

Faculty Senate Executive Council  
MINUTES  
November 5, 2012

Members Present: Steve Thomas, David Golden, Vincent Anfara, Fritz Polite, Stefanie Ohnesorg, Ralph Brockett, Guoxun Chen, Phillip Daves, Scott Gilpatric, Lee Han, John Koontz, Bruce MacLennan, Susan Martin, Steven Milewski, David Patterson, Lloyd Rinehart, Matthew Theriot

## **I. CALL TO ORDER**

S. Thomas called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m.

## **II. ANNOUNCEMENTS AND REPORTS**

### President's Report (S. Thomas)

- No written report had been prepared. Activities related TO the recently-revised Code of Conduct (i.e., reading the current and previous versions, attending meetings about it, or reading and writing emails on this topic) have been the focus of attention for the past several weeks.

### Chancellor's Report (J. Cheek)

- *New Tradition for Homecoming Game.* In recognition of the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Morrell Act of 1862, Tennessee Walking Horses were featured, ridden by 4-H members who represent the outreach of the university into the communities. (It was noted that the horses were not "high-steppers," a style often felt to be injurious to the horses.)
- *New Funds for Graduate Students.* An allocation of \$200,000 has been made to allow graduate students to travel to make presentations at professional meetings and conferences. This action has been received well by students. Last week, six million dollars was set aside to be allocated by the Provost for graduate fellowships. Over the past five years more than twelve million dollars have been allocated for Ph.D. programs in support for our graduate students.
- *Emphasis on Funding for Professorships and Chairs.* During the past 15 months, 23 commitments have been made. As a special incentive, in the case of contributions of \$100,000 or more, the income from these funds will be advanced for immediate use.
- *Faculty Salaries.* Raising faculty salaries is one of the most critical issues we have to face and remain high priority. While we have made some progress in recent years, more improvement is still needed to close the gap between our salary levels and those of top-25 aspirational peers. While commending the work of the Budget and Planning Committee on this issue, we need to be careful not to send mixed messages on priorities or to use different measures (e.g., mean, median, or mode figures) that could be confusing. The greatest discrepancy, in comparison with Top 25 universities, is with professor salaries. We hope to address this difference through a process for post-promotion reviews that could be linked to raises. In response, S. Gilpatric noted that the intention of the Budget and Planning Committee's resolution was only to call attention to special challenges, not to propose a different set of priorities.
- *Code of Conduct.* Acknowledged concerns about the lack of discussion and input by faculty in this policy. The first question raised when this issue was presented to chancellors was about faculty involvement.

- *Vice-Chancellor for Diversity.* Search going well; hope to be able to move forward with appointment soon.

#### Provost's Report (S. Martin)

- *Advising Activities.* Advising will be discussed at the upcoming meeting of the Board of Trustees. Vice Chair Don Stansberry, Jr. has already met with Ruth Darling on this matter. Three actions that the Board may consider are:
  1. Encouraging students to waive their FERPA rights in this matter.
  2. Offering counseling on debt.
  3. Requiring the tracking on class attendance.

There was a brief period of open discussion on these issues.

- Would such attendance tracking be systematic or at the discretion of the faculty?
- Do we want to treat students as children (with freshman year being the 13<sup>th</sup> grade) or do we expect them to begin to act as adults and take responsibility for attendance?
- There is an important difference between merely being present physically and participating actively in class.
- Useful to incorporate incentives for attendance (e.g., quizzes and in class exercises that count toward grade), if they are a part of the course syllabus.
- In large classes, taking attendance could take time away from instruction.
- Generally, attendance correlates to better grades. But would simply requiring attendance improving graduation rates?
- Debt counseling cannot be a one-shot deal; must be ongoing process.
- How much do/should we involve parents?

### **III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

S. Thomas asked for corrections or additions to the minutes of the meeting on October 10, 2012. When no comments were received, S. Gilpatric made a motion to approve the minutes as present. The motion received a second and was passed by voice vote.

### **IV. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

#### Courses not Taught in Four Years (S. Thomas)

S. Thomas reported receiving information from R. Brockett concerning the action taken on this matter by the Graduate Council on April 12, 2012. However, we need to insure that there is agreement between the Graduate Council and Undergraduate Council on a consistent policy. M. Theriot reported that the Undergraduate Council is working through some disagreements.

