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Faculty Senate - September 14, 2009 Meeting Minutes

Faculty Senate

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The University of Tennessee Faculty Senate
MINUTES
September 14, 2009

Absent: Lt. Col. Michael Angle, Alvaro Ayo, Roberto Benson, Bill Bradshaw, Steven Dandaneau, Jim Drake, Michael Essington, Greer Fox, Roxanne Hovland, Jeff Kovac, Beauvais Lyons, Norman Magden, Lane Morris, Lloyd Rinehart, W. Tim Rogers, Rupy Sawhney, Montgomery Smith, Carla Sommardahl, Marlys Staudt, Matthew Theriot, Pia Wood

T. Boulet called the meeting to order at 3:31 p.m.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Establishment of a Quorum (S. Kurth)

S. Kurth reported a quorum was present.

Senate President's Report (T. Boulet)

T. Boulet announced that he had distributed his report via e-mail (attached) because of the items on the meeting agenda. He added that an Ombudsperson search committee had been appointed and a person to temporarily fill the position identified. As the Provost and the Chancellor were at the Deans, Directors and Department Heads (DDDH) Retreat, the order of items considered on the agenda was adjusted.

MINUTES

Faculty Senate Meeting

The minutes of the April 20, 2009, Faculty Senate meeting were moved by N. Mertz and seconded by D. Bruce. Minutes approved.

Faculty Senate Executive Committee Meeting

The minutes of the August 31, 2009, meeting of the Executive Committee were available as an information item.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Provost's Report (S. Martin)

S. Martin said the DDDH retreat focused on the challenges facing the campus once the stimulus money is spent. Various presentations had been made including one by W. Fox and A. Haynes that focused on where the campus would be at the end of stimulus funding. The question was how UTK could be the best possible university with a leaner budget. Planning is essential. She noted the development of a document on best practices for non-tenure track faculty, specifically lecturers. Appropriate management is being sought.

Chancellor's Report (J. Cheek)

J. Cheek announced the first year students constituted the best and most diverse class ever (9 % African-American and 12% from low income families). Discussions about the relationship between the campus and the system were continuing. He encouraged inviting the faculty representative to the Board of Trustees (BOT) to speak about proposed changes, namely:

- 1) The system should be located somewhere other than on a campus.
- 2) A committee would be formed soon to consider the reporting structure of Athletics. A report from that committee should be available in January or February.
- 3) The BOT approved a 9% tuition increase for 2009-2010 that had the support of the Student Government Association (SGA).

Increasing academic effectiveness and efficiency through actions such as articulation with community colleges and change in the date for dropping courses is under consideration.

Questions.

T. Wang noted that the faculty has been hearing for several years that each succeeding entering class was the best ever. She asked what evidence there was that changes in the characteristics of entering class members had improved the 6-year graduation rate. Cheek said for the last academic year there was an 11.4% increase in the number of graduates compared to the previous year. There was no increase in the 6-year rate over the previous year. He said that the campus should be in the 80% graduation rate category.

M. Breinig asked about enrollment. Cheek said enrollment was down a bit because of the number of students who graduated.

PREVIOUS BUSINESS

There was no previous business.

MINUTES POSTED ELECTRONICALLY

Graduate Council Minutes (V. Anfara)

V. Anfara highlighted several actions in the April 9, 2009, minutes passage of Academic Policy Committee Bylaws, policy change concerning international exchange students, revision of the Appeals Committee Bylaws, and a change in policy requiring grade appeals be made within 30 days. The August 13, 2009, minutes included approval of bylaws for the Curriculum Committee. Mertz moved that both sets of minutes be considered together. M. Wirth seconded. Motion approved. The minutes of both meetings were approved.

