

## University of Tennessee, Knoxville Campus Report

UFC meeting Oct. 1, 2014

- **Sexual Misconduct Interim Policy** Many universities are facing the need to change or add to their policies on sexual assault and relationship violence. Several are being formally investigated. (Not UT) This comes from a federal mandate, based on the Clery Act, Title IX, and definitions in VAWA renewal. The Chancellor has appointed a large broad-based task force to form a permanent policy and implementation plan by Dec 1. This is a faculty concern e.g., in areas of confidential communication with students versus mandatory reporting. We are seeing increasing sexual assault reports, because of the Clery Act, though we were obviously having underreporting before this. Definitions of consent and assault, sexual contact, etc. will be aided by faculty input. Are other campuses undergoing this process and how is it going?
- **Budget issues** In a climate of decreasing state revenues and the move toward less support of UT higher education (Though more support for community colleges), the system faces dire constraints. Faculty concerns include faculty-student ratios, salaries, tuition, and increasing online education. Additionally, strategies will be considered such as recruiting more out of state students, etc.
- **Academic freedom and free speech**, and to protect the rights of students on those points. This remains a concern. It remains to be seen whether the decisions about student use of student fees will be negatively affected by the changes in the joint resolution.
- **Accessibility** of education is also going to affect our UTK students, faculty and policymakers and OIT, etc. The change there is that there should be less onus on the student asking for accessibility accommodations, and more on making things accessible in the first place. This has implications for online education, with its emphasis on the visual, etc. State regulation is driving this, though federal regulations have been in place, though not always heeded—that ALL instructional materials and platforms must be accessible. Going forward, we will be challenging vendors of instructional products and platforms, and not buying ones that are not accessibility-based, but retrofitting what we have would be costly. The faculty will be heavily affected, and a conceptual change precedes the practice changes.

- **Technologically updating communication between Senate and faculty**, and if other campuses need to do this, we might share information on how to do that, and how to use technology better to conduct UFC meetings as well. We are changing the name of our Senate Information Officer to “Communications Officer” reflecting a change in perspective on communication, and the plan for greater transparency and dialogue.
- **Concerns about Bylaws** in general, the need to streamline and or simplify committee bylaws, so that committee might require fewer members, (the current separate subcommittee bylaws are cumbersome in that often large numbers of senators are called for by committees that might not need so many, etc.). Could we arrive at any common language to generally simplify to one bylaws statement about all senate subcommittees, and make committee assignments easier, and committee work more efficient? Secondly, with the election of NTTF to the Senate, some foresight is needed in examining bylaws, to assure that there is a balance of NTT and TT faculty in the Senate, and that, e.g., requirements for committee memberships and chair positions are specified.
- **Logo**--UTK is considering a new logo as part of their re-branding process. This has implications regarding image and emphasis. The obvious one is identity as a flagship campus, but there are additional concerns about the distinguishing of the academic and athletic missions, and that is a faculty concern. Connecting with and distinguishing UTK from the other campuses is a factor to consider.
- **ELEMENTS**. The Vice Provost for Faculty presented, (and the rollout has begun, in the Business School), a database on T/TT faculty productivity, purported to be for gathering information for administrative reports, metrics, etc., called ELEMENTS. Concerns from the Senate here include that it will be one more place where faculty must enter their information for reports, and that rather than be just “collective data” it may be used for evaluative purposes at the individual level. While not presently linked to it, ELEMENTS *is* planned to be linked at some point to our online Faculty Evaluation System.
- **Compliance—Imedris system** is now being implemented. Faculty members who have tried to use it are already raising concerns. It is the same system used by Memphis. Faculty filing IRB applications, etc. are finding it repetitive, and not user friendly for our purposes. We would like input from those who are already using it.

- **Engaged Scholarship** We had a great panel discussion on this led by David Patterson, and this represents a new means of giving credit, and possibly changing tenure criteria to more accurately account for those forms of faculty achievement that are not linked to traditional research. The humanities and arts, but also professional schools are unduly affected by having to “prove” that while the University wants more community and other engagement, we have excellent forms of engaged scholarship among many faculty, and this is not well-recognized.
- **Quality Enhancement Program** is an initiative UTK will have to incorporate. This is required by SACS and involves a mandatory data-supported goal and campus wide involvement (similar to Ready-for-the-World at UTK). Ideas for topic are being discussed; faculty are involved, and have concern for the ultimate goal/program. The topic and goal must be set by December. This may be something on which the Senate could weigh in. Faculty will be key to implementing the QEP.