

Faculty Senate Business Meeting  
January 28, 2019

**Members Present:**

Douglas Airhart, Ismet Anitsal, Jeremy Blair, Tammy Boles, Troy Brachey, Debra Bryant, Andrew Callender, Corinne Darvennes, Ahmed ElSawy, Steven Frye, Stuart Gaetjens, Melissa Geist, Mark Groundland, David Hajdik, Barbara Jared, Christy Killman, Seth King, David Larimore, Lori Maxwell, Christine Miller, Holly Mills, Lachelle Norris, Linda Null, Brian O'Connor, Joseph Ojo, Jeff Roberts, Leeann Shipley, Cara Sisk, Troy Smith, Sandi Smith-Andrews, Holly Stretz, Kim Winkle, Jeanette Wolak

**Members Absent:**

Deborah Ballou, Michael Best, Chris Brown, Jeremy Hansen, Ann Hellman, Paula Hinton, Shelia Hurley, Regina Lee, Ben Mohr, Sally Pardue, Richard Rand, Mohan Rao, Barry Stein, Zac Wilcox

**Guests:**

Lori Bruce, Ed Lisic, Julie C. Baker, Jeff Boles, Forrest Allard, Brandi Hill, Sharon Huo, Michael Aikens

**Call to Order**

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

**Approval of Agenda**

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

**Approval of Minutes from the Senate Business Meeting on November 12, 2018**

Senator Stretz made a motion to approve the minutes from the Senate business meeting on November 12<sup>th</sup> and Senator Larimore seconded it.

Senate President Smith informed faculty senators that Trustee Harper had asked to see these minutes to ensure their accuracy and he assented. In e-mails to faculty senators, Senate President Smith noted that her suggested corrections were stylistic, such as to clarify that comments were from Senators and not from her. Senate Secretary Groundland confirmed Senate President Smith's assessment. Senate President Smith asked that a committee be formed to look at whether or not someone outside of the Faculty Senate can see the minutes/notes before they have been approved as well as other procedural matters. Senator Smith-Andrews agreed to chair this committee.

The November 12<sup>th</sup> minutes were APPROVED with Ms. Harper's clarifications. Senator Geist abstained.

### **Approval of Notes from the Senate Meeting with the President on November 26, 2018**

Senator Stretz made a motion to approve the minutes from the Senate meeting with President Oldham on November 26<sup>th</sup> and Senator Larimore seconded it. These minutes were APPROVED. Senator Geist abstained.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

#### A. E-mail holds.

Senate President Smith announced that those who have had access to any information regarding the research misconduct matter would continue to have their e-mail held until there is no further possibility of litigation, 6 years.

#### B. Faculty Trustee Nomination update

Senate President Smith informed the faculty senate that the process to elect the next faculty trustee is underway. By the next senate business meeting, the nomination committee will have narrowed down the candidate list to three. These finalists will have the opportunity to address the faculty senate and present their reasons for wanting to become the next Faculty Trustee. Presently, though, there are no applicants for this important position. The deadline is February 15<sup>th</sup>. Senate President Smith asked if it would be appropriate for him to be a candidate as past president of the Faculty Senate. There were no objections.

#### C. ATHENA

Senate President Smith reported on the continuing initiative for different organizations to cooperate on a variety of issues relating to higher education. A consortium has been formed called the Association of Tennessee Higher Education Networking Advocates (ATHENA). The following groups are represented in ATHENA: AAUP, UCW, TEA, and TUFs. The first meeting was held at the TEA office two weeks ago. Two-year schools are also participating in ATHENA.

#### D. Emeriti Faculty Report

Senator Roberts distributed a draft proposal to make changes to Policy 219—Emeriti Faculty. See attached. In this manner, Tennessee Tech will acknowledge the value of emeriti faculty and help them in their endeavors. Continued e-mail access (item K, slight wording change) and office space (item L) are two proposed, worthwhile additions to Policy 219. Senator Stretz moved to recommend the draft proposal as a recommended policy change and Senator Smith-Andrews seconded it. A Senator asked about possible liability issues with granting access to labs or office space. Another Senator suggested a waiver form. Some discussion ensued on possible parking options for emeriti faculty for a semester. Dr. Roberts will accept wording suggestions by e-mail. The motion PASSED.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

#### A. Calendar Update and Scheduling Committees

1. Provost Bruce began by giving important background information on the university calendar. Previously, Tennessee Tech was required to follow TBR's guidelines. 2020-2021 marks the first year in which Tennessee Tech will have flexibility to make effective changes. Tennessee Tech Policy 267 governs calendar matters, yet it is very general. This policy states that the President, in consultation with the Provost and the VP for Enrollment Management, determines

the calendar. Provost Bruce received feedback about the calendar and course scheduling from faculty, staff, and students. She determined that it was important to review these matters and formed two ad hoc committees: the calendar committee and the course scheduling committee.