NEW BUSINESS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

J. Nolt invited C. Pierce to attend the meeting as former Senate Co-Parliamentarian to recognize his service:

The University of Tennessee, Knoxville
Faculty Senate

WHEREAS, *Carl A. Pierce, J.D., is a highly respected colleague, teacher, and researcher;*
and

WHEREAS, *he served with distinction as Parliamentarian of the Faculty Senate during the academic year 2008-2009; and*

WHEREAS, *not only as Parliamentarian but also as a former President of the Faculty Senate, he has demonstrated a thorough knowledge of the rules of order and the traditions of the Faculty Senate;*

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT *the University of Tennessee, Knoxville Faculty Senate expresses its sincere appreciation to*

Carl A. Pierce

for his outstanding and devoted service to the Faculty Senate and the University of Tennessee; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT *a copy of this Resolution be presented to Professor Pierce and that the Resolution be made a part of the minutes of the Faculty Senate meeting held on September 14, 2009.*

Suzanne Kurth
Secretary

John Nolt
President, 2008-2009

D. Birdwell moved the resolution and D. Bruce seconded it. Motion passed unanimously.

J. Boulet asked for recognition of J. Nolt's service as Senate President:

***The University of Tennessee
Faculty Senate***

***WHEREAS**, Professor John E. Nolt is a highly respected colleague, teacher, scholar and citizen; and*

***WHEREAS**, he has served with distinction as President of the Faculty Senate during the 2008-2009 academic year, elevating the prestige of the Senate within the University community by his assertive leadership and speaking truth to power at the campus, system, and board levels; and*

***WHEREAS**, he has patiently and persistently promoted the interests of faculty, staff, and students by supporting the ideals of sustainability, shared governance, diversity in hiring, faculty participation in the development of Cherokee Farm, and increased efficiency at all levels of administration of higher education in the state of Tennessee; and*

***WHEREAS**, he has also served the Senate and the Faculty of this campus as a member of the Tennessee University Faculty Senates (of which he is the current President) and the UT Faculty Council; and*

WHEREAS, he has worked tirelessly to communicate the activities of the Senate to faculty and to improve the overall organization of the University for the benefit of faculty, staff, and students;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the University of Tennessee Faculty Senate expresses its sincere appreciation to

Professor John E. Nolt

for his exemplary leadership and service to the Senate and the University of Tennessee; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT a copy of this Resolution be presented to Professor John E. Nolt and that the Resolution become part of the minutes of the Senate meeting held on September 14, 2009.

Suzanne Kurth
Secretary

Toby Boulet
President

D. MacClennan moved to adopt the resolution by acclamation and J. Shefner seconded the motion. Motion approved.

Resolution on TUFs Position Paper (J. Nolt)

J. Nolt introduced the resolution approved by the Senate Executive Council. The Tennessee University Senates (TUFs) position paper was developed over the summer. Nolt briefly reviewed the history of TUFs and referred people to the information on its website. UTK joined the organization last October. In April 2009 Nolt was elected President. At that meeting it was decided that reorganization of higher education should be a priority. Initially, Governor Bredesen was expected to appoint a commission to address reorganization, but instead he decided to pursue the issue on a more informal consultative basis. When TUFs's view was sought, the 10 Faculty Senate Presidents decided to see what they could agree on and meet August 14-16. At that meeting they decided to submit the document to their respective senate bodies and report the votes by September 30. It would become the TUFs position paper if approved by 6 senate bodies.

To date UT Health Sciences Center voted against it and two other bodies voted for it. If it receives a majority vote and becomes TUFs official position, then the hope is that it could be discussed with the Governor's office and legislators on the education committee. Nolt would represent the view of all (for and against), if it is passed by the majority. The initiative probably would die if not approved in September, as no TUFs meeting was scheduled until April 2010. Two possible justifications for the proposed reorganization were offering better service to students and the current dire economic circumstances and forecast that may produce program mergers and cuts, as well as loss of positions. (As faculty members are not all that popular with legislators, the TUFs participants wanted to express interest in students.). Nolt reviewed the political history that led to the creation of two systems and the Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC) to coordinate. The position paper has two foci. One set of proposals aim to reduce administrative costs by taking advantage of the economies of scale. THEC would be eliminated, but a separate 2-year college system would

be retained. The system would be moved to a new location. The other set addresses the elimination of institutional barriers (e.g., shared library resources, joint academic programs, and centralized admissions record keeping).

