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Faculty Senate - August 28, 2009 Budget and Planning

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MINUTES

University of Tennessee Faculty Senate Budget and Planning Committee

August 28, 2009, 8:30 a.m. – SMC 720 (CBER Conference Room)

Present: Don Bruce (Chair), Chris Cimino, Jerzy Dydak, Nathalie Hristov, Jay Pfaffman, Conrad Plaut, Harold Roth, Stephen Blackwell, and Klaus van den Berg
Absent: Michael Essington, Lane Morris, Karen Sowers, and Marlys Staudt

Minutes from April 24, 2009 were not available and will be considered for approval at a future meeting.

Welcome and Introductions: The committee members introduced themselves and Bruce gave an overview of the Committee's charge from the Faculty Senate Bylaws, which had been revised in recent months. He also discussed recent, current, and probable future areas of concern for the committee. Emphasis will be on pushing the planning for inevitable budget cuts following the expiration of the federal stimulus funding, and monitoring the budgetary impacts of any developments regarding the reorganization of higher education in Tennessee.

Gender Equity Study: Hristov and Bruce reported on a summer meeting with Donald Cunningham in the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment. OIRA produces an annual report on gender equity that had been questioned by Lou Gross and others, who developed a new methodology. He had offered to have a student update that report over the summer; Hristov will follow up to check on the status of that.

Bruce recommended that the committee contact Provost Susan Martin to recommend a study group on the issue, since there are currently at least three methodologies used on campus to track gender equity. The group would be convened and led by the Budget and Planning Committee with presumed members representing the Provost's office, the Commission for Women, OIRA, OED, human resources, Lou Gross, and others as needed.

Faculty Salary Study: Bruce agreed to follow up with Cunningham at OIRA to inquire about the status of the annual faculty salary study, which typically becomes available in early fall.

Campus Budget Update: Cimino noted that the campus had been spared additional cuts while other state agencies have been asked to identify new cuts. He expressed some concern over the lack of serious planning to prepare for coming budget cuts following the expiration of the stimulus funding. He reported that the stimulus funds are being spent on a reimbursement basis, where the University sends invoices to the state after expenses are incurred. Bruce asked whether the state was earning (and keeping) interest on the reserves in the interim, and Cimino did not know. Cimino echoed earlier points about the level of reporting, oversight, and auditing involved with the use of the stimulus money. Preparations are underway with deans and budget directors in the various colleges. The use of stimulus funds for renovations or upgrades is turning out to be difficult, with projects in excess of \$100,000 having to go through a one-year state approval process unless new fast-track procedures are implemented. The recent 9 percent

tuition increase has helped, but most of that new money has been directed toward fixed cost increases. Cimino offered to provide “budget 101” training for the committee if needed on some future date.

Plaut revisited the April 2009 discussion on the lack of review for many non-academic spending areas. The committee agreed to try to learn more about the current review process for those types of expenditures, and to think about presenting options to the faculty in terms of the value of cutting some of those areas relative to the value of firing lecturers. The committee set this as a goal for the 2009-2010 academic year, such that a concrete set of options could be presented at least one year before the expiration of the stimulus funds.

Bruce reported on the summer budget hearing of the Athletics Department, which he attended along with John Nolt and Margo Holland.

Bruce also reported on the April 27, 2009 meeting of the Chancellor’s Budget Committee, which echoed many of the items already discussed.

Fall Meeting Schedule: After some discussion, the committee agreed that Friday morning meetings were the least objectionable option on the table. Bruce recommended September 18, October 30, and November 20, all at 8:30 a.m. in SMC 722.

*NOTE: Subsequent calendar review and e-mail discussion required a revision of these dates. **Fall meetings will be held on October 2, November 6, and December 4.***