

Faculty Senate Business Meeting
April 22, 2019

Members Present:

Douglas Airhart, Jeremy Blair, Tammy Boles, Chris Brown, Andrew Callender, Corinne Darvennes, Stuart Gaetjens, Melissa Geist, Mark Groundland, David Hajdik, Paula Hinton, Shelia Hurley, Christy Killman, David Larimore, Regina Lee, Lori Maxwell, Christine Miller, Holly Mills, Lachelle Norris, Linda Null, Brian O'Connor, Joseph Ojo, Sally Pardue, Jeff Roberts, Leeann Shipley, Troy Smith, Sandi Smith-Andrews, Barry Stein, Holly Stretz, Zac Wilcox, Kim Winkle, Jeannette Wolak

Members Absent:

Ismet Anitsal, Deborah Ballou, Michael Best, Troy Brachey, Debra Bryant, Wei Tsun Chang, Ahmed ElSawy, Steven Frye, Ann Hellman, Barbara Jared, Seth King, Ben Mohr, Richard Rand, Mohan Rao, Cara Sisk

Guests:

Ann Boyd Davis, Harvill Eaton

Call to Order

Senate President Smith called the meeting to order at 3:35 p.m.

Approval of Agenda

Senator Hinton made a motion to approve the agenda for today's meeting with the following correction and addition:

4. B. Final Report from Nominating Committee (**Douglas Airhart, Chair**) and Election
4. C. Final Report from the Strategic Planning Committee (Ann Davis, Jeff Boles).

Senator Stein seconded with these revisions. The agenda was APPROVED.

Approval of Minutes and Notes

Senator Darvennes made a motion to approve the minutes from the Senate business meeting on April 1st and the notes from the Senate meeting with President Oldham on April 15th. Senator Smith-Andrews seconded. These minutes and notes were APPROVED.

OLD BUSINESS

A. Opening comments and announcements

1. Senate President Smith congratulated Senators Corinne Darvennes and Regina Lee and wished them well in their retirements.
2. Senate President Smith met with Lori Bruce, Yvette Clark, and Deb Zsigalov to discuss the charge of the Board of Trustees to determine what "affiliated" means in the matter concerning e-mail access for retired faculty. They determined that most of the wording in the Senate-approved proposal would be included in the written report to the Executive Committee of the Board. Ultimately, the group indicated that all retired and affiliated faculty would retain access to their Tennessee Tech e-mail accounts. The group determined that Department Chairs would first indicate if their retired faculty (emeriti and non-emeriti) could be deemed "affiliated." Afterwards, the

Dean and the Provost would make their assessment. If two out of three of these administrators determine that the retired faculty is affiliated, then they will retain access to their Tech e-mail accounts. The Department Chair will renew the faculty's e-mail status annually. This process would not apply to staff, but the group discussed extending the period (3-6 months) before Tech cut their e-mail access. Senate President Smith was happy with this productive meeting and the group's resolution. The Provost, in particular, championed the faculty on this issue. Faculty senators asked the following questions:

- Will the Provost present this recommendation to the Board of Trustees? Senate President Smith was unsure, but noted that she will be there. He will also argue in favor of their recommendation if needed.
 - Was IT in favor of the group's changes to the e-mail matter involving retired faculty? Yvette Clark was part of the group. The written summary will have the endorsement of IT.
 - Approximately how many affiliated retired faculty members are in the 65,000 e-mail accounts in doubt? Approximately 180 out of 65,000 are of retired faculty members. Most of the other e-mail accounts are of former students.
 - Are librarians considered faculty? Yes, librarians are faculty members. E-mail is connected to library access. Senate President Smith clarified that retired faculty will have access to not only the library, but also to all campus computers.
 - Will affiliated staff also retain their e-mail accounts? Senate President Smith noted that they are not included in the written recommendation to the Board, but the Provost seemed in favor of extending e-mail privileges in the meeting.
 - Will retiring faculty have ample time to work on their e-mail before it is taken away? Senate President Smith will look into it. A retiring Faculty Senator indicated that IT sent her an e-mail stating that her e-mail access will be cut on May 4th. Others told this Faculty Senator to contact Deb Zsigalov to extend her access.
 - Are faculty and administrative personnel lumped together? Did this come up in context of e-mail access? Yes, there might be administrators who would still retain e-mail access. The group pushed against a blanket allowance of e-mail access for all retiring staff, because of the large number.
 - How will they determine if a faculty is affiliated? The Department Chair will begin this determination. The Provost would like to find another word or phrase besides "affiliated."
 - It is important to resolve this situation. Unhappy retired faculty might not want to donate to the university. Hopefully the Board will accept the group's recommendations to help resolve this situation.
3. Senate President Smith gave an update on House Bill 0707 and Senate Bill 0775, both pertaining to adjunct pay. The House Bill never made it out of committee and the Senate Bill has been sent back to committee for further study. He noted the importance of this item for Tennessee Tech and urged that the Faculty Senate examine it closely next year. An increase in pay for adjuncts needs to come from the university budget. On the other hand, adjuncts have not received a raise since the

1990s. A Faculty Senator clarified that Tennessee Tech does not have to pay the lowest adjunct pay rate.

