

Faculty Senate Meeting with President Oldham  
April 15, 2019

**Members Present:**

Jeremy Blair, Chris Brown, Debra Bryant, Andrew Callender, Wei Tsun Chang, Corinne Darvennes, Ahmed ElSawy, Stuart Gaetjens, Melissa Geist, Mark Groundland, David Hajdik, Christy Killman, David Larimore, Regina Lee, Lori Maxwell, Christine Miller, Holly Mills, Lachelle Norris, Linda Null, Brian O'Connor, Joseph Ojo, Sally Pardue, Richard Rand, Mohan Rao, Jeff Roberts, Leeann Shipley, Troy Smith, Sandi Smith-Andrews, Barry Stein, Holly Stretz, Zac Wilcox, Kim Winkle, Jeannette Wolak

**Members Absent:**

Douglas Airhart, Ismet Anitsal, Deborah Ballou, Michael Best, Tammy Boles, Troy Brachey, Steven Frye, Ann Hellman, Paula Hinton, Shelia Hurley, Barbara Jared, Seth King, Ben Mohr, Cara Sisk

**Guests:**

Leslie Crickenberger, Stephanie Warner, Lee Wray

**Call to Order**

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

**Reminder**

Faculty Senate Smith reminded Senators that next Monday (April 22<sup>nd</sup>) will be the last meeting of the year. Elections will occur and other pending matters will be discussed.

**Report from Dr. Leslie Crickenberger**

Dr. Crickenberger explained the decision process for adopting Time Clock Plus in HR and gave a presentation on how it works. This tool will cut down on the time needed to enter payroll data per month. HR will also use Time Clock Plus for the time sheets of FT C&S employees. HR conducted a pre-pilot with C&S employees and the participants were satisfied with Time Clock Plus. It was easy to use and a definite improvement over Banner Self Service. Employees are not "clocking in and out." This is not the purpose of Time Clock Plus. HR will conduct a campus-wide pilot in July. If all goes well, HR will roll out Time Clock Plus on September 1 for student workers, C&S employees, and administrators. Faculty Senators asked the following questions:

1. Are the C&S employee times adjustable? Yes
2. Will Time Clock Plus solve the need of sending out reminders? Yes
3. Does the student view look similar? Yes
4. Did you do a cost-benefit analysis? This program cuts down on the tremendous amount of time needed to insert data manually. Time Clock Plus costs about \$20/employee, approximately \$47,000/year. We are currently spending over \$40,000/month to key in the data by hand.
5. Will employees need training to use this new system? There will be continuous training sessions between June and October, and 1:1 training sessions. HR will prepare guidebook a with screen shots.

6. Some pre-pilot participants thought they were testing the new system for students and did not understand that it was for clerical staff as well. Dr. Crickenberger responded that they should not have thought it was just for students. HR was clear that Time Clock Plus is for C&S staff. HR has received consistently unfavorable feedback on Banner Self Service.
7. Students cannot access Time Clock Plus when in class. If a class is cancelled, could they use the free time to work? No, students on a federal work-study program cannot work even if a class is cancelled.
8. Do faculty enter their sick leave hours in Banner? No
9. What is the plan if the network crashes? Time Clock Plus will still work.
10. Can students use this program on their phones? Yes
11. Will TechConnect speak to Time Clock Plus? You can upload mass schedules and assign them in Time Clock Plus. Dr. Crickenberger will look into this question further.
12. Does Time Clock Plus apply to graduate students? No

Dr. Crickenberger clarified that Time Clock Plus will be funded from HR's budget. It does not represent an additional expense. She proposed that faculty members use Time Clock Plus for entering sick leave requests only. Either faculty or their clerical staff can submit these requests. It would be helpful.

### **President Oldham's Opening Comments**

President Oldham thanked Senators Lee and Darvennes for their work throughout the years and wished them well on their upcoming retirements. He noted the success of several events on and around campus: Spring Alumni weekend, Baja competition, banquets, award ceremonies, Windows on the World, to name a few.

