

Faculty Senate Executive Council
February 17, 2020
MINUTES

Present: Misty Anderson, Joel Anderson, Ernest Bernard, Mark Collins, Sadie Hutson, David Keffer, Michael Kilbey, Beauvais Lyons, David Manderscheid, Crystal McAlvin, Bonnie Ownley, David Patterson, Rebecca Prosser, Beth Schussler, Gary Skolits, Rob Spirko, Shawn Spurgeon, Anthony Welch

Guests: Andrea Ludwig, Donde Plowman, Jon Shefner, Dixie Thompson

I. CALL TO ORDER

G. Skolits called the meeting to order at 3:32 p.m.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Minutes of the Executive Council meeting of January 27, 2020, were presented for approval by B. Lyons, J. Anderson seconded. Minutes were unanimously approved.

III. ANNOUNCEMENTS AND REPORTS

President's Report (G. Skolits)

G. Skolits did not provide a report today given the length of the agenda.

UTK Chancellor's Report (D. Plowman)

D. Plowman shared that the strategic visioning process has begun. The process will be guided by a small executive committee as well as a larger committee of about 55 people. The executive committee met and wrote a white paper. The larger committee meets next week. D. Plowman noted that a substantial draft of our vision for the next several years will be completed by summer. The campus currently has two vice chancellor searches underway. The search committee will bring candidates to campus at the end of February for the vice chancellor for research position; all campus visits for that position will be completed by spring break. D. Plowman recognized that D. Manderscheid is co-chairing the search committee. The vice chancellor for student life (VCSL) position will invite candidates in April. D. Plowman noted that the VCSL position will be an important partner with the Faculty Senate and the Chancellor. A meeting with students took place last week; F. Cuevas shared that there was very little communication about the decisions that had been made with the Student Advisory Committee that was setup to make decisions about student programming. D. Plowman shared that decisions about spring programming have not yet been made. F. Cuevas met with the Board and provided suggestions; these decisions should come forward in the next week. D. Plowman emphasized that we must have a more modern way to handle programming for student organizations. Students provided numerous examples of ideas for programming including the need for free legal services to students, arrangements for Uber or Lyft to provide discounted prices to students, etc. B. Lyons asked whether we will go back to re-examine the comptrollers report as it pertains to student programming. D. Plowman responded that we will get through the spring with the current process and then re-examine the process. She clarified that it isn't really about going back to the comptroller, but rather the BOT. D. Plowman also met with graduate students, who have inquired whether every grad student has to pay the same fees as undergraduate students. This will be examined. D. Plowman shared the good news that we are up in the rankings for Fulbright awards. She also acknowledged our excellent athletics programs

and shared that our athletes are doing better than ever on graduation rates, class attendance, GPA, etc. She stated that D. Bruce is an excellent faculty representative. UTK currently ranks in the top 3 on every metric in the SEC. A. Welch noted that he reviewed the committee lists for the executive and strategic visioning committees and requested additional membership from humanities. D. Plowman responded that she also heard this suggestion within the last 24 hours; a request has been sent out to invite an additional person. M. Anderson stated that at a time when we are talking about research, we often refer only to funded research. She emphasized that it will be an important and welcome sign that we define scholarship more broadly. M. Kilbey asked about graduate student fees, inquiring about whether academic classes are treated differently than dissertation hours (which do not provide instruction). D. Plowman responded that this is something that is being examined.

Provost's Report (D. Manderscheid)

D. Manderscheid noted that he and S. Allard are working closely on strategic visioning and that the whitepaper is a great start. He reported that four Law Dean candidates are coming to campus this week. D. Manderscheid noted a leadership change in the Honors and Scholars program. The position announcement will be made available later in the week. Further, the reporting structure will change and the honors programs will now report to the vice chancellor for student success, A. Williams. D. Manderscheid also announced that the leadership for the Haslam Scholars program will change; A. Seidler from the Office of National Scholarships and Fellowships will serve as interim director.

