

Faculty Senate Meeting with the President
March 18, 2019

Members Present:

Douglas Airhart, Ismet Anitsal, Jeremy Blair, Tammy Boles, Troy Brachey, Chris Brown, Debra Bryant, Andrew Callender, Wei Tsun Chang, Corinne Darvennes, Steven Frye, Stuart Gaetjens, Mark Groundland, David Hajdik, Paula Hinton, Shelia Hurley, Barbara Jared, Christy Killman, David Larimore, Regina Lee, Lori Maxwell, Christine Miller, Lachelle Norris, Linda Null, Brian O'Connor, Joseph Ojo, Sally Pardue, Richard Rand, Jeff Roberts, Cara Sisk, Troy Smith, Sandi Smith-Andrews, Holly Stretz, Zac Wilcox, Jeanette Wolak

Members Absent:

Deborah Ballou, Michael Best, Ahmed ElSawy, Melissa Geist, Ann Hellman, Seth King, Ben Mohr, Holly Mills, Mohan Rao, Leeann Shipley, Barry Stein, Kim Winkle

Guests:

Cody Bryant, Karen Lykins, Lee Wray

Call to Order

Senate President Smith called the meeting to order at 3:36 p.m.

Announcements by Faculty Senate President

- Senate President Smith reminded Faculty Senators that the breakfast with the Board of Trustees is this Thursday (March 21st) at 7:30 a.m. Some discussion ensued whether to place index cards with timely discussion topics on the tables or not. The consensus was to be collegial and mention some of these topics in conversation in an informal manner.
- Senator Airhart is chairing the Nomination committee to replace Senator Smith-Andrews as Senate President-Elect. Other members on this committee are Senators Brachey and Wolak. They will also accept nominations for Secretary.
- Senate President Smith announced a final senate business meeting for April 22nd at 3:35 p.m.

President Oldham's Opening Comments

- President Oldham thanked Cody Bryant and Karen Lykins for their hard work on the new university website.
- The Governor's "State of the State" address was kind to Tennessee Tech. The Governor's budget still needs to pass through and be approved by the legislative session. If things stand, Tennessee Tech will receive the following benefits (Note that these figures are approximations):
 - \$2.6 million additional recurring dollars based on the funding formula
 - \$800 thousand of recurring reallocation money because Tennessee Tech was the top performing university in last year's cycle
 - The last \$900 thousand of Carnegie reclassification funds, bringing the total to \$2.1 million of recurring funds
 - The third of four years of \$500 thousand committed to cyber security. The previous years' recurring allocation of \$3 million for the College of Engineering

is already within the budget, so the cyber security funds do not show up as a line item.

- One-time planning money allocation for a new engineering building in the amount of \$3.25 million. This does not guarantee funding for the construction of this building, but it is a very good sign that it will be approved in the next year's budget.
 - Close to \$8 million in capital maintenance funds, which would go a long way to repairing many roofs on campus.
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- A Faculty Senator asked about raises for next year. President Oldham replied that the Governor's budget does not mandate raises, but it is something the President strives for, depending on tuition and enrollment numbers.
 - Another Faculty Senator asked if the pool for merit bonuses was ongoing. Yes, merit bonuses are built into the budget. The Senator suggested taking the promotion raises out of the merit pool of money, rather than taking it out of the pool for general salary increases. President Oldham agreed that promotion raises should be separated from the general salary increase pool, and will see if he can make it happen. He needs to look into the matter further.
 - President Oldham shared the news of the recent Wall Street Journal editorial on the nation-wide scandal on the admission practices of prestigious universities and how Tennessee Tech was applauded for our integrity and strong values. This is great publicity for us.
 - Tennessee Tech is ready to roll out "The Grand Challenge," an initiative that encompasses "rural reimagined" and "generation r." Tennessee Tech will continue to play an important role in the education of and service to rural areas of Tennessee. We are uniquely positioned to capitalize on these types of projects, which will help distinguish Tennessee Tech from other universities. President Oldham encouraged all academic units to participate. Publicity is forthcoming.