2. To see if the scheduling complaints were systemic, Provost Bruce asked ITS to give her all scheduling data for spring and fall semesters from last year. She found over 200 unique start and stop times for classes. She also looked over classroom usage data, especially those classes needing large rooms (80+ students). She concluded that a more standardized schedule would help to solve scheduling issues.
3. Provost Bruce charged the calendar committee to review the Tennessee Tech calendar and to look at options for 2020-2021 onward (start/stop dates, fall/spring breaks, alignment with Putnam County Schools break schedule, inclusion of more holidays, etc.). She noted a wide variety of representatives on this committee: Registrar, Provost's office, Admissions, Bursars office, Graduate School, HR, Athletics, Student Affairs, Academic Council, Administrative Council, New Student programs, Financial Aid, Veterans Affairs, and student representatives.
4. Associate Provost Sharon Huo and Brandi Hill, co-Chairs, reported on the work of the calendar committee. They are currently at the information-gathering stage to see about changing the 14-week semester to 15 weeks. Associate Provost Huo noted several areas on which this committee is focusing. First, it is important that Tennessee Tech and its associated programs begin on the same date. Currently, accelerated programs start a week earlier, which complicates payment schedules. A Senator asked what these accelerated programs were. One example given was the Safety graduate program. Furthermore, the confirmation payment deadlines of e-campus courses are earlier than Tennessee Tech's payment deadlines. Second, the committee is looking at matching Tennessee Tech holidays with those of the public school system. A 15-week schedule would make this easier to do. Third, Associate Provost Huo addressed the importance of adhering to the SACS-COC definition of a credit hour. She read the SACS-COC credit hour policy: "Not less than one hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours out of class student work each week for approximately fifteen weeks for one semester..." Before 2004, Tennessee Tech followed a 15-week semester. TBR subsequently changed it to 14 weeks. The start/stop times also changed. According to the TBR guidelines, MWF classes shall meet for 55 minutes and TR classes shall meet for 85 minutes. Currently, Tennessee Tech courses on TR only meet for 80 minutes. Therefore, we need to increase our semester to 15 weeks in order to conform to SACS-COC policy. A Senator asked whether the final exam week counted in the 14 weeks. Associate Provost Huo replied that it does not. Some discussion ensued. Provost Bruce clarified that the 14- or 15-week issue represents a multifaceted problem, one that involves different offices on campus in addition to academic units (Financial Aid, Bursar, Housing, Athletics, etc.). She noted that the challenge is to find a way to meet accreditation requirements,

to free up scheduling flexibility, for example. She wants to take the recommendations made by the committee in order to inform the President on the best course of action.

5. Senate President Smith underscored the wording in the SACS-COC policy of approximately 15 weeks, approximately giving us some wriggle room. He also noted the concern that an expansion to 15 weeks would mean two extra weeks a year of being in the classroom without extra compensation. Senator O'Connor explained that when he brought this up at a meeting, there was no sympathy. The sentiment expressed was that faculty are on a 9-month contract. Provost Bruce explained that as State employees on 9-month contracts, law dictates that faculty must work a minimum of 37.5 hours per week. Several Senators noted that many faculty members work much longer than this minimum requirement. Provost Bruce clarified that we do not want to perpetuate the myth that faculty are not working if they are not in the classroom. By arguing for not being paid for these additional two weeks may have unintended bad consequences.
6. A Senator expressed her satisfaction with the current calendar. She asked why there are so many strange times and noted that it should be the job of the Deans to enforce the standardized times already in place.
7. Provost Bruce charged the course scheduling committee to develop a standard schedule of classes. This committee does not concern itself with numbers of course sections, but rather it is working toward establishing a scheduling framework in which academic units can populate their courses. This committee consists of representatives from all of the Colleges, the Registrar, Provost's Office, CITL, Disability Services, ITS, Library, Facilities, and student representatives.
8. Julie C. Baker and Brandi Hill, co-Chairs, reported on the work of the scheduling committee. First, this committee looked at immediate scheduling concerns for fall 2019, as well as making recommendations for 2020-2021 and beyond. They discussed the large number of unique start/stop times and the need to make recommendations to the Registrar's Office in a timely manner. There seems to be no monitoring of course schedules; hence, the exacerbation of the large number and the overlapping of start/stop times. Start/stop times need standardization. This is a widespread problem, not specific to any academic program. This committee also reviewed data on room utilization and room capacities. This committee aims to make improvements to these areas to facilitate a more student-friendly scheduling process. Dr. Baker also stressed the importance of maintaining clearly defined SACS-COC compliant course times. The committee welcomes all feedback from faculty, staff, and students. Currently, this committee has recommended a scheduling framework for fall 2019, following the final exam schedule in use (and even added in a few more time slots). They are currently looking at next steps for 2020-2021 and beyond.