### **Topics of Conversation with the President**

#### Budget matters

President Oldham is confident that the State legislature will pass the Governor's proposed budget in a few weeks. If all goes well, Tennessee Tech will receive approximately 4.5 million dollars in additional State support, bringing the total State appropriations to almost 60 million dollars. He noted a possible tuition increase of around 2.3%, pending Board of Trustees' approval. The Budget Committee has been examining cost escalators, such as promotion increases and utilities. Furthermore, Tennessee Tech should commit 2 million dollars to restore the fund balance. All of these factors indicate that there will be few additional resources in next year's budget. They are taking a very conservative stance on the budget this year and building in a 2.3 million dollar drop in tuition revenue into it. They will know more in September. Overall, the budget is not looking too bad. Faculty Senators asked the following questions:

1. Do you concur with a recent Senate motion that states that promotion raises should be funded through the overall budget, and not through merit raise funds? The President responded that this is his intention as well. The President also mentioned the uncertainty of a general salary raise for faculty this year. Promotion raises, of course, will be funded.
2. How is budget planning better now than before? We have a group that serves on a strategic planning committee. They look at data and try to do as much predictive analysis as possible. Many resources are vulnerable to enrollment fluctuations. They are trying to build in a "safety net" (fund balance) to deal with some of the budget shortfall due to

drops in enrollment. They are also holding off on deciding on any salary raises for faculty until the fall semester.

3. How is the new VP for enrollment adjusting to Tennessee Tech and our enrollment challenges? Dr. Johnson is systematically reshaping how we recruit, market, and predict enrollments. There is much more to do. We need to improve recruiting.
4. Have you heard of a current bill (0707) before the legislature that aims to compensate adjunct professor \$1000 / credit hour? Yes. President Oldham thinks that it is still in committee. Lee Wray will look into it.
5. While we may not be able to predict enrollment numbers, we can control how we spend on campus. Academic Units are feeling squeezed. President Oldham countered with data he accessed today. Since 2015, College budgets have increased by 12%, while enrollments have dropped by 11%. The split between Academic and Administrative was 50/50, but now it is 60 (Academic)/40 (Administrative). In 2012, the student/faculty ratio was 22:1; now it is below 18:1. The Colleges are receiving money. As an institution, we invest in people. The budget model indicates that if enrollments continue to decline, then putting money in personnel may not be wise. At some point, you have too many people.

A Faculty Senator observed that since 2016, Colleges began paying for accreditation costs. This is a modest cost, according to President Oldham, compared to the total dollar amounts in each College.

Another Faculty Senator observed that it would be interesting to see the same type of comparison concerning spending on the administrative side, the numbers and the increases for positions. Are we making the right choices for Tennessee Tech? President Oldham acknowledged the fairness of the question. According to THEC data from 5-6 years ago, all of the TN universities dedicate 18-20% of their E&G budget to operational support and administrative support. Tennessee Tech is no different. The numbers of non-instructional staffing at Tennessee Tech is lower than those numbers at sister institutions. The salaries of Tech administrative personnel is lower than those salaries at other TN universities.

President Oldham noted that tenured and tenure-track faculty at Tennessee Tech represent 80% of the full-time faculty. This is a fixed cost and ties our hands on how we may respond to budget situations. This is significantly higher than our peer institutions. A Faculty Senator argued that this 80% connotes stability and strength and expressed uneasiness about couching this statistic in terms like, "it ties our hands."

6. There is a perception amongst faculty that the Office of Sponsored Research misused money on inappropriate activities. Faculty had worked hard to earn this money. How is the search going for the Vice President of Research and Economic Development? The search committee is formed and meetings are underway.
7. The salaries in the College of Business are amongst the highest in the university. When asked if they could hire full-time instructors, the administration denied their request. Would this not be more economical? President Oldham expressed needing to know more details. These decisions are best made at the departmental level. There are budgetary realities in play.

