

The University of Tennessee Faculty Senate
CALLED MEETING MINUTES
December 8, 2015

Absent: Mary Albrecht, Stephen Blackwell, Stan Bowie, Allie Brown*, Barry Bruce, Vincent Carilli, Chris Cimino, Mark Dean, Ray DeGennaro, Mary Derrington, Jennifer Franklin*, Stephanie Galloway, Heather Hartman, Qiang He*, Christy Hickman, Derek Hopko, Sadie Hutson, Jacqueline Johnson, Gregor Kalas, Hyun Kim, Lt. Col. Brian Lancaster, Jeanie Lim*, Susan Martin, Crystal McAlvin, Polly McArthur*, Laura Miller, Agricola Odoi, Gina Owens, Christian Parigger, Yvonne Pelletier, Cindy Raines, Amadou Sall, John Schmisser, John Schwartz, Joe Scogin, Vandana Singh, George Siopsis, Gary Smith, Kimberly Smith, Cary Staples*, Paul Terry*, Micheline Van Riemsdijk*, Brynn Voy, Forbes Walker, Micheline Westfall, Xiaopeng Zhao

Alternates*: Beauvais Lyons for Cary Staples, Reba Umberger for Allie Brown, Marian Roman for Polly McArthur, Neelam Poudyal for Jennifer Franklin, Terry Hazen for Qiang He, Jeremy Whaley for Jeanie Lim, Laurie Meschke for Paul Terry, Neil Conner for Micheline Van Riemsdijk

I. ESTABLISHMENT OF QUORUM (E. Bernard)
Quorum established by E. Bernard.

II. CALL TO ORDER

B. MacLennan called the meeting to order 3:31 pm.

III. ANOUNCEMENTS

President's Report (B. MacLennan)

It has been a remarkable week, which has seen state legislators calling for the resignation of Chancellor Cheek and Vice Chancellor Hall, and most recently calling for the complete defunding of the Office for Diversity and Inclusion. The immediate cause for this crisis was the discovery on the Office for Diversity's website of best-practice guidelines for planning inclusive holiday parties. They are not unusual. Many universities have similar guidelines, as do major corporations. It stands to reason that if you want to arrange an enjoyable celebration and to bring people together, then you try to make everyone feel welcome and not alienated. No doubt these particular recommendations can be improved; most can be. The people affected by these suggestions — that is, the faculty, staff, and students — might have engaged in a civil, inclusive, and well-informed discussion to revise the document. Instead, parties outside the university community have created a crisis, during the midst of final exams for students, by demanding drastic changes in UTK's leadership.

Most of us understand that an inclusive and welcoming campus environment will maximize the opportunity for students from diverse backgrounds to work hard and to excel in their educational endeavors. Moreover, a diverse and inclusive campus is essential to a comprehensive education, which should prepare students for post-graduation employment, but also for the next five, six, or seven decades of their lives. For, long after we're gone, they will be living in the midst of increasing diversity, and will need to be able to function effectively in a multinational world and to deal effectively with people different from themselves. Accrediting agencies demand it, potential employers demand it, students demand it, and they should, for it is their future.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

B. MacLennan stated that there are two proposed resolutions before the Senate that were developed by, and the motion comes from, the Executive Council.

A. Proposed Resolution on Diversity and Inclusion (B. MacLennan)

- B. MacLennan read the proposed resolution into the minutes.

Proposed Resolution on Diversity and Inclusion

WHEREAS, interacting with people from diverse backgrounds and perspectives augments the curricular experience and affords every student the opportunity to gain the knowledge and skills fundamental to a sound twenty first century education and necessary to be a productive and contributing citizen of this state and nation capable of participating in a global society; AND

WHEREAS, many U.S. university campuses are currently sites of student and community protest that these institutions do not dedicate enough resources for improving diversity and inclusion nor effectively uphold policies for improving diversity and inclusion; AND

WHEREAS, it is the duty of The University of Tennessee as a state entity to recognize no single religious observance over any other, consistent with the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution; AND

WHEREAS, consistent with our commitment to freedom of expression and conscience, all members of The University of Tennessee community, including students, faculty and staff, have the right to express their beliefs; AND

WHEREAS, efforts by The University of Tennessee to foster a diverse and inclusive campus environment are in compliance with our accreditation through the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, which affirms, "Diversity in higher education is critical to the social and economic future of this country"; AND

WHEREAS The University of Tennessee Board of Trustees' Diversity Statement notes "The Board affirms the educational value of a diverse and fully inclusive campus community, one that is enriched by persons of different backgrounds, points of view, cultures, socioeconomic status, and other diverse characteristics. The Board expects the University to engage in a variety of initiatives to advance diversity in all aspects of University life."

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Faculty Senate supports the University's Office for Diversity and Inclusion in its progress and continuous improvement in promoting a diverse and inclusive campus environment; AND

Furthermore, the Faculty Senate encourages President DiPietro to support the ongoing efforts of Chancellor Cheek and Vice Chancellor Hall to promote improved diversity and inclusion, which makes all people feel valued, empowered, and respected by their peers on the UTK campus.

