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Faculty Senate - Executive Council August 31, 2009 Meeting Minutes

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Faculty Senate Executive Council
MINUTES
August 31, 2009

Present: Vincent Anfara, Toby Boulet, Marianne Breinig, Donald Bruce, Chris Cimino, Becky Fields, Sarah Gardial (for Susan Martin), Glenn Graber (for Ken Stephenson), Rob Heller, Joan Heminway, Laura Howes, Suzanne Kurth, Beauvais Lyons, John Nolt, Stefanie Ohnesorg, Scott Simmons (Graduate Assistant), Steve Thomas, and Dixie Thompson

I. CALL TO ORDER

T. Boulet called the meeting to order at 3:32 p.m.

II. REVIEW OF MINUTES

Heminway asked to clarify the Faculty Affairs Committee report in the minutes of April 6, 2009, by changing it to "Joan Heminway noted a set of amendments to the Faculty Affairs Committee's resolution (proposed by Doug Birdwell) were passed by the Senate at its last meeting." She also asked that on p. 4 the paragraph beginning "Anfara," be modified to state "Heminway noted that when discussion on the PRRR Task Force started, she had raised concerns about the availability of quality comparable data." The corrected minutes were moved, seconded, and approved.

III. REPORTS

President's Report (T. Boulet)

T. Boulet announced:

- The first annual all Knoxville campus faculty meeting would be held September 21 at 3:30 in the University Center Auditorium.
- D. Patterson was appointed chair of a committee to search for an Ombudsperson. In the meantime, a temporary Ombudsperson is being sought.
- T. Diacon has taken a new position. President Simek has sought names of people to take on his role as NCAA faculty representative. Diacon's term will end December 31.
- The Faculty Senate Retreat will focus on two topics: budget issues and the potential reorganization of higher education in the state.
- L. Howes appointment as an at large member of the Executive Council was announced.

Boulet proposed no longer including historical summaries at the end of changes in the *Faculty Senate Bylaws*. J. Heminway explained that by keeping the former documents available online the information was available. B. Lyons said he thought the summaries were useful showing that it is a living document. He elaborated that there was no need to detail all changes made, rather he thought there should be a few sentences talking about the *Bylaws*. G. Graber pointed out that the summaries provide guidance as to where to look for action on changes in the Senate Minutes.

Provost's Report (S. Gardial)

S. Gardial indicated that Provost Martin was out of town. She thanked the Faculty Affairs Committee for all the work it did over the past year. She said the administration had heard faculty members' concerns about the need to follow procedures. The revised process is being reviewed with Department Heads. There was discussion with V. Anfara about having peer-to-peer training for Department Heads, drawing on the expertise of experienced Heads. There

were meetings over the summer about some changes that were not substantive (e.g., editorial). Some changes would come to the Executive Council rather than the Faculty Affairs Committee.

1) Revision of Family and Medical Leave.

A significant change in policy is proposed particularly for faculty on 9-month appointments. The revised policy was posted and the system questioned it, so wording was revised after consultation with the General Counsel's Office. Heminway raised several issues:

- Would people be able to find the policies, as they were variously designated as Human Resources policy and personnel policy? She wanted to be sure that people would be able to find them.
- She was concerned about policy references being made with no specific citations.
- She raised a specific question about the section referring to faculty members who arranged modified duties, noting that it said two. Gardial said such arrangements were not limited to two occasions. L. Howes asked whether usage of the verb "may" indicated that a Department Head might not give approval. She suggested substituting "shall," so approval was not in question.
- Heminway said she questioned repeating the 7-year rule, as she finds it problematic to repeat policy statements made elsewhere, as it is difficult to maintain consistency when statements are made in multiple locations.

2) Merger of two documents—one addressing spousal-partner hires and the other addressing opportunity hires.

- Gardial announced there had been 8 or 9 such hires in the past year. Lyons noted for clarification that the focus is on hiring, not on retaining faculty who may have long distance relationships. Gardial said there was no restriction preventing hiring spouses/partners of current faculty members, but recognized such hires occurred primarily during the recruitment process.

3) "Introduction" to *Faculty Handbook* (Attachments 5 & 6)

- Attachment 5 discussed previous revisions. With the new substantial changes, Attachment 6 would be used. Heminway said there were two procedures she could not locate (incorrectly identified). She also noted that the attachment only selectively included people involved in preparing the changes. She said she would prefer not including any than doing so piecemeal. Lyons noted the General Counsel's Office ensures that the *Handbook* is not in conflict with Board policy. It becomes an issue of who is required to give approval. Gardial and others indicated that it referred to the process and that would include everyone. Howes asked about what was currently posted online, i.e., prior handbooks. She was specifically interested in what had happened to earlier versions. Heminway said she had asked S. Martin about the issue of previous versions and learned some were available only as paper documents. Boulet suggested a statement could be placed on the Provost's website telling people to contact the Provost's Office, if they wanted a paper copy. Lyons said the types of changes made to the *Faculty Handbook* had been refinements. More information could be confusing, as changes could be initiated in a number of ways. He argued that the two copies available represented the major ones. Howes supported the idea.

IV. OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business.

V. NEW BUSINESS

Appointments to Committees and the Executive Council (T. Boulet)

Boulet said R. Heller and A. Wentzel had agreed to serve as co-chairs of the Athletics Committee. Their appointment was moved, seconded and approved. The one change to committee appointments (R. Sawhney) was moved, seconded and approved.

Voting in Executive Council (T. Boulet)

Boulet said some people have more than one role and, for example, in the case of Lyons, two disparate roles. He consulted with the Parliamentarian about a person having more than one vote due to multiple roles. With no dissent it was agreed that the rule should be one person has one vote.

