

February 6, 2023
Faculty Senate Meeting with President Oldham

Via TEAMS

In attendance: President Maxwell, Secretary Killman, Past-President Luna, President-elect Allen
Senators Ojo, Craven, Comer, Liu, Reames, Manginelli, Ding, Fornehed, Langford, Park, Rajabali, Isbell,
Rand, Spears, Turner, Upole, Weathers, Mullen, Brachey, Hermann-Turner, Smith-Andrews, O'Conner,
Mills, Loftis, SSmith, Hutson, Alley, Null, Hajdik, Duncan, Canfield, Pickering, Alcott, Hasan, Adams,
Winkle, Howard, Crockett, TSmith, Sisk, Witcher, Shipley, Lee, Meadows

Guests: President Oldham, Lee Wray

Absent: Fennwald, Swartling, Frye, Burch, Ding

Call to Order: 3:35pm by Senate President Maxwell

Motion to approve minutes of Sept. 12th, seconded. No discussion. Motion passed.

President Maxwell welcomed President Oldham and Chief Ray to the meeting and turned the meeting over.

President:

The Governor's State address is this evening. We will get a proposed budget for next year. It is available on the Governor's website.

Mercer Compensation Study. Approximately 6 months to complete. I don't expect any report on the study till the Summer. We will keep you updated.

Question:

Is this study for the salaries of staff?

Answer:

Yes. It's for everyone. Faculty and Staff.

Question:

Will there be an increase in pay for adjunct and lecturer?

Answer:

The University doesn't dictate the pay. That is controlled within the colleges. That is a decision made in the Dean's offices.

Question:

Has there been discussion to use some of this money that was recuperated after the cuts perhaps in online fees? Not coming from the college level.

Answer:

Anything can be reconsidered. It would be between the Dean's and the Provost.

Question:

I don't understand why teachers that come in for one class a day have to pay for a \$200+ parking permit to be here for one hour. Why can't there be a \$15 parking permit? The dept. is not allowed to pay it for them.

Answer:

I don't disagree. There is no reason that the dept. couldn't compensate that.

Question:

What about adding a chief operating office? Creating a new division around the operating unite.

Answer:

I like this idea. The cost is slowing me down. It's a half a million-dollar recurring cost.

Question:

Did we save \$500,000 by combining two positions – Brandon Johnson and Karen Lykins?

Answer:

No. We gained efficiency but did not save that much.

Question:

Can we see the projections of cost.

Answer:

The cost concerns are mine. To hire a senior executive, it would be \$200,000 + benefits. To create ad new admin office, we would need the staff and operating funding. You get to ½ a million pretty quickly and that is very conservative.

As long as we can pay that additional cost, we can do it. I want to do it when that cost will be the least impactful.

Update on Construction completion:

We are on schedule. The engineering building is scheduled for completion in March of 24. Acme building is in design currently. Construction won't happen for another year. Two years to complete. New Tucker Stadium West is in design. The plan is to tear down the current stadium at the end of this football season.

Foster demo will happen around Nov. Johnson Hall reno will begin March of 24 and take a year and a half to complete. Back in Johnson Hall by Christmas of 25.

Parking and Transportation improvements:

On schedule. I know there are questions on safety. Making changes to the road contract. There should be more permanent fencing around construction sites. I have asked them to pay attention to pedestrian pathways to keep students and others from walking through mud holes, etc.

Question:

Has Matthew Daniels project been pushed back?

Answer:

No. That is dependent on the governor's budget. It's 3rd priority on the capitol's request. In a typical year we would get that funded.

Question:

There is no safe wheel chair access on the pedestrian pathways. Will this be addressed?

Answer:

I will communicate those concerns. I would encourage everyone take notice that if someone is having difficulty, please work with them individually.

Policy Central:

Tech established student organization policy on children under 18 regarding free speech. There has been no policy change. Last fall, we put a group together to look at our practices involving minor children at student organization hosted events. The group came back with recommendations on procedure around student organized events. Those recommendations have been implemented. They must follow all requirements if children under 18 attend their event.

Question:

Any info on groups that rent the campus?

Answer:

We have not changed our minors on campus policy.

Question:

I am an advisor to a student organization. The guidelines were not distributed. Do they prohibit minors from everything regardless of subject matter if it is student organization sponsored?

