

Faculty Senate Business Meeting  
September 10, 2018

**Members Present:**

Douglas Airhart, Deborah Ballou, Tammy Boles, Troy Brachey, Chris Brown, Debra Bryant, Andrew Callender, Corinne Darvennes, Ahmed ElSawy, Steven Frye, Stuart Gaetjens, Melissa Geist, Mark Groundland, David Hajdik, Ann Hellman, Paula Hinton, Shelia Hurley, Barbara Jared, Seth King, David Larimore, Regina Lee, Christine Miller, Holly Mills, Ben Mohr, Lachelle Norris, Linda Null, Brian O'Connor, Joseph Ojo, Sally Pardue, Richard Rand, Jeff Roberts, Leeann Shipley, Cara Sisk, Troy Smith, Sandi Smith-Andrews, Barry Stein, Holly Stretz, Zac Wilcox, Kim Winkle, Jeanette Wolak

**Members Absent:**

Ismet Anitsal, Michael Best, Jeremy Blair, Jeremy Hansen, Christy Killman, Lori Maxwell, Mohan Rao

**Guest Present:**

Brandon Johnson, Vice President for Enrollment Management and Career Placement

**Call to Order**

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

**Approval of Agenda**

Senator Smith-Andrews made a motion to approve the agenda for today's meeting and Senator Darvennes seconded this motion. The agenda was APPROVED.

**Approval of Notes**

After determining that the notes taken at the Senate retreat on August 20, 2018 should be officially accepted, Senator Stein made a motion for their acceptance and Senator Darvennes seconded this motion. The notes were ACCEPTED.

**Discussion of Notes**

While Senators acknowledged that the notes taken at the Senate retreat accurately reflected what President Oldham presented, a lengthy discussion ensued on the content of certain topics. Senators expressed concerns and disagreement about what was said about UNIV 1020 courses, tenure review, and Adjunct Instructors.

A. UNIV 1020 courses.

1. The notes reflect the following statement by President Oldham, "[T]he budget was not cut, but rather it was overspent." Senator Null conveyed that the UNIV 1020 budget was not overspent, but rather it was discovered that some of the money in this budget belonged in another budget. The wording makes it sound like the UNIV 1020 committee was irresponsible, which is not true. They spent the amount that they were allotted in their account. Senator Geist added succinctly that budget cuts happened.
2. The Notes state, "Senator Stein replied that he had done some initial assessment and that no effect on assessment was found." Senator Null pointed out the unclearness of the statement, perhaps "no effect on retention was found" was what was meant. In any event,

she continues that this study was done years ago and that the statement is misleading about the effectiveness of UNIV 1020 courses. Senator Stein clarified his wording in the following manner, “There was no effect on the course or any of the measures that we looked at.” Ultimately, Section II. E of the notes does not give an accurate impression of UNIV 1020.

B. Tenure review.

1. Senator Geist indicated that the Board’s desire to change the tenure system at Tennessee Tech University. Their statements are on record and contradict comments made by President Oldham.

C. Use of Adjuncts

1. President Oldham made a statement that the use of adjuncts should not be to reduce costs, but rather to bring in specialized experts to teach a course on their expertise that students would not be able to attend otherwise. It was noted that if we are headed down a path where the strategy is to use more adjuncts instead of professors, then this is in contradiction to President Oldham’s statement. Senator Rand asked that this comment be added to the Notes of the Senate Retreat.

Senator Rand moved that President Oldham’s statement be added to the Notes, Senator Smith-Andrews seconded the motion. This correction was APPROVED and will appear in the Senate Retreat Notes, Section II. G. as follows: **“President Oldham asserted that the use of adjuncts should not be to reduce costs, but rather as an opportunity to bring in specialized experts to teach a class on their area of expertise that students would not be able to attend otherwise.”**

### Opening Comments and Updates by Senate President Smith

- A. He asked that Senators check to see if their contact information on the Faculty Senate website was accurate.
- B. Senator Roberts will be heading an ad hoc committee on emeriti faculty issues. Upon interviewing several emeriti faculty, Senator Roberts has learned of their challenges with parking and e-mail accounts, for example. Please contact Senator Roberts if there are any emeriti faculty that would like to speak with him.
- C. President Smith reminded Senators of the outsourcing issue involving the janitorial services from last year. The President had indicated that they were not going with JLL and that there was some dissatisfaction with SCC, the company under contract last year. It was going to be several months before a call for bids would happen. President Smith noted that there was some momentum at the April 2018 Senate meeting to return to in-house janitorial service. He updated that Tennessee Tech University has renewed the contract with SCC for five years.
- D. President Smith reminded Senators of the Gender / Race Equity Study presented to the Senate last spring by Professor Ada Haynes. What do we do with this information? It conflicts with information provided by the administration. He proposed that someone Chair a committee to talk with Professor Haynes and prepare a report for the Senate that suggests how the Senate might move forward with this issue. Senator Miller cited an article in *The Economist* that clearly documents the existence of gender bias in the workplace. Senator Stretz suggested that this committee compare Professor Haynes’ study with the one presented by Senior Associate Provost Stephens. Senator Stein

interjected that the Board wants to get rid of the equity model and to base everything on performance. This will likely introduce both gender and race biases during the evaluation process. Elements of the equity model must remain. Senator Larimore added that one's performance history is undervalued in the current evaluation system that only considers the faculty's performance of the current year. He continued that an equity study began around 1976, but the bias part of it has not been mentioned for several years. Senior Associate Provost Stephens is the keeper of this study. The Senate needs to make sure it is accurate, repeat the study, and report the results. More discussion ensued on bias in the evaluation process. Senator Hinton volunteered to serve on this ad hoc committee to help gather information.

