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Faculty Senate - Executive Council November 2, 2009 Meeting Minutes

Faculty Senate

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Faculty Senate Executive Council
MINUTES
November 2, 2009

Present: Vincent Anfara, Toby Boulet, Marianne Breinig, Donald Bruce, Chris Cimino, Rob Heller, Joan Heminway, Laura Howes, Suzanne Kurth, Beauvais Lyons, Susan Martin, John Nolt, Stefanie Ohnesorg, Lloyd Rinehart, Ken Stephenson, Steve Thomas, and Dixie Thompson

Guest: Scott Simmons (Graduate Assistant)

I. CALL TO ORDER

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

II. REVIEW OF MINUTES

B. Lyons requested the minutes be amended to more fully represent his remarks. In the discussion of the usage of the revenue from the ESPN contract "for terminal degree students" should replace "for doctoral students." With reference to the University Systems Relation committee the minutes should specify that the meeting was about the "Cherokee Farm Campus." Also, the statement about the lack of a clear business plan should specify "beyond the first phase and that much of the discussion emphasized how to connect the Cherokee Farm Campus to the academic mission of the University." T. Boulet asked that his comment about the emergence of the academic freedom in the 1950s specify "in the courts." Nolt made and Anfara seconded a motion to approve the minutes as amended. Minutes approved as amended.

III. REPORTS

President's Report (T. Boulet)

T. Boulet indicated he had some minor additions to the report he distributed. He attended a meeting of the Commission for LGBT People and a couple of items are forthcoming. Becky Fields, Chair of the Faculty Benefits Committee, has resigned and Boulet was seeking a replacement from among the committee members. Boulet requested and received approval for obtaining Executive Committee approval of a replacement via e-mail. Chancellor Cheek had requested advice on which faculty members he should have in mind when giving away tickets to campus events. V. Anfara indicated he had suggested via e-mail giving free tickets to those who received promotion and tenure. Other suggestions were those recognized as "Scholar of the Week" and those who received honors at the previous Chancellor's Honors banquet. It was noted that those giving presentations before football games already received tickets.

M. Breinig said the sparse attendance at the brown bags with T. Boulet and S. Martin might be because no one knew about them. J. Heminway said the location was not very visible. Sending out e-mails to advertise the events was proposed.

Provost's Report (S. Martin)

Status of Non-Tenure Track/Contingent Faculty. S. Simmons has worked on the report being prepared by the committee. These faculty members are predominately lecturers. One of the issues is establishing the criteria for their appointment and reappointment. A report will be given to the Faculty Affairs Committee. Among the things it will address are "best practices,"

career paths, and professional development activities. The material might be added to the *Faculty Handbook* as it really represents an extension of Chapter 4.

Academic Planning Meetings. S. Martin indicated that the meetings were starting. The Deans were to provide information about: Strategic planning for the period after the termination of the stimulus funding, increasing diversity, and communicating information to their faculties. She noted that while 8% cuts had already been made, they had not been “felt.” There will be meetings with two colleges a week. In contrast with previous planning sessions, Deans were being asked to provide revenue enhancing strategies.

Boulet asked about the timing of information release noting that there should not be surprises if communication has been effective. Martin explained that decisions should be communicated, but she was thinking more of planning. Lyons asked how specific the questions were, e.g., where would Deans add or take away money based on their philosophies? Martin talked about the opportunity to get reliable data on student FTEs, etc. There is a need for reliable data for academic units, as often the first reaction of academic administrators is “it’s all wrong.” K. Stephenson said the Research Council is struggling to make graduate education more visible in planning. Faculty members need to recognize that if they are expected to do more teaching and committee work, they will have less time for their research. He argued that pointing out the possible deleterious effects of cuts on graduate student funding and thus graduate programs would be a way to get research issues on the table.

Martin affirmed that we have to maintain our mission as the public research institution in the state. The graduate programs are closely linked to research. Whether all of them can be sustained is not known. She said that raising the standard teaching load has not been contemplated. Other means will be pursued to handle changes in the number of teachers. Stephenson argued that part of the planning process is to point out what is in danger. Martin said it appeared research productivity was going up. She noted one approach might be to have fewer programs. The Chancellor had been working hard to raise graduate stipends. Research grants and contracts are important sources of graduate student support. Stephenson said the Research Council recognized that some research was not externally funded and there was a need to take a broad perspective on research. It was suggested that some sort of discussion or planning document be started on the research side. Martin said they were very attuned to research in the Humanities and she would be glad to talk with Stephenson.

VCFA Report (C. Cimino)

C. Cimino reported the state budget picture was somewhat better the last three months, that is, the budget in relation to state sales tax projections. The deficits were lower, but reports were still circulating about the potential impact of deficits on state agencies, e.g., a cut of 6% in higher education.

Planning process of non-academic units was starting. The Chancellor was meeting with Vice Chancellors about the budgets for their units the first of year. Those meetings would be followed by public budget hearings. They are looking to streamline, to be more efficient. (Committees are looking at the Motor Pool and Graphic Arts.) Also utilities are a concern. While the Switch Your Thinking campaign met its 10% reduction in consumption goal, rate increases ate up the gain. They will be replacing items to make buildings more efficient and doing classroom upgrades.

IV. OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business.

V. NEW BUSINESS

Elections and Bylaws (J. Heminway)

President-elect J. Heminway said she would start working with caucus leaders in January. They will be seeking candidates for Senate offices. She noted there were some typos that needed to be corrected in the Senate Bylaws. She would like any other suggestions.

