

Faculty Senate Meeting with the President April 16, 2018

Members present: Douglas Airhart, Ismet Anitsal, S.K. Ballal, Jason Beach, Tammy Boles. Troy Brachey, Debra Bryant, Andrew Callender, Corinne Darvennes, Ahmed ElSawy, Billye Foster, Steven Frye, Stuart Gaetjens, Melissa Geist, Mark Groundland, David Hajdik, Ann Hellman, Paula Hinton, Steve Idem, Barbara Jared, Christy Killman, David Larimore, Regina Lee, Lori Maxwell, Tony Michael, Holly Mills, Linda Null, Brian O'Connor, Joseph Ojo, Richard Rand, Jeff Roberts, LeeAnn Shipley, Cara Sisk, Sandi Smith-Andrews, Holly Stretz and Jeremy Wendt

Members absent: Deborah Ballou, Chris Brown, Ward Doubet, Jeremy Hansen, Shelia Hurley, Jane Liu, Christine Miller and Troy Smith

Guests: President Phil Oldham, Lee Wray and Provost Lori Bruce

Call to Order

Secretary Lee opened the meeting, and turned it over to President Oldham.

President's Opening Comments

President Oldham thanked everyone for coming, and made a few humorous comments.

Faculty Senate Photo

Senate President Killman arranged for a group photo of the Senators to be taken at this meeting.

President's Comments

President Oldham welcomed Provost Lori Bruce to her first day of work at Tech. He continued by thanking Senators for another good year. There continues to be a lot of work done to implement the new strategic plan, as there are many ambitious components to it.

State Funding and Legislature Activity

Funding for the College of Engineering with the State Legislature is still in play. The Legislature is taking up the budget this week, as they get near the close of this session. There's an effort to provide a line item for engineering, but it's too early to talk about what we will do with those dollars until it's a done deal and we have the money. This will be very advantageous for Tech, and would be an annual, indefinitely recurring line item. Tech's three Centers of Excellence get about \$3M from the State, but is on a slight decline of about 3% per year. There is no effort to defund the Centers at this time. We need to keep validating our ROI of the Centers to show the Legislature their worth.

We had concerns about some proposed bills going through the Legislature, but most have died along the way. One transparency bill is still active having to do with institutions providing

a financial plan for students looking four years into the future. This is very hard to predict with any accuracy.

The Governor's Compete to Complete initiative passed. This is for students who receive either the Tennessee Promise or HOPE scholarship to be required to complete 30 academic hours in 12 months or risk losing a portion of their award.

Millard Oakley's Resignation

We have a vacancy on our Board of Trustees now, as Millard Oakley resigned recently. The Governor is working to fill this position. We expect confirmation hearings before the Legislature is done this month.

Faculty Senate Website Comments

- a. Questions were submitted about the \$3M the State is giving engineering, and if the University can put \$1M toward something else. President Oldham replied by saying if this comment is related to this coming year, VP Stinson showed us the \$900K+ gap between expected resources and where the budget needs were. That gap continues to be worked on.
- b. Someone asked why another budget shortfall is to be split 50/50 between administration and academics when academics is not overspending. President Oldham said the 50/50 split is based on how revenue is currently distributed, so it's rational to distribute money the same way. We are taking a strong look at analytics, with enrollment expectations. Not all campuses split the same way. We are trying to be more transparent by showing more to everyone. This is the same thing that's been done for years, but is now more transparent. Our strategy has been to stay engaged in Tennessee eCampus, but prepare to be on our own. There's about a \$500K+ gap in closing out our budget this year, due to a drop in eCampus revenue due to fewer students because of other institutions pulling out of the eCampus consortium. There is no additional financial hit now, as funds from vacant salary lines are being used to cover some of this. ETSU and MTSU pulled out of Tennessee eCampus, and are now doing it themselves. How can we avoid these gaps each year? Data can help, so we can predict this better and look out further in the future. This may be our new norm. We need to act more like a private institution that relies on enrollment for revenue. The total budget for the campus has been increasing, and most of that increase has gone into salaries. But demands are also increasing. More general education courses online will also help. Cuts on the academic side hurt students. VP Stinson is doing a financial analysis with the Chair of Finance on the Board.
- c. Some pieces of construction materials get blown around on the library grounds during the re-brick project. President Oldham explained why we are doing this project. It was managed by TBR 30 years ago, when there was no one on campus to do this and oversee construction. The waterproofing behind the brick was not done correctly, causing significant leakage on walls and around windows inside the building.

- d. A question about the possible research misconduct investigation and the parties involved was posed on the website. President Oldham recused himself, so he said he doesn't know much. The process is ongoing, and proceeding. The first stage deadline is this Friday to see if an investigation is needed.

Criminal Justice Online Program

From the Senate comments last December, President Oldham met with Interim Provost Stephens and Associate VP Wilson. They assured President Oldham that they have dealt with this matter appropriately. Any programs depend on people working together, and this wasn't done in the matter of the Criminal Justice online program. Provost Bruce will pay close attention to all online programs. Individual units have done good job with online strategy. Now we can go to the next level with a more universal strategy. The primary driver should always be the academic unit, but they need external support. Tech is looking into more protections for faculty related to online classes.

The names of Kim Godwin and Terry Saltsman keep coming up in Senate. Dr. Godwin is employed to support online programs, and assist with development and marketing. Dr. Saltsman's initial role was to recognize needs for programs, but he is doing other things now. Senator Maxwell said the criminal justice program is going well now.

The College of Engineering is the corner stone of TTU, but President Oldham sees the biggest gains can be made in the Social Sciences. He said he can easily see doubling the number of students in social sciences. We need to do this strategically that fits our institution.

Other Such Matters

President Oldham said he appreciates all we do. He thinks it would be a good idea for the Provost to join us at future senate meetings, as well as VP Stinson in order to answer some of the questions we raise. He wants us to think about it.

What Tom Brewer's activities are now? What is he doing now? President Oldham said he can't fully answer that, but said he is still doing economic development and outreach. VP Soni is a better one to ask. Despite our challenges, we are sitting on a gold mine. We have the talent and are producing what everybody wants.

President Oldham said there are three on campus asked to serve on Governor's TN H₂O Water Plan initiative. Two of them are faculty in the Water Center.

President Oldham said he hopes to continue discussions informally with the Senate, even during summer.

Monday, April 23, 2018 is the final Senate business meeting. We will approve the last minutes and notes, and vote on the next secretary.

April 25, 2018 is the University Faculty meeting. Senate President Killman urged all to attend and encourage our colleagues. Let's work to get attendance back up at these meetings.

Senator Larimore referred to the "gee-whiz" graphs with gender inequality presented earlier this year. Analysis of this was done every year in the past, using the salary equity model. He wants the Senate to follow up and make sure this study is done again, as it's been several years.

The meeting adjourned at 5:17 PM

Respectfully submitted,
Regina Lee, Faculty
Senate Secretary

Approved: April 23, 2018