The proposed resolution states:

WHEREAS, on October 20, 2008, The UTK Faculty Senate elected to become a member of Tennessee University Faculty Senates (TUFS), an organization created "To facilitate communication and cooperation between the various Faculty Senates and Councils of the State of Tennessee's Public universities," "To foster the role played by the Faculty in the shared governance of Tennessee's public universities, and "To represent the missions, accomplishments and needs of public universities to state agencies and to the general public of the State of Tennessee;" and

WHEREAS, TUFS created the Tennessee University Faculty Senates Position Paper on the Reorganization of Higher Education in Tennessee, attached to this resolution as Exhibit A (the "Position Paper"), in an effort to ensure faculty involvement at all stages of any process of reorganization of higher education in Tennessee, encourage specific discussion among its members about efficiency in the administration of higher education in Tennessee, and facilitate student and faculty access to educational programs and resources across the state; and

WHEREAS, TUFS has requested endorsement of the Position Paper from each of its member senates prior to distributing the Position Paper to the Governor, various legislators, and other state officials in order to engage in dialogue on the reorganization of higher education in Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, on August 31, 2009, the Executive Council of the Faculty Senate considered and supported the Position Paper and directed that it be submitted for a vote at this meeting; now, therefore it is

RESOLVED, that to ensure faculty involvement at all stages of any process of reorganization of higher education in Tennessee, to encourage specific discussion among its members about efficiency in the administration of higher education in Tennessee, and to facilitate student and faculty access to educational programs and resources across the state, the Faculty Senate endorses the Position Paper, with the understanding that this endorsement shall not be construed by TUFS as detailed, point-by-point agreement with each of the principles, objectives and recommendations included in the Position Paper, but rather as a vehicle for TUFS' Engagement with officials of the State of Tennessee.

Nolt explained that as the resolution came from the Executive Council it was on the floor for discussion. Boulet asked that discussion initially be restricted to questions for J. Nolt. The first questioner asked him to explain how a statewide curriculum would be good for our students. Nolt said the meaning was "general education" curriculum. C. Plaut asked whether it meant that UTK's general education curriculum would be geared to all students, not just those entering as first year students but those transferring in. Nolt said it would not, that it would be what UTK currently has for transfers. Mertz said that the documents said "core curriculum" and did not refer to transfers. Nolt said it would not require having the same courses. M. Handelsman asked whether the document would make it necessary for UTK to submit core curriculum changes. Nolt said it probably would not. M. Levering asked whether other institutions would see the document the same way.

M. Hristov asked about the first recommendation that appeared to suggest "one size" fits all. She thought all the recommendation seemed to be like that and asked Nolt to respond. Nolt said it arose from the Tennessee Board of Regents (TBR) dealing with community colleges and "one size fits all." P. Crilly, returning to General Education, said transferring was not the problem, but that a common General Education curriculum muddies the water of articulating. Nolt said because it was a TUFS document, the Senate was being asked to vote it up or down. S. Zivanovic asked why the Senate was voting on a position paper rather than a simple request to be involved. Nolt replied that at the August meeting there was agreement on goals and principles, but the general perception was that that documents would be a "yawner." The emergent consensus was to make some specific recommendations. Another question was about the recommendations made 10 years ago that were still relevant, that is, what were they (Sundquist Higher Education Report)? Nolt said they essentially kept the two systems in place addressing graduation rates, but not reorganization. D. Birdwell asked the position of the University's lobbyists in Nashville on the Position Paper. Nolt said he had talked to H. Dye and it apparently made them nervous because they thought the University was well-off, as it was. Boulet said A. Haynes was also concerned about the consequences of endorsing reorganization that might not be implemented until after a different administration is in Nashville. Shefner commented that Dye and Haynes were uncomfortable the previous year with faculty members stepping outside of their traditional role. In his view they do not understand very well what faculty members want. Could TUFS be a voice of opposition to cuts rather than one attempting to shape budget cuts? He said he would like it to offer a voice of opposition to cuts. Boulet said TUFS could speak in opposition to cuts. Wang said she had questions about two items—one having to do with students moving easily and the other the goal of having a visiting faculty consortium. Nolt said several things were possible. Students could pursue distance learning or enroll for a semester at another institution. And, there could be collaboration among graduate programs at different institutions. The proposed faculty consortium represented parallel types of options, for example teaching on another campus. Handelsman had questions about the impact of the centralization proposed in #7 and the quality of service. Nolt pointed out it said centralization should be "considered." Breinig noted that Nolt had said several times that TUFS would not meet until April, so her question was what would TUFS do? Nolt said if asked TUFS members would meet. Boulet said that as UTK's representative, he would transmit this campus's view. Nolt said that he, too, would convey the Senate's views. B. Blass said attention should be paid to the document. If it were approved it would be like buying a pig in a poke. He said it needed to be approved in principle. He expressed concern about changes in who decides on the curriculum. In the past the costs of maintaining the system Vice Presidents has been examined. Consideration should be given to eliminating them.

