

Faculty Senate Executive Council
Convened via Zoom
April 20, 2020
MINUTES

Present: Joel Anderson, Misty Anderson, Ernest Bernard, Mark Collins, Sadie Hutson, David Keffer, Michael Kilbey, Laurie Knox, Beauvais Lyons, Crystal McAlvin, Bruce MacLennan, Bonnie Ownley, David Patterson, Rebecca Prosser, Amber Roessner, Beth Schussler, Gary Skolits, Rob Spirko, Shawn Spurgeon, Anthony Welch, James Williams

Guests: Tim Cross, Lou Gross, RJ Hinde, David Manderscheid, Donde Plowman, Matthew Theriot, Dixie Thompson, John Zomchick

I. CALL TO ORDER

G. Skolits called the meeting to order at 3:32 p.m. E. Bernard established a quorum.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Minutes of the Executive Council meeting of March 23, 2020, were presented for approval. S. Spurgeon moved for approval; M. Collins seconded. Minutes were approved unanimously.

III. ANNOUNCEMENTS AND REPORTS

UTIA Report (T. Cross)

T. Cross thanked G. Skolits for managing the meetings via Zoom and expressed his gratitude to all of the faculty for the extra work that has been taking place. T. Cross shared several updates. As for operational practices at UTIA, they have been in lockstep with the rest of the campus with regard to public events, meetings, etc. and have been able to bring similar procedures parallel to their off-campus operations. He provided thanks to the EOC and noted that it has been beneficial to have consistent operational practices. T. Cross also noted that they have rolled out a portal for bringing forward success stories, encouraging faculty and staff as they have had positive experiences to share those. He indicated that about 20 separate examples have come forward thus far and they are in the process of bringing those to the public via social media/video. T. Cross noted that this is a good way to promote recognition for the creative and effective things that are going on with the faculty and staff and still demonstrate that much work is continuing during these circumstances. It is important to let all of the stakeholders know they are working hard for Tennesseans. This week there will be a briefing with UTHSC to share practices regarding re-entry, including factors we might consider as we move ahead. T. Cross shared that they are trying to find the right balance to keep our eye on health and safety and ensure that we effectively re-enter the workplace in offices, classrooms, and labs. He noted that one challenge they will have will be to work with 95 county mayors as they each make shelter in place decisions; this means there will not be a one size fits all solution. T. Cross explained that they will attempt to have some baseline practices while being cognizant that each county may have a different approach. He also shared that he has been hosting fireside chats every Friday; those have been very helpful as he gets to see the faculty and staff across the campus and the state. Attendees can ask questions live or in advance of the session; President Boyd joined last week and shared some remarks. L. Gross thanked Chancellor Cross and noted that C. Cimino has had a meeting with the budget and planning committee regarding budget plans for next year. He asked whether there are specific plans that relate to UTIA given the operations across the state. T. Cross responded that vet med operates solely off of its tuition; as such, they have been operating similar to an RCM model since created; this means

they are dependent upon enrollment. They have commitments to constitute a full class in the fall, but the clinical revenues have been challenged as everything except emergency medicine has been closed. He went on to explain that as community practices are closed, there have been many more referrals and critical care visits than previously. He stated that the Herbert College is funded with all other colleges at UTK. In the Ag Research and UT extension, there is no connection to tuition and enrollment, but very dependent upon state appropriations (50%), 30% on federal and county appropriations and remainder is restricted funds or gift funds. T. Cross noted that they are uncertain what the budget looks like for the coming year but feels they will see a challenging budget starting July 1. He went on to explain that likely the real issues will not emerge until July 2021 in accounting for the fallout of the impact from the recession in 2020. T. Cross noted that county appropriations support county operations and that it is difficult to know what the state impact will be on the local economies. L. Gross asked whether the Department of Agriculture has come up with any additional funds to support Ag Research and Ag Extension. He also asked about a faculty search in Forestry, Wildlife, and Fisheries and wondered if they are on hold. T. Cross responded that searches are being viewed similarly to the rest of the campus; the wildlife position was far along and has come criticality because student progression depends on it. He has asked the deans this week to look at every open position to determine what we can wait to fill without disrupting student success. M. Anderson provided thanks for the student success model and for the fireside chats. She asked a question about research facilities and the clarity of messaging about research facilities given that the labs have live animals and wondered how this is currently being addressed. T. Cross noted that this is not very straightforward when you factor that most research and education centers are housed onsite. He noted that they have instituted a protocol at each center whereby each person is required to check-in and depending upon what needs to be done, there are practices in place to ensure social distancing and sanitation. Agricultural crops are still underway as we are in the planting season. Have been able to implement practices to ensure the safety of the workers.

President's Report (G. Skolits)

G. Skolits encouraged everyone to attend the Chancellor's town hall meeting tomorrow and asked members to forward questions in advance.

