

UTK Faculty Senate Executive Council Zoom Meeting July 13, 2020 3:30 – 5:00 p.m.

Attending: Joel Anderson, Amy Broemmel, Ernest Bernard, Mark Collins, Tim Cross, Millie Gimmel, Julia Jaekel, Cheryl Kojima, Brian Krumm, Anne Langendorfer, Beauvais Lyons, Stephanie Madison, Bonnie Ownley, David Patterson, Donde Plowman, Gary Skolits, Rob Spirko, Shawn Spurgeon, Dixie Thompson, Michelle Violanti, James Williams, John Zomchick

I. Call to Order

- a. Meeting was called to order at 3:31

II. Announcements and Reports

a. President's report (S. Spurgeon)

The President welcomed everyone and appreciates their willingness to meet during the summer. This meeting is outside of normally scheduled meetings but should serve as a chance to get to know each other before a busy academic year. The president then asked everyone to introduce themselves.

b. UTK Chancellor's Report (D. Plowman)

The chancellor expressed her pleasure at seeing everyone and her appreciation of the committee's efforts for planning for fall. She had three main issues to discuss.

1. Covid Planning: We are a hotspot, leadership is poor and testing is slow. We don't know if we will have football. We are planning to have students in dorms and we know they are excited to come. Everything will be different but we should still strive for quality. Nothing will be 100% safe and we need to figure out how to educate students in this new and different way. Answers are always changing as we get new information but the chancellor is committed to doing the best she can with the information available. Parents are asking why they should send students to UT when 45% of classes are on-line. The chancellor believes that we will be able to offer an exceptional experience, even in the face of these issues. Faculty are encouraged to do all they can to foster deep conversations and learning, even via zoom or other on-line instructions.
2. Diversity/race: What is our role in perpetuating racist practices? We all need to examine this and commit ourselves to work on this issue together. She has met with CRC and Africana studies and other groups. Faculty can help by acknowledging the toll of service on faculty of color in evaluating tenure and promotion, and can look critically at hiring practices and casting a wider net in our searches. We have to commit to diversifying and retaining FOC.
3. International students: The chancellor with other chancellors will be signing a protest (APLU) protesting the new ICE regulations around international students.

There was a question about filling the provost position as a non-interim position. Are there better ways to have done this? Many people are going to question this decision when the semester starts and are questioning the Chancellor's way of doing this. The Chancellor stated that John Zomchick was an acceptable candidate in the prior search and she wanted to make a short-term

appointment of up to three years. She feels an executive must be able to fill needs rapidly the need to fill the Provost's position was urgent. In situations with other administrative positions, regular practices and searches have been done and will continue to be done.

- c. Provost's Report (J. Zomchick) There is a regular search for VP for faculty affairs going on now and he stated his commitment to shared governance in the searches and in all other aspects of his position. The Provost plans to meet with every department during the next academic year.

We are still preparing for a more or less normal fall but things are happening in ways we didn't expect (increased numbers of infections, hospitalizations and deaths). We are working to keep campus safe and provide a rich experience. We have a record first year class, a record transfer class and a record out of state population this year. Our reputation is strong and improving which is a tribute to faculty. The Provost is deeply grateful to faculty.

He then addressed how we can address systemic racism. Everyone has to work together on this. Faculty, staff, students, climate and curriculum are the central ways to do this. Faculty are directly involved in much of this. The university will be working to increase faculty in underrepresented groups and we really need to do better in searches.

UTK is going admission test optional next year for undergrad admissions because many students don't have access to the SAT or ACT right now. This is a good chance to study the biased nature of these tests. We'll be doing a holistic review and Faculty Senate will be consulted.

PPPR will be suspended for the next year since we all need to focus on teaching, research and outreach. How can we streamline annual reviews and make them less burdensome and free up time for more vital activities? We still need some sort of annual review especially for probationary faculty.

NTTF issues are still a priority. The Provost hopes to offer additional year contracts for all NTTF who have been here at least two years. He is also interested in exploring if we can shorten the time it takes to be promoted to senior lecturer.

Colleges and DH need to work with the provost to address the workloads of NTTF. College of Business has done this well but they do have fewer NTTF.

