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## Faculty Senate - Executive Council February 15, 2010 Meeting Minutes

Faculty Senate

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Faculty Senate Executive Council  
MINUTES  
February 15, 2010

Present: Doug Birdwell, Toby Boulet, Chris Cimino, Rob Heller, Joan Heminway, Laura Howes, Suzanne Kurth, Beauvais Lyons, Susan Martin, John Nolt, Stefanie Ohnesorg, Ken Stephenson, Steve Thomas, Dixie Thompson

Guests: Scott Simmons (Graduate Assistant)

### **I. CALL TO ORDER**

T. Boulet called the meeting to order at 3:33 p.m.

### **II. REVIEW OF MINUTES**

A motion to approve the minutes of the January 11, 2010, meeting was made by D. Thompson and seconded by J. Nolt. The minutes were approved. B. Lyons requested that the record show that an adequate explanation had not been received about the discrepancy in the inclusive statements in University publications. He noted that Sec, 1, Ch. 1 of the *Faculty Handbook* contains a welcoming statement promoting inclusiveness. Lyons asked whether the Executive Council, the Faculty Affairs Committee, or the Faculty Senate President should pursue the inconsistency. Boulet said the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Gay, Transgender (LGBT) Commission had raised the issue and he would schedule a meeting with the General Counsel's Office to pursue the issue. J. Heminway suggested there could be two statements: one statement meeting the federal requirements and a second being the current welcoming one. This would reduce the current multiple statements to two.

### **III. REPORTS**

#### President's Report (T. Boulet)

T. Boulet's report had been distributed with the meeting agenda. He noted that the opening of OUTreach, the LGBT resource center in F103 Melrose Hall, would be Thursday, February 25 from 2:30-4:30. In response to Boulet's question about the number of faculty members/representation of faculty on the Athletics Board, R. Heller said that faculty members held 8 of the 39 positions on the Board. Heller indicated that it was not an activist organization. Faculty members chair the Board Subcommittees. J. Nolt indicated there was a bill pending in the legislature designed to open the Presidency of the University to additional candidates (a college degree minimum). It did not yet have a sponsor in the Senate, so there was no need for action. Nolt said Anthony Haynes would draw the Senate's attention to any such items.

#### Provost's Report (S. Martin)

S. Martin indicated that Chancellor Cheek could not attend the meeting due to a death in his family. She said the Board of Trustees (BOT) would be meeting the following week in Martin. The proposal for differential tuition in four colleges would be put forward then. An overall tuition increase would affect planning. She noted that Boulet and Cheek spoke at the Task Force meeting. From the Task Force it would move to the next level. She identified two task forces. One would address the new relationship between Oak Ridge (ORNL) and the University of Tennessee, Knoxville (UTK). She noted the need to proceed carefully. The second task force would do a gap analysis to see what it would take for UTK to reach the top 25. The first decision would be to decide who is in the top 25. The Task Force would look at benchmarks.

By the time of the June BOT meeting, the strategic planning process would be informed by the top 25 analysis.

The Academic Efficiency and Effectiveness Task Force identified the lack of a uniform strategy during summer orientation as a problem. The students were learning about fun things to do but not getting enough information about how to be academically successful. The goal is to have a more academic message and not leave information about academics to the second day. Sally McMillan was working with the Registrar on proposing timetable changes, that is, changes in when classes meet. Currently, students seek classes that meet two days a week (Tuesday and Thursday). Other classes are meeting at nonstandard times on Monday and Wednesday. The Task Force will look at developing a more flexible timetable with different day combination, e.g., Monday and Wednesday. Changing the time schedule for classes could lead to more efficient use of classroom space and would help UTK assess its space needs. The possibility of creating a tracking process with BANNER to indicate when students are not taking the courses leading to their major is being explored. And, bottleneck courses were being reviewed. The advising recommendation is being implemented. Professional advisers will staff the Arts and Sciences Advising Center.

Heminway commented that she was pleased about the examination of orientation. She said the Task Force might consider carrying advising through from orientation to academic year advising. Martin said they wanted students to be more comfortable with the degree audit system (DARS). K. Stephenson asked whether there was any specific classroom building scheduled. C. Cimino said the plan was to have one when Stokely was razed, but he noted that development was not imminent. Lyons commented that it was great that the Registrar was looking at the scheduling of classes. He thought having student focus groups to give input would be useful. Lyons said he had encountered scheduling problems due to students' work schedules.

