

Faculty Senate Business Meeting

November 23, 2020

Members Present:

Stephanie Adams, Douglas Airhart, Dan Allcott, Michael Allen, Jeremy Blair, Troy Brachey, Chris Brown, Debra Bryant, Wei Tsun Chang, Kris Craven, Dennis Duncan, Mary Lou Fornehed, Steven Frye, David Hajdik, Tammy Howard, Janet Isbell, Brian Jones, Christy Killman, Nancy Kolodziej, David Larimore, Emily Lee, Chad Luke, Ann Manginelli, Lori Maxwell, Jennifer Meadows, Mark Melichar, Holly Mills, Lachelle Norris, Linda Null, Brian O'Connor, Joseph Ojo, Anthony Paradis, Sally Pardue, Richard Rand, Jeff Roberts, Lee Ann Shipley, Troy Smith, Sandra Smith-Andrews, Barry Stein, Holly Stretz, Daniel Swartling, Robert Wilbanks, Zac Wilcox, Kimberly Winkle, Russ Witcher, Jeannette Wolak

Members Absent:

Yun Ding, Matt Langford*, Susan Laningham, Mary Matthews, Mike Rogers, Lenly Weathers

Proxy:

*Andrew Donadio, for Matt Langford

Special Guests:

Jeff Schaeffer, Center for the Management, Utilization and Protection of Water Resources (Water Center), Director

1. Call to Order

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

2. Approval of Agenda

Senator Smith-Andrews made a motion to approve the agenda. Senator Airhart seconded. Two senators asked to be included in item #12 – Other Such Matters. The motion was approved.

3. Approval of Minutes from October 26, 2020 Business Meeting and Notes from November 9, 2020 Meeting with the President

Senator Duncan made a motion to approve the minutes and the notes from previous meetings. Senator Airhart seconded.

A few typos were pointed out. A mix-up in item #8 was also noted. The business meeting minutes passed with friendly amendments to correct the issues listed. The notes from the meeting with the president passed.

4. Nominating Committee for BOT Faculty Representative (Pardue)

Senator Pardue discussed that the new Board of Trustees (BOT) Faculty Representative will be starting in July 2021 as her term will end June 30, 2021. She also discussed the procedure for the replacement which includes the forming of a nominating committee, collection of nomination packets, distributing the packets to the committee members, and a vote at the second Business

meeting of the Faculty Senate in 2021. This meeting is scheduled to take place on February 22, 2021. Senator Pardue volunteers to serve on the nominating committee.

Senate President Stretz asked for other volunteers to serve on the committee and officially appointed Senators Fornehed, Duncan, and Allen to the committee.

The next step is for the nominating committee to meet. They will need to choose a chairman and define what is to be submitted by the candidates.

It was noted that BOT Faculty Representative will become a member of the Senate when elected, but it is not required that the nominees be current Senators. However, the candidates must be of Faculty rank.

5. Joint Committee on Procedures Report (Douglas Airhart)

There has been no further progress to report.

6. Budget Committee Report

a. Effectiveness & Efficiency

Senator Smith-Andrews reported that this subcommittee had a 2-hour meeting on Friday. At this meeting they discussed how to prioritize tasks and procedures for moving forward. The subcommittee recognizes that there is a need to be more effective, reduce redundancy, and incorporate more electronic means.

b. Five Year Strategic Planning

Senator Larimore reported that this subcommittee has met once and has plans to meet again. They are focusing on the budget model, particularly the margins that have been established for each college. It is unclear what are the consequences for not meeting the margins. There was also discussion about the inclusion of the special student fees that are currently being collected. Senate President Stretz asked about charges for space that were in the budget and Senator Larimore indicated that this has been removed from the current budget model. Senator Smith-Andrews asked about the special fees for online courses. Senator Larimore answered that these are not included, but the subcommittee has requested information regarding all fees that are being charged to students.

c. Facilities & Infrastructure

Senate President Stretz reported that there was a brief introductory meeting of this subcommittee and they plan to meet again soon. They have appointed a chair. Some discussion included what to do after COVID with/about all of the new online content that is currently being generated. Specifically, how can it be leveraged to the university's favor?

d. Emerging Opportunities & Threats

This subcommittee had an introductory meeting back in October. There was no real input received at that meeting, mainly distribution of information.