We are in good shape compared to other state schools. Our allocation is the same as last year and we may have 3-4% more students and our retention rate seems to have gone up. But in the Spring and the rest of the Fiscal Year we may have \$50 million in expenses because of Covid. Some money will come from CARES act and some will come from the rainy day fund. These losses are mostly in housing and dining and the money spent to get campus ready for students returning to campus. The Provost is cautiously optimistic about our financial situation.

Discussion included the need to promote the importance and effectiveness of synchronous on-line instruction. One faculty member noted that PPPR and EPPR are redundant. We need to focus on good mentoring of probationary faculty. We should be as constructive as possible in mentoring junior faculty. Another noted that in hiring and retention of people of color we need to recognize that these people live in this community and we should foster a connection and help them adjust to the community. One attendee requested that we revisit the faculty handbook since there is no mechanism in the handbook for input from faculty about the rank of incoming hires.

d. UTIA Report (T. Cross)

Dealing with Covid is like nailing Jell-O to the wall. The IA is working on a parallel path with the main campus both on campus and off. They are hoping to have all offices open soon. The vet college has never closed. The Institute has to plan for the best and back up as necessary. They are working on issues on racism and recognize there is a lot of work to do and hope to implement some anti-racism activities and training in the near future. They are hiring a director of diversity and inclusion (parallel to Dr. Small's office). They are working with the county on how to improve racial equity. They are committed to supporting early career faculty.

III. Old Business

- a. 2019-2020 Committee Summary Reports (information item) (see attached)

These are helpful for upcoming chairs. There will be a packet available for all committee chairs with expectations, deadlines, etc.

The retreat is scheduled for Aug 14, before classes begin. Committees will be constituted before then and the retreat time is a good time to begin committee work. Any ideas for the retreat, please click on the link provided by Brooke.

IV. New Business

- a. 2020-2021 FSEC Expectations (S. Spurgeon) Using UTK Email for all correspondence
- b. Committee Summary Reports Involvement (see old business)
- c. Faculty Senate President's Council: This will continue and help with continuity in the FS agendas.
- d. Cost Estimate for the 2019-2020 PPP Reviews (B. Lyons) (see attached)

The PPPR has been suspended for the coming year and they will be following up on this with the system. We are the only campus that conducted PPPR. EPPR can still be implemented.

c. Diversity and Inclusion Committee Resolution Discussion (J. Anderson) (see attached)

Last month UCW reached out to the committee to draft a letter to the Provost, similar to the CRC letter. Not all of the committee was comfortable signing that letter so UCW sent letter alone. Some members were concerned with the action focus of the letter and the Diversity committee must represent all groups.

Other faculty are asking if we will have a resolution on anti-racism. Since then the Provost has sent a letter responding to many of the actions requested by UCW and the CRC. This resolution would be a start in seeing how the FS can be a part of this work. Anderson asks for recommendations for the resolution.

One person noted that it's hard to be nimble based on FS processes but others commented that resolutions that go through the normal processes carry weight because they have been carefully vetted and because of the amount of work it took to get them passes.

There was other discussion on the powers of the executive committee over the summer. The EC can act for the Senate and pass resolutions on racial justice. Others felt it would be more important to have the full senate weigh in, especially if we want real institutional change. All agreed that we want real permanent change and it was pointed out that those changes are necessarily slow. We need to be systematic and clear.

The issue of race-based scholarships was brought up but those scholarships are not legal.

e. Best Practices for Executive Level Searches (B. Lyons) (see attached)

Best practices are important for all searches. In the chancellor's search there was only a CV, no cover letter. It's helpful to see how candidates respond to a common set of questions. We need to advocate for a set of best practices. The attached is a draft to discuss. Ideally it would be integrated into the procedure via the chancellor's advisory board. Putting it forward as a resolution would be good. We need input from people who have been part of the search for executive positions. There may already be protocols in some colleges for dean's searches. Perhaps a task force appointed by the FS president would be the best way to explore this issue.

e. FS Zoom Retreat Topics/Ideas Request (S. Spurgeon)

<https://utk.questionpro.com/t/AOhpNZiDz4>

V. Adjournment