

## **Faculty Senate Business Meeting**

January 24, 2022

**Submitted by K. Craven**

### **Members Present:**

Stephanie Adams, Douglas Airhart, Dan Allcott, Michael Allen, Sean Alley, Troy Brachey, Chris Brown, Debra Bryant, Melissa Comer, April Crocket, Kris Craven, Dennis Duncan, Mary Lou Fornehed, Steven Garner, Scott Hagarty, David Hajdik, Syed Rafay Hasan, Katherine Hermann-Turner, Tammy Howard, Samantha Hutson, Janet Isbell, Christy Killman, Matt Langford, Emily Lee, Jane Liu, Mark Loftis, Jeanette Luna, Ann Manginelli, Lori Maxwell, Jennifer Meadows, Holly Mills, Linda Null, Brian O'Connor, Joseph Ojo, Kristin Pickering, Elizabeth Ramsey, Christopher Reames, Lee Ann Shipley, Drew Sisk, Troy Smith, Sandi Smith-Andrews, Holly Stretz, Dan Swartling, Kyle Turner, Robert Wilbanks, Kimberly Winkle, Russ Witcher, Laith Zuraikat

### **Members Absent:**

Steve Canfield, Yun Ding, Scott Smith, Lenly Weathers

### **Call to Order**

Senate President Jeannette Luna called the meeting to order at 3:36 p.m.

### **Approval of Agenda**

Senator Airhart made a motion to approve the agenda. Senator Ramsey seconded.

An item was added before Other Such Matters to discuss making the meetings open to the public. The motion was approved.

### **Approval of Minutes and Notes**

#### 1. November 15, 2021 Business Meeting

Senator Mills made a motion to approve the Minutes of the Business Meeting as edited. Senator Smith-Andrews seconded. The motion carried.

#### 2. November 29, 2021 Meeting with the President

Senator Smith-Andrews moved that the Notes be approved as edited. Senator Mills seconded. The motion carried.

### **Updates and Remarks from Senate President (10 minutes)**

#### 1. Senate Roster updates – welcome Dr. Kyle Turner (Business)

Senator Turner is replacing Senator Rand who requested to be released from duties for this semester. The term will end in May. We invite him to remain by running in the upcoming election.

There is also a need to recruit 2 new Senators as Senator Larimore has retired and Senator Luke has left the university. Senate President Luna will contact the appropriate parties for replacements.

## 2. Update on Academic Calendar

### a. Report on results following Academic Calendar Committee fall meetings

The calendar committee met a second time. This is not a subcommittee of the Senate, but a stand-alone committee. They have approved a modification to the calendar for this spring and changes to the 2022-2023 calendar. These modifications have been approved by the Provost and the President and are already updated on the web site. Of note are the following items. The fall 2022 semester will again start on a Thursday, the same as the fall of 2021. We will also now have Veterans Day as a holiday in the fall semester. However, the last day of classes is earlier and closer to the old calendar and the final exam schedule returns to the Monday through Thursday format with grades due the following Monday (after graduation). This current semester, Thursday and Friday of Easter weekend will both be no class days and this will continue into future years. This is also consistent with other institutions in Tennessee. This committee will meet twice this semester.

Question: It seems that there has been a week taken out of the instructional term. Is it so important to have classes start on the hour and half-hour to lose this time?

Answer: This was never an option given to the committee for discussion. They were only asked to look at the start and end of the semester and the days allotted for holidays and breaks. The start and stop time for classes was to remain the same. Additionally, there are other tools for instruction beyond the schedule class times that could be utilized to make up discrepancies.

Note: The committee will continue to discuss such questions as handling the Veterans day holiday as it moves to different days of the week impacting the MWF/TR schedules differently. There is a consideration of moving the Fall Break to compensate. Please send any questions or recommendations about the calendar to Dr. Sharon Huo, Associate Provost.

## 3. Update on the SSC Custodial Services Contract

The contact with SSC will end 1/31/2022. There was a request for proposals last semester. SSC submitted a proposal but was not chosen to continue providing the custodial services for the university. The new company, HES, will take over on 2/1/2022. There was an agreement for HES to hire the SSC employees but there was an issue over health insurance coverage.

## 4. Update on ORED Town Hall

The Town Hall was attended by approximately 25 faculty members and there was a large number of questions asked and addressed. The main topic of discussion was the reorganization efforts and the status of the process.

## 5. Update on Faculty Senate Procedures

The procedures for the Academic Council and Administrative Council have been updated. There needs to be some work done on the Senate Procedures to match the updates in the others. Another issue that needs to be discussed and addressed is the change in representation of the Library on the Senate. This work will continue.

#### Additional Comments about #4

The reorganization process is more top-down than bottom-up due to the fact that there is no committee but is being primarily controlled by Dr. Jennifer Taylor, Vice President. One goal is to move most of the bookkeeping out of the Centers and into the ORED. There has been a decrease in staffing and it is necessary to move the work around so that the experienced personnel are handling appropriate work throughout the process. This should allow the Center Directors more time to work with faculty and to work on identifying appropriate funding sources. This is definitely something to keep an eye on, but it won't be implemented until the summer with the hope of having things in place by the start of the fall semester.