B. Final report from the Nominating Committee

Senator Airhart announced one name on the ballot for Secretary and moved to nominate Senator Holly Mills for this position. Senator Roberts seconded. The Faculty Senate APPROVED Senator Mills as the new Secretary by acclamation. Senator Airhart nominated Senator Holly Stretz to be the President-Elect of the Faculty Senate. Senator Stretz accepted the nomination with the condition of stepping down as Academic Council Chair. After some discussion, Senator Roberts seconded the nomination. The Faculty Senate APPROVED Senator Stretz as the President-Elect. Senator O'Connor thanked Senator Troy Smith and Senator Mark Groundland for their leadership roles as Faculty Senate President and Secretary.

C. Report on Strategic Plan, Exceptional Stewardship Group

Dr. Ann Davis, Chair of the Exceptional Stewardship Working Group, summarized her group's work, particularly in the areas of graduation processes and procedures, communication with Facilities, creation of a virtual success center for online students, and the budget. Faculty Senators offered the following feedback:

1. Have we fixed the problem of students needing to apply for graduation? The application date for graduation has become policy. Dr. Johnson is in the process of taking this date out of the policy. This will take time.
2. If students are late for applying for graduation, they cannot apply electronically, but rather by paper form. Is anything being done to streamline the process for those applying late? If a student has met all of the requirements for graduation, Tech does not want to delay their graduation. Dr. Johnson recognizes that the paperwork in this situation is not student friendly and is looking to improve this process.
3. When they set up the system that automatically processes students for graduation, is there a way to delay graduation if students want to study abroad, for example? Dr. Davis' group had not considered this possibility. They will look into this scenario and possibly recommend something like an opt-out e-mail.
4. They are considering the adoption of electronic substitution forms.
5. Do red flags appear if a student is still missing a graduation requirement? The graduation audit process helps with this issue. They will recommend that advisors receive alerts before students so advisors can investigate any problems before worrying students.
6. We had a VP for Online Education who should have initiated all of the online initiatives mentioned for our online students.
7. As for Online Education, Tennessee Tech should collaborate with and support its faculty when they develop online courses and dedicate their valuable time to this endeavor. This institutional support should include financial incentives.
8. An online orientation should include hotlinks to university resources, such as TechConnect, Eagle Online, iLearn, etc.
9. If we launch a real online presence, Tech needs to support it with more personnel, in addition to Lauren Neal and James Alexander.
10. Have you included people in existing College Success Centers to help plan an online orientation? The Steering Committee will determine who needs to be involved in

- implementing these recommendations. They should include College Success Center professionals. A Faculty Senator also recommended that First-Year Experience Course instructors be involved.
11. Will there be an online site where faculty and administrators can comment on budget matters (such as overload teaching, summer school, etc.)? This is our recommendation. Hopefully there will be a section for other matters that will enable faculty to see how the administration is spending money and offer their feedback.
 12. Is there not a Faculty Represented Budget Committee on Campus? There is a University Budget Advisory Committee; there are approximately 4 faculty members out of the 35 members on this committee.
 13. Faculty receive information from the University Budget Advisory Committee, but they are not given a voice in it. The Administration needs to involve faculty more. Tennessee Tech needs a cultural shift to include faculty in important decisions.
 14. Will faculty see a list of recommendations from the four Strategic Plan's Working Groups and have input into which are chosen? The chairs of the working groups have asked this question. The IFC Steering Committee is in the process of preparing a document with recommended implementations. Money will be a factor. They have asked the four chairs to continue working through the summer. The Chairs have stressed the importance of implementation of some of the recommendations.
 15. Please suggest that the IFC Committee be careful with assigning additional work to faculty. Their plates are already overflowing. The Working Group has not yet been able to look at faculty workload deployment. They know that the faculty is asked to do a lot, and that service cannot simply be an add-on piece.

Dr. Davis asked Faculty Senators for recommendations, especially on financial matters and the budget. Her e-mail is anndavis@tntech.edu

16. There appear to be three different budget committees on campus: this working group's budget sub-committee, the University Budget Advisory Committee, and the 5-year Budget Committee that advises the Board of Trustees. How do they interface? They have not, at this point. However, Emily Wheeler is a member in all three groups.
17. Is it true that Tennessee Tech is under State notice due to our low budget reserves? We have to have a certain dollar amount in reserves and Tennessee Tech is now building it up. A Faculty Senator clarified that the financial position of the university is sound. He doubts that we are on any notice, though he shared that the university has not contributed to the reserves in the last two years. Reserve funds should be built into the budget on the front end. Another Faculty Senator noted that the President had shared the incoming funds from the State at the last meeting, and that these funds are already committed. This does not paint a strong budgetary outlook. State law requires that we have a rainy day fund.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Tenured Faculty Cover Sheet

Faculty Senator Null presented the work of an Academic Council Subcommittee on the Tenured Faculty Cover Sheet. This group has met with Associate Provost Huo, Dr. Curtis

