

President-Elect's Report, May 7, 2018  
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The demotion of Dr. Beverly Davenport from her post as Chancellor of the University of Tennessee, Knoxville is only the latest in a series of disturbing and disruptive policy decisions and public statements from the UT System office President. In light of these events, it is important to clarify the values that guide our teaching, research, creative activity, and service.

- **We value academic excellence.** Our successes can be measured in the number of our nationally ranked programs, the rich and varied forms of research and creative activity conducted across the campus, and the quality of teaching and mentoring evident in the achievements of our students, which include this year's record breaking 19 student Fulbright scholars. Our students are future alumni and citizens, and we are dedicated to making an excellent education available to them by creating a campus with the resources, climate, and infrastructure to sustain them. The policies governing tenure foster that project by protecting the pursuit of truth, ensuring quality through rigorous review, and fostering integrity; in a healthy university, they are not subject to whimsical or hasty changes.
- **We value a culture of civility.** Meaningful dialogue, robust debate, and honesty are hallmarks of a great university and necessary to a healthy, respectful, democratic, productive society. Disagreement is an inherent part of that process, but "us and them" adversarialism, **humiliation**, and public personal attacks, particularly when they come from academic administrators who are entrusted with the management and public image of the university, undermine our ability to model high standards of conduct for our students.
- **We value the dignity of work.** The dedication of our campus facilities and clerical workers, staff, professors, non-tenure track faculty, and lecturers make our campus great. We hold ourselves to high standards, and we believe in the importance of mutual respect for and between the people who carry out the mission on the ground. That respect should be manifest in meaningful shared governance, integrity in decision-making, and transparent, respectful communication.

Because materials for the agenda must, by our bylaws, be sent to senators at least 5 days before the meeting, and because we will already appeal to senators for vote to entertain a motion to consider the pressing matter of a resolution of censure of the System President, we do not have a resolution to honor Dr. Davenport's service. I will take the privilege of my report to note just a few of her accomplishments in her brief time as our Chancellor. Dr. Davenport's commitment to UTK's students has been lauded in The SGA's Statement Regarding the Leadership Change at the University. **Her commitment to the students of this campus was nothing short of extraordinary.** Her responses to the proposed outsourcing of campus workers and the hate speech of neo-Nazi groups on our campus affirmed the values of dignified work, respect for first amendment rights, and concern for the safety of the members of our campus community. **As the first female chancellor of this university, she inspired many, fought for the Pride Center and endowed its future amid politicized attacks on our students, and worked for justice in the university community.** The larger projects she was just beginning to launch were reasons for great hope, hope which remains amid our concerns.

The UT System office is not UTK and UTIA. The System office is an administrative entity that exists by taxing its campuses. It has introduced measures that are, increasingly, a distraction from our mission as the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, the mission we carry out. **The time has come to confront that fact and call publicly for meaningful reform of this expensive layer of management and its structure, which pits Presidents against Chancellors and System against Campus.** As we face the year ahead together, I call on my fellow Senators—and the faculty of UTK and UTIA represented by this Senate—to lead from the high, firm ground that brought us here, to act with integrity, and to affirm our core values and the centrality of our role as the proud stewards of this the university and the people who carry out its mission: to educate, to discover, and to serve.