8. Several Board of Trustee members, and others, have expressed concern with faculty members coming up for promotion early. This should be examined.
9. A Faculty Senator indicated that the administration took 60% of lapsed money from academic units earlier this year for strategic investments. Is this true or is this money being used to cover our deficit? The President responded that these funds are being used as an investment pool. It has been hard to build up this pool due to Tennessee Promise and other factors. Lee Wray offered to provide a spreadsheet prepared by Dr. Stinson to show the use of these investment funds. Faculty Senators agreed that this information should be available to alleviate concerns about budget cuts and the lack of new initiatives. President Oldham concurred and noted that in order to remain relevant, we need to refresh what we do. He noted that Tennessee Tech has not had to discontinue anything since he has been President so far. A conversation may need to happen if we continue to do new things, maybe there are things we do not need to do any more. A Faculty Senator indicated that the College of Business discontinued the campus-based MBA program. It is now solely online.
10. What is happening with the money from the new Carnegie classification? This money is part of the overall budget. Tennessee Tech's commitment to Ph.D. Programs remain intact. However, we cannot earmark this money at this time. A Faculty Senator in the College of Engineering indicated that his department would not likely be able to admit new students because graduate courses currently have few students in them. President Oldham pointed out that Ph.D. programs should not strictly depend on institutional dollars. External dollars are necessary.
11. Should we do away with out-of-state tuition for graduate students? This would attract more Master's students to our programs. The President has been thinking about this question for some time. Before it would not have worked because if we had cut this tuition in half, we would have lost a considerable amount of money from those out-of-state graduate students currently on campus. Now there are fewer out-of-state graduate students on campus, so it would be easier to do. They are continuing to examine this proposition. Faculty Senators indicated that the graduate student market is national. President Oldham agreed, but he needs to consider existing budgetary restraints.
12. A Faculty Senator asked about the incoming \$6 million in new resources and if it included the \$3 million for Engineering and the \$2 million in Carnegie funding. The President clarified that the Carnegie funding for this year was \$900 thousand, bringing the total recurring funds to \$2.1 million. These are recurring funds in the overall budget. We have approximately \$4.5 million of uncommitted funds (including the Carnegie funding of \$900 thousand) that will be used to deal with high priority matters. If we go with a 2.3% tuition increase, then this will generate approximately \$1.5 million. President Oldham shared the approximate costs of the following priority matters:
  - Absorb a loss of \$2.3 million in tuition revenue
  - \$1.3 million for faculty promotions (\$400 thousand), software escalation costs, utility costs (\$500 thousand), graduate assistantships, legislated mandated fee waivers (\$50 thousand), and the full reestablishment of the fund balance (\$2.6 million). The fund balance is a pool of money saved to protect the university against any unforeseen circumstances. These funds have been used to absorb some losses so as not to affect the university's missions.
  - A faculty salary increase of 2% would cost \$1.8 million.

- Tennessee Tech is approximately \$2.8 million short of funding every high priority item. Hence, we need to think strategically.
13. Is there a plan to distribute merit bonuses next year? The timing is not ideal to make a quick decision. President Oldham asked for recommendations. Faculty Senators indicated that faculty would be more in favor of a uniform raise for all. President Oldham clarified that the merit pay pool is only \$150 thousand. Another Faculty Senator suggested that the merit raise should not be given on a percentage of salary but as a flat raise for everyone involved. President Oldham will consider this issue in the summertime with faculty feedback.

#### International Students

A Faculty Senator asked about international student recruitment. President Oldham replied that this recruitment is ongoing. Charlie Wilkerson now reports to the Office of Enrollment Management. This recruitment is very cyclical.

#### Fitness Center and Science Building

A Faculty Senator asked about the projected completions of the Fitness Center and the Science Building. The Fitness Center should be completed by January 2020. Large lecture halls in the Science Building will be available by fall 2020. The rest of the building should be completed by the end of 2020.

#### Parking Lottery for Students

Where do we stand with the parking lottery for students? The parking committee never approved the increases of available gold parking permits for students. The President will suspend this lottery for next fall until the parking committee can review it further. A Faculty Senator suggested making discounted gold permits available for instructors and lecturers.

#### At-Large Ballots for Academic Council and Administrative Council

The Provost's Office will release the revised list of nominees for the Academic Council and the Administrative Council very soon.

The meeting adjourned at 5:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark Groundland, Secretary of the Faculty Senate