7. Update on Data Management Discussions

Jeff Schaeffer discussed this topic with the Faculty Senate. He told a story of how a burst pipe led to the finding of a very useful survey from 1952 which resulted in a new database that is currently being used. The concept of Data Management is gathering of historical data for current and future use in research. This is of great interest to the Federal government and is becoming a critical requirement for funding. One aspect of interest is what happens to the research work of a faculty member, or a graduate student, when they leave an institution? How can this work be continued into long-term projects? We have already begun some of the work through the Office of Research, but we want input from others. He also talked about a situation where a faculty member was reluctant to publish their data for fear it would then be mis-used by other researchers. However, when the data was released another researcher wrote a very good paper using the data and gave the original researcher second author credit for allowing the use of the data. Action is needed to recognize this as a high priority that is not unique to this university. However, this work is just now emerging and there will be a need for more assistance, like archivists.

Senate President Stretz commented about the new MS and PhD programs that are just getting started will need to have a good plan, it is not good enough to just promise. When others are able to use your data in their work they will include you on their paper, meaning more publications.

Senate President Elect Wolak also agreed that this is very important. Funding agencies like NASA and NSF are already requiring plans and prefer at least a 10-year lifespan for data. Therefore, we are behind the curve.

Dr. Shaeffer said that we have a disadvantage due to the lack of a school of information science. This would be a good source of graduate students who could be very helpful with the work to get a data management system in place. He reiterated that the university will need to add positions in the library to do the heavy lifting for the new system. However, it would be helpful to find some graduate students to train in this, it would be a good experience for them.

Senate President Stretz talked about work being done by the American Institute of Chemical Engineers (AIChE). This group has some internships for students to do data mining. This helps them to understand what data needs to be saved.

A question was asked about confidentiality – Can the data being managed be qualitative or just quantitative? The answer given was that you need to have a software system to handle this concern. With the right software, you will be able to guarantee confidentiality when and where it is needed. Researchers will still need to discuss this with the subjects and users of the data but it

can be redacted as needed. Dr. Schaeffer said he has never had a negative experience when software was employed for this purpose.

Senate President Stretz talked about how many of us are more familiar with numerical data. It would be nice if the Senate defines what each researcher needs.

Senator Adams gave a perspective from faculty in the library. If we establish a repository for the university, it would be good to add dissertations and theses. Currently it is costly to have these handled by another service. Being able to keep these works in our own data management will be helpful and less expensive.

Dr. Schaeffer suggested that the Senators look at the DeepBlue, a repository at the University of Michigan that could serve as a good model.

Senate President Stretz encouraged the Senators to do this and give feedback to the Office of Research.

8. Faculty Senate Compensation Resolution – Wolak

Senate President Elect Wolak reported that after the Resolution was passed at the last Senate Business meeting, the executive staff met with President Oldham about presenting the resolution to the BOT. Currently it has been placed on the Agenda for the Executive Committee, however this will not include all members of the BOT and is not part of the meeting that is broadcast. We have asked to have it moved and we are still waiting for a response. We have asked for the Resolution to be presented as an information only item. Senate President Elect Wolak intends to discuss that the Senate desires for this to have an impact for the long-term plans and is not proposed as an immediate action calling for change now.

9. Summer Calendar

Senate President Stretz asked if there were any questions or comments regarding the new summer calendar that was distributed to the Senators earlier via e-mail. General consensus is that it is much better than what is posted currently. Stretz said this is going to cause the Registrar Office a lot of work, but should be better for faculty and students. She will continue to check and make sure that it gets uploaded to the web site soon.

10. Spring Melt

The department chairs have been discussing the retention rates as they are expected to suffer due to the current situation. They are concerned about a significant decrease in registration for the spring semester. The reasons are not known. Senator Smith-Andrews suggested that they consult with the advisors. They have the ability to run reports to see who has not yet registered and can work with the students to see why. She also indicated that now is a good time to do this, before they leave campus for the holiday break.