Answer:

If it is a live event or performance that they are not in control of, they can't guarantee that something inappropriate won't take place. The guidelines are very thorough.

Question:

If we are having minors on campus, would it be best to confirm with Brandon Stubbs?

Answer:

Yes.

Question:

If I haven't seen these guidelines, how are we supposed to follow them? This is another example of the lack of the communication throughout the university. If they come out months ago, why haven't they been distributed? And who is held responsible for not distributing them?

Answer:

They were sent out the first of January. I'm guessing they don't have an accurate list of who they need to communicate with.

Is there anyone on this call that has received this information?

No one seems to have received it.

The reason I drafted the Wings Up Way is to put students first and accommodate their interests and needs. Many things don't reflect that but we still have more work to do to get better.

Comment:

Dec 21st there was an email sent out but the guidelines were very hidden.

Answer:

I apologize that that wasn't communicated more effectively.

Question:

UTK has heightened their partnership with Arizona State. Their goal is to be THE school for online learning. Do you know anything about it?

Answer:

I don't know anything about that. In the past, UTK is been pretty opposed but they should have done this a long time ago. I would love to do more in this arena at Tech. We were offered invitation from Arizona State to partner with them but it wasn't clear to me how it would work. UTK is in a different mode in the past few years, the culture has changed, more aggressive ideas. They have 46,000 apps for the freshman class this fall. It is the dominant out of state institution. Our limitation is our bandwidth.

Follow Up:

So many people want to finish online and they are the toughest to get into. We have the data but there are so many restrictions.

In Accounting, data shows that online is very successful. I have to justify every year that we have a high percentage because we can't be above a certain percentage or it looks bad?

Question:

Do we have any plans to expand the diversity of schedules that we offer?

Answer:

I am not aware of anything recently. We have in the past; it creates challenges such as financial aid. We can make it work, but is it worth it? The way to do it would be to find opportunities that really warrant making it happen.

Question:

If merit-based pay is a law but only two schools in the state follow that? Are the other schools breaking the law?

Question:

There seems to be a directive that when chairs evaluate their faculty that those evaluations should report mediocre or average regardless if the faculty is outstanding. Is that in line with our so-called merit system?

Answer:

To my knowledge, there is no admin directive mandating evaluations to be centered around average. We are making efforts with HR to provide more training with supervisors around evaluations and to provide better tools to make the process more meaningful.

Comment:

We were told to remind our faculty that no more than 50% of them could be rated as outstanding.

Comment:

There is outstanding, high, and average. We are limited.

Answer:

I don't know where this originated from.

Comment:

As a chair, I don't care what that guideline says. I think we have to evaluate our faculty accurately.

Comment:

I may be mistaken, but this was not in place when I came here 10 years ago. It is not something from the distant past.

Answer:

I don't have an answer for this. I would suggest having that conversation on what these evaluations should represent. I agree that the chair should evaluate accurately.

Comment:

I think these evaluation guidelines came from the financial side of the university based on merit raises.

Answer:

It's a worthy question. We all evaluate other people in some way. If we had a colleague that gave students all A's, that would be something we would want to look at.

Regarding domestic partnerships:

To my knowledge there is no opportunity in domestic partnership bereavement. This just hasn't been thoroughly explored. If the faculty senate wants to make a proposal for consideration, we can see where it goes.

Question:

10 years ago, there was a proposal submitted but nothing happen. What happened with that?

Answer:

Legally that was in a different place 10 years ago. It Was around gay and lesbian couples and that did not have legal status in the state at the time. I'm not sure of the definition of domestic partnership today. There would be a lot of things to consider.

Comment:

There is a senate bill 0834 that prohibits using foreign video platforms. We need to be aware of things that should be potential blocked on university software.

Watching closely in TUFFS. D2L (I'learn) is Canadian and the bill says all foreign platforms.

Question:

When is the clock going to be fixed?

Answer:

It was fixed and then broke again; they are bringing in an outside consultant.

Call for final questions/comments for President Oldham. Hearing none, President Maxwell thanked he and Lee Wray for their time.

Such Other Matters:

Question:

Do we need to put out another call for faculty trustee?

Answer:

Yes, need another call for sure.

Comment:

Please consider questions that you would like to ask at the March breakfast with the board of trustees.

No motion needed for adjournment since it's not business. Meeting ended at 5:09pm.

Respectfully submitted by Christy Killman