7-17-1923

From the Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Trustees Held on July 17, 1923

Board of Directors

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"The Board reassembled at 2:00 P.M. Governor Peay in the chair. Roll call showed the following members present, constituting a quorum: Governor Austin Peay, Commissioner P. L. Harned, Commissioner Homer Hancock, President H. A. Morgan, Judge Hugh G. Kyle, Mr. Paul J. Kruesi, Mr. W. P. Cooper, Sr., Mr. I. B. Tigrett, Mr. Spencer F. Thomas, Mr. C. F. J. Mooney, Mr. W. S. Shields, Mr. T. A. Wright, Mr. Bolton Smith.

It was announced that certain members of the faculty and citizens wished to address the Board on proposed changes in the faculty. On motion it was decided that each member of the faculty not recommended for reappointment who wished to be heard should be allowed twenty minutes and others ten minutes each. The following persons addressed the Board in the order named: Prof. R. S. Ellis, Prof. M. Mulvania, Dr. R. S. Radford, Dr. John R. Neal, Mr. W. W. Piper, Mr. A. G. Lowe, Mr. Kenneth Gresham, Mr. Walter Roberts.

The Board then went into executive session and all visitors were excluded.

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"The President presented the report of the Deans, in which he concurred, recommending that certain members of the faculty should not be reappointed. This report is contained in a letter of the Deans to President Morgan, dated June 29, 1923, making these recommendations and the letters and papers attached hereto giving the reasons therefor. On roll call this report of the President and Deans was adopted and ratified by the Board, Governor Peay and Mr. Smith voting "no". The report was ordered spread on the records, as follows:

June 29, 1923

Dr. H. A. Morgan, President,
University of Tennessee

Dear Sir:

We respectfully submit to you as President of the University of Tennessee the record of the final meeting of the Deans held on June 29th for the consideration of recommendations relative to reappointments of members of the University faculty.

We are of the unanimous opinion that the following members of the University faculty should not be recommended for reappointment: Dr. J. W. Sprowls, Professor of Secondary Education, Mrs. A. M. Withers, Assistant Professor of Art, Dr. John R. Neal, Professor of Law, Dr. A. A. Schaeffer, Professor of Zoology, Dr. R. R. Ellis, Professor of Psychology and Philosophy, Dr. R. S. Radford, Professor of Latin and Roman Archaeology, Prof. Maurice Mulvania, Dean of the Pre-medical course and Associate Professor of Bacteriology.

Respectfully submitted,

James D. Hoskins
Chas. E. Ferris
J. T. Porter
Malcolm McDermott
C. A. Willson

July 13, 1923
I am submitting the recommendation from Dr. J. A. Thackston, Head of the Department of Education, that Dr. J. W. Sprowls, Professor of Secondary Education, be not reappointed. I concur in this recommendation.

Sometime in March Dr. Thackston informed me of the situation in the case of Dr. Sprowls. After careful consideration it was decided that Dr. Sprowls should be called to my office and notified by Dr. Thackston that he would not be recommended for reappointment because he was not adapted to the field work and had failed in getting satisfactory results in this work.

This notification was given to Dr. Sprowls on or about April 1st. He left the Dean's office and immediately began an agitation of protest. He questioned the authority of the Administration to notify him that a change should be recommended, sought legal advice and assistance, and gave the impression that he had been dismissed in violation of academic freedom. He did not confine his agitation to the faculty but he extended it to the students and to the public.

Respectfully submitted,

James D. Hoskins, Dean

July 10, 1923

In accordance with our agreement as the result of a conference held in the early part of April, it becomes my painful duty to submit to you the recommendation that Dr. Jesse William Sprowls, Professor of Secondary Education, be not reappointed for the reason that he is not adapted to the field work of his position and has not given satisfactory results in his work.

Dr. Sprowls was employed by the University of Tennessee as Professor of Secondary Education about the close of the first term of the session 1920-21. A very important part of the duties of this position is the field work including the visiting of schools in the State. The Professor of Secondary Education should through visitation and inspection strengthen the relationship between the University and the schools of the State, especially the high schools. He should assist in promoting the efficiency and standards of the public high schools as a matter of vital importance to the growth and development of the entire system of elementary schools. By a demonstration extending through two and one-half years, Dr. Sprowls has proved conclusively that he is not adapted to this work. He has presented no feasible plans for the promotion of secondary education, nor has he reported the results of his visits by giving estimates of the schools visited. His haphazard methods have brought no definite and specific information suitable for intelligent planning and promotion on the part of the University. He has made no constructive suggestions for the strengthening of the relations between the University and the public secondary and elementary schools. His failure, therefore, to meet the requirements of this position imposes upon me, as the Head of the Department of Education, the duty of recommending a change.

Respectfully submitted,

Jno. A. Thackston