space.

#### Provost Report (S. Martin)

- Admissions for fall 2015 look great. Students should confirm enrollment by May 1. Our student quality is high with an average 3.8 GPA and 27 ACT. Better students have more flexibility, so recruiting continues at orientation. Last Saturday an event for students who had confirmed or were about to confirm their intent to attend UT was held. S. Martin is not predicting a specific number of students, but expects that number to be robust.
- Implementation of the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) will be starting soon. The QEP team met last week to debrief and discuss the positive feedback from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACS) Review team.
- The Student Assessment of Instruction (SAIS) Task Force is moving forward with the validation phase. This will be discussed later in the meeting.

### **III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

C. White moved to approve the Executive Council meeting minutes of March 30, 2015 (<http://cdn-senate.utk.edu/files/2014/08/Exec.-Minutes-March-2015.pdf>). J. Fowler seconded the motion, and the minutes were approved.

### **IV. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

#### IRB Concerns (T. Shepardson)

The IRB workshop was held today by PRIMR. Council members attended and stated that attendance overall was low. It was reported that when asked specific questions about applications and exemptions, PRIMR staff indicated that decisions would be made by the local campus IRB. Council members complained that their studies were being delayed because they had been unable to obtain IRB approval (3+ months). When they inquired about the problem, they were told that applications by graduate students took priority. Members added that the backlog of applications had caused graduate students to change their plan of work, or delayed their graduation, which meant more tuition costs for self-funded students. Members expressed concern about the confusion over whether undergraduate students needed IRB approvals to participate in the EURēCA competition. As a result, there were fewer entries. Council members commended T. Richardson for continuing to seek resolution and keeping the issue on our agenda. J. Hall concluded that the backlog of applications is compromising faculty and student scholarship and increasing student time to graduation.

#### Elections Progress Report (B. MacLennan)

The second round of Senate elections was delayed to solicit more candidates, elections are closing tomorrow. Many were running unopposed and there are five empty seats in the College of Arts and Sciences. They have consolidated college elections and included Senate elections. Their process and timeline is different from those of the Faculty Senate, and this has caused problems. The question was raised as to whether we can have Senate elections consistent with our bylaws, within the College of Arts and Sciences framework? The problem highlights the need to have the Caucus chairs more engaged in the election process.

### SAIS Task Force Update (J. Richards, M. Palenchar)

The Task Force will work on validating the SAIS questions that they have developed with focus groups. They will also address development of policies and recommendations on use of the SAIS instrument, and plan to work with the Faculty Affairs Committee on this. Software will be the third part of their focus. They will mock test the new instrument through classes, and look at the survey instrument in relation to tenure and promotion, and how teachers can use it to improve their classroom teaching. The fourth focus will be to provide training for faculty. Progress of the Task Force is given at <https://oira.utk.edu/sais/task-force>.

### Concerns Regarding Academic Freedom and Tenure (J. Hall)

As policies for promotion and tenure and post tenure review are examined, J. Hall cautioned that we should be mindful of unintended consequences.

## **V. REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES**

- a. Appeals Committee (R. Prosser)  
The Committee met eight times, read and discussed appeals, and decided whether a review panel should be appointed for each. In summary, there was one appeal that remains open from the previous year, four new appeals, four appeals that were closed, and one active appeal. A year-end report has been posted.
- b. Athletics Committee (D. Kopsell)  
A year-end report has been posted.
- c. Faculty Affairs Committee (J. Fowler)  
The Committee met five times and worked on four topics: Relationships between Faculty and Students, Non-tenure Track Faculty Extension Titles, Outreach and Engagement Resolution, and Faculty Annual Review Rubrics.
- d. Graduate Council (P. Freeland)  
The Council is continuing to modify the leave policy for graduate students. There is also interest in adding 'minus' grades for graduate students; this item will go to committee and come back to Council for further consideration.
- e. Library & Information Technology Committee (K. Wong)  
The Committee worked on a resolution to encourage a minimal technology standard for classrooms, but they could not come to agreement. This issue was identified as important according to an OIT survey. University policies have recently changed so that more funds are available for classroom upgrades. The committee had problems achieving quorum, even though they regularly used Zoom to facilitate participation of members at a distance. The Committee had a larger number of members (16) than specified in the bylaws (10). K. Wong suggested that the duties of this committee be expanded. A year-end report has been posted.
- f. Nominations and Appointments Committee (B. MacLennan)  
B. MacLennan announced that B. Ownley was the new President-elect.
- g. Research Council (T. Shepardson)  
Council met eight times to hear presentations, change Council bylaws, discuss IRB issues, and develop the resolution on the undergraduate student research fee. Additional activities were completed by Council committees (<http://web.utk.edu/~senate/rc/committees/>). R. Kalyanaraman will be new chair for 2015-2016. A year-end report has been posted.