UTIA Report (T. Cross)

T. Cross reported that there has been great movement in the One Health initiative. Faculty from UTK and UTIA have been involved as well as representatives from Oak Ridge. T. Cross expressed his gratitude to the Chancellor and Provost for reaching out for representation from UTIA on all campus initiatives. T. Cross mentioned that the reception at UT Day on the Hill was uniformly positive, upbeat, and that the state appropriation provided outstanding support of the work of UT. He noted that it would be impactful to have 8-10 faculty members to experience this as it would assist the faculty in better appreciating the support of the university. M. Anderson thanked Chancellor Plowman for funding the faculty lunches; One Health was one of the top items of discussion. She applauded this initiative. M. Anderson inquired about whether this Day on the Hill felt any differently from a comparative reflection standpoint. T. Cross noted that this year was very upbeat compared with previous years; he felt it was the best he had attended. D. Plowman responded that folks were very excited, wearing orange, and very engaged. T. Cross noted that his meetings were with more rural representatives and he would like to do additional work to connect extension agents with the faculty.

IV. OLD BUSINESS

Elections Update (S. Spurgeon)

G. Skolits reported that B. Lyons was elected as the faculty representative to the Campus Advisory Board. D. Patterson will be in the running for the UFC. S. Spurgeon noted that information about senator elections has been distributed to caucus chairs and C. Springer is assisting with ballot preparation. He noted that caucus chairs are actively working to find candidates.

V. NEW BUSINESS

Extension Caucus [Bylaws Change](#) (A. Ludwig)

A. Ludwig reported that she is currently serving as Ag Caucus Chair for the Senate. There are presently two caucuses: Agriculture and Veterinary Medicine. The current bylaws limit faculty holding an extension appointment to one seat and the term is ambiguous. The proposed bylaws change is as presented. G. Skolits reported that there was discussion about whether there should be one caucus or three caucuses. To reduce silos, it was decided that three is not ideal; the decision was made to have one caucus. B. Lyons asked whether the size of the senate would increase as a result of this change? A. Ludwig responded that it would not. M. Anderson moved approval of the bylaws change, S. Spurgeon seconded. The motion was unanimously approved. This will move forward to the Faculty Senate for a first reading in March.

[Resolution Opposing Guns on Campus](#) (J. Shefner)

J. Shefner presented a resolution opposing legislation legalizing concealed gun carry by students on University property (HB 2102 and SB 2288), or carrying a concealed gun without a permit on campuses (HB 2661 and SB 2888). G. Skolits noted that there is also a previous [resolution from TUFS](#) about this. He stated that educators share this concern across the state; we can be asked as a senate to reaffirm the TUFS resolution from 2017. M. Anderson asked whether we have any feedback from Anthony Hanes about this. G. Skolits stated that he has called A. Haynes but has not yet heard back. D. Plowman noted that A. Haynes previously communicated that he did not think these pieces of legislation had much chance of being successful, but some progress has been made since then. B. Lyons noted that it would be appropriate for representation from the Faculty Senate to be present when these come forward to the senate education committee. He also suggested connecting with local legislators so that they can understand our position. G. Skolits asked about next steps for moving forward. D. Plowman stated that she would like to strategize with A. Haynes to better understand the timeline and learn when faculty voice should be present. B. Lyons requested that the next time the Chancellor meets with President Boyd to please put this on the agenda. D. Plowman agreed. M. Anderson voted to open the resolution for discussion. S. Spurgeon seconded. B. Lyons noted that there exists a section of the Faculty Senate website on [firearms on campus](#). He suggested it may be helpful to acknowledge or link former senate resolutions on guns on campus. B. Ownley noted that there is an infographic about guns on campus; she suggested updating it. B. Lyons suggested that the final "Whereas" can refer to previous material demonstrating where we have taken this stance before as a faculty senate body. J. Shefner will send the final "whereas" to a few EC members to ensure it reads appropriately. G. Skolits noted that a separate vote can be requested of the Senate to reaffirm the TUFS resolution from 2017. J. Anderson suggested reaching out to C. Myers to come to the next Senate meeting to go over brief talking points for senators with legislators. G. Skolits agreed to reach out to her and invite her to the next meeting.

