

Faculty Senate Executive Council
MINUTES
November 3, 2014

Present: Joe Bailey, Micah Beck, Mark Collins, Jennifer Fowler, Patricia Freeland, Joanne Hall, Dean Kopsell, Bruce MacLennan, Gina Owens, Bonnie Ownley, Michael Palenchar, Rebecca Prosser, Jennifer Richards, Tina Shepardson, Robert Spirko, Candace White, and Kathi Wong

I. CALL TO ORDER

J. Hall called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m. and established that a quorum was present.

II. ANNOUNCEMENTS AND REPORTS

President's Report (J. Hall)

- We have been reviewing potential transparency issues in the Faculty Handbook. Often we have policy that calls for the Senate President, Appeals Committee, or Executive Council to be involved in adverse faculty employment issues. It's important that consultation with these groups is part of the process. We should be more vigilant about this because as time goes on, there is slippage from the original intent of the Faculty Handbook.
- Members from Executive Council (J. Hall, B. Ownley, T. Shepardson, and C. White) met with Taylor Eighmy to discuss issues related to compliance, especially iMedRIS. He was interested in our input. T. Shepardson will report on this meeting.
- Student Government Association (SGA) would like to see Gender Neutral restrooms (also called family restrooms) in key locations on campus. This is important for LGBT (eliminates panic reaction on the part of the transgender person when discovered), good for families, and good for those with disabilities.
- Jenny Richter will return to talk with the Senate as the Sexual Misconduct and Relationship Violence Policy is developed further.
- Matthew Theriot will speak with the Senate on the Quality Enhancement Program and Experiential Learning.
- J. Hall asked members for suggestions of good speakers for Senate meetings, ideas about visibility of the Senate, and issues on program evaluation.
- C. White asked where the Senate stands on the issue of Gender Neutral restrooms. Does SGA want our support? J. Hall said that it was an important issue to support. M. Beck asked if there is an expectation that if such a restroom existed, would certain persons be required to use them. What is the policy? Discussion followed. J. Bailey stated that there may be legal issues surrounding this.

Chancellor's Report (J. Cheek)

The Chancellor was unable to attend.

Provost's Report (S. Martin)

The Provost was unable to attend.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Minutes of the Executive Council Meeting of October 6, 2014 were presented for approval. M. Collins moved to approve the minutes as written and R. Spirko seconded the motion. The minutes were approved.

IV. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Update on Senate Listserv and other Communication Issues (R. Spirko)

R. Spirko reported that he has been working with Communications on the site redesign. He noted that committee chairs have encountered problems getting information out about activities. Most recently, J. Richards had problems distributing information about teaching awards. R. Spirko asked the group if he should assist committee chairs with these issues, in his new role as Communications Officer. The consensus was that he should serve as a facilitator. C. White stated that we could all use the senate listserv, but to reach all faculty, we will have to go through Margie Nichols. Discussion on updating the listserv followed. J. Hall asked what would be different about the new website platform. R. Spirko responded that the new platform will be easier to use and search, and easier to access archives. C. White added that an accordion fold structure might be used. There may be interactive functions, a blog (1-way), etc.

Sexual Misconduct and Relationship Violence Policy (J. Hall)

J. Hall asked if discussion on the Sexual Misconduct and Relationship Violence policy had started in departments and units. Some members acknowledged that they had.

V. REPORTS OF SPECIAL COMMITTEES

There were no reports from special committees.

VI. REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

Appeals Committee (R. Prosser)

No report was available.

Athletics Committee (D. Kopsell)

Todd Dooley (Associate Athletic Director for Compliance and Operations) visited with the committee and indicated that there were new developments in compliance in the NCAA that would make reporting of issues more transparent. These changes will make it better for all athletes, not just those in high profile sports.

Benefits and Professional Development Committee (M. Beck)

The committee has had further discussion about the benefits resolutions that were passed last spring, and the outcome of that action. M. Beck asked what would be the role of the committee in pushing those forward. They would like to hear from administration on follow-up and the process for moving these forward; they have been told that it is complicated. J. Hall said that she could discuss it with the Provost. M. Palenchar suggested that the topic would be a good one for a Faculty Senate meeting. Beck said that the committee had also discussed the new employee satisfaction survey. He felt that it was more adapted for business than for a university. Discussion followed on anonymity of the survey. C. White suggested that the University of Tennessee Faculty Council look at the anonymity issue because it affects the whole UT system.

Budget and Planning Committee (J. Bailey)

The committee is trying to establish a calendar of when budget decisions are made, and identify who makes the decisions. They want to make certain that committee members can meet with the appropriate people before decisions are made. J. Bailey added that Chris Cimino (Vice-Chancellor for Finance and Administration) has been very cooperative. The committee is trying

to obtain salary information from peer institutions for comparisons. In addition, they want to compare salaries by gender at UTK.

Nominations and Appointments Committee (B. MacLennan)

There is no report at this time.

Faculty Affairs Committee (J. Fowler)

The committee has met, but there is nothing to report at this time.

Graduate Council (P. Freeland)

Council is trying to interpret out what SAICS wants in terms of programs designed for combined undergraduate and graduate degrees. They are working on what is and is not allowed for these programs.