- h. Teaching and Learning Council (J. Richards)  
The Council has expended most of their time on the Chancellor's Awards for teaching and advising. The nomination process is very time intensive. With the new emphasis on experiential learning, J. Richards suggested that faculty members outside of Council are needed to share responsibilities for selecting nominees for the Awards. A year-end report has been posted.
- i. Undergraduate Council (M. Palenchar)  
With the use of the 'consent agenda' during meetings, time has been freed for important discussion, rather than focus on micro-edits. Council is working on tweaking the format for curriculum development to make additional improvements. Regarding honors graduation, the requirement to earn 60 hours at UT Knoxville has been removed so that any student (including transfer students) who meets the university's residency requirements and all other degree requirements can qualify for honors. The minimum score for receiving AP exam course credit is being raised to 4 for AP Government and Politics to receive credit for POLS 101, and to 4 for AP Literature and Composition to receive course credit for ENGL 101 (students will no longer receive credit for ENGL 102 too). These decisions have traditionally been made at the department level, but Council has referred this to their committees to develop policy.
- j. Non-Tenure Track (NTT) Faculty Committee (M. Collins)  
The Committee met seven times, and used Zoom for meetings. They worked on collecting data and presenting information on the percentage of NTT faculty at the university and on Faculty Senate. They will be working on gathering information on maximum and minimum salaries for NTT faculty, which is a difficult task due to the wide range of titles and responsibilities. They are working on a proposal for equivalency structure of NTT titles with Tenure-track faculty.

## **VI. NEW BUSINESS**

### University Faculty Council (UFC) Joint Resolution on Shared Governance and Faculty Handbooks (C. White)

Several policies have developed that are outside of existing faculty governance policies. Examples include sanctions without termination, and the 'Code of Conduct' policy, which was developed outside of the Faculty Handbook. This policy, which calls for faculty to adhere to the standards of the community, may have unintended consequences, i.e. if you are gay you may not be adhering to standards of the community. The same applies to teaching the concept of evolution. We need to ensure that when such policies are developed, faculty governance is part of the process. There are likely more problems at other campuses than at UT Knoxville, but the other campuses look to UTK for leadership. A motion was made and seconded to approve the resolution, the motion passed.

### Suggestions for Retreat and Senate Orientation (B. MacLennan)

B. MacLennan stated that it was important that senators be strongly encouraged to attend senate meetings or assign alternates to attend. Caucus chairs need to know that an email list of faculty is maintained in the dean's office for each caucus, and should be used to inform caucus faculty of senate activities. B. Ownley suggested that a 'best practices' document could be useful for orientation of new senators. M. Palenchar suggested that senate retreat information be released prior to the retreat so that senators would have an opportunity to review materials and prepare for the retreat. B. Ownley mentioned that STRIDE would like to hold a workshop for senators. B. MacLennan requested that suggestions for the retreat be sent to him. C. White suggested that the Past-President's group be involved with supplying ideas for the retreat.

Nominations for Faculty Senate Officers (B. MacLennan)

R. Spirko will continue as Information Officer and E. Bernard has indicated that he is willing to serve as Parliamentarian. B. MacLennan solicited Council members to send nominations for Secretary.

Committee Chairs Issues (B. MacLennan)

Please send suggestions for committee chairs to B. MacLennan.

Nominations for Student Programming Allocations Committee (SPAC) (J. Hall)

J. Hall indicated that we have three nominations for SPAC and need one more.

Annual Evaluation Rubrics Changes (J. Fowler)

J. Fowler stated that a task force had been charged by the Provost Office to simplify the ratings rubric used for annual evaluation of faculty. The task force recommended that the numbers be deleted because they were only meant to provide a listing, letters could have been used instead of numbers. There is a misconception among some that the numbers in different categories should be averaged for an overall rating. B. MacLennan (who served on the task force) stated that it is meaningless to average the numbers because they are ordinal. The task force changed the wording to focus on expectations. The Board of Trustee policy has four descriptors, but no numbers associated with them. Departments should define what each of these expectations mean in their bylaws.

~~5—Outstanding (Excellent):~~ Far exceeds expectations for rank

~~4—More than Expected (Very Good):~~ Exceeds expectations for rank

~~3—Expected (Good):~~ Meets expectations for rank

~~2—Less than Expected (Fair):~~ Falls short of meeting expectations for rank

~~1—Unsatisfactory (Poor):~~ Falls far short of meeting expectations for rank

K. Wong pointed out that evaluations across campus should be the same, and currently there is a numerical system for lecturers. M. Palenchar asked what happens to those going up for tenure and promotion with some years of old system of evaluation, and some years of the new one. He asked if the Faculty Affairs committee had discussed this possibility, and J. Fowler responded no. B. MacLennan stated that annual evaluations should be focused on what you are planning to do for the coming year, and whether those plans will enable you to meet or exceed expectations. S. Martin said that the most important information is given by department heads or supervisors in the comment section. R. Prosser said that conversations are needed at the department level. J. Fowler stated that a workshop on evaluation was being planned for department heads. The motion to approve the change in annual evaluation rubrics was seconded, and passed. B. Ownley will present the resolution at the next Faculty Senate meeting.

**VII. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 5:10 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Bonnie H. Ownley,  
Secretary