UTK Faculty Senate Meeting  
Monday, April 3, 2023  
3:30 pm  

Minutes

I. Call to Order at 15:34

Not in attendance: Acharya, Ragini; Ader, David; Berg, Thomas; Blakeman, Robyn; Collins-Elliott, Stephen; Doan, Joy-Marie; Efremenko, Yuri; Fecteau, Kellie; Ferrigno, Cassio; Harris, Matthew; Issa, Bernard; Jewel, Lucille; Li, Xueping; Madhukar, Madhu; Maroulas, Vasileios; Martin, Kelly; McCormick, Karen; Mobley, Sarah; Pittman, Matthew; Scott, Rachelle; Sharma, Madhuri; Toledo, Rosa; Westerhold, Jessica; Zhang, Zhili

Alternates: Harry Dahms for Beth Cooper, Cristina Barroso for Samereh Abdoli

Given the weighty agenda and the time-consuming nature of counting hands for voting, all voting on the minutes will happen by viewing raised hands for visual inspection of a majority of yes votes, unless a senator calls for a counted vote.

II. Approval of Minutes

a. Faculty Senate Minutes from March 6, 2023

Moved to approve: Mary Held
Second: Marcin Nowicki
Discussion: There was no discussion

The minutes were approved.

b. Undergraduate Council March 7, 2023 Minutes / Voting Items Summary

Discussion: There was no discussion

The minutes were approved

c. Graduate Council March 9, 2023 Minutes / Voting Items Summary

Discussion: there was no discussion

The minutes were approved

III. Reports

a. Administrative Report

Discussion: There were questions about the budget and a desire that the dialogue about this continues to stay open. A suggestion was made that the administration can support NTTF by passage of the revisions to the handbook and by offering professional development leave to NTTF. The Provost indicated that he has been in dialogue with the senate president on the issue of professional development leave (PDL) for NTTF. There are ongoing discussions on how to involve faculty in budgetary discussions in the fall. Right now all PDLs are funded by the colleges and the Provost will be in conversation with the deans on how to provide them for NTTF. For TTF PDL is available every 6 years and that should be the same for NTTF. The provost has finished his review of the handbook revisions and has approved the changes. VP Kelly has been in dialogue with the General Counsel on this and it is moving forward. One of the biggest issues is how to effectively communicate the changes to the involved parties.

A senator asked about UT Pathways and how the other system campuses feel about being treated as farm schools for UTK. The Provost shared that this idea came from the system and the other campuses were
involved in it. UTK is the only campus with a growing enrollment. There is hope that if students begin at a smaller campus they will stay there. For the other campuses this is an immediate gain, even if students do not stay to graduate. At a recent UFC meeting the other campuses had a favorable reaction to this procedure.

Why has the Provost’s office not issued a memo on AI use in classrooms? The provost feels it is too soon to form a policy but there is much discussion happening around the issue. It was pointed out that students are already using AI and the university needs to offer guidance on how to use AI in the classroom, both positively and negatively. The Provost indicated that an instructor can decide on their own if AI generated material is academic dishonesty. The provost will try to have a policy in place by the beginning of the fall semester.

What is the progress on travel policy? When will changes be implemented, when will more information be shared? The provost did not have additional information at this time. He will look into this but reminds the body that travel policy is set by the system. Faculty are welcome to provide input.

b. Faculty Senate Report
Discussion: This is election season. Be sure to vote and encourage colleagues to vote. Votes must be cast by April 15. There was no further discussion.

IV. New Business
a. Living wage Resolution (Humanities and Social Sciences caucuses)
Discussion: The President reviewed the resolution. The exempt staff council weighed in. In the case of extension staff, many are paid by counties and many counties cannot afford $20/hour. The grad student salaries will be addressed separately. Minimums have not been updated since 2021 and housing and other expenses have gone up considerably. The GS Senate feels that we need to be aware of what all bodies across campus are doing on this issue. Should all these groups be offering separate resolutions? It might be stronger to issue one joint resolution.

What is the timetable for the GS resolution? They expect to present it to the GS Senate on May 9 with real time data. The Senate could pass this today and support the GSS with a joint resolution in May. The resolution was never intended to work against graduate student pay.

Does this resolution include the Nashville staff? There was no intention to exclude any workers. The committee would welcome a friendly amendment to include Nashville. Is the resolution for the system or UTK. It was intended for UTK workers but there is no desire to exclude anyone.

