

TTU Faculty Senate Business Meeting September 25, 2017

Members Present: Douglas Airhart, S.K. Ballal, Jason Beach, Tammy Boles, Troy Brachey, Chris Brown, Debra Bryant, Andrew Callender, Corinne Darvennes, Ahmed ElSawy, Billye Foster, Steven Frye, Stuart Gaetjens, Melissa Geist, Mark Groundland, David Hajdik, Jeremy Hansen, Paula Hinton, Shelia Hurley, Steve Idem, Barbara Jared, Christy Killman, David Larimore, Regina Lee, Lori Maxwell, Tony Michael, Christine Miller, Linda Null, Brian O'Connor, Richard Rand, Jeff Roberts, Lee Ann Shipley, Troy Smith, Sandi Smith-Andrews, Holly Stretz, and Jeremy Wendt

Members Absent: Ismet Anitsal, Deborah Ballou, Ward Doubet, Ann Hellman, Jane Liu, Holly Mills, Joseph Ojo, and Cara Sisk

Approval of Notes

Senator Ballal made a motion, seconded by Senator Darvennes to approve the May 25, 2017, June 5, 2017, and July 25, 2017 notes. All sets of notes were approved as written.

Other Comments

Senate President Killman said there was similar sentiment in the President's Cabinet meeting for the online administrative calendar as Senators had for it. A solution has been found to resolve the issue of printing it. Instructions and link will be shared with Senators via email.

We want to continue discussions about various topics with the President and administration.

TTU Faculty Senate Meeting with the President September 25, 2017

Guest: President Phil Oldham

General Remarks and Status of the University

President Oldham hoped everything was off to a great start this semester.

Enrollment Update

Enrollment projections were exceeded this fall semester with more students than expected. Freshmen numbers look good at 761 (up 10 from last year). Transfers and graduate students are also up. The graduate student increase is due to new graduate programs. President Oldham thanked faculty for creating these new programs. As the Tennessee Promise impact settles down, we are returning to more level numbers. The average ACT score is 24.4 for this freshmen

class, which is about the same as last year. The first-year retention rate is also about the same as last year at 79%. The six-year graduation rate dipped a bit. We are still working through the financials, but appear to be in a healthy spot, budget wise. We are seeing a shift in less demand for lower level curriculum, and more emphasis on upper level curriculum, due to the Tennessee Promise. There are cost differentials between them.

Construction Projects Update

Multiple construction projects are moving along. The Roaden University Center project will take about a year. The science building will break ground the week of homecoming. Some site work is already taking place for the science building, as well as the new fitness center. Parking changed slightly around the library, because of underutilized gold spaces. Now some of the gold spaces are red. The shuttle service schedule is online, and there's also a phone app available. Dependability is stressed for drivers with shuttle schedule and stops. There seems to be more bicycles on campus, with the bike sharing program and overall increase in students. The number of parking tickets has gone down substantially from last year. Senators wanted to make sure news is communicated to all.

Searches

The search for VP for Enrollment Management is now moving toward Skype interviews. There were 24 applicants, and the committee is planning to have 7 skype interviews, with 3 brought to campus in October. The Provost search just opened up accepting applications. Already we have received 27 applications. Searches to fill dean positions are waiting on these first two to be filled.

SACSCOC

Visitors representing SACSCOC will be on campus this week to talk about the change in governance. About 98% of the report is already written. The visitors will probably cut their campus visit short this week by a half-day. Our consultant thought we were in good shape with all the documentation. A big thanks goes to Associate Provost Sharon Huo and others.

Shared Governance

President Oldham talked briefly at the retreat about shared governance. His views are consistent with the AAUP statement, with weighted contributions between all depending on particular issues and expertise. He wants faculty to be involved with academic matters (curriculum, educational process, etc.) Faculty have interest in most everything, but not as much expertise in some other areas. Legally, The State of Tennessee has sole discretion on governance. They have delegated that to our Board of Trustees, then to the President, and on down the line.

In terms of timing, input is appropriate at any time from faculty. The earlier the better, but ultimately there is no restriction on when input is accepted. At what point could our input be solicited? President Oldham said everyone has a stake in all matters at this University. Permanent faculty have a stronger, long-term investment in matters. The door should always be open, but it can be tricky in practice as we are all busy with responsibilities, and solicitation doesn't happen as well as it should. President Oldham will try to make sure it happens. There

will probably still be errors in judgement and miscalculations. It's best to have ongoing dialog during the decision process. President Oldham takes issue with the last point in article he distributed at the retreat. He said the world was very different then, and now speed and agility is much more important which creates a natural tension. We need to find a new balance for our institution. Time is a very important commodity for us. We aren't operating in a vacuum, we have competitors pushing hard and fast. We need to move forward.

Senator Stretz commended Interim Provost Stephens for coming to the last Faculty Senate meeting to explain restructuring the CTLE and Innovative Institute. Another example of faculty involvement is seen this semester with the increase in graduate students due to the faculty-initiated new graduate programs.

Some Senators complained the HR policies still in effect make the search and hiring processes move too slowly. President Oldham said the biggest challenge is our discomfort with handling risk. We will probably make some mistakes along the way, but we are presently intolerant of any errors. Whatever time we spend should be in productive dialog, not bureaucratic hurdles. Senators want to ask the Huron Consulting Group who has to do a matrix, and who doesn't. It bogs down the hiring process. President Oldham said we are too far on the conservative end of this spectrum. Other significant improvements have been made in HR, but there is still more to be done. We need to also understand where HR is coming from to meet their goals and requirements, too.