Martin agreed with Lyons that the lack of availability of classes throughout the week made it harder for students. She said McMillan would hold student focus groups. She noted the need to address how UTK can increase its retention and graduation rates. Rates have improved for students entering with lower ability, but they have leveled off for students entering with higher ability. Consequently, groups will address that discrepancy.

Nolt noted that spring was coming and he wondered about the status of the evaluations of Deans. Martin said she would address that next. Heminway said there was a need to know why students worked, e.g., was it due to the job market. Martin said as students are more economically stressed the University needs to support them as much as possible. Middle class students are being helped with scholarships. D. Birdwell said the merger involving the former Computer Science Department revealed nonstandard class time problems. He asked why nonstandard class times were permitted. He also noted that Monday and Friday classes should be considered. Martin said other institutions implemented timetable changes a couple of years ago. One consequence of making a switch may be that exceptions are nullified. Currently, faculty members claim long-standing exceptions.

Martin then addressed the evaluation of Deans. She said she used the academic year for evaluations. She noted that she got a late start this year, but she was in the process of completing them. As the process requires feedback to the faculty, the process takes longer.

She is working with each Dean on what to communicate to the faculty. She met with the Library Faculty. In some units, summary paragraphs may be provided to the faculty. She said she would distribute surveys this spring for fall evaluations. Boulet noted the *Faculty Handbook* specified written feedback should be provided. Martin said that actually different statements appear in different locations within that document. She indicated she liked the statement for Department Heads. Boulet said the *Faculty Handbook* specified there should be a written summary of the surveys, but if other statements were made elsewhere that made a difference. Nolt asked whether there were evaluations of Associate Deans. Martin said nothing was specified. Nolt said it would be good for the Faculty Affairs Committee to consider their evaluation.

#### **IV. OLD BUSINESS**

##### Resolution on the Senate's Position on Reporting of Athletics (T. Boulet)

Boulet distributed Lyons proposed addition to the resolution after the budget line: "Whereas, the planning and construction of Athletics facilities have an impact on academic programs on the UTK campus; and." The proposed change was accepted as a friendly amendment. Nolt moved to bring the resolution to the Senate and Birdwell seconded the motion. Lyons noted that Boulet gave a presentation to the Athletics Alignment Task Force. Boulet said he thought it was generally supported. The recommendation goes from that group to the Athletics Board and finally to the BOT. There was general discussion of what action might be taken. Motion approved.

#### **V. NEW BUSINESS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

##### Faculty Affairs Committee (S. Thomas)

S. Thomas said the Committee had three resolutions. The first was to add a best practices statement for non-tenure track teaching faculty. The Provost, the Council of Deans, and the Faculty Affairs Committee had reviewed the resolution that supports a set of best practices but does not establish them as policy. Nolt asked why they were not proposed as policy. Thomas said there might be cases in smaller colleges where they might be burdensome. D. Thompson asked whether there was input from Department Heads. Martin said there was not. Thompson said Heads have to deal with faculty. Martin said the recommendations were what the campus currently was trying to follow and the administration understood they could create expectations. Nolt said there were a lot of concerns among lecturers, e.g., that they cannot do things like mentor College Scholars and are not eligible for various faculty development opportunities. Martin replied that the College Scholars rule was a college policy and faculty development opportunities are often related to departmental resources because much of the money comes from them. L. Howes applauded the establishment of periods of employment. She asked whether there was any discussion of tenure. Thomas said there was not, as the focus was on non-tenure track. Howes said there were lecturers tenured at one time. Birdwell said one person currently had tenure. Martin said that in the past people were tenured due to the number of years for a tenure decision having elapsed. Heminway asked whether the proposal addressed Vice President Joseph DiPietro's e-mail to Thomas, specifying that he question was about change in years in one place and not the other. Thomas said a portion in the third resolution distinguished the category of lecturer. He expressed discomfort with changing the Committee's report that proposed "typically." Thompson said she did not understand reapplication if it applied to people like one of her faculty members that has been at UTK 30 years. Thomas said the Committee's understanding was that it would be up to the Department Head and Dean. Martin said Chapter 4 of the *Faculty Handbook* already required at least a

