

Faculty Senate Business Meeting

March 22, 2021

Submitted by K. Craven

Members Present:

Stephanie Adams, Douglas Airhart, Dan Allcott, Michael Allen, Jeremy Blair, Troy Brachey, Debra Bryant, Kris Craven, Dennis Duncan, David Hajdik, Tammy Howard, Janet Isbell, Brian Jones, Christy Killman, Nancy Kolodziej, Matt Langford, Chad Luke, Ann Manginelli, Lori Maxwell, Jennifer Meadows, Mark Melichar, Holly Mills, Lachelle Norris, David Larimore, Linda Null, Brian O'Connor, Joseph Ojo, Anthony Paradis, Sally Pardue, Richard Rand, Jeff Roberts, Mike Rogers, 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:

Chris Brown, Wei Tsun Chang, Yun Ding, Steven Frye, Susan Laningham, Emily Lee, Lenly Weathers

Proxy: Rachel Hall for Mary Lou Fornehed

Special Guest: Elizabeth Sofia (left after BOT Rep vote)

1. Call to Order

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

2. Approval of Agenda

Senator Duncan made a motion to approve the agenda. Senator Rand seconded.

There was no discussion. The motion was approved.

3. Approval of Minutes (February 22, 2021 Business Meeting) and Notes (April 5, 2021 Meeting with the President)

Senator Smith made a motion to approve. Senator Duncan seconded.

There was no discussion. The motion carried and both documents are approved.

4. BOT Faculty Representative Presentations and Vote (Pardue)

Candidates Sandi Smith-Andrews and Dan Allcott made brief presentations. Senate members voted via anonymous poll. Senator Dan Allcott was elected as the Faculty Representative to the TTU Board of Trustees.

5. Nominating Committee formation for President Elect of Faculty Senate

Committee chair Senate President Elect Wolak stated that the vote for the next Senate President Elect will be at the last business meeting on Monday April 19. The committee is comprised of President Elect Wolak and Senators Smith-Andrews and Rand. The nominations are open.

Senate members can self-nominate. She expressed her opinion that it is a great opportunity to learn the inner workings of the university. This is a 3-year commitment moving from President Elect to President to Past President. From President Elect Wolak's experience there is a well

established and smooth transition and this position allows for a faculty member to see the progression of issues and provides a continuity for the Senate. Senate President Stretz added that she believes that it is a privilege to serve and be the voice of the faculty. The position allows a faculty member to transfer information to relevant members of campus and speak on behalf of the faculty.

6. Faculty Senate President update

There are currently some legal processes ongoing to address some conflict that has occurred recently. The process is for Human Resources to do an investigation and issue a ruling. If the ruling is appealed, then the Faculty Senate will be asked to participate. This process needs to happen without involvement or interference from any Senate members in order to maintain objectivity. President Stretz has asked the Senators to remain objective during this investigation.

Senate President Elect Wolak reminded the Senate of the recent situation regarding a promotion issue where there was an appeal and the Senate had a closed special meeting to vote on the appeal. She reiterated that the Senate will not be involved until the HR investigation is complete and a ruling has been issued. This prevents the Senate from discussing the situations further at this time.

President Stretz also discussed that the previous discussion and resulting invitation for a visit from an individual from the administration is involved in the ongoing investigation and so this visit will not happen at this time. The Senate is asked not to discuss the matter any further until or unless it is brought back to the Senate after the investigation concludes.

As for recent discussion on changes in the policies as a response to changes in Title IX and the Cleary Act, the changes were required by the federal government with a timeline of a July or August deadline. The changes involved the due process for these types of issues. The university must now hire representatives for both parties and an impartial judge for the case. This required setting aside funds and other unexpected considerations. Due to the nature of the changes and the fact that it was mandated by the federal government, these new updates were not required to be approved by the Councils.

This highlighted an issue that the Senate, and the general faculty, need to be aware when changes are made to policies within the university. The Provost is in discussion with Karen Lykins to see how to communicate when there are important policy changes and what the policy changes entail. Most likely this will result in a more obvious area on Policy Central to show new updates.

There is now vaccine available and being distributed on campus, see Leann Ray in Health Services. Senator Smith-Andrews reported that we must follow the same guidelines as the County Health Department. President Stretz said that Walgreens now has vaccines. As does Walmart and other pharmacies. To reduce waste, some pharmacies will give shots at the end of the day to anyone regardless of qualification so as to not throw the vaccine away.

There was a discussion about the new Eagle Cards. The issue is that they don't say Tennessee Tech University or specify Faculty or Staff. This is causing problems for faculty registering for conferences that require proof of affiliation and faculty status. They also do not include any date, so validity and current status are unclear. It was determined that the information should be conveyed to Karen Lykins with a copy to the Provost and request a consideration for a new design.

7. This item was stricken as discussed in #6 above.

8. Old Business

No old business was discussed.

9. Such Other Matters

President Stretz conveyed from the Cabinet meeting that applications are down 8% and admits to the university are down by 9%. It is an unusual circumstance with the continuation of the pandemic. They are hopeful to have a better picture after more students complete the RSVP for SOAR in a few weeks.

Senate President Elect Wolak thanked BOT Representative Pardue for her words at the BOT meeting about the faculty compensation. She feels that we have now taken one step forward. We had asked for a cost of living increase at a minimum and what was passed was a range from 1% to 7%, so the average would be around 4%. BOT Representative Pardue argued for 2% to 5% but the Board did not choose this option. Senate President Elect Wolak is grateful for the good fight. Senate President Stretz added her thanks for BOT Representative Pardue's service.

BOT Representative Pardue said that she was doing it for all of us and was disappointed that the Board didn't concur. She also stated that the discussion wasn't heard by the broader group because it was a part of the smaller morning meetings. She also said that the discussion is not over. The 1% to 7% will be for this year but it has started the conversation. She also talked about the Boards for other Tennessee universities and they do not all handle this issue the same way. She believes that the department chairs need to have the ability to make local decisions and the deans should uphold the chair's decisions. It is good news that the department chairs will be including 2 years of data when making the decisions.

Senate President Elect Wolak expressed that these are tiny steps forward. Also, all meetings will now be recorded and made public.

Senate President Stretz again discussed stimulus money coming from the federal government. She is concerned that there is discussion about how to justify spending and not how it will actually be spent. She feels that there needs to be a single voice. There have been significant reductions in some budgets, like Center Stage and the Library. There is a need to fund additional research. What other things are needed? Senator Killman suggested that Senate could send a list

of recommendations, but this would need to happen very soon. Senators Rand and Smith-Andrews discussed needs around Study Abroad and International travel issues due to trips being booked and then cancelled in the last academic year due to the pandemic. Senator Killman also suggested tying the recommendations to high impact practices, this would strengthen the argument.

Senate President Stretz also said that the Provost is interested in expanding the options for faculty to participate in non-instructional leave. She has been requested to announce a clearer explanation of her intentions.

There was a brief discussion about the progress of the new Budget Advisory Committee structure. Dr. Stinson is listening but is still not getting enough advice.

On the issue of athlete rights, there was some information in the last meeting. President has met with coaches and Mark Wilson concerning the language and appropriate ways of protesting. There was a letter to express protests and the writers asked to meet with State Senators but did not ask to meet with President Oldham.

Adjournment

Senator Killman moved to adjourn the meeting. Senator Rand seconded. The meeting adjourned at 5:03 p.m.

Approved: April 19, 2021