9. Provost Bruce asked both committees to look for ways to optimize student learning and to facilitate scheduling for the academic programs. Essentially, look at everything through the lens of a student. What do they need? She also clarified the need to conform to SACS-COC requirements regarding the amount of time a course must meet.
10. A Senator noted her need for additional information regarding scheduling matters and pointed out that it would be more effective to ask for feedback sometime other than final exam week. She asked what other institutions are doing.
11. Provost Bruce indicated that all of the other Locally-Governed Institutions (LGIs) are also struggling with these matters. She noted the importance of aligning schedules and calendars with those institutions with whom we have joint programs.
12. A Senator asked what is the current capacity utilization rate based on a 14-week period. What is the magic number? How will this rate change if we move to a 15-week period? What goals will be achieved by increasing the number of weeks in a semester? He clarified that we have X number of rooms on campus. Some rooms are being utilized more than others are. Furthermore, to what extent will a room be considered as being utilized fully or not? Provost Bruce clarified that for her, room utilization encompasses a set number of rooms and a set number of hours in the day. If we look at all of our classrooms, the number of seats in them, and the number of hours in the day...we multiply that to get a utilization number. If we want a bigger utilization number, we can make more rooms, make more hours in the day (offer more evening courses, for example), or extend the number of days when the courses are offered. It is important to use the timeslots available more fully. The room utilization issue, according to Provost Bruce, is not a driving factor for changing the calendar dates. Changing calendar dates will enable for more flexible scheduling, more time slots, better alignment of breaks with the school system's breaks, and more. She also noted that no one has done anything wrong with scheduling, but rather over time, with no monitoring, scheduling has become an issue that needs improving.
13. Associate Provost Huo also clarified that the 15-week semester is an option. Other options are being explored, such as starting semesters on Thursdays.
14. A Senator noted that the biggest problem with the current schedule is the many different start/stop times. This problem can be solved by not allowing non-standard stop/start times. We should simply adhere to the standard times as listed on the final exam schedule. The lengths of class times should also be standardized. He also suggested that class times begin on the hour or the half hour, which would then require 15 weeks of instructions. He also agreed that starting semesters a day earlier would allow for the insertion of previously recognized holidays into the calendar, such as Good Friday.

15. Another Senator noted that the standardization of class times would benefit students if they could start on the hour or half hour. There is a tentative draft of the 2020-2021 schedule with these start times. Students are sometimes confused about when classes begin due to the different start times. Another Senator disagreed with this need, considering students should learn their start times and abide by them.
16. Senate President Smith asked Associate Provost Huo whether the proposed changes to the calendar would go through the Academic and Administrative Councils. Associate Provost Huo replied no, Policy 267 will go to the President, Provost and VP for Enrollment Management. After some discussion, she indicated that it is possible to change Policy 267 in the future so changes would also go to the councils. Associate Provost Huo encouraged feedback on calendar matters.

#### B. Strategic Plan Update

Dr. Jeff Boles reported on the status of the work being done on Tennessee Tech's strategic plan. In 2017-2018, a committee was formed to formulate a strategic plan. This committee disbanded in May 2018 and new committees were formed to ensure the effective communication of the strategic plan to the faculty and how to best implement it. Dr. Boles distributed a handout that described the progress and composition of the working groups of each of the four goals of the strategic plan: 1.) Education for life, 2.) Innovation in all we do, 3.) Exceptional stewardship, and 4.) Engagement for impact. See attachment. All of these working groups will report on their progress to the Faculty Senate. By May 2019, all four groups will have presented their recommendations to the Tennessee Tech Tomorrow Steering Committee. A motion will be formulated to implement these recommendations over the summer. Town hall meetings will take place to present the strategic plan to the campus. This is a new process, one in which faculty and staff have the opportunity to serve on different committees / working groups to participate in the process of the formulation of the strategic plan.

Dr. Ed Lisic proceeded to present on the work being done on goal 1 (Education for life) and distributed a handout on this goal's priority actions (or goals) and potential tactics. See attachment. Dr. Ed Lisic and Dr. Julie Baker are the co-chairs for the Diversity Subcommittee. From the data collected and the feedback from meetings, this subcommittee has six (6) recommendations:

1. Establish a Chief Inclusion and Diversity Officer. A Senator asked whether this was Robert Owen's position. Dr. Lisic responded that he believes that Robert Owen is taking over Mark Burnett's position in Student Affairs. Mr. Owen's previous position in Multicultural Affairs is different from the proposed Chief Inclusion and Diversity Officer.
2. Reorganize offices and groups to constitute an Office of Inclusions and Diversity. Dr. Lisic clarified that this proposed reorganization is to improve channels of communication between offices and groups already associated with inclusion and diversity, such as the Disability Office, Diversity Equity Access Council, Commission on the Status of Blacks, Commission on the Status of Women,

International Education, Civil Rights—Affirmative Action, LGBTQ, Multicultural Center, and Women’s Center. Senators noted an apparent omission of Hispanic representation in the groups listed. Dr. Lisic stressed that they want to be as inclusive as possible and welcome all feedback. Another Senator asked whether this proposal would mean the hiring of yet another administrative position. Dr. Lisic assured the faculty senate that they do not want to hire another Vice President, but rather to establish a staff position, probably someone already on campus.

