

## **Faculty Senate Business Meeting**

February 26, 2024

via TEAMS

### **Members Present:**

Michael Allen, Sean Alley, Megan Atkinson, Scott Christen, Melissa Comer, Kris Craven, April Crockett, Andrew Donadio, Dennis Fennewald, Mary Lou Fornehed, Syed Hasan, Samantha Hutson, Krystal Kennedy, Christy Killman, Matthew Langford, Richard Le Borne, Jane Liu, Mark Loftis, Jeannette Luna, Jennifer Mabry, Twanelle Majors, Lori Maxwell, Holly Mills, Wendy Mullen, Linda Null, Brian O'Connor, Hyewon Park, Mustafa Rajabali, Christopher Reames, Steven Seiler, Lee Ann Shipley, Scott Smith, Troy Smith, Sandi Smith-Andrews, Leslie Suters, Kyle Turner, Hannah Upole, Brenda Wilson, Kimberly Winkle

### **Members Absent:**

Teddy Burch, Stephen Canfield, Mark Creter, Yun Ding, Steve Frye, Ann Manginelli, Michael Nattrass, Joseph Ojo, Richard Rand, Amber Spears, Lenly Weathers

### **Guests Present:**

Kevin Braswell, Brandon Boyd

### **Call to Order**

Senate President Allen called the meeting to order at 3:37 p.m.

### **1. Approval of Agenda**

Senator Donadio made a motion to approve the agenda. Senator Smith-Andrews seconded. The motion carried.

### **2. Approval of Minutes and Notes from Previous Meetings**

#### a.) January 29, 2024 Business Meeting Minutes

Senator Donadio made a motion to approve the minutes. Senator Atkinson seconded. Senator Smith-Andrews abstained. The motion carried.

#### b.) February 5, 2024 Meeting with Provost Bruce Notes

Senator Smith-Andrews made a motion to approve the notes. Senator Atkinson seconded. The motion carried.

### **3. Report from Academic Council Chair**

Senators discussed issues and confusion with reserving space for classes through Coursedog; this may need to be a future agenda item for discussion. The best advice is to work ahead and together as much as possible.

### **4. Report from Administrative Council Chair**

No updates; the council has not met since the last report.

### **5. Report from TUFs**

Senator Smith-Andrews reported on the latest TUFs meeting topics, including shared governance and a history of low and inconsistent pay for adjunct instructors.

#### **6. Discussion with Vice President Braswell from Advancement**

VP Braswell updated senators on fundraising goals and changes in funding the department. Advancement has met 44% of the funding goal after 45% of the time has passed for this funding campaign. The department seeks to raise these funds primarily for faculty support, scholarships, and student experiences. VP Braswell offered to meet with anyone who had any further questions or discussion.

#### **7. Report from Trustee Luna**

The next Board of Trustees meeting is coming up a week from Thursday. There is not yet any information on the Mercer study and Trustee Luna was told the board would be reviewing results at the March meeting.

#### **8. Report from the Faculty Senate President**

The recent meeting of the President's Cabinet held information about the Mercer study. According to Mercer, faculty salaries are on average 5% below the median, though some units may have higher or lower percentages. Staff salaries are on average 16% below the median. President Oldham proposed correcting the averages closer to the median over the next four years. The first year's effort will use the \$1.7 million set aside to correct some salaries (retroactive to January 1). Senate President Allen shared a discussion in Cabinet he had with concerns about using merit pay to achieve market targets. Senate President Allen offered to President Oldham to work on a model to achieve market without merit to see if it can be applied to all departments. Senate President Allen solicited volunteers from the senate body to help achieve this in the next week. Some senators expressed hope that staff salaries be prioritized first and further concerns about using merit pay to achieve market medians.

#### **9. Discussion on Budget Advisory Committee meeting**

The BAC did not get the budget information ahead of the meeting; President Oldham shared it in the meeting. This will be a "lean year" as the state is dealing with a \$1.2 billion lawsuit. President Oldham and VP Stinson are going to make pleas to the state. The lawsuit is in regard to an excise tax overcharge according to one senator.

#### **10. Discussion on Faculty Handbook**

Senate President Allen discussed with Provost Bruce issues with the current Faculty Handbook. In question is whether the Faculty Handbook website is a duplication of information elsewhere, and what purpose the Handbook serves or needs to serve. Senators are encouraged to speak with colleagues about the Handbook and its future before discussing this in a future Senate business meeting.

#### **11. Discussion of Tennessee House Bill 2348, proposed**

Senator Troy Smith encourages all to look at the bill as it is deeply concerning. The bill introduces felony consequences and further defines restrictions regarding divisive concepts.

#### **12. Request for questions for meeting with President Oldham on March 4**

Submit questions or comments to Senate President Allen or Secretary Mills

**13. Reminder of breakfast with Board of Trustees at 7:00 a.m., lobby in front of the multipurpose room**

Senator Christen requested a calendar invitation and Secretary Mills agreed to send to all. Senators should have received a paper invitation.

**8. Report from the Faculty Senate President**

Richard Rand suffered a heart attack recently but is on campus working. Senator O'Connor noted the passing of Ray Kozub.

**Adjournment**

Senator Rajabali moved to adjourn the meeting. Senator Smith-Andrews seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 5:43 p.m.

**Approved:** 03/25/2024