

## Faculty Senate President's Meeting Notes

November 1, 2021

Submitted by K. Craven

### Members Present:

Stephanie Adams, Douglas Airhart, Dan Allcott, Michael Allen, Sean Alley, Chris Brown, Troy Brachey, 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, David Larimore, Emily Lee, Jane Liu, Mark Loftis, Chad Luke, Jeanette Luna, Ann Manginelli, Lori Maxwell, Jennifer Meadows, Holly Mills, Linda Null, Brian O'Connor, Joseph Ojo, Kristin Pickering, Elizabeth Ramsey, Richard Rand, Christopher Reames, Lee Ann Shipley, Drew Sisk, Scott Smith, Troy Smith, Sandi Smith-Andrews, Holly Stretz, Dan Swartling, Lenly Weathers, Robert Wilbanks, Kimberly Winkle, Laith Zuraikat

### Members Absent:

Steve Canfield, Yun Ding, Matt Langford, Russ Witcher

**Guests Present:** Lori Bruce (Provost), Lee Wray (Chief of Staff), Claire Stinson (VP of Planning and Finance), Doug Bates (Dean of the Library)

### Call to Order

Call to order 3:35 p.m.

### Remarks from President Oldham

1. Upcoming Master Plan feedback sessions
2. Other remarks

President Oldham discussed two new capital projects for which we will seek approval from the Board of Trustees at their meeting in December. The first project is for a parking garage. This has been in the master plan and will have four levels with 412 parking spaces and be located next to the STEM center. The other is the renovation of the West side of Tucker Stadium. The current building is 45 years old and in very bad shape. The new facility will include a new press box, premium seating, and an improved fan experience. Much of the funding is planned to come from ticket sales and rental of the club-level seats and is intended to be a show piece for campus visitors. This project is approximately \$15M.

Question: Is this the right time to invest this much in athletics? What is the growth potential?

Answer: There is no intention of using student fees to satisfy the debt service. There is no prediction of the future, but there are a number of schools who have started or restarted football programs and now they are selling out many of their games. This is a growth industry. As a governor on the NCAA Board of Governors, there have been a lot of conversations around this

issue. This can be a component in the new enrollment strategy because students want a school with a competitive football program. For this to happen here, we need to invest in it.

Question: There are issues with the OVC realignment. The conference has never been truly competitive. What is the current situation?

Answer: Over the last 40 years we have had 10 winning seasons. This is a hard location for this level of competition. The OVC is attempting to change this. They are hoping that the changes will yield a return on investment.

Question: We are talking about a large investment in athletics when the employees are not getting sufficient compensation and the departments are planning for budget cuts. Related to the return on investment, talk about the visual optics of the budget situation.

Answer: We can address all of these issues. One doesn't hurt or help the other. A viable athletic program will help the whole campus. We need to look at the long-term perspective and see the difference between a lack of recurring resources and outlay for specific projects. I am not proposing that we put athletics ahead of academics. The state will not help to finance the renovation of the stadium and putting it off won't fix the problems. We believe that we can afford it now because of a lot of external support.

### **Budget Discussion (beginning ~4pm)**

#### **Guest: VP Stinson**

1. Overview of the current revised budget
2. Is the university anticipating a 4-6% budget cut? How is this estimated?
3. Other questions from Senators

Question: We are hearing a lot of different numbers related to the proposed budget cuts. What is the real situation:

Answer: There are always issues with timing when related to the budget. The process is long and arduous. Many of the questions are not answered until just before the budget is due to the state. There are a lot of outstanding questions now. We don't know the level of funding available from the state and we won't know until the State of the State address by the Governor in February. The tuition pricing is also unknown. We don't know what the spring enrollment will look like, much less the enrollment for next fall. What was sent out to the colleges and department was for planning purposes. The intention is for the units to run through various scenarios of what could happen and to be ready. It was not intended to scare anyone. We would like to get as much information as soon as possible. Hopefully thing will improve so we can get a clearer picture.

VP Stinson presented the current budget information to the Senators. This included some discussion of the new scholarship program and the intention that it will help to increase

enrollment. She also discussed the unspent funds and wanting to involve the campus more in the budget process. VP Stinson also stated that there has been progress made on making the summer school budget more realistic.

President Oldham expressed his opinion that we are in a very sound financial position presently. He doesn't want anyone to get confused by the talk about reductions. This is an attempt to plan ahead, which is a good strategy. There are concerns about enrollment.