#### **Recommendations from Ad Hoc Committee on Policy 600 (Dr. Maxwell, 30 minutes)**

1. Thank you to ad hoc committee members Allcott, Maxwell, Shipley, Smith
2. Committee Recommendations below:
  - a. Delete Section III, C, sentence two; possibly proposed a replacement sentence
  - b. For "employees" III. A. "Employees, including administrators, faculty and staff" is proposed.
  - c. For E. Code of Conduct, 3: "Employees shall not refuse to accept reasonable job assignments or intentionally fail to follow lawful instructions. Employees must also accurately report work time and attendance. The refusal of an employee to comply with the lawful directives of authorized university officials constitutes insubordination."
3. Discussion

Policy 600 is the Code of Conduct Policy. The recommendations in item #2 above were distributed to the Senators through e-mail. The ad hoc committee met once via zoom. Several of the members then met with VP Vetter & University Counsel Perdue to discuss the recommendations. As to item #2 (a) there was some debate as to whether a replacement sentence with different wording was needed as a replacement. The conclusion was that there is no such need and the recommendation is to delete the sentence from the policy. For item #2 (b) there was some additional discussion among the Senators as to whether students also need to be included in the specification of employees in this section of the policy. Some believe that students were considered in the Student Handbook and did not need to be included. The decision was to consult University Counsel Perdue before the final submission of the policy changes. Regarding item #2 (c) the issue was a concern about getting directives from someone other than the direct supervisor. In this case of a directive from the direct supervisor, refusing would be considered insubordination. Therefore, the new wording see above is recommended to protect the faculty member.

The next step is to consult the owner of the policy, VP Vetter, for clarification on these points and then submit to the Administrative Council for the first presentation as an information item.

## **Recommendations from Ad Hoc Committee on Policies 205, 206, 20 (Dr. Null, 40 minutes)**

1. Thank you to ad hoc committee members Fornehead, Langford, Null, Smith-Andrews
2. Committee Recommendations (see Word File with list)
3. Discussion

### Policy 205 – Faculty Tenure, Policy 206 – Faculty Promotion, Policy 207 – Tenured Faculty

The Ad Hoc Committee has met and gone through the policies looking for inconsistencies and concerns that need to be addressed. These were sent in a Word document. These items are just recommendations and they would like some discussion and suggestions on them before moving forward.

One topic of discussion was item IX.B.3 regarding who would hear an appeal of a faculty member not renewed during the probationary period. The policy currently allows for an option of a committee specifically empowered by the President. However, it is believed that the Faculty Affairs committee is tasked with this type of appeal and for consistency and experience with the process this seems sufficient. The general consensus of the Senators was that all policies should use the Faculty Affairs committee for any grievance.

Another point of discussion was related to item X.B.4 regarding the allowance of appellant testimony. In many instances, it is believed that it would be beneficial to hear from the appellant. Also, there is some concern regarding the communication of decisions in these cases. It is felt that it should be stated that after the President decides the case, he should convey his decision to at least the department chair and possibly the college dean and the Provost. The current practice is to notify the faculty member. The other issue is the timing of the decision and the communication. The information needs to be received in time for planning for the following semester.

Another big issue is item VI where it would seem that the policy on granting exceptions to promotion and the policy on granting prior credit for promotion have been conflated. There is a desire to explicitly detail this process and assure that it is being applied consistently in the policies and in practice. The timing is such that the negotiation should occur at the time of hiring and the information should be included in the hiring contract.

A desire to have the Provost provide someone to help work on these documents and revisit this issue at a later meeting.

### **New Item: Should the Faculty Senate Meetings be Open to the Public?**

In the interest of time, this item will be considered at the next meeting.

### **Other Such Matters**

## 1. Covid-19 Concerns

Senate President Luna stated that there are now N95 masks on campus. Consult your department.

Senator Fornehead gave an update from her experience working at the hospital. The new variant is very contagious. Even if you are fully vaccinated and boosted, she encourages you to wear a mask. There are a lot of patients in the hospital and it is increasing exponentially. Most of them are unvaccinated. For masks, KN94's and 2 surgical masks are good. Cloth masks provide no protection. This trend has not peaked yet, hopefully in 3 to 4 weeks.

Senate President Luna said that to get masks and other supplies, you need to submit a work order. The AAUP is planning to put out a statement. There is a lot of anxiety and stress among the faculty. Her requests to delay the start to the semester or begin the semester online went unanswered. She also indicated that the university is not likely to return to online instruction, but if you are having extremely low enrollment you can decide to go online for a short period for health and safety reasons. This must be communicated to the students very well.

Senate President Luna said that she has invited Athletic Director Mark Wilson to the next meeting with the President to discuss the new athletic facilities. She requested that agenda items can be sent to her via e-mail.

### **Adjournment**

Senator Fornehead moved to adjourn the meeting. Senator Smith-Andrews seconded. The meeting adjourned at 5:38 p.m.

Approved: February 21, 2022