The increase is 10,000/year/worker. This is a lot of money for some entities and the increase might create deficits in other areas. Where is the money to come from? Perhaps some of the higher paid employees could give up some of their salaries. This is a moral issue. If we can raise coaches and administrators raises, why can’t we raise for the lowest paid employees. The state of Tennessee has added more money to the rainy day fund every year. Why can’t that money be diverted to wages?

In favor: 68
Against: 11

The resolution was approved

b. By-Law changes, new committee structure and overview (E. Schussler, B. Issa, S. Madison, H. Meadows, E. Lukosi)
The president reviewed the changes. The bylaws are reviewed every year. The creation of the new colleges and the change in committee structure have necessitated many of the changes this year. We will be voting in May and we need at 2/3 vote to pass the changes. Senators can comment on the document during the review period.
The proposal for new committees was reviewed separately. Are the numbers for Diversity and Inclusion committee decreasing? A senator asked that we reconsider this in light of the attacks on D and I in the state. This can be addressed in the discussion/review. The current chair of D and I was aware that the number was reduced. At present it is difficult to get all the committee members attend the same meeting. Committee members serve as liaisons to other councils and commissions. The idea is that these councils and commissions can bring concerns to the senate D and I committee, rather than have the committee duplicate their work. The current chair supports the smaller number of committee members. A senator suggested that the shared governance committee be reduced by 2 and those people could move to D and I.

Global learning and research would be addressed by the Teaching and Learning Committee and the research council. The shared governance committee will reach out to GSS and UGS and Staff and will bring those representatives into the senate more. There needs to be more feedback on this. Being able to be a consolidated front and have good communication among all shared governance constituents is important.

Do caucus chairs need to meet with each other or just with their deans? What will the committee do? This committee will meet once a month and look at the work senate is doing and decide how to bring senate concerns to the deans. We need to figure out how to best work with deans and share information with them.

There is still the same number of senators even with the split in arts and sciences.

In May we will vote on the main changes and the committee changes.

The body indicated via a straw poll (67 in favor, 7 against) that they are in favor of bringing this to a vote in May. Please share feedback with President Schussler.

c. Budget report (E. Lukosi and A. Bolton)
Discussion: The biggest issue here is that the executive budget council will set the tone for budget preparations. The consolidated budget in now under the two-week review period by the senate. The model is much more transparent on many levels. It’s still a work in process.

Do we anticipate the recommendations being implemented next year? Bolton shared that some will be implemented sooner than next year. All recommendations are being taken seriously.

Involving caucuses is critical. How can they be more involved? This will be a decision made by all involved parties. There is discussion happening on how this will work.

Will there be oversight for equity across colleges? This is a difficult issue and the timeline is tight. It will be important to establish best practices.

Please address the committee as you have other questions.

d. Salary analyses report and summary (T. Fridman, A. Rodrigues)
The president reviewed the summary. The biggest problem is with NTTF salaries in most colleges. Many groups in the university are doing salary analyses. It would be good to have all the data in one report and Budget and Planning committee should look at this for next year.

The library is not included because it was not in the original data. It is included in some of the data in the report.

Extension professors are included in the professorial data.
Is the vet school included? It should be there. The data sets are complex and the comparisons are not for the same groups. There is data for faculty and for lecturers. The vet school staff is included in the professorial data but not the lecturers. The data is sometime intractable. Sometimes it is aggregated, sometimes not. This represents the best data so far and the best interpretation possible at this time. In the aggregate things look good but at a granular level there are some concerns.

Is wage compression represented in the document? No

Have salaries been declining? No but they have been overrun by inflation. Denise Gardener (Assistant Provost and Director of Institutional Research and Strategic Analysis) indicated that the idea of collaborating on an annual salary report would be amenable.

Senator Fridman stated that the salary inequity issues are mostly in the College of Arts & Sciences and are in specific departments. Senator Fridman suggested that a mandate for salary increases must come from administration above the deans.

Is there an action item related to the salary analysis report? President Schussler suggested that this information be forwarded to the deans and said that faculty need a better understanding of what information the deans receive every year.

V. Information Items

President Schussler suggested that Senators review the Information Items on the agenda, including the Executive Council minutes (March 20, 2023) and the various Committee Reports submitted.

a. Faculty Senate Executive Council Meeting Minutes, March 20, 2023
b. Faculty Senate and Other Committee Reports

VI. Adjournment

President Schussler adjourned the meeting by consent at 5:20 pm

Respectfully submitted by Millie Gimmel