- E. President Smith reported that the ethics investigation is underway. The report will come due in a few weeks and he will inform the Senate of any findings and recommendations. Senator Ojo noted that after the report comes out, it will be reviewed for an additional 90 days, prolonging the process. A senator reported that a grant was awarded to Tom Brewer as a co-PI in June or July of 2018, even though an active investigation is underway. It was clarified that this was not a federal grant; therefore, any restriction on him does not apply. Senator O'Connor asked if the final report would include recommendations or not. If there were none, the Faculty Senate might want to make its own recommendations. Another senator proposed to report Tom Brewer to federal agencies, so he cannot apply nor receive any funds.

Senators proposed to revise Policy 780 at the conclusion of the investigation. One item to add, for example, is that the University President should not be endorsing any research findings.

- F. President Smith encouraged faculty senators to attend the breakfast with the Board of Trustees on Tuesday, September 18<sup>th</sup>, as well as any other open Board meetings.
- G. President Smith asked Senators to begin to think about choosing a new faculty Board representative. This will occur either at the last meeting of the fall semester or the first meeting of the spring semester. A nomination committee will be formed and a call made to ask for nominations, including self-nominations.

### **New Business**

- A. Brandon Johnson, VP for Enrollment Management, began by sharing that the diploma issue brought up in the Faculty Senate Retreat has been resolved. The disclaimer on the diploma has been removed and the wording on the website has been softened. He thanked the Senators for the invitation to attend the meeting and share his thoughts on enrollment management. He assured the Senators that he will always state facts about enrollment, whether they are good or bad, and proceeded to share the following current enrollment statistics:
1. The total university enrollment (as of Sept 7<sup>th</sup>) is down 297 students. There are currently 10,207 students.
  2. Graduate programs are up 41 students.
  3. Undergraduate is down 341 students.

4. Freshmen class is just under 1900 students, up 133 from last year.
5. Transfer students are down 118 compared to last year.
6. Returning students are down 356 students. Some of these numbers have been anticipated, considering for example the large graduation class last spring.
7. Compared to last fall, the international student enrollment dropped by 153 students. Currently there are 278 undergraduate international students and 118 graduate international students. Some discussion ensued on the causes of this drop in international student enrollment, such as the strength of the dollar and visa issues.

Vice President Johnson recognized that there are areas for improvement. He shared that they did not spend their entire scholarship budget this cycle. He announced the hiring of Mary Benedict as the Interim Director of Financial Aid and the anticipated offer to hire a Director for Career Services in the near future. This fall he is initiating a strategic enrollment plan, which will include meeting with Deans, ensuring diversity, striving for growth, developing new programs, and offering special topics to different Colleges. This will be an inclusive and integrated process. The mindset of the Office of Enrollment Management and Career Placement is to be data-informed, solution-based, and proactive with student issues. Vice President Johnson then shared what the Enrollment Management Dashboard (undergraduates) looks like and noted that it will be made public soon.

Some questions and comments from Senators ensued:

- It would be useful to Chairs to have access to a similar Dashboard for admits for recruitment purposes.
- What was the budget based upon and what is the implication that the enrollment count is down 341 students? Did the budget committee anticipate the enrollment being down this much?  
—VP Johnson knew they anticipated some drop, but did not know the exact number. These numbers are still not finalized.
- How can we recruit students from outside of Tennessee, such as international students? Are faculty involved in the process? The university recruiters are not academics.  
—VP Johnson is open to working with faculty and is in favor of faculty sharing ideas with his office. He meets regularly with Deans and will meet with anyone interested in the recruitment process. Recruitment and enrollment management need to be inclusive, especially with faculty. Communication is key. His job is to evaluate the best strategies for recruitment.
- Faculty have little contact with new students during SOAR or visiting prospective students.  
—VP Johnson suggested looking into this matter with the Student Success Centers. Some of these decisions are not coming out of Enrollment Management.
- When applying to other universities around Tennessee, prospective students only need to complete one application. At Tennessee Tech University, however, the application process is much more complicated, whether applying for admittance to TTU or applying for scholarships. Is there a way we can streamline these application processes?

—Discussions are underway to review these application processes. To reduce the numbers of applications would mean to expand the numbers of questions on the remaining application. Some scholarship questions, for example, are Department specific. He will continue to look at this issue.