Library and Information Technology Committee (K. Wong)

The committee met but there were not enough members for quorum. They also used Zoom to include one member. K. Wong suggested that numbers on committees be reduced. She also stated that their charge seems to be listening, learning, and disseminating information, rather than addressing problems. They are working on the problem that not all classrooms have the technology installed that is necessary for teaching. There is also a university committee (Classroom Technology Upgrade Committee) working on this. The problem is not just a technology issue, but it is also a classroom use issue. When the University Center closes for renovation, there will be more competition for classroom space. Wong asked where one goes to solve these broader issues, and how do other universities address this. C. White responded that the question is how does the Senate move from recognition of an issue to action? White suggested that the Library and Information Technology Committee add an ex-officio member from the Classroom Technology Upgrade Committee. J. Hall suggested that Wong bring this issue to the Senate. White also suggested that committees work jointly on such issues.

Research Council (T. Shepardson)

Council did not have a quorum at its last meeting. For the next meeting, Mark Dean from Engineering will speak on industry-funded research and the impact on one's career.

Teaching and Learning Council (J. Richards)

Council is ready to launch their solicitations for teaching awards. They are hoping that the links will go live on Thursday (November 6, 2014).

Undergraduate Council (M. Palenchar)

The issue with textbooks (not enough available) is being examined. This is a process problem, which can be resolved. The Undergraduate Curriculum Submission Guidelines have been updated. Please use the new guidelines to propose changes, and make sure that curriculum changes are correct. A question was raised about the level of approval needed for different types of curriculum changes. M. Palenchar said that each college would decide its own procedure, but there will be a main agenda and a consent agenda. Items on the main agenda are considered controversial while those on the consent agenda, such as changing the name of a course, are not controversial. Undergraduate Council will move an item out of the consent agenda to the main agenda if they consider it controversial.

University System Relations Committee (G. Owens)

There is no report at this time.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

Gender-Neutral/Family Bathrooms (J. Hall)

This was discussed earlier and the request from SGA will be brought before the Senate.

iMedRIS and other IRB/Compliance Concerns (T. Shepardson)

The problems with iMedRIS will be brought before the Research Council. The complaints are that the program is not user friendly (redundant questions, lengthy), and there are issues with interpretation of the guidelines for compliance. Projects that were previously considered exempt are required to be registered with an iMedRIS application at this time. R. Nobles (Office of Research and Engagement) has invited a member of Research Council to attend meetings of a new committee that he has formed on compliance issues. In the meeting with T. Eighmy (mentioned earlier), he suggested that a third party be invited to review interpretation of IRB guidelines. T. Shepardson pointed out that those in the humanities and social sciences are using the writings of others, both living and dead, without obtaining permission. M. Beck suggested that an awareness panel on IRB be created to inform faculty. The question was raised about whether administrators wanted to facilitate faculty compliance. J. Hall stated that she has been invited to Nobles' committee meeting, but was not certain that she was the right person to attend. It may be better to have someone with more experience with IRB compliance.

Advocacy Update (FS) (UFC) (C. White)

Members of the Faculty Senate will be added to UT Advocacy to receive update information. They are currently working on developing mobile apps. The second phase will be to get as many faculty involved as possible. Concern was expressed by non-tenure track faculty. Since they lack the protections of tenure, they are concerned that they would be putting their jobs at risk if they spoke on controversial topics.

Bylaws Issues for Committees (B. MacLennan)

An email will be sent to Faculty Senate committees requesting that they examine their bylaws. B. MacLennan is trying to address various persistent problems, including quorum. For example, is the committee too large? Ideally, each Senator should serve on one committee; serving on multiple committees makes it more difficult to attend meetings. Is it appropriate for committees to use technology for meetings? We need to address the balance of tenure and non-tenure track faculty serving on committees and as chair of committees. B. MacLennan said that we do not want non-tenure track faculty feeling that they are putting their jobs at risk by their involvement in Faculty Senate. M. Beck suggested that non-tenure track faculty need to have some kind of protection in their role as Faculty Senator. B. Ownley suggested that policies are needed to cover non-tenure track research, clinical, and extension faculty, in the way that has been done for retention and promotion of non-tenure track teaching faculty.

Faculty Senate and Executive Council Meetings for 2015-2016 (B. MacLennan)

B. MacLennan developed meeting schedules for the next academic year. It was proposed that the Faculty Senate Retreat be held on September 4, 2015, but this will likely be changed due to Labor Day weekend. The proposed dates for meetings were as follows:

Faculty Senate Meetings

September 21, 2015
October 19, 2015
November 16, 2015
January 11, 2016 (reserve date if needed)
February 1, 2016
March 7, 2016
April 4, 2016
May 2, 2016

Faculty Senate Executive Council Meetings

September 8, 2015
October 5, 2015
November 2, 2015
January 19, 2016
February 22, 2016
March 21, 2016
April 18, 2016

The proposed meeting dates were approved.

Resources for Faculty Wellness (J. Hall)

J. Hall pointed out that there is no one on campus who can assist with faculty mental health. She indicated that this issue should be examined.

Communication with Graduate and Undergraduate Councils (C. White)

C. White expressed concern about the communication between the Faculty Senate and the Undergraduate and Graduate Councils. The UT Board of Trustees gives control of curriculum matters to Faculty Senate. The Councils have developed bylaws that are in conflict with Faculty Senate bylaws; she urged that this problem be resolved. Currently, the Faculty Senate is approving minutes of meetings of the Councils, but we did not attend these meetings. However, it is the role of the Faculty Senate to approve curriculum changes. The idea is to have the two Council Chairs talk about the specific curriculum changes that they approved when they present their report to Faculty Senate. T. Shepardson added that Honors programs are making policy changes that go straight to the Councils without obtaining prior approval of the Colleges. Discussion followed that items could be separated into a consent agenda versus anything controversial. R. Prosser suggested that an email on the proposed changes could be sent out with information from the Councils prior to Faculty Senate meetings.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 5:16 p.m.