3. Establish a new Admissions Counselor position with a focus on recruitment of diverse students.
4. Fund three graduate assistant positions to support recruitment in targeted areas.
5. Combine several campus groups to elevate and strengthen initiatives, align goals, and unify resources.
6. Develop / expand a strategic scholarship system for new students from diverse backgrounds. A Senator indicated that the Office of Research already has a diversity scholarship and asked what would be different about these newly proposed diversity scholarships. Working Group #1 has looked at all of the scholarships offered by Tennessee Tech and has noticed that there are few diversity scholarships. Another Senator asked about the extent to which the diversity of the student population resulted from Athletics. Senator Roberts stated that roughly half of the diversity stems from Athletics. Student diversity needs to grow in academic units, such as the licensure programs in the College of Education, according to Dr. Lisic. Another Senator pointed out the need to look at and grow diversity in new faculty hires. Dr. Lisic noted the component in working group #2 that deals with diversity in faculty. All suggestions are welcome. There is also a suggestion box in the Strategic Planning section of the Tennessee Tech homepage. Dr. Lisic asked for faculty volunteers to help in the faculty-driven process of determining Tennessee Tech’s strategic plan. The chairs of the other working groups will present at future senate meetings.

#### C. National Academy report on Sexual Harassment

Senator Stretz attended a webinar on the status of sexual harassment laws and training in Academia and reported on it to the faculty senate. She shared a PowerPoint presentation prepared by Kathryn Clancy (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign), Lilia Cortina (University of Michigan), and Vicki Magley (University of Connecticut). Senator Stretz outlined the webinar, including remarks on myth busting common misperceptions about sexual harassment, relevant facts (three forms of sexual harassment: sexual coercion, unwanted sexual attention, gender harassment; research refutes that physical harassment is worse for women’s well-being than verbal or visual forms), and in what academic areas different types of sexual harassment take place. Senate President Smith asserted that if Tennessee Tech does not have some of the recommended avenues that we should have, than the faculty senate should become involved to bring them out.

[Due to time constraints, Senate President Smith sent out brief reports on the remaining items in New Business by e-mail. They are as follows.]

#### D. RIF procedures

This has been raised by several people. When the five people were let go in November, then again a week or two ago when three people were let go from university advancement, people who in some cases had been here for many years were told, when being informed they were being let go, to clear out their desks/offices by the end of the day and in some cases escorted off campus by security. I know of other staff who turned in their two weeks' notice this year and were told to clear out that day, not being given the courtesy of two weeks to prepare and leave with dignity.

This seems to be a new thing they are doing this year. Many of us would like to know why. I think this should definitely be something we take up with the President on Feb. 18.

#### E. Faculty survey

Last year's survey by AAUP –which was very professionally done –attracted the attention of the cabinet, particularly the provost, and the board, all of whom took it seriously and are now (finally) acknowledging a morale issue on this campus. The provost asked me why faculty senate had not taken the initiative to do such a survey. From my own perspective, having the imprimatur of senate would give it an extra layer of “respectability” for some people, and reinforce its importance. (I would like to point out that two of the three people who created and distributed the AAUP survey are senators this year). I have talked with Tech's AAUP chapter president, Dan Allcott. I would like to propose that the exact same survey be given again, co-sponsored this time by faculty senate. We can discuss this and potentially vote on it at the next business meeting. In part I would like to see if there has been any movement this year in either direction, but I would also like to see it done again this soon because keeping it fresh in the administration/board's mind, with the added support of senate, might lead to some substantive effort to address the issues by the board.

#### F. Oakley Farm

This matter was brought to Senator Airhart's attention by the concerned party, Pat Bagley from Agriculture, who asked if there was anything the senate could do. Essentially, Dr. Bagley was PI on a summer research project on behalf of a company called Y-TEX, to be conducted at Oakley Farm (which was being changed over to Oakley Farm LLC, under the aegis of the TTU Foundation). The Office of Research recommended he route the funding through the Foundation, but the Foundation –having received the funds charged to Y-TEX for the research –has refused to pay Dr. Bagley his summer pay out of those funds for the work he did.

#### **Other such matters**

Senator Smith-Andrews asked for volunteers to serve on the Faculty Senate Procedures Committee.

The meeting adjourned at 5:59 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark Groundland,  
Secretary of the Faculty Senate