Lyons said a campus representative to the University Council needed to be elected in the spring. Boulet said C. Hodges had referred a student request that UTK graduates have unique academic regalia to the Faculty Senate. Martin said the issue was probably graduation robes rather than hoods. Lyons said Boulet could assemble a committee, e.g., with M. Custer. Boulet said the Senate could advise.

Status of Contingent Faculty (T. Boulet)

Boulet said the handout (report) distributed on contingent faculty raises questions about the acceptable percentage of faculty that is contingent and their representation on the Faculty Senate. S. Kurth said a task force should be appointment as the issue did not fit any standing committee. Lyons agreed about having a task force. Stephenson said the Mathematics Department had some 40 odd contingent faculty and some of them were more or less permanent. Lyons noted it was also a gender equity issue because women are disproportionately represented. Nolt said he did not think setting a percentage was the answer, but the issue was long overdue for Senate consideration. Policies for non-tenure track faculty and their representation on faculty senates should be examined. Any task force should have non-tenure track faculty members on it. Boulet noted Simmons engaged in a brief examination of the issue when Nolt was President. Breinig said there had been a report 10 years previously. Lyons said the question came up with the creation of Chapter 4 for the *Faculty Handbook*. College and departmental bylaws were needed to address a complex set of questions. He noted an earlier task force discussed titles. Heminway said the College of Law looks more like the Mathematics Department with a high number of contingent faculty members due to the nature of legal training. Setting a percentage of the faculty that is contingent therefore was not the answer. The Senate needs to be alert to a variety of issues involving the employment of contingent faculty members. Anfara said the state had redesigned licensure requirements for school administrators so non-tenure track faculty members have to be hired. Breinig said she thought there was a difference between adjunct faculty and lecturers. Lyons said the nomenclature shifts. For those teaching general education courses an effort has been made to make them full time so they are eligible for benefits. He said adjunct was a rather generic term that could mean different things. Faculty members can be contingent whether full-time or part-time.

Martin pointed out that often adjunct status does not involve money. The term "lecturer" was the chosen title for non-tenure track faculty members. The designation "instructor" is for new hires that have not completed their dissertations. Chapter 4 was a great accomplishment, but it does not include a career path. Other issues to be addressed are yearly limits and recruitment. S. Ohnesorg said that lack of maternity leave was very problematic. Boulet said that there would be further thought given to the issues by the Senate.

UT System Relations Committee (B. Lyons)

Lyons said there was a meeting with A. Haynes and H. Dye to discuss the upcoming legislative session—communicating faculty will that preserving faculty positions was more important than raises. What would it mean to fund pay increases? Are pay raises more important than retaining personnel? Nolt added that last year when they met with Dye and Haynes, they were surprised that they [Dye and Haynes] were meeting with the legislature about increases. The Committee was concerned about preserving jobs. Should the Senate membership be polled (not publicly) to see if there is still support for retaining jobs rather than providing raises? Boulet asked how it could be done. Lyons said you could ask whether you would like a salary increase or an increased teaching load. Heminway said without information on strategic planning how do faculty members know what to argue. One of the questions is how are functions to be supported? Nolt said in terms of strategic decisions that that was not what they were looking at, but rather pushing across the board policies. Heminway said the question was: what would the campus look like in 5 years? Stephenson said he did not think the faculty should capitulate on raises. The campus is in danger of losing some people. Martin said she would hate for faculty to be almost halfway out the door before doing anything. She thought the Chancellor would want to continue talking about raises. Anfara said some faculty members in his college were suffering from serious salary compression. The faculty salary study was not yet available. L. Howes said attrition was already occurring and should be a concern. Some units were weakened before the current planning efforts due to attrition. Boulet said there was a need to understand competitive issues, that is, faculty could be lost to other institutions. Nolt said the Committee needed some general guidance. Lyons said Haynes and Dye indicated that it really helped them last year to say faculty were more concerned about preservation, as that position was seen as more positive. Lyons said he thought faculty morale was actually pretty good. Boulet asked whether it had to be one or the other [salary increases or job preservation]. Boulet asked Martin if the salary situation was causing attrition. Martin said she hesitated to characterize departures. Her office was planning to look at faculty separations to follow up a study conducted two years before. She had asked S. Gardial to review the data. She did not have a sense that the campus was being raided, although such issues did tend to arise in the spring. Lyons commented that there were no systematic exit interviews. Martin said the Deans were encouraged to do so. Stephenson commented that some faculty in Maryland had been furloughed. He also noted that faculty raises elsewhere affected hiring on campus. Lyons expressed appreciation for the comments. Nolt said it might be that nothing would change in this legislative session and that nothing might need to be done at present. It might be 2012 when the Faculty Senate would want to get involved. D. Bruce indicated he had a meeting with Haynes the next day and wondered whether it would address the same issues. Heminway commented that she thought it was a false dichotomy pitting keeping faculty in the classroom versus providing salary increases. There has been a problem retaining faculty in classrooms. As other schools provide raises UTK will have difficulty retaining faculty in its classrooms and consequently slide into a different position. Bruce said pay raise discussions at the state level were dire. Other units without stimulus money were losing positions.

Adjournment was moved by Heminway, seconded by Stephenson and approved. Meeting adjourned at 4:53 p.m.