- Some discussion ensued on scholarships and deadlines.

—VP Johnson noted that the scholarship deadline is December 15<sup>th</sup>. Scholarship deadlines will be followed to ensure fairness. He mentioned that the service work hour component to the High Flyer Scholarship has been removed, and added to the Golden Eagle Grant.

- B. Invitation of Administrators to Senate Meetings with the President. Discussion ensued on whether or not to invite VP Stinson and Provost Bruce to Senate meetings with the President. Ultimately, the Senators agreed that they should attend when they can contribute to a specific agenda item. For example, when the budget is on the agenda, VP Stinson will be invited to explain the financial status of the university. It was suggested that she send her budget presentations to Senators before the meeting for review.
- C. Change of Venue. Some discussion ensued on whether or not the Faculty Senate wanted to change the venue of the meeting to a bigger space. Faculty Senators agreed that the smaller conference room is preferred, and they would like to stay in the President's Conference Room (Room 210), Derryberry Hall.
- D. Journalism Student. Senate President Smith informed the Faculty Senate that a journalism student has been assigned to the Faculty Senate and has asked to attend a meeting. After some discussion, Senators suggested that instead of attending a meeting, the student could interview several Faculty Senators for the class.
- E. Post-tenure review (and "merit pay" vis-à-vis raises). Senate President Smith distributed and discussed three handouts: 1.) A National AAUP response to post-tenure review, 2.) A letter from Professor Alcott to State Representative Williams regarding the 2.5% payroll increase, and 3.) State Representative Williams' response. Senate President Smith sent a message to President Oldham and Provost Bruce indicating that our SACS/COC accreditation is tied to our conforming to the AAUP standards on tenure and academic freedom and that there is a policy on post-tenure review. He also entreated Provost Bruce to involve the Faculty Senate and AAUP in the post-tenure review committee. Several Senate Faculty members announced that they are serving on this committee. The AAUP report sets out what acceptable uses of post-tenure review are in connection with academic freedom. Succinctly, the function of the post-tenure review process is to allow for the continuing improvement and development of faculty, not to make it easier to fire faculty. Senators made the following comments on post-tenure review and merit raises:
- Earlier in the meeting, Senator Geist pointed out that a board member clearly stated that they do not want to get rid of tenure. They just want to make it easier to fire faculty. She explained that if tenure goes away, then all of the goals (jump in research, external funding) will not be achieved because faculty will not want to come to Tennessee Tech University. Most of the board members replied that

they were fine with that. If incoming faculty are afraid of evaluation, they should look for employment elsewhere.

- There are already policies in place that effectively accomplish what the Board is requesting. Over the last two years, six tenured faculty members have given up their jobs as a result of following these policies. This information should be brought to the Post-tenure review committee's attention.
- Some faculty received a raise much lower than the promised 2.5% raise, regardless of their outstanding performance evaluation. If a Chair considers that all of their faculty members are outstanding, they should not be discouraged from marking their boxes. Additionally, if student evaluations (IDEA) are going to drive performance rating, then it is unfair to faculty members who teach classes that students do not like to take. Students often evaluate these challenging courses, not the faculty members who teach them.
- Senate President Smith expressed a desire for the Faculty Senate, AAUP, TUFS, United Campus Workers to work on these and similar issues.
- A Faculty Senator suggested that a box be created on the annual faculty evaluation form that indicates the need for a post-tenure review (for example, recurring poor student evaluations). This post-tenure review will increase the workload of department chairs exponentially.
- Not only is there an academic component to tenure, there is also a financial one. Faculty members accept lower salaries in exchange for job security. If tenure is taken away, faculty will want higher salaries. It is important to have President Oldham, Provost Bruce, and Vice President Stinson advocate on the importance of tenure on behalf of the faculty in a public manner.
- Perhaps we should invite Representative Williams and Senator Bailey to a Faculty Senate meeting.
- A comment was made that supposedly 3 million dollars was to go to the College of Engineering. This did not happen.
- Senator Stein reminded the Faculty Senators that instructors and lecturers will be promoted later this academic year. Where will the money to come from to support their promotional raises?

F. Talking points for President Oldham and Provost Bruce

1. Course overload situation
2. Provost Bruce's position on the role of adjuncts at Tennessee Tech University
3. Is there money available for instructor / lecturer promotion raises? Where will this money come from?

4. General thoughts on merit pay
5. What happened to the \$750,000 of Carnegie funding for this year?
6. Will there be an upcoming search for a new Vice President for Research and Development pending Dr. Soni's retirement?
7. Post-tenure review
8. Where is the 3 million dollars for the College of Engineering? This money is direly needed for infrastructure, equipment repairs and maintenance, for example.

The meeting adjourned at 5:54 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark Groundland, Faculty Senate Secretary

Supporting Documents:

1. Faculty Senate Retreat Minutes from August 20, 2018.
2. AAUP Post-Tenure Review Policy
3. Correspondence between Professor Allcott and State Representative Williams