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Faculty Senate - October 2, 2009 Budgeting and Planning

Faculty Senate

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MINUTES

**University of Tennessee Faculty Senate
Budget and Planning Committee
October 2, 2009, 8:30 a.m. – SMC 720 (CBER Conference Room)**

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

Minutes from April 24, 2009 and August 28, 2009 were approved.

Gender Equity Study Update: According to Hristov and Bruce, Lou Gross has offered to update the analysis using data already received from OIRA. The analysis is apparently complete but the write-up has not been finished. Bruce will follow up with Provost Susan Martin about convening a discussion group on the topic of gender equity studies at UTK. We are still waiting for the annual OIRA study from Donald Cunningham.

Faculty Salary Study Update: Bruce heard from Cunningham that this was nearly complete, but he will follow up soon.

Tennessee Higher Education Reorganization: Nolt reported on the status of the TUFSS position paper. Copies of the cover letter and dissenting statements were provided to committee members for review; the package has already been sent to the Governor. A meeting has been set with the Faculty Senate Executive Council and Anthony Haynes on November 3. Various other groups are meeting in the state to discuss related issues. The UT-TBR task force on this topic has apparently set up a web site. Plaut raised the question of what we could do as a committee and/or the broader senate. He noted that we need to clarify the problems that arise from the current system before we advocate for a different structure. Nolt responded that inefficiencies are common as a result of the current system, namely regarding getting permission to do buildings and renovations. He also noted the rather crude oversight from THEC, primarily consisting of the low-performing programs list that is regularly released. Hristov raised the possibility of reorganizing THEC rather than moving to a new structure. Plaut noted that the current funding formula needs to be revised, toward a focus on retention and graduation and possibly considering post-graduation employment outcomes. Bruce suggested and others agreed that a survey of UTK faculty might be more fruitful than an effort to achieve consensus around any specific set of recommendations. He offered to present that option at the Executive Council meeting on October 5. Discussion ensued on the issues of setting up a special (or joint) committee to plan and administer the survey, and whether IRB issues were at play. Morris asked about whether diplomas from UTC or UTM said UTC/UTM or just UT on them; responses indicated that all diplomas system-wide said only the University of Tennessee.

Campus Budget Update: Cimino gave a brief report on the current budget situation, focusing on efforts to appropriately spend and administer stimulus funding. THEC has changed its policy on how projects must be submitted. Some classroom upgrades are already underway, along with

some environmental improvements. He noted that approval for other projects must be obtained now for the entire stimulus period rather than periodically throughout the two years. Bruce asked about the current status of planning for the budget “cliff” that looms at the end of the stimulus period. Cimino responded that the Provost will meet with Deans in November, and that campus-level discussions include both budget cuts and possibilities for revenue enhancement. He also noted that the campus had met the 10% energy usage reduction goal, but that KUB might go to a peak-load pricing model (with higher rates during heavy usage periods such as 10 a.m. through 3 p.m.) that might cut into some or all of those savings.

Non-Academic Spending and Review Process: After some review of prior discussions on this topic, the committee agreed to set a goal in this area as working toward a report and resolution by Spring 2010. The report would discuss goals of non-academic spending areas, criteria for regular assessment, methodology for review, and transparency of the process. The committee agreed to work via e-mail to establish a working set of criteria.

On a related note, the committee discussed the news about the President’s desire to move the system administration off of the Knoxville campus (but within Knoxville). Members questioned the budgetary impact of such a move, especially given the stated purpose of the move being primarily symbolic. It was not clear that the symbolism was worth the expense or the rushed timing given the budget environment. Members agreed to monitor the situation.

Other Business: The UT Board of Trustees will be in Knoxville October 8-9. Bruce asked that a committee member please review the full board meeting or webcast and report back to the committee at the next meeting.

Fall Meeting Schedule:

November 6

December 4