Discussion Topics

Tennessee Tech Web Page

The new web page launched on March 7th. Over 200 OU web managers across campus worked on their corresponding webpages with the support of Mr. Cody Bryant and his team. After giving a brief overview of the new university website and emphasizing it as a marketing tool for new students, Mr. Bryant fielded the following questions and concerns:

1. Where is "People Finder"? "People Finder" is located under the search section (magnifying glass icon) of the main webpage. Faculty Senators pointed out that, in addition to being hard to find, it is now password protected and can only be accessed by Tennessee Tech affiliated employees. Furthermore, this page does not offer professional information that prospective students and peer scholars commonly access. Mr. Bryant noted that the placement of People Finder behind an authentication wall was for security reasons. The Chief Communications Officer, Ms. Karen Lykins, noted that people could enter the name of a faculty member in the search engine to take them to the faculty member's profile. Faculty webpages are also in the A-Z listing under Search. Faculty Senators noted that the search function should connect to the faculty research profile, not to their contact information. Mr. Bryant replied that the web managers in each

department control the content in the faculty profiles. The searchable faculty profile should include contact and research information. Currently there are two bins, a directory bin and a department bin. Departmental web masters need to update the directory profile to include contact information and the faculty member's research accomplishments. Outside people can also access the research webpages of faculty members by looking in their prospective departmental webpages.

2. Mr. Bryant has noted a gap in content in some academic areas. He and his team are working quickly to help move the content from the old website to the new one.
3. There is less functionality in the new website. Why did the new website launch with its existing functionality issues? Dean and Chair candidates, for example, could not find much information on College and Departmental websites. Mr. Bryant indicated that the new website has more features and is much more secure. He conceded that there are content areas that are currently lacking, but they are being fixed as soon as possible. Faculty Senators pointed out the importance of the website for its users. The monthly-view academic calendar is no longer available. Mr. Bryant and his team are looking into this. It is currently designed as a list. Faculty Senators voiced their preference for the more functional monthly-view calendar. They also noted that important items such as advising week and registration week are not on the lists. Mr. Bryant replied that his group does not handle content, it is all submission based by different administrative and academic units.
4. The appearance of the website needs improving. The fonts are hard to read on a presentation screen. Mr. Bryant noted the font on the new website is bigger than on the former website. The links in purple within text are indiscernible from regular words in black, unless you hover the cursor over them. Mr. Bryant replied that the links should also be underlined and he will look into this.
5. What is the projected timeline to fix all of the kinks and bugs? Mr. Bryant said that he hopes to fix the kinks by the end of the semester.
6. There was a link to the library page at the top of the main university webpage before. Now it is embedded under the express section or under the faculty or student resources sections. A Faculty Senator expressed his preference to see the library link on the main page, like before. Mr. Bryant indicated that the Express section will be the university's intranet for local use, and will be introduced next year.
7. Why did we decide to change the webpage? The former webpage used Modex, and offered no support. The person who created and maintained the former website is no longer at the university. The new, OU website platform is used statewide by all other LGIs. It is much easier to manage. Before, there had been three university websites built on top of one another, creating many security issues (old pdfs with personal identifiable information on them). Furthermore, favorable feature of the new site is the controllability of the search function. The previous websites was google search, which did not enable us to control it. Now we can.
8. There should be a sense of urgency to fix and completely update the new university website. The website is a direct reflection of the university. Ms. Lykins expressed this urgency and noted how Mr. Bryant and his team are doing the best they can to update the website. They are at today's faculty senate meeting to receive value feedback and act on it. She noted that there has not been much feedback from faculty and staff in general. She asked Faculty Senators to convey to their web managers that they should ask for help

when needed. Soon there will be workshops for web managers to attend to help them with their webpages (aesthetics, for example). Tennessee Tech University and Austin Peay University both contracted the new website platform in December 2017. All agree that the new website system is much more manageable. A design firm worked on the website's design from January to July 2018. OU campus built out the website and submitted it to Tennessee Tech in November. The 200+ web managers began to receive training in November as well.

9. Is there a way to search the links on the website to find something that is pointing out of campus? Omni update links are appearing on certain pages. Can we turn these off? Mr. Bryant indicated that these were example pages used in the training workshop. Some web masters have not changed or removed them. He will work on removing them. You can forward these pages to webmaster@tntech.edu for removal.
10. Faculty Senators expressed concern that the web manager training was too advanced and fast-paced for many. Mr. Bryant noted that the training workshop was 3 hours long. He will schedule open sessions to continue to aid web managers in the future.
11. Senate President Smith remarked that there are clearly still issues to work out with the new university website. People can contact Mr. Cody Bryant or Ms. Karen Lykins directly with feedback.
12. An e-mail from President Oldham to the campus community on how to report problems with the website would also be useful.