B. MacLennan seconded that the resolution be adopted and opened the floor up for discussion.

- V. Mayfield moved to delete the second and third clause to avoid bringing in information related to constitution. M. Collins concurred. S. Murphy also supported V. Mayfield because it draws away from a broader sense of diversity, makes the document a little less persuasive, and invites debates.

S. Edmundson stated that it is important for the first amendment to stay in the proposal because of the issues brought up from people claiming to be constitutionists. V. Mayfield suggested adding the word *respect*. Further discussion included providing the Senators with background information about the resolution.

M. Fry explained that the proposed resolutions are already existing policies and not new policy resolutions. He expressed it is good for the Faculty Senate to support these things and soon, but he questioned how urgent it is for the Senate to vote today. He noted that the resolutions were only made available to Senate members around 10 a.m. today, which allowed little time for feedback from the faculty at large. He sent an email to his CVM faculty colleagues about the resolutions and in the short time allowed for feedback, he received responses from approximately 10 colleagues. Most of them were unequivocally in support of the resolutions, but three responses (from senior and highly respected CVM faculty) raised significant concerns.

J. Hall stated that things have progressed further than what we have addressed with these resolutions. She explained the university went from acts to appease the legislators and is now moving away from UTK's integrity (e. g. Diversity website). She stated that she admires the Faculty Senate was able to act this quickly; echoes the need to act, and for the Faculty Senate to raise their voice. She then asked for a vote on calling the question and L. Gross seconded. B. MacLennan called the vote. The majority of the Faculty Senators voted to oppose any changes to the proposed resolution. Thus the motion to amend the resolution failed.

- B. MacLennan next called for favor of vote for the proposed resolution. The majority of Faculty Senators voted to adopt the proposed resolution. Thus the motion was passed and the resolution was adopted.

B. Proposed Resolution Against Undue Influence and Inclusion (B. MacLennan)

- B. MacLennan read the proposed resolution into the minutes.

Proposed Resolution Against Undue Influence on the University of Tennessee

WHEREAS The University of Tennessee is managed through a Board of Trustees appointed by the Governor; AND

WHEREAS all officers of The University serve at the pleasure of the Board of Trustees; AND

WHEREAS The University of Tennessee is accredited through the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools; AND

WHEREAS the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges states in The Principles of Accreditation, "The governing board of the institution is responsible for the selection and the periodic evaluation of the chief executive officer" (Sec. 3.2.1), and "The governing board is free from undue influence from political, religious, or other external bodies and protects the institution from such influence" (Sec. 3.2.4); AND

WHEREAS The University of Tennessee, Knoxville has procedures, approved through the Board of Trustees, for the review and revision of policies and guidelines for the university community; AND WHEREAS there have been recent public statements by members of the Tennessee Congressional delegation and the Tennessee State Legislative delegation urging that certain university administrators be removed from their offices; AND

WHEREAS such statements by legislators are not consistent with Board of Trustee processes to formulate, review, or revise University policies and guidelines, nor do such statements allow for a deliberative, civil, inclusive, and well informed discussion; AND

WHEREAS these public statements by members of the Tennessee State Legislative delegation have included threats to reduce funding for the University;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that The University of Tennessee, Knoxville, Faculty Senate asserts its support for any actions impacting general university policies, including those on diversity and inclusion, to be evaluated and assessed by the Board of Trustees per procedures already in place; AND

FURTHERMORE, the UTK Faculty Senate encourages Governor Bill Haslam, in his role as Chair of the Board of Trustees for The University of Tennessee, to publicly assert his support for the processes and procedures already in place for managing the University as well as his support for the President of The University of Tennessee in conducting the business of the university free from undue influence from political, religious, or other external bodies.

B. MacLennan seconded that the resolution from the Executive Council be adopted and opened the floor up for discussion.

- L. Gross asked if the proposed resolution is going to be shared with Governor Haslam. V. Mayfield asked for clarification about who is being referenced as the "officers of The University" in the resolution. C. White stated that the officers include presidents, vice presidents, and chancellors of UT Knoxville, UT Chattanooga, and UT Martin.

G. Skolits motioned to amend the last clause to "petitions" instead of "encourage." S. Hunter seconded. The floor was opened for discussion and there was none. B. MacLennan called the vote. The majority of the Faculty Senators voted to pass the motion.

A motion was made to remove the word "all" from the second phrase. L. Gross seconded the motion. The floor was opened for discussion and there was none. B. MacLennan called the vote. The majority of the Faculty Senators voted to pass the motion. Thus, the word "all" was removed from the second phrase.

B. MacLennan called for a vote for the proposed resolution. The Faculty Senators voted unanimously to adopt the amended proposed resolution. Thus the motion was passed and the amended resolution was adopted.

C. White asked that a copy of the resolutions be placed on Senate letterhead and mailed to the president, governor, and chancellor.

J. Hall expressed thanks to the Executive Council on their work and to B. MacLennan for his leadership.

V. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned by B. MacLennan.

Respectfully submitted,
Phyllis L. Thompson, Secretary