Boulet then opened debate on the motion and said it would follow the format of alternating speakers on the two sides. Birdwell spoke against the position expressing his concern that endorsing the Position Paper would be taken as representing agreement with the recommendations and he did not agree with a number of them. He noted the seamless library reminded him of when ORNL tried to take advantage of our library, basically a cost shifting rather than a cost sharing action. He also argued that the issue in many cases is not geographic distribution of programs, but rather that there are too many programs, e.g., in Engineering.

B. Mallinckrodt said he was persuaded by the argument that the faculty needs to have a voice at the table, although he still had a question about who would be fleshing out the proposals.

Hristov argued against saying the recommendations are well-defined, i.e., interconnected IT systems. Usually such proposals come out of committees that have examined the options. She thought they could be used given how they are worded and proposed simply stating "communicating," as the bottom line message was the faculty wants to be heard.

D. Bruce spoke in favor noting that he shared the reservations of others. He thought it provided an opportunity to speak. Without supporting the process the faculty has no voice. He said Boulet and Nolt would represent the UTK Faculty Senate's views.

T. Wang spoke in opposition arguing that UTK had more to lose than other institutions, noting #4 "regional access to graduate programs." She argued that students should enroll in the institutions with the desired programs and that in her view it was better to build one quality program.

R. Hirst spoke in favor saying while there were problematic things, what message would be sent about TUFS if the resolution were voted down.

Levering spoke against saying the proposal represented the interests of TBR schools. In her view the distinctiveness of our campus is its first rate research and graduate programs. Spreading resources would make it more difficult for programs to be excellent.

J. Lounsbury said he was troubled about whether there would be a voice if the Senate voted "no." Nolt said there was a desire to respond to regional programs. People who are employed and seeking degrees in nursing and education have limited flexibility when enrolling in graduate programs.

A visitor from the history department faculty was given the opportunity to comment that the document was meant to be consequential for people who are not academics. Those people might read it and assume there could be easy movement from one campus to another.

B. Ambroziak spoke in favor saying Senators had had a week and a half to review the document (others said only 4 days). He supported B. Lyons and Nolt's arguments.

Lounsbury asked what the administration thought. The Chancellor said he, Vice President DiPietro, and President Simek had some serious concerns (e.g., about research coordination). They questioned why the faculty would want to centralize, when the campus had opposed system control for years. He did not think the time frame was as urgent as it was presented as being. The advice he received from BOT members was basically "wait and see."

Birdwell said that as the flagship institution, any position taken would be heard. Nolt asked in what practical way that might occur and influence the Governor. He doubted consensus would be easy to achieve. In his view if the resolution were not adopted there would be no substantial statement, that is, the proposal was the only way to voice views.

Crilly spoke against the resolution noting he shared others' concerns. The Legislature has limited time to review such documents and would not understand that the intent was to express broad principles.

Mertz called the question.

The resolution was defeated (9 for and 43 opposed).

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn made, seconded and approved. Meeting adjourned at 4:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Suzanne Kurth, Secretary