

Minutes of the University-System Relations Committee, 2/24/2020

Present: Misty Anderson, David Keffer, Bruce MacLennan, Pat Rutenberg, Marcy Souza, Gary Skolits, Doug, Jennifer Tourville, Elyssa Gould. Guest: VP John Zomchick

We discussed briefly that the Chancellor has questions about the remit of our committee that leave us at a bit of an impasse when it comes to meeting with System officials. As we seek greater clarification on how we can best work together, we will take the following approaches to make sure that faculty concerns and ideas are informing System policy:

- We will work more closely with the UFC to make sure UTK/UTIA concerns are well represented there, perhaps having a member of this committee rotate through as an extra presence, as some other UTs do. The main point person for now on this subject is Gary Skolits, with help from Bruce MacLennan as the seated member of that committee.
- We will continue to advocate for a Faculty Trustee on the Board with a white paper, consolidating some of the good arguments already available. NB that Beauvais Lyons did a white paper on this issue, so our goal for the April meeting will be to consolidate the best arguments into a single page. Point people are Gary Skolits, Pat Rutenberg, and Misty Anderson.
- We will prepare well for the upcoming, just-announced visit of Randy Boyd to the campuses. Our town hall will be March 9, and if there are other meetings available to the Senate we will be in touch. Everyone on the committee is tasked with thinking about other possible questions we can submit in advance. Preliminary questions for him from our Senate are:
 - What are your take-aways from the responses around reunification of our campuses, and how will that inform future interactions with faculty?
 - How do you see the domain of the ORI in relation to the System and the UTK Campus? Who has authority?
 - (Related—Elyssa asked a great question about how will faculty feedback about the event be gathered, and who will design it? Can faculty have a hand in it?)
 - The System put out a link for questions at <https://presidenttownhall.questionpro.com/>. though we still plan to consolidate ours and submit them on behalf of our committee.

We then switched over to talking about faculty communications with our guest Vice Provost John Zomchick. We floated many ideas about how digital communications can be improved while reducing the number of emails. We have a working thesis that a mobile-friendly website, to cover the app-oriented and the not app-oriented, with sections for 1) Events 2) Provost/Chancellor messages 3) Faculty profiles and 4) EITHER a searchable version of Faculty Central or a deadlines calendar, might help. We agreed that we're probably not getting rid of individual emails from various units, colleges, etc., but that it's a reasonable goal to make the main info streams available for skimming. Pat and Doug both brought up the value of a consolidator, like Reddit or Real Clear News, as a model. Marcy brought up that the different calendar and newsfeeds for UTIA faculty might present some challenges. We all agreed to talk to a colleague at another institution about how they handle faculty news in a search for good ideas before our next meeting.

Our next meeting will be on Monday, March 30, 3:30 in Dunford 2412. At that meeting, everyone will report out on one other university's faculty news approach. We will also review the ideas we came up with at the Feb meeting and add any emerging spots of clarity or insight. We will at that point have had the town hall meeting with Randy Boyd and will recap that, as well as further thoughts from the Chancellor about interacting with the System.

Thanks for your time and contributions. If there are other matters you'd like to get on the agenda for the good of our colleagues, just send them to me before March 24 so I can get them out to everyone in advance of our March 30 meeting.