Custodial Service Issues

Senate President Smith noted that since the contract renewal of Service Solutions, the custodial service in some building has noticeably declined, perhaps due to reduction of staff. President Oldham had inquired to see if there was an increase in complaints, and had found that this was not the case. He suggested that faculty contact Cheryl Sullivan (csullivan@tntech.edu) with any concerns. After all, we want to get the level of service for which we are paying. Several Faculty Senators gave the following feedback.

1. A Faculty Senator has filed the same complaint several times because it was never resolved. There is often a short-term fix, but no lasting change. President Oldham noted that the new Director of Facilities, Craig Short (cshort@tntech.edu), should know about these types of recurring issues.
2. There is a decline in the number of janitors in some buildings (Foster Hall, Clement Hall, for example). It seems that the company is finding it hard to find new janitors. President Oldham noted the importance of local management as well as local wage pressure. Senate President Smith replied that the wage issue is a product of outsourcing. Another Faculty Senator explained that when you outsource services, you lose dedicated university employees and gain whoever is willing to work for less money.
3. What is going to happen to the parking area behind the new addition of the University Center and what is the timeline? A landscaping project has already begun and its projected completion date is by the beginning of the fall semester. This will be a green space in the future, no parking. When will the bridge open? Mr. Wray responded that they are testing new substances. Once acceptable, they will redo the bridge and the balcony.

4. Why are there two lounge areas in the newly renovated sections of the University Center? These areas are needed for student use and as overflow space for the cafeteria during its primetime hours.

Changes in Summer School Policy

All of the departments received an e-mail from the business office stating that the funding system for summer school courses is changing. If the new system were applied to last year's summer courses, many would not make. This is problematic since many summer courses with less than the minimum of students required must still be taught for students to advance in their respective undergraduate and graduate majors. A "one-size-fits-all" policy does not work for all academic units. For example, graduate students in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction must attend specifically-tailored education courses in the summer. There seems to be an understanding in the business office that if a student cannot take a particular course in the summertime, then they can just take it in the fall or spring semester. Instead, however, we will most likely lose this revenue to other universities, such as MTSU.

President Oldham believes that there has been no change in the funding formula for summer school courses. There may have been a change in how the funds are allocated. There is no pullback of funds. All revenue from summer courses goes to the respective Colleges. The following discussion ensued:

1. You cannot take a fixed cost and allocate it again during summer school to determine whether a summer school course is profitable or not. The university has to pay a fixed cost (electric bill, for example), whether there is a summer school course or not. It seems that the business office is making it more expensive to offer a summer course.

President Oldham is not sure if the budgeted fixed cost for the calendar year will be charged to academic units again in the summer. He clarified that there is no difference between academic year credit hours and summer school credit hours in the budget model. Fixed costs, he believes, are budgeted only during the academic year and not during the summer.

2. This issue has come up in the past. In reality, the budget allocates the overhead for the entire calendar year. The business office would essentially be charging academic units twice for overhead already budgeted. Marginal revenue in a marginal cost should be applied to summer school courses; that is, you figure out how much one section of a class costs and you try to generate enough revenue to cover this cost, and hopefully more. Overhead is not involved in this formulation. The administration needs to dispel all of the rumors and declare how they will determine the break-even number for a summer course to make.

Mr. Wray noted that this has already been discussed with the Deans.

3. What is the justification to move away from a break-even model?

President Oldham replied that he does not believe we employ a break-even model. His understanding is that summer school has lost money over the last several years. Faculty

Senators disagreed with this understanding. In the College of Arts and Sciences, for example, summer courses must break even, otherwise, they cannot be offered. President Oldham noticed that these were direct costs. He countered that overall summer school operation has been losing money. A Faculty Senator declared that the business office, then, is measuring the summer school course costs incorrectly. Another Faculty Senator noted that sometimes summer school courses were allowed with fewer students needed to break even if these students direly needed to take the course (to graduate, for example). This may account for some of the losses of revenue during the summer.

4. Another Faculty Senator pointed out that there is a new line (#30) on the expense section of the budget spreadsheet that reads Summer School Expense. This line is new in budget documentation. It is not listed, however, in the revenue section. Administrative officials are meeting today to determine the break-even point for summer school courses to convey to departmental chairs and the Deans.
5. There seems to be more urgency this year to look at summer school more closely. The revenue from summer school has always been in the budget as have been the anticipated expenses. This scrutiny may be due to an anticipated overall budget deficit.