There was concern that the default position is to move more quickly, and not allow for dialog on important decisions and issues. President Oldham explained that in practice, administrators in Derryberry Hall are exposed to a competitive nature, so there is a need to act quickly. They are constantly reminded of this competitive nature which creates a natural tension by doing more and faster. This is not meant to avoid shared governance. Maybe we need to be thinking ahead further, and not be in a reactive mode. Communication will help with this.

Senator ElSawy wants to hear how he can be helped, not be told what he can't do. President Oldham said it takes a good administrator to say "Yes", but the easy answer is "No".

Outsourcing Views

President Oldham said his position on outsourcing some university services hasn't really changed. The State of Tennessee signed a blanket contract for a wide range of potential services. An institution can sign on to any or all of these. The custodial contract with SSC was extended for 1 year while the State worked on the blanket contract. Our intent is to talk with JLL for custodial services when SSC's contract expires on April 30th. We could also put out a RFP for this, but it's probably not good cost-wise for us. JLL would like our facilities maintenance, but it will cost us more for this now. We are happy with the service we are getting from our facilities staff now, and there is no thought of expanding that at this time. Ultimately, our mission is to educate students, not manage facilities, but it's a necessary component. If outsourcing makes sense, we will do it. Opting out is an ongoing thing, and there is no time frame.

We have personal loyalty to our facilities staff, but there may be more advantages to outsourcing in the future. President Oldham is concerned what the impact will be to these employees. There would still be some facilities leadership managing the contract and maybe some other areas that currently are under Facilities. JLL would have to hire everybody we have,

either at or better compensation levels than they have now. Currently, we have no back up expertise if someone is out for a time. Training is usually up to date with outsourcing companies. SSC, for the most part, has met our expectations. Services prior to SSC were good, and some not so good. It's been more cost effective, and overall better service with SSC, but during the last few months services have been degrading. There is not much incentive to do better right now, because they know they probably won't get their contract renewed. A new contract will cost us more because of higher salaries and wages.

Chartwells Proposed Fee

The proposed increase for students of \$300 per semester was a component of Chartwells' bid for their next contract of food services. It's not an obligation or requirement. If the University wants to do this, the increase would pay for dining services and new facility. The fee is 100% refundable at end of the semester. Chartwells employees said this is done on other campuses. The pros to this include that it's convenient, and assures that the student will be able to eat. Cons include students would be required to put money up front and must request a refund at the end of the semester.

President Oldham said he won't move forward until there is substantial student interest. This is in a very premature stage now. The SGA is aware of the proposal, but hasn't had a chance to explore this yet with student interest. There is no time frame or urgency now, but they are interested in expanding dining options on campus in the future. A new site is unknown at this time, but it would be outside of the RUC. Maybe for on-campus students. You can still put money on an account now. Anyone living on campus is required to purchase a meal plan. Tech should be handling the money, not Chartwells.

The TTU Board of Trustees will have a say on this.

The Faculty Senate may want to weigh in on this and move scholarships to more need-based in the future, and not strictly merit-based. If you break students down by economic status, the lowest income students are in pretty good shape with Pell grants, etc. The more affluent students benefit from merit-based scholarships. The middle income students have to take the biggest hit, as they don't qualify for federal assistance or merit-based scholarships.

Such Other Matters

Conversations with TTU Board of Trustees Members

Can faculty members talk to board members about administrators? President Oldham said yes, as long as it's truthful, preferably. Boards speak through their chairman, but they seek input from anyone. This Board will probably erect some kind of controls. This is one of the driving reasons for having a faculty representative on the Board. President Oldham defended that in front of the State of Tennessee Education Committee last year.

News from Other Sources

In yesterday's local newspaper, there was a picture of what the University Center will look like after this renovation. It's a design from about 3 years ago, but there was concern that this picture was not shared with faculty prior to publication.

First Amendment Rights

Will we provide First Amendment rights here? In principle, the First Amendment protects free speech, especially for students and faculty. As a university, we are content neutral, but also must consider our safety and security. We can have reasonable restrictions for time and space.

Faculty Compensation

President Oldham wants us to think about where faculty want to go regarding salaries. He discussed this with the Faculty Compensation Committee last week. Tom Jones summarized it well by saying we want TTU to have the very best faculty possible, and pay them appropriately. We currently don't have a strategic goal, but need to look at a plan and set strategic targets. Look at peer and aspirational peers, and make sure we are competitive. He also wants us to look at faculty workloads, and faculty evaluations. This all needs to be fair and robust. If you think this is a good approach, then President Oldham will move forward to start putting this together. Senate President Killman said she was forming a new Senate committee, the evaluation committee, which might be a good start.

Next Faculty Senate Meeting

The next Faculty Senate business meeting is Oct 9th. The agenda will be sent out Oct 2nd with documents, therefore Sept. 29th is the deadline for agenda items. Strategic planning initiative to be on agenda. Tom Jones on vacation, so he can't meet on October 9th. Senators decided to wait and get more focused before inviting TTU Board of Trustee members.

Faculty Hires

President Oldham is working with Interim Provost Stephens and three departments to do some special faculty hires in IT disciplines. There is a growing demand for IT-related disciplines (computer science, decision science, and curriculum & instruction).

Meeting adjourned at 5:25 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Regina Lee

Approved: October 9, 2017