[ORI - Bredesen Center APR](#) (D. Thompson)

D. Thompson asked the Chancellor for a brief update regarding current status of ORI. D. Plowman noted that the steering committee completed their work and that she, T. Zachariah and R. Boyd have been working on a job description for the director position as this was not something the steering committee addressed. D. Plowman noted that there will need to be an ORNL and UTK to articulate what ORI would look like. She stated that R. Boyd is committed to selecting a director and moving forward. The operational details of where the director is employed and to whom the director reports is being discussed. B. Ownley asked who employs

the advisors for the students. She stated that we cannot control Title 9 violations from a federal employee, if the advisors report to ORNL. B. Ownley wanted to know what sort of appointment at UTK would advisors need to have to ensure there is responsibility of oversight for Title 9. D. Manderscheid acknowledged that this was an important consideration and that he would investigate further. D. Manderscheid noted that ORI is a "container" for everything UTK and ORNL do together. He stressed that the academics fall under UTK and the equipment falls under ORNL. D. Patterson inquired about the possibility of 500 graduate students and 120 new faculty who will be in UTK Departments. He stressed that the reality is that our faculty are often working at or above capacity and that this is an important consideration for accommodating the dissertation committees for all of the new students. D. Manderscheid stated that these new faculty will also serve on committees of the existing students as well and that existing faculty will serve on new student committees. He underscored that the current ratio of faculty to grad students is low and there is some capacity to accommodate the new students. D. Thompson reported that the size of graduate enrollment is lower than aspirational peers, particularly in stem areas, but she hasn't specifically examined the ratio. D. Patterson noted that it is important to keep bringing this to the forefront. R. Prosser asked where all of the new faculty and students be housed. D. Manderscheid responded that plans are presently forming about this. R. Prosser reinforced that this conversation needs to happen out in the open. R. Spirko asked about how the new ORI faculty fit into the new budget model. D. Plowman noted that this is not yet clear, but each faculty member will have a home department. D. Patterson noted that the new faculty will all presumably be provided with startup accounts; this is a large sum of money and it is not clear whether we will realize the return on investment. D. Manderscheid responded that this is where science is heading, examples include IACME and cyber security. He stated this initiative will make us competitive for more grant funding. D. Keffer noted that in the context of significant funding for this effort, it is important to ensure that the students are supported in their programs. He noted a 45% attrition of those who did not finish their degree in the Bredesen Center. He also reported that none failed the comprehensive exam. D. Thompson cited a difference between the data shared by D. Keffer and data from the Graduate Blueprint. She suggested the importance of meeting to reconcile this discrepancy. B. Lyons asked about the status of the academic program report for the Bredesen Center. D. Keffer stated that the initial report is under review by the Bredesen Center Director. D. Manderscheid noted that the external reviewers provided strong support at the final report meeting during the site visit.

Timetable (S. Spurgeon)

S. Spurgeon reported that there have been two meetings thus far and a third is being scheduled. The committee is in the process of identifying strengths and weaknesses of the timetable changes as many departments are doing things differently. He stated that the issue arose around scheduling 20 minutes between classes related to travel to and from UTK and the Ag campus. D. Manderscheid noted that a 20 minutes break between classes is a good idea but this will reduce in-class time. He further stated that we may need to make use of less popular times to hold classes. M. Anderson stated that this will take a big conversation as the potential exists to need to run classes longer. D. Plowman reported that there are three prominent issues: 1) the need for an express bus; 2) many students don't know the location of classes when they register; and 3) considering a 20-minute allotment between classes. She noted that there may be some unintended consequences and that classes may need to start earlier in the day. R. Prosser noted that as a circadian biologist it is important to remember that young adults' clocks run later; as such, earlier classes may not be a good idea.

University Systems Relations Committee (M. Anderson)
Deferred to next meeting.

Communications with Faculty (G. Skolits)
Deferred to next meeting.

VI. COMMITTEE REPORTS

Undergraduate Council (A. Welch)

The Undergraduate Council Minutes of [January 28, 2020](#), were presented. A. Welch reviewed five summary points from the UG Council meeting: 1) replacing the ABC/NC grading system with ABC/N, in order to comply with the State of Tennessee Attorney General's opinion on HOPE Scholarship grade calculations; 2) incorporating the ABC/N grades into the general repeat policy; 3) revising the grade replacement policy by (a) extending the current policy to 300- and 400- level courses and (b) replacing the "most recent grade counts" policy with "highest grade counts"; 4) revising the add/drop policy by (a) reducing the length of the add/drop period and (b) extending the maximum number of allowed drops (i.e., "W"s) from four to six classes; and 5) adding new catalog language concerning Distance Education programs. He stated that the Undergraduate Council approved all five proposals. The FSEC unanimously approved the committee reports.

Committee Summary Reports

B. Lyons asked that the minutes of the Faculty Affairs Committee be added before the March Senate meeting.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

G. Skolits adjourned the meeting at 5:11 p.m.