

## **Misty Anderson, Faculty Senate President Remarks October 15**

I want to begin with a question for you: **what are you doing here?** Understanding what the senate is, how it works, and why we serve here is fundamental to our success. This senate is the chartered body for the faculty's participation in shared governance. Its primary charge is the formulation of general educational objectives, with additional roles in consulting in the selection of administrators (including the President, though the Bylaws of the Board of Trustees no longer specify that we have a role there) and in policies concerning the general welfare of faculty and students, all through our advisory role to the chief academic officer of the campus. That remit is at once broad and purely consultative.

In the words of Tennyson's Ulysses, urging his aging crew to carry on, "we are not now that strength which in old days/Moved earth and heaven, that which we are, we are." Yet, Tennyson also says, "Some work of noble note may yet be done". Shared governance in the age of the modern university depends on meaningful and mutually respectful collaboration. Our recent efforts to improve the campus PPPR implementation plan, on which we will vote later, is an example of a good campus process that strengthened shared governance by the practice of it. We turned a Board policy that began as an alarming assault on tenure into something that now feeds back into EPPR. The AAUP noted that while we should continue to monitor it, the campus plan was now deemed not to undermine the principle of tenure, and they have signed off on it. I encourage you to vote for this plan as a way to assert our place in the process, even when it begins with top-down actions. We will also vote today on a resolution that makes explicit reasons that the Board should reconsider its policy. This is not a contradiction: we've done everything we can to improve the campus implementation, and I commend Provost Manderscheid and Interim Chancellor Davis for pushing back on the System template to get the crucial amendment that seals the back door to any reckless "detenuring" plan. Past president Beauvais Lyons and our RA Brooke Killion deserve our thanks for their tireless work on bylaws compliance, which clarifies expectations for rank. This resolution pushes back on overly management-centric models of the university.

The PPPR process has also highlighted a concern about the state of our Senate handbook and the delay in implementing changes and updates since January of 2016. This includes the language governing EPPR. The handbook is the closest thing to a faculty contract, and we are its stewards. I want to commend Senator Michelle Kwon and past-past President Bonnie Ownley for tracking this problem, and thank Vice Provost Zomchick in advance for helping us to sort it out. Every shared governance challenge, including today's vote, is also a chance for the campus to strengthen its profile and show a commitment to meaningful collaboration.

**So how does this thing work?** Most of the Senate's work is done outside this room, in committees, Executive Council, and caucuses. But we can do better. In response to concerns about use of time, we will begin to shift away from long reports, especially from administrators, and toward more discussion. Beginning today, the Provost and Chancellor's reports will be simplified to a tidy highlight or two, with longer communications posted beforehand with the agenda, so that we can use at least 10 minutes at the front of the meeting for more general Q&A. This change is an attempt to balance the need for timely discussion against the need for a considered agenda that forwards the work of our committees. We will still have New Business at the end of the meeting. I will also be shifting future presentations to panels or toward conversation befitting our policy and advisory roles. Anyone, senator or faculty member, can bring a concern or idea through the Caucus chairs, or a proposed action to a committee and know that it will be considered. That doesn't mean every idea will be adopted, but it will be considered by other elected senators. I'll also be actively feeding that process through faculty-wide polling, which will be included with the mini-minutes I plan to send all faculty after each full Senate meeting. Committees share an implicit charge both to collaborate with administrators and to hold them accountable for good policy, transparency, and meaningful action.

To this same end, I'm also going to be organizing each meeting around a matter of shared concern. Today, it's matters of tenure and shared governance. Next

meeting will take up faculty roles in student success, during which we will talk with the Undergraduate Council about the new GenEd templates, Dean of Students Shea Houze, and Jennifer Gramling, point person for e-learning. We need to assert our role in the educational objectives of the institution and be at the table, formulating next steps with staff and administrators, and not merely being told about them. I have also requested that incoming interim President Randy Boyd address this senate, about his plans regarding diversity, access, and growth, and have urged a town hall before that. We await news on all the above. The UFC is the corresponding advisory body to the President, as we are to Chancellor Davis and Provost Manderscheid, but this senate also represents roughly 2/3 of all faculty in the System and we need to have an open channel to the System President. We will continue to ask for that.

**So why do we bother?** Without plunging you into the slough of despond here, we all know that there is a larger battle raging in our culture over the future of public education. I believe we are shoveling sand against the tide until we can make a better case for faculty contributions and higher ed generally. Our PSA program will launch this month, with Tennessee: Home out soon. The OpEd project, which trained 20 faculty members and two communications staff from across this campus (every college was represented) September 27-28 has already yielded 3 published OpEds, with more in the hopper. Just before the meeting started I sent each of you the collected notes from the session and encourage you think about how you can be an advocate for higher education in your spheres of influence. Today you'll hear from David Keffer about preliminary plans for our positive, pro-higher ed outreach to legislators, and from Calvin Skinner, alum, speaker at the recent ORE conference on Building University-Community Relationships and organizer with OneKnoxLegacy, about community efforts at voter turnout and representation. Vol For Life films has agreed to do a series of short spots featuring faculty with student athletes, and we're continuing to pursue possibilities with Alumni Affairs that can help to shift the narrative to one that better understands, respects, and appreciates our contributions to this state and the world. If you want to be involved with the PSAs, Social Media outreach, or the legislative "buddy system" and haven't been in touch yet, let me know. United at the Rock

2.0 coming up in February will help by illustrating our commitment to a campus where Vol means All, and where we stand together against hate. This work is about speaking into being the university as we know it can be and holding it to its highest standards. I applaud your commitment to serving your colleagues, to your students, to access to higher education; you're demonstrating all of those values by being here, and I thank you.

We'll now hear briefly from Chancellor Davis and Provost Manderscheid before we throw open the floor for a brief discussion period.

Anne/Samantha/Beauvais: distribute and collect ballots, mic

Ernest, Sadie: confirm 4:00 headcount, count ballots

Smoke Free Task Force