

February 27, 2023
Faculty Senate Business Meeting

Via TEAMS

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

Guests:

Absent: Senators Duncan, Langford, Frye, Maxwell

Call to Order: 3:35pm by President-elect Allen

Approval of the Agenda

Motion to approve by Senator Fornehed, second by Senator Smith-Andrews, call for vote, motion passed.

Presentation by Faculty Representative to the Board of Trustees candidate Jeannette Luna. In the allotted 5 minutes Senator Luna outlined topics she is concerned about and will pursue as faculty trustee.

1. Salary study,
2. Divisive concepts legislation (how does it impact us?)
3. Enrollment clift (25-26 recruitment strategies)
4. Capital projects (challenging but good)
5. Planning/budget
6. Tenure legislation (TUFS)
7. Mental Health (faculty, staff and students)

Discussion and vote via teams. 41 voted. 100% of votes cast were in favor. When Trustee Allcott rolls off the Board of Trustees, Senator Luna will take his place. Thank you, Jeannette for representing us on the board.

Planning for the March 6 meeting with President Oldham ensued.

TUFS reports that of all public universities give raises on basis of Tech is the only institution doing 100% merit raises only. Others go by COLA (cost of living), with merit after minimum COLA.

Can notes be turned into tables? Tables helped make the case in the past. Since it's data driven, a table can help people to see what we are wanting them see.

APSU uses a hybrid system. Our Board might go for that. (Hold out a percentage of the pool for merit.) Most deserving still identified and rewarded. UTK merit changes year to year but closest to what we do but much better.

1989 salary study committee came up with model for distributing raises that worked quite well when it was used. It has a merit component in it. We have a procedure in place but seems president and board don't want to use it because it's not strictly merit. It worked pretty well.

January 27, 2020 business meeting- there was an extensive conversation about merit compensation, specifically how faculty felt. Several bullet points specifically addressed merit-based pay and how faculty felt.

Since so many new senators – have to get on same page of what we are asking. Sounds like if we are aligned, COLA first then merit-based raises.

President Oldham suggested Chairs go back and talk to Deans about awarding more than 50% of faculty in the department the rating of outstanding. Any discussion about this? Previously in faculty senate there is evidence of lack of transparency and consistency. Awards based on inconsistent evaluations with no statistical adjustment made.

If we have on the agenda again, are we to report to the President what was said when we talked to our Dean? What's new?

We are looking for clarity.

The form is fairly clear. "No more than 50% of your faculty can be outstanding". What point is it we are trying to make with the President.

He seemed to not be aware of the 50% restriction. Did the Provost see something that needed fixing? Maybe everybody is not aware of this being done. It's not the first time the President was not aware of things going on.

A year or more ago, the Board charged the President with spreading merit raises out. Can't do that if everyone receives outstanding. There is a disconnect that is happening between Board, President, Provost and HR. The President needs to give direction on it.

There is a deliberate and objective process that most chairs go through when evaluating faculty. The process is not arbitrary, but thoughtful. Chair's job is to be fair and objective in allocating these raises.

The money in the pool is the money in the pool, period. We don't get more money to distribute because we give outstanding ratings.

Survey monkey text message about Putnam County and Tennessee Tech. Heard nothing about it before – the question is related to merging Tech with the UT system. Does anyone know anything about this?

Discussion of topics for the Board breakfast – March 9 from 7-8am. Don't want to bring up tenure to the board. It's a huge can of worms. Do we really want to be discussing this with them? Is the legislation far enough along to make it worthwhile to discuss at breakfast.

We don't want to give something traction or draw attention. Don't want momentum just because we talked about it.

Divisive concepts in Chronicle about legislation in other states. Wonder if it's coming to Tennessee. Anxious to see results of survey by Robert Owens about divisive concepts.

Banning social media owned by foreign entities. Has anyone heard anything about that?

Chair Harper's mother passed away. May want to send a note of condolence.

Nomination committee for president-elect – Chair (as president elect) Michael Allen, Senator Smith-Andrews, and Senator Fornehed

Graduate Health insurance committee recommendations (sent out previously)

Chat GPT – can answer exam questions. What can we do about that? Play with it to see how it will affect you and your classes/tests. It could answer every question. It has passed bar exams in some states. Pulls from Google. Every topic. Has a hard time with original physics questions.

Had it use Blooms Taxonomy to answer questions and I was amazed. 2 others coming out soon. Each has its strength. Will get nothing but better. Problem in online learning.

Talk of legislation to ban these BOTS. There are new rules and formal training on campus.

We should ask the President about the research office and the lack of service there...again. Some are reaching out to other institutions to get help they need for grant work.

There has been hiring in research office but not enough staff, especially bookkeeping. They are not keeping up and departments are doing it. President is saying it's better, but operationally, it's not. Definitely still issues.

Meeting adjourn @ 4:44pm

Respectfully submitted by Christy Killman