#### Reviewing Minutes of Graduate Council and Undergraduate Council Meetings (S. Thomas)

S. Thomas reported that the decision, made at the October Executive Council meeting, to wait for each council to approve its own minutes before presenting these minutes to the Faculty Senate for final approval had been appealed by Kay Reed because such action could delay entering changes into the curriculum database in time for registration for the next semester. The policy now proposed is this: As long as the Graduate Council (or Undergraduate Council) minutes are available within the timeframe specified by the Senate's *Bylaws*, the Senate will consider them for approval. If something in those minutes should later be revised by the Council, the Council would need to submit revised minutes for approval again. This understanding was accepted by common consent.

### Code of Conduct (S. Thomas)

S. Thomas summarized activities related to the Code of Conduct that had occurred since the Faculty Senate meeting on October 22, 2012. The anticipated videoconference of UT Faculty Senate Presidents was held on October 29, 2012. The major outcomes from this meeting had been shared by Thomas via a message on the senate listserv on October 30, 2012.

- Sandy Jansen and Katie High recommended to President DiPietro that plans to track the acknowledgement/acceptance of the Code of Conduct be dropped. As with all University policies, employees are expected to be aware of it and to abide by it. However, no employee will be asked to acknowledge or accept with it, formally.
- November 13, 2012, was tentatively set for the official "roll out" date for promoting the policy, assuming all the faculty senates report to Katie High that local discussions have concluded.
- The UT system administration will seek to formalize a process to insure that "faculty are included in the development of policies that concern the welfare of the community."
- President DiPietro will address this issue with the University Faculty Council during its meeting on November 8, 2012.

S. Thomas reported that only a few responses had been received from the listserv message, but those received had favored additional discussion at the Senate meeting on September 19<sup>th</sup>. He asked for comments on this issue from the council members, since scheduling such a discussion would involve asking for a delay in the planned "roll out" of the policy on November 13<sup>th</sup>.

In response to a question about why the policy was being changed now, Thomas noted that changes to the Federal Sentencing Guidelines had been referenced. He explained that, if an organization is investigated for misconduct, these guidelines determine the range of fines that could be imposed. If an organization demonstrates that good faith efforts have been made to promote a standard of excellence and a culture of compliance, then such punishment may be reduced.

D. Patterson observed that, while the goal might be worthy, the continuation of constraints on academic enterprise is unacceptable. What has happened here clearly circumvented the process called for in our *Faculty Handbook*.

A consensus was reached to place this topic on the agenda for the November 19<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Faculty Senate.

### **V. NEW BUSINESS**

#### Anthony Haynes to Address Senate (S. Thomas)

S. Thomas reported that he had invited Anthony Haynes (UT System Vice-President for Government Relations and Advocacy) to address the Senate during the November meeting. He noted that, during recent years, such a report would have been received during the Senate's Retreat, but a scheduling conflict had occurred this year.

#### Revisions to *Resources Manual* (P. Daves)

P. Daves reported that a minor change had been proposed for the introduction to the *Resources Manual*, indicating that current content of this manual had been moved from the *Manual for Faculty Evaluation* in 2012. As this revision was being discussed, it became apparent that the manual does not contain the process for revision that had been included in the resolution

creating it earlier this year. The present resolution from the Faculty Affairs Committee inserts this language (from the previously accepted resolution) as part of the introduction to the manual and makes the minor change already mentioned. Coming from a standing committee, the motion to accept this resolution did not require a second. After brief discussion, the motion passed by voice vote.

#### Faculty Salary Resolution (S. Gilpatric)

S. Gilpatric presented a resolution on faculty salaries from the Budget and Planning Committee. While acknowledging and applauding recent efforts to raise UTK faculty salaries and to begin to close the gap between our salaries and the salaries at Top 25 public universities, the resolution noted that, in spite of these efforts, for some colleges the salary gap has continued to increase. The resolution recommends considering the special challenges that may be needed to close the salary gap for faculty in these colleges.

In light of earlier comments on this issue made during the Chancellor's report, brief consideration was given to amending the resolution presented by the committee. When this effort proved unsuccessful, a motion was made to return the resolution to the committee for additional review. This motion passed by voice vote.

#### **VI. ADJOURNMENT**

Adjournment was moved and seconded. The meeting adjourned at 5:10 p.m.