Guide for Collegiate and Departmental Bylaws (S. Thomas)

The assistance of S. Simmons in collecting information was recognized by Thomas. Nolt asked where the document would appear and was informed it would replace the document currently on the Senate website. Deans would be assigned responsibility for departments revising their bylaws by a specific date, for example January 1. Thompson pointed out that with the shift to fall evaluations, waiting until the end of spring semester might be better for Department Heads. Simmons noted that some Department Heads would not even give him copies of their bylaws when he was collecting them fall 2008. Gardial asked for advice on timing. Lyons said January 1 might be too soon. He said he had worked on this project since he chaired the Faculty Affairs Committee. He argued it was urgent to have them in place because such governing documents are important in tenure and promotion decisions. He thought the end of the academic year was probably a reasonable due date as faculty members needed to be at the table, too. Boulet asked about mid spring. Gardial agreed with mid spring, e.g., March 30. She noted in meetings this summer it was apparent that a lack of specificity is a problem. Heminway pointed out Lyons' role in having this process occur.

Position Paper from Tennessee University Faculty Senates (TUFS) (J. Nolt)

J. Nolt explained that the 10 universities in state systems had been engaged in major discussion about the possible reorganization of higher education statewide. In May a joint committee (Tennessee Board of Regents (TBR) and University of Tennessee system (UT)) was created to explore how the systems might work together. No major change was proposed. Nolt asked Governor Bredesen in April about faculty involvement in any change to higher education. TUFS created a position paper. All points in the position paper were voted on, for example, having a unified library system that would produce efficiency due to the advantages of size.

In terms of large-scale reorganization, what has been tentatively put forward as having one system for four-year institutions, a change that would eliminate the need for the Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC), and another system for two-year institutions. The TUFS document was being presented at each institution for approval by its faculty senate. The document is non-amendable, i.e., it must be voted up or down as is, due to the logistical considerations involved in getting approval at all institutions. The first step to obtaining Faculty Senate approval on our campus would be approval from the Executive Council. Since the

document was approved by TUFSS, Representative Beth Harwell indicated she was interested in sponsoring legislation. She has met with Governor Bredesen since then. The plan was for all faculty senates to vote by the end of September, after which the document would be sent out as a press release, information to politicians, etc.

Nolt noted that the TUFSS paper was discussed at the statewide American Association of University Professors (AAUP) meeting. Howes asked about the vision of a common general education core curriculum. Nolt said the idea was to make it seamless. Lyons said at the June University Faculty Council meeting the idea of reciprocity was discussed, for example, reciprocity between UT Martin and UT Knoxville. He thought TUFSS was proposing a common curriculum rather than reciprocity. Lyons said support could be given to the general recommendation of TUFSS without being specific about changes to general education requirements. Nolt said the goal was to do things that would benefit students and save money. D. Thompson said she was supportive, but she saw the issues as very complicated. Nolt said the group wanted to initiate a process of rational reevaluation of the system of higher education in the state that involved faculty. D. Bruce said it might be appropriate to have a qualifying statement supporting the process, but not endorsing all the specific proposals. Lyons said the battle would be about having two flagship institutions. Boulet said an effort was made to write a document that did not get into "turf." One thing he thought the document did not address was quality, e.g., pooling schools with quite different graduation rates. He went on to say that it is clear that the current situation was inefficient. Heminway suggested one way to proceed might be to craft a resolution of support. Boulet said any statement would have to include in it the words "we endorse." Nolt pointed out that action had to be taken quickly to meet the end of September deadline. Lyons said this was a time when the Faculty Senate Listserv could play an important role by preempting unfounded concerns. Boulet suggested the resolution could be put out and discussion on the Listserv could follow. Nolt said the same thing could be accomplished by passing a resolution to endorse the position paper and then explaining why. Boulet identified two approaches: circulating the resolution via e-mail after voting on its appropriateness or simply bringing it to the whole Senate. Nolt said he preferred getting the support of the Executive Council (EC). If the EC endorsed the TUFSS document and it were then sent to the Senate, it would be accompanied by a resolution for presenting it to the Faculty Senate. Nolt moved that the Executive Council support the position paper and Heminway seconded.

Breinig began the discussion of the motion by asking what it meant to "endorse" a position paper. Nolt said the wording came from the TUFSS discussion provision requiring individual Senate approval. Breinig noted that EC members did not necessarily agree. Boulet said he thought endorsing the paper meant that the Senate wanted TUFSS to take the document to the Governor. Anfara said his concern was that the document did not emphasize *process*. Nolt said the process would ultimately be political. Anfara said he was concerned that the recommendations seemed so specific, that it was not process oriented. Nolt replied that it was necessary to have something to present. Bruce raised the question of the downside or risk of not supporting it. He wanted support to be framed. Lyons suggested emphasizing Section III—objectives endorsed by TUFSS.

Heminway said she saw it as a position paper of TUFSS, not of the UTK Faculty Senate, so she saw the Executive Council's role as a facilitative one. Boulet offered a friendly amendment: to distribute a framing statement for the Executive Council's support of the position paper before

the statement was placed on the Senate Listserv. The friendly amendment was accepted by the maker of the motion and the second. Lyons said there should be a link to the TUFs Constitution in the memo accompanying the resolution. Amended motion passed.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

S. Simmons asked that everyone please *RSVP* for Friday's retreat.

Lyons said R. Heller had a photo exhibit at the East Tennessee Foundation that could be visited after the retreat.

Adjournment was moved, second and approved. Meeting adjourned at 4:52 p.m.