minimal reapplication every year. Boulet said it could be very minimal. Lyons noted it might vary from unit to unit. Thompson asked about inclusion of sabbatical, as UTK currently does not have one for tenure-track faculty. Thomas said it was in the report when the Committee received it. Thompson asked whether it helped or hurt to have a set of best practices that could not be met. Thomas said the Committee was concerned about moving into a period of limited resources. The practices could be thought of as the groundwork for a later time. He was not certain how long the Distinguished Lecturer position had been in place. He asked whether any had been appointed and Martin said there had been. The standards are unclear. Ohnesorg noted that one person threatened a lawsuit because the category was available. Nolt said he thought such appointments took place at the departmental level. Martin said that was a good point and such designations relied on a sound evaluation process. Nolt pointed out that such an evaluation process had not been in place. Thomas said there might be implications for departments and tenured faculty as there are references to the standards employed for them. Martin said she understood the document was almost from another age. Some departments have funds. She said she was sensitive to the concern about creating false expectations, but she thought having best practices in place was important. Howes asked what percentage of the faculty was in non-tenure track and was told between 20-25% of full-time. Nolt pointed out that women were the highest percentage of faculty at the lowest level. Thompson asked whether the resolution would go through two readings, if it were sent to the Faculty Senate. Boulet said it had been the custom. Thomas moved the resolution on behalf of the Committee. Motion approved.

The second resolution originated from the Council of Deans and was intended to avoid the need to make annual appointments for research, clinical, distinguished and senior lecturers. Howes asked whether the wording "current contract" in the resolve part should be "letter of appointment," as that is what people receive. Thomas said that was his wording. He accepted "letter of appointment," as a friendly amendment. The resolution from the Committee was approved as amended for reading at the next Senate meeting.

The third resolution introduced senior lecturer as a valid rank changing the paragraph for "Distinguished Lecturer" to read "senior lecturer" instead of "lecturer or above." And, "normally for a period of three to five years" was changed to "typically for a period of five years." Boulet noted that if the Senate passed by the change it might require General Counsel approval. Martin said it would depend on what the General Counsel's Office said. Birdwell asked whether the change would preclude bringing someone in as a Distinguished Lecturer, who had not been at UTK previously. Thomas said the five years could be worked around. Heminway said the visiting title could be used, if the appointment were for one year. Birdwell said he wondered about having an escape clause. Lyons said the *Faculty Handbook* had a number of visiting titles. Thomas said the criteria for the "visiting" designation were unclear. Boulet said qualification could be specified like those for granting tenure. He said the Committee could look into the possibility of addressing criteria. Birdwell expressed interest in having an escape clause. Motion from the Faculty Affairs Committee approved.

#### Elections (J. Heminway)

Heminway provided an update on the upcoming elections. The two candidates for the University of Tennessee Faculty Council (I. Lane and D. Patterson) were scheduled to speak at the March 1 Faculty Senate meeting. Trying to recruit two candidates for Senate President-elect that met the criteria specified in the *Faculty Senate Bylaws* and represented diversity had

been difficult. In some cases, there was only one nominee for a Senate seat rather than two. Heminway said there were a number of reasons for the problems. One problem was that service on the Senate was not valued. Also, there was a conception that all the Senate does is pass what is put in front of it. The Deans and Department Heads could address the problem. In the College of Law the Dean made sure there were candidates. She noted there was inconsistency in the *Bylaws* about appointment of the Information Officer. Heminway said she needed clarification about what body to put the nomination of the Information Officer and Secretary before. The suggestion she made about changing the existing statement about the qualifications for President-elect were attached to the minutes of the last meeting. The proposed change eliminated the requirement of having served as an elected member of the Senate. She proposed adding "prior service on the Faculty Senate as an administrative member...or in another elected or appointed capacity". At the last Senate meeting, the question was raised about the basis for excluding Deans. Heminway said that they were excluded because of the 50% faculty status requirement. Thomas moved and Thompson seconded the resolution adding the additional service categories and deleting the elected Senator requirement. Motion approved officially sanctioning the motion read at the February Senate meeting.

#### Strategic Plan

The goal is to have focus groups. Committee Chairs should have it reviewed by their committees.

Thompson asked whether she should present the Undergraduate Council minutes at the next meeting, as they were posted. Changes affecting General Education are contained in them. It was agreed she would make comments.

Adjournment was moved, second and approved. Meeting adjourned at 4:59 p.m.