Question: Has the amount of state funding gone up?

Answer: Yes. In my term as president it has almost doubled. The latest increase is similar to that in other states. The current increase was mostly to go into salaries. The state usually mandates increases but does not provide sufficient funding. In that case we would make up the difference.

Question: We know there is a decrease in enrollment. What percentage is due to lack of retention? What is the final enrollment drop?

Answer: A high level. However, all students are not equivalent. We dropped 30% in enrollment this year, many were full paying students. A lot of the drop is attributed to the pandemic. It is also not just freshman. There was a 5% drop in first-year retention. These were mainly students who had not yet chosen a major. This was an incentive to the changes in the scholarship program that are being implemented. The goal is approximately 2000 new students or a 4% annual growth rate.

Question: In regards to summer school, when a faculty member teaches a class with low enrollment, they receive a prorated pay for that course. With a more stable budget, will they now receive full pay?

Answer: Provost Bruce said that this a challenge. Summer school is a part of the budget, which is different from many schools. The revenue to cost ratio is almost 2 to 1. This is a different model from some others, but there are both pros and cons to this model. The Provost is open to removing summer school from the budget, but it is a tangled knot that will require unraveling. As VP Stinson said, we are working toward a more realistic summer school budget. The prorated pay is not the only issue and we need to get it right. One goal is to change from reactive to proactive.

### **Discussion about the Library Budget (beginning ~4:30pm)**

**Guests: VP Stinson, Provost Bruce, Dean Bates**

1. Overview of the history of library funding (Dean Bates)
2. What is the plan for funding the library moving forward?
3. Other questions from Senators

Dean Bates presented information about the Library budget. He discussed the inflation issues with library materials, which is a big challenge. The world of the library has changed significantly. A comparison of TTU with other programs that have an engineering program shows us on the low end of library budgets.

Question: There are a number of resources that have been covered by the state for the nursing program. This funding is going away, but they are still critical to the success of the program. Did the library receive any of the increase revenue when the Carnegie classification changed?

Answer: There was considerable competition for those funds and much discussion about where would get the biggest impact. It was a complicated issue. To give it to the library would mean taking it away from somewhere else. In the end, the funds were all allocated elsewhere.

Question: Where do we go if we need new or renewed resources?

Answer: There is a request form on the web site. However, there is no available money, so we would have to give up something else. The best option is to use the Inter Library Loan service.

Question: Since we are trying to increase our research productivity, we need good database access. Is there any of the research overhead fee going to the Library?

Answer: I don't know. The budget has stayed the same for the last 5 years. President Oldham said that they could take from the indirect costs on a contract. Dean Bates raised the question – what is the vision of the library? We need to set a vision for the library and then begin to plan how we can get there.

Please send any additional questions for the guests directly to them.

### **Discussion about Covid-19 Updates (~20 minutes)**

1. Changes to masking on campus
2. Other questions from Senators

President Oldham asked the Senators to rewind to the beginning of the semester and remember the discussion about where we were and the decision to have the mask mandate. There were a lot of unknowns and controversy. It was decided to have the mandate and monitor the situation. They honored that plan and have now revisited the current situation with discussion in the President's cabinet and calls with local leaders. The number of cases has been tracked very closely and have been falling substantially. As of this morning, there were only 3 confirmed reported cases on campus. Therefore, it seemed like an appropriate time to eliminate the mask mandate. So far, comments have been mostly positive. This was not influenced by any external pressure or reasons.

Senate President Luna discussed the new program about to be announced for a vaccine incentive program on campus. She gave credit to Senator Smith-Andrews for her work with the TUFS organization and information presented at their recent meeting. They have looked at a number of programs from other schools and patterned ours similarly. For students, there will be a drawing to include prizes. For faculty and staff, there will be some prizes and it was announced that Wednesday before Thanksgiving is going to be an official holiday.

President Luna also announced the progress of Policy 945 – Name, Image, and Likeness. This is a new NCAA policy for the athletes to be able to use their name, image, and likeness for financial gain. As a NCAA member, we need to have an official institutional policy. It will be working its way through the Councils and University Assembly for implementation at the first of the new year. Please provide any feedback directly to the Athletics Director Mark Wilson.

There was a question about a vaccine mandate. There is a situation at UTK with faculty who have government contracts being required to get vaccinated. We are still looking into whether this will be an issue on campus and