UTK Chancellor's Report (D. Plowman)

D. Plowman thanked everyone for their hard work and began by stating that D. White and B. Dunne have been working on the research subcommittee to develop practices and protocols and have been working collaboratively. She noted that a task force has been put together, called the Re-imagining Fall Task-Force. D. Plowman noted that the members will be considering three situations: 1) We reconvene face-to-face with students for the fall semester, either at the planned time of August 19 or perhaps a few weeks later, but with modifications to our typical practices; 2) We reconvene face-to-face with students for the fall semester, but then a sudden outbreak or spike in COVID-19 cases requires us to move back to a remote learning environment; and 3) Students do not return to campus for the fall semester, and we use a virtual learning environment for the entire fall semester. The task-force has six sub-committees for which each will have a beginning set of questions to consider. D. Plowman shared that the campus will be providing some training during the summer for people who are going to be teaching online again in the Fall; M. Theriot and his office is preparing for this. D. Plowman noted that the EOC is still functioning and presently working on a proposed plan for how we can phase-in the return of employees to campus. She noted that the System will be helping guide us with the help of outside health experts to know when it is safe to return. The draft plan

includes Phase I of moving people back in to work in May. D. Plowman noted that plans are in place for virtual commencement. She stated that students really wanted face-to-face commencement; and have noted that if it is safe to have an in-person commencement in August we will hold it then, or possibly December. There are several activities that are being planned for the week commencement would have occurred. D. Plowman shared that 18,000 students have been called to check on how they are doing. She also noted that on the recruitment side, about 8,900 calls have been made to admitted students to provide encouragement for Fall. D. Plowman also shared about the briefing with Bill Fox to share his economic forecasting. She shared that the hardest hit will be 2021 and though Bill Fox does not believe the recession will be as bad as the one in 2008, the impact will be felt more deeply because more individuals are affected. A temporary pause in hiring has been put into place. A meeting with the Provost, C. Cimino, and the Deans to discuss that hiring should not happen unless it is mission critical, unless the funds are coming from a grant or other funds, etc. B. Lyons provided his thanks to the Chancellor for her leadership and collaborative approach. He noted that President Boyd addressed UTIA and mentioned that there will be raise pools this year but wondered whether this was prudent given all the uncertainty regarding the budget. D. Plowman noted that she was not aware of the conversation or the budget circumstances regarding this matter. L. Gross noted that C. Cimino said that the 2.5% that was in the Governor's budget has been cut to 1.5% and the legislature may not approve this. He asked about carryover and startup funds for next year. D. Plowman responded that they are going to meet startup commitments and asked Deans to cut spending to see what the total deficit looks like. D. Plowman also shared that she has advocated for no tuition increases. G. Skolits asked whether the membership of the sub-committees for the re-imagining task force will be shared. D. Plowman indicated that they would. A. Roessner asked whether the athletics budget will have any impact on the academic budget. D. Plowman responded that there are still no plans regarding football that are set in stone; she noted that the SEC Presidents and Chancellors are examining multiple scenarios about how football can still happen safely. The decision about the football schedule will be made by the conferences and the NCAA. She noted that there are no plans to shift funds from the academic budget to athletics.

Provost's Report (D. Manderscheid)

D. Manderscheid has been meeting with the Deans every other day. He stated that the strategic visioning executive committee will be meeting on Friday to get that work started again. The work is going to shift based on the pandemic. He noted that during the month of May, there will be lots of opportunities for people to provide input. D. Manderscheid noted that on Friday, a memo was sent to over 200 lecturers regarding a supplement that will be dispersed in April paychecks to those earning less than 50K/year and are full-time. L. Knox noted that the part-timers may have been the most impacted by the transition to remote learning. She asked D. Manderscheid to provide a justification for leaving them out. D. Manderscheid responded that Deans also had the prerogative to supplement this by asking for funds centrally. D. Plowman shared that we did what we could afford and felt it was important that Deans had the discretion to identify those who were outside of the bounds. L. Gross noted that students will be looking for alternative opportunities including graduate education because they are not getting jobs; this is a perfect opportunity for UT to step forward and articulate what we have available now. He wondered if there was anything we can do as a faculty to encourage the students who may be on the border of committing. D. Manderscheid responded that D. Thompson has compiled a list of master's programs and certificates that would be open to students. D. Thompson responded that some stand-alone grad certificates could be a short-term experience that might translate into future degree seeking students. She stated that they are trying to cull down the

info and distribute it for individuals to consider. B. Lyons stated that it may be possible for someone graduating to pursue a second major or minor, if the options for graduate study are limited and asked whether this was being discussed. RJ Hinde responded that students are able to defer graduation and if they wait, they would have to do 30 new credit hours to earn a degree. If they are graduating, they need to be thinking about this. D. Thompson noted that programs that are 4+1 programs, may have people now who are considering this route and may now switch to this. D. Manderscheid noted that this idea will be brought forward to Council of Deans.