Armstrong, and Provost Bruce to discuss this matter. Faculty Senator President Smith had distributed the cover sheet (quantitative) and the tenure progress narrative (qualitative) before the meeting. The group wanted to bring their work before the Faculty Senate as an information item. Faculty Senators offered the following comments and questions:

1. Who will look at this information? The documentation will be included in the tenure portfolio and seen by the Dean, Provost and President.
This is concerning because there are categories that do not apply to everyone. A subcommittee member responded that academic units would come up with their own faculty tenure cover sheet. Furthermore, the narrative would highlight discipline-specific accomplishments. In the subcommittee meeting, the Provost noted that the first group to see the cover sheet would be peers. The Provost also reassured the group that she would not be looking for zeroes on the cover sheet.
2. The cover sheet should also include student advising and other administrative duties. One reason why advising is not yet on the cover sheet is that it is not one of the three criteria for tenure: teaching, research, and service. Faculty Senators indicated that advising is on the Agreement on Responsibilities form.
3. It would be helpful to compare this Faculty Tenure Cover Sheet to departmental tenure guideline documents.
4. Internships and the preparation of accreditation reports should also be included in this document. The Provost, in the meeting, suggested that these activities lend themselves better to the tenure narrative.
5. A row for "Other items" on the cover sheet would be beneficial.
6. Does not the tenure committee chair's letter already describe the contents of the dossier? The Provost noted the importance of affording the candidates an opportunity to summarize their own work over the last five years.
7. The service category is far more limited and much less inclusive than teaching and research. Faculty Senator Null encouraged Senators to send her suggestions for this category.
8. This cover sheet will not be consistently meaningful across units. Tenure-track faculty, for example, could select committees that meet infrequently to cover committee work on the checklist. The number of MS committees served would differ depending on whether there is a thesis option or not. Once again, the narrative will assist in distinguishing items amongst academic units.
9. It is incumbent upon the tenure committee to evaluate the dossier appropriately, including the proposed tenure narrative and faculty tenure cover sheet.
10. If someone is denied tenure, could the candidate use the cover sheet to argue against the decision?
11. Should there be two tenure forms: the proposed cover sheet and the departmental expectations for tenure? Another Faculty Senator noted that faculty expectations might differ within a department that offers graduate and undergraduate degrees.
12. A member of the subcommittee noted that the tenure narrative and cover sheet would allow the Provost to cut down the time required to look at 40 tenure dossiers. This new documentation would allow the Provost to interpret the contents of these dossiers in a more effective manner.

Senate President Smith recommended that Faculty Senators send their feedback to this subcommittee. The Academic Council will vote on the faculty tenure cover sheet and the tenure progress narrative in the fall.

B. Interim Vice President of Research Report

Dr. Harville Eaton introduced himself and pledged to support faculty in their research endeavors. He encouraged faculty to meet with him to discuss their research. Senate President Smith appreciated Dr. Eaton's support.

C. Other Such Matters

1. Academic Calendar Change

A Faculty Senator noted that the administration did not adequately publicize the change to the academic calendar (from 14 to 15 weeks). It was merely an informational item in the Academic Council. Furthermore, there was some reservation with the methodology of the student survey. Students were unaware how their preference of having courses on the hour or half hour would mean that the semester would be extended for one week. May 1st is the deadline for submitting the academic calendar. Faculty Senate President Smith discussed this issue with President Oldham and how students had mentioned that the change would impact their internships, jobs, and how an extra week would be an extra expense for them. A Faculty Senator suggested a survey be given to faculty and students to see if the one-week extension is desirable. Another Faculty Senator pointed out that they had initially agreed with the extension, understanding that it was necessary for SACS-COC accreditation. However, Dr. Huo walked back the requirement by using the term "approximately" to describe the 15-week requirement. Furthermore, Tech received an outstanding accreditation report while on a 14-week schedule. Another Faculty Senator noted how Dr. Huo had initially stressed the importance of the total minutes in a semester, whereas now she is stressing the importance of 15 weeks, giving less significance to the total number of minutes.

Faculty Senator Stein made the following motion:

"The Faculty Senate recommends the postponement of the adoption of the 15-week calendar until surveys are conducted to explore the perceptions of faculty and students."

Faculty Senator Stretz seconded it. The resolution was APPROVED.

2. Faculty Senator Airhart announced Tech's celebration of Arbor Day. Furthermore, the Arbor Day Foundation has designated Tennessee Tech University as a Tree Campus U.S.A.
3. Faculty Senator Smith-Andrews thanked the faculty service award committee for awarding her this honor.
4. Faculty Senator Stretz asked Senators to consider recommending that students be allowed to drop a class with a W until the last day of classes.
5. Some discussion ensued on how to handle Faculty Senator Stretz' stepping down as Academic Council Chair in order to become the President-elect of the Faculty Senate. Faculty Senator Stretz will send an e-mail to Academic Council members.

6. Finally, Faculty Senate President Smith thanked everyone for supporting him as President and for the Senators' hard work over the last year.

The meeting adjourned at 6:03 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mark Groundland, Secretary of the Faculty Senate