

## **Faculty Senate President's Meeting**

October 21, 2019

### **Members Present:**

Douglas Airhart, Michael Best, Jeremy Blair, Troy Brachey, Chris Brown, Debra Bryant, Wei Tsun Chang, Andrew Callender, Ahmed Elsayy, Mary Lou Fornehed, Stuart Gaetjens, Mark Groundland, David Hajdik, Shelia Hurley, Brian Jones, Christy Killman, Nancy Kolodziej, Matt Langford, Susan Laningham, Lori Maxwell, Mark Melichar, Christine Miller, Allan Mills, Holly Mills, Lachelle Norris, Linda Null, Brian O'Connor, Anthony Paradis, Sally Pardue, Richard Rand, Krystal Akehinmi for Jeff Roberts, Mike Rogers, Troy Smith, Sandra Smith-Andrews, Barry Stein, Holly Stretz, Lenly Weathers, Zac Wilcox, Kim Winkle, Jeannette Wolak

### **Members Absent:**

Yun Ding, Steven Frye, Barbara Jared, David Larimore, Mary Matthews, Ben Mohr, Joseph Ojo, Lee Ann Shipley, Craig Zamer

### **Guests Present:**

Lee Wray

The meeting was called to order at 3:36 p.m. by Senate President Smith-Andrews.

### **Remarks by President Oldham:**

The President is initiating a new format for this meeting. Instead of agenda items, he will ask questions of the senators in an effort to gain insight and ideas about meeting his goals for the year. He is open to comments, suggestions, compliments, and complaints. His focus in these meetings is faculty involvement, participation, and contribution.

Before asking about Preview Day and discussing strategies for his goal of increasing diversity, President Oldham shared that the special called meeting in November will be a presentation by staff who have been modeling potential changes to the 12 credit hour tuition model and to out-of-state tuition.

### **Preview Day**

President Oldham asked what the senators thought of Preview Day on October 5.

Senators by and large reported positive feedback, noted parents were engaged, felt the event was collegiate, and that it was possible the best event Tech had held. It was mentioned this was a great event for new faculty who felt intimidated but were pleasantly surprised how well it went. Senators noted current students and advisors were engaged with prospective students the whole day. The branding and marketing on campus was well done and gave a great perception. President Oldham said he was impressed with how departments displayed their own branding and identities, and he was pleased to see so many faculty in front of tables rather than behind them.

President Oldham asked if everyone felt this was a good use of faculty time and whether everyone felt it was the right level of support. He asked if anyone felt there was anything lacking in the event.

Senators agreed this was a good use of faculty time and was well-supported. Some suggestions for tweaking the event were offered, including:

- iPads or tablets on the network for signing-up to facilitate follow-up and recruitment (and sharing with Admissions)
- large fans to combat heat if necessary
- extra tent(s) to alleviate the feeling of crowding
- advanced notice about departmental costs for the event
- conversion data to track attendees who choose Tennessee Tech
- bringing in industry alumni to attend the event and speak to prospective students
- recruiting the younger high school siblings of prospective students
- to increase diversity, consider chartering buses of prospective students and families from areas where traveling to an event may be a limiting factor
- providing Tech shirts for new faculty and staff
- tracking diversity data on the front end as well as after the event

Lee Wray asked if anyone had a sense of prospective students expressing doubt about Tech or hearing reasons that students may not choose this school. Senators were not aware of any specific doubts or concerns, other than the amount of courses that may transfer from other schools. President Oldham said that should not be a problem and would look into that. There was discussion about our main competition, and Tech is primarily competing with UT-Knoxville (40%), MTSU (30%), and UT-Chattanooga (30%) for students. President Oldham remarked that students deciding based on money are usually choosing between us and MTSU, while students deciding based on academics are usually choosing between us and UT-Knoxville.

## **Recruitment**

President Oldham asked if there were other ways faculty would like to be useful in general or in recruitment efforts. Senators expressed interest in being ambassadors on recruitment trips, joining community college recruitment fairs (and pairing with subject-specific faculty), visiting prospective students both inside and outside of regular recruiting events, visiting company/industry events to represent Tech, and allowing prospective students to sit in on classes. President Oldham mentioned “Tech After Dark,” a recruitment effort for local prospective students. Sitting-in on evening classes could be a helpful part of this event.

Some senators raised concerns about recruiting graduate students. President Oldham explained how it is much harder to centralize and is usually handled at the department-level. Some of the concerns about recruiting graduate students involved the availability of assistantships/funding and how a lack of available health insurance may require students to work off-campus to supplement costs.

The discussion wrapped with a restatement of President Oldham’s enrollment and diversity goals for 2025, which include enrollment of 12,000 with 22% diversity. The President emphasized that we need to grow, and some senators agreed and commented that Tech’s size was part of its appeal, so growth should be slow and steady. It was also mentioned that while events like Preview Day do well to attract students, we should focus on making sure we have the programs, facilities, and services that will keep them here when they choose us.

President Oldham asked for any further comments. Hearing none, he adjourned the meeting at 5:05 p.m.

Approved: 11/04/2019