IV. OLD BUSINESS

Status of President-Elect Search (G. Skolits)

G. Skolits noted that there is no president-elect candidate to put on the slate at this time. He stated that if you are aware of any names or ideas to bring folks forward, to please share them.

Senate Election Results (S. Spurgeon)

S. Spurgeon noted that the link included with the agenda provides election results. He thanked B. Killion and C. Springer for their help and support in addition to caucus chairs. He noted that they are now in the process of securing alternates.

Bylaws Update (G. Skolits; B. Lyons)

G. Skolits noted that we need to vote on the bylaws change for Extension on the next full senate agenda. B. Lyons noted that he worked with R. Hinde and A. Welch to address core questions to the UG Council bylaws. He highlighted two modifications: one is to update the ex-officio members of the UG Council; the second is to articulate the process about what happens when the EC pulls out some proposed portion of the curriculum for further review, etc. He noted that it is the responsibility of the Faculty Senate president to convey the concerns expressed and then the UG Council could bring back a revision or a proposed justification. R. Hinde noted that the additional sentence on this mimics exactly what appears at the end of the paragraph that describes the Graduate Council. G. Skolits noted that the Research Council had changes regarding the conveyance of the chair of the council and asked if this could be discussed at the next senate meeting. E. Bernard noted that a language change could be introduced at the senate meeting. M. Kilbey also noted that we could work together in good faith on this. He further explained that from the RC perspective, it is important to get the chair in place because ORE does strategic planning in the summer.

V. NEW BUSINESS

Teaching and Learning Innovation (M. Theriot)

M. Theriot reported that his team has been working on assembling a summer bootcamp for online teaching. He noted that it will not likely include the philosophy of pedagogy; an overview was distributed by email this afternoon. The group is working to put the building blocks in place for concrete user information plus items such as: classroom management, inclusive learning environments, etc. and having opportunities for more advanced users to discuss experiential learning. G. Skolits asked how the faculty is being involved to assemble this workshop. M. Theriot responded that they have relied more heavily on queries that have been received from faculty to guide what will be included. He explained that they do not have a general TLI advisory board, but that there are seven active advisory groups in TLI focused on various initiatives. B. Schussler asked about the philosophy of what is different about teaching online vs. teaching in the classroom including core items on which to focus on to transition well. M. Theriot responded that there are a number of resources for faculty on specific topics. D. Keffer

offered that the Governor's School is supposed to be offered this summer for high school students and asked about best practices for online instruction to prepare for a month of content that is to be delivered. He stated concern about not putting their best foot forward and an immediate need around best practices for engaging high school students for a month. M. Theriot noted that they plan to have their bootcamp up and running by May. M. Anderson asked how they will be reaching out to faculty in TLI to determine what is needed and possibly assemble a faculty fellows program. M. Theriot responded that a faculty innovators program could be helpful but that they would need to have more conversations about discipline-specific information.

Faculty Communication (M. Anderson)

M. Anderson reported that she is working with J. Zomchick and wanted to make sure there is a clear and consolidated faculty space for communications. She shared that the System Relations Committee put together a short working paper that includes a set of proposals including some items faculty might want to see such as a mobile-friendly web-page, etc. She emphasized that something consolidated needs to be assembled as it pertains to communications.

Unfinished Business 2019-2020 (G. Skolits)

G. Skolits noted that there is still much business to be conducted and that the senate is a year-round body. He noted that the FSEC will be meeting over the summer.

VI. COMMITTEE REPORTS

Undergraduate Council (A. Welch)

The minutes and summary report for the meeting of April 14, 2020, were included with the agenda. A. Welch summarized the reports in the agenda. L. Gross noted that at the last FSEC meeting there was a question about Vol Core and asked about the status. A. Welch noted that the Gen Ed committee has voted to continue as planned. By the May Senate meeting, there will be 417 Vol Core classes approved and a few hundred more at various stages of approval. There will be plans for Aug/Sept to assess the status. R. Hinde added his staff and the Office of the Registrar will be meeting over the summer months to review all the plans to identify any curriculum for which the current Gen Ed courses have not migrated to Vol Core so that those programs can identify substitute courses or identify key pre/co-requisites so that those can be added to the list for Vol Core implementation. The minutes were unanimously approved.

Graduate Council (D. Patterson)

The minutes for the meeting of March 26, 2020, were included with the agenda. D. Patterson noted that the committee report is brief. There were no appeals and the curriculum committee had no report. The grade change policy was approved for this semester for Vet Med and Law. Minutes were unanimously approved.

Committee Summary Report

The summary reports were included with the agenda.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

G. Skolits adjourned the meeting at 5:07 p.m.