President Oldham disagreed with this assumption.

6. Faculty Senators and President Oldham disagreed on when costs (utilities, benefits, FICA, retirement, etc.) are budgeted. President Oldham contended that they are budgeted during the academic year (9 months) and Faculty Senators noted that these costs are budgeted year round (12 months), regardless if a faculty member works in the summer or not.
7. Faculty Senators reiterated that faculty are nervous because they know students need to take certain courses in the summertime and a new, more strict funding policy for these courses would put students in jeopardy. President Oldham promised to get clarification on this issue quickly.

Travel Funds Issue

A Faculty Senator reported on an issue that arose on a Travel Abroad trip. The group generated all of the money, except for the airfare. These funds were placed in an account. When arriving to their hotel in the Dominican Republic, they learned that Tennessee Tech had not transferred funds to pay for their lodging. Apparently, Dr. Stinson had not approved the accounting document in a timely manner. This was not her money to approve in the first place. If not for the close relationship with the travel agent, 21 students and faculty leaders would have been stranded in a foreign country without lodging. This situation should never happen. President Oldham will look into this matter. This issue should also be conveyed to the Strategic Planning Committee that has study abroad in its purview.

University of Tennessee, Knoxville's Last Dollar Scholarship

Faculty Senate President Smith asked how this scholarship might affect our recruitment. President Oldham is not sure. He has discussed something similar with his team for several years. President Oldham believes that we are already doing something similar. We are just not

claiming credit for it. Students receiving the Lottery Scholarship and those who are Pell eligible are already essentially getting full tuition at Tennessee Tech. Our challenge is to improve financial aid for students who are not Pell eligible and just under the qualifications for academic scholarships. This is one of the reasons Tennessee Tech has redirected many of their scholarships to need-based students. President Oldham explained general recruitment strategies. UTK's tuition is expensive, but they offer many discounts in the form of scholarships, waivers, etc. Tennessee Tech's tuition is lower, which means we can offer fewer discounts. Overall, we need to improve our recruitment efforts to bring in students and determine how to best accommodate them financially. Higher education is a competitive marketplace. There is a cost for competing. We need to be strategic. The following discussion ensued:

1. Is there any data to measure how many students enrolled in community colleges and how many completed their two-year degree due to Tennessee Promise? Yes. There was a 5% increase in enrollment and graduation also increased. However, no 4-year university has seen a surge of transfer students as the result of Tennessee Promise. President Oldham recommended the book, *Crossing the Finish Line*, that looks at college completion rates. One or two chapters deal with transfer students from community colleges and analyzes their completion of a 4-year degree. Tennessee Promise has affected Tennessee Tech's financial model. There is less enrollment in lower-level courses, for example.
2. President Oldham stressed the need to identify Tennessee Tech University's strengths and core values.
3. Is the Drive for 55 still occurring? Yes, the marketing may have changed because this was the initiative of the former Governor, but the goals remain. Governor Lee talks about career and technical education. Tennessee Tech received planning funding for the engineering building because the Governor understands how critical engineering is to connect to the job market.
4. There is not as much emphasis placed on retention as before. Is this due to the change in Governors? No. We should always emphasize retention. We have made a lot of progress on retention in the last few years, and we need to continue to focus on it.

Lecturers with Prior Service Issue

President Oldham has investigated this issue and determined that it is quite complex. Ultimately, the Chairs, Deans, and Provost need to decide this matter on a case-by-case basis. The best way to handle this moving forward is to negotiate prior service up front. Faculty members asked the following questions:

1. How many Lecturers are involved? Not many.
2. Is there a committee looking at this issue? President Oldham was not sure. It would be a reasonable recommendation to make to Academic Affairs.

Searches

President Oldham reported that the candidates for Dean of the College of Agriculture and Human Ecology have been interviewed on campus. The candidates for Dean of the College of Engineering are starting this process today. Provost Bruce has initiated the national search for a new Vice President for Research. The search for a new basketball coach is also underway.

Other Such Matters

A Faculty Senator encouraged everyone to donate to the I Heart Tech campaign.

The meeting adjourned at 5:45 p.m.
Respectfully submitted,

Mark Groundland, Faculty Senate Secretary