

Faculty Senate Business Meeting

March 25, 2024

via TEAMS

Members Present:

Michael Allen, Sean Alley, Teddy Burch, Scott Christen, Melissa Comer, Kris Craven, Mark Creter, April Crockett, Andrew Donadio, Mary Lou Fornehed, Steve Frye, Samantha Hutson, Krystal Kennedy, Christy Killman, Matthew Langford, Jeannette Luna, Jennifer Mabry, Twanelle Majors, Ann Manginelli, Lori Maxwell, Holly Mills, Wendy Mullen, Linda Null, Brian O'Connor, Joseph Ojo, Hyewon Park, Mustafa Rajabali, Christopher Reames, Steven Seiler, Lee Ann Shipley, Scott Smith, Troy Smith, Sandi Smith-Andrews, Amber Spears, Leslie Suters, Kyle Turner, Hannah Upole, Brenda Wilson, Kimberly Winkle

Members Absent:

Megan Atkinson, Stephen Canfield, Yun Ding, Dennis Fennewald, Syed Hasan, Richard Le Borne, Jane Liu, Mark Loftis, Michael Natrass, Richard Rand, Lenly Weathers

Call to Order

Senate President Allen called the meeting to order at 3:37 p.m.

1. Approval of Agenda

Senator Smith-Andrews made a motion to approve the agenda. Senator Troy Smith seconded. The motion carried.

2. Approval of Minutes and Notes from Previous Meetings

a.) February 26, 2024 Business Meeting Minutes

Senator Smith-Andrews made a motion to approve the minutes. Senator Maxwell seconded. The motion carried.

b.) March 4, 2024 Meeting with the President Notes

Senator Smith-Andrews made a motion to approve the notes. Senator Donadio seconded. The motion carried.

3. Report from Academic Council Chair

No updates

4. Report from Administrative Council Chair

No updates

5. Report from Trustee Luna

Trustee Luna announced there is a new Trustee, Camron Rudd. The new nuclear engineering program was approved and funded in a way that made Trustee Luna confident other departments were not being slighted. The biggest topic was the compensation study, and it was agreed there will be several town hall discussions to help disseminate information and answer questions. It is

Trustee Luna's understanding there will not be a final written report from Mercer, but there will be a framework for mapping jobs to the new job architecture that Tech will use from now on.

6. Report from Faculty Senate President

Senate President Allen met with Provost Bruce recently, primarily regarding the budget, as well as policies, procedures, and PIP (personnel improvement plans). President Oldham agreed with Senate President Allen's assertion that the adjustments in pay should be shifted first, then merit pay added after. A new budget from the state should arrive within a week. The President's Cabinet mostly discussed the Mercer study outcomes.

7. Request for Volunteers for Nomination Committee

Senators Smith-Andrews, Fornehed, Troy Smith, and Rajabali volunteered to comprise the nominating committee for next year's Faculty Senate leadership.

8. Discussion about Faculty on PIP, HR Policies, Tenured Faculty Policy

Senators discussed concerns about whether standards for conduct or expectations were tied to policies and subject to departmental whim, whether the policy regarding minors on campus is confusing or prohibitive procedurally, and discussed how an ombudsperson can help navigate these policy and procedural guidelines and appeals after action has been taken by HR or the administration. Senate President Allen stated that we would have to request money for the position from the Board of Trustees as ideally an ombudsperson would report to the Board to maintain neutrality.

In addition, Policy 207 was discussed at length, with a focus on section VIII.B. The discussion centered on the choice of the word "capricious" in VIII.B.8, and there was a discussion about the entity or entities that could bring complaints regarding the causes for termination listed in this section.

Finally, it was stressed repeatedly by Senate President Allen in light of VIII.B.5 that all faculty read and comply with HR policies.

In light of the discussion of VIII.B.8., a motion to recommend Policy 207 be brought up for review was made by Senator O'Connor and seconded by Senator Wilson. The motion carried.

9. Discussion on Proposed Required Parking Fee for Students

Senators discussed concerns about the draft SGA survey regarding a parking fee for all students that may remove tiers. Senate President Allen has discussed this with Provost Bruce who is concerned that those students not on campus would be made to pay for a service they cannot use. Though senators were concerned about the potential impact on faculty gold parking, it was generally thought that the faculty permits and parking would likely be unaffected.

10. Point of Information regarding DEI House Bill 2348

The bill was killed in committee according to President Oldham due largely to efforts from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

11. Request for Questions for Meeting with President Oldham April 1

A senator learned that Tennessee Tech may be the only school to require Resident Assistants (RAs) to pay ahead for their housing and get reimbursed later instead of the university covering it up front, and the senator would like to know why.

Senate President Allen urges all senators to submit questions directly to him, Senate Secretary Mills, or through the form online.

12. Such Other Matters

Senate President Allen learned that Putnam County Schools recently negotiated \$13/hour pay for their custodial services, while HES pays \$11/hour. The concern is that HES will lose employees; VP Stinson is asking HES to please raise their hourly compensation rate.

Adjournment

Senator Troy Smith moved to adjourn the meeting. Senator Rajabali seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 4:59 p.m.

Approved: 04/15/2024