11. Old Business

Senate President Elect Wolak recommended that the Senators begin thinking and talking with faculty members that are good candidates for the BOT representative. This is a big commitment and we want to find the right person to represent us.

12. Such Other Matters

Senator Airhart: Could we do something with the gap between the advising of students, that is starting earlier now with the new advising system, and the actual registration? If we had some preliminary numbers collected by the advisors during advising, departments could adjust the classes and help the registration to work better and allow students to know that there are sections available for high need classes while limiting the lower demand classes and moving faculty accordingly.

President Stretz suggested discussing this idea with the Provost.

Senator Allen said that it has been requested that the course schedules be input prior to advising and the Provost is aware of the need.

Senator Allen: He discussed a pattern of lower enrollment in certain math classes in the spring semester compared to the fall semester. The department is having issues with assigning faculty to classes appropriately causing some faculty to be overloaded or underloaded in certain semesters. It is desirable to balance by asking students who only need a single math class to take it in the spring rather than the fall. This will help those who need to take multiple classes in sequence and still have faculty to cover all the classes in each semester.

Senator Smith-Andrews suggested that this is ideal discussion for the new Advising Center.

Senator Allen also indicated that this is primarily a freshman student problem and maybe the general education providers can discuss how to move some options to accommodate.

Senator Pardue: She is currently planning to abstain from the vote on the bonus proposed by President Oldham due to a conflict of interest, she would be receiving the bonus herself. She is asking the Senators if they feel this is appropriate?

Senator Maxwell stated that she disagrees that it would be a conflict of interest. She is not on the board as a personal faculty member, but a chosen representative for all university faculty. Therefore, it would be appropriate for her to express her support by voting.

Senator Allcott stated that he agrees. She should state her position and vote.

Senate President Elect Wolak stated that she also thinks Representative Pardue should vote as to not set a precedent for future situations.

Senator Smith-Andrews: She reminded the Senators of the TUFs survey that we have been asked to complete. She is asking if Senators have received it outside of the Senate, i.e. from the department or other means. She expressed a desire to make sure it is being distributed to faculty in general. She asks the Senators to encourage their colleagues to complete the survey.

Senate President Stretz reminded the Senators that we will get the data from this survey and it will have a high impact on shared governance in the state of Tennessee.

Senator Howard asked when is the deadline for completing the survey?

Answer: End of the semester, so basically a few weeks from now.

Senator Hajdik: There is some concern about the new calendar increasing costs, specifically for residence hall students – meal plans and semester residence hall fees – due to the extra days on campus. Senate was told that this would not happen, but there are concerns being expressed among the student body. Senate President Stretz agreed to forward these concerns to the appropriate university personnel.

Senator O'Connor discussed the need to balance the number of days for the different patterns of classes, the questions about classes starting on the hour versus the current schedule, the fact that other problems have started to creep into the mix. These concerns have been sent to Dr. Huo who agreed to forward them to the Provost.

Senate President Stretz indicated there has been some trouble with getting it all figured out. There has also been discussion about the following year, will we stay with the new system or go back to the current semester?

Senator Allcott expressed a need to change the culture. Faculty must make a significant adjust to major changes like this. We are not here to help them, they are here to help us do our job better.

Senator Airhart said that the Academic Council was told that there was a survey of students to see what they wanted, but the students were not given sufficient information. For example, ask if they prefer to go to class on the hour or on the current schedule without telling them that this would mean adding an extra week to the semester.

Senator Null talked about the two calendar committees. There was a vote on the proposal in Academic Council.

Senator Smith-Andrews said she remembers it being an information only item, not a vote, in the Administrative Council.

Senate President Stretz: She expressed concern about the impact of the vaccine exemption on the COVID-19 pandemic. Will the university allow the exemption to extend to include the pandemic vaccine?

Senator Fornehed said that the vaccine is close to approval for front line health care workers, should be available near the end of December.

Adjournment

Senator Mills moved to adjourn the meeting. Senator Fry seconded. The meeting adjourned at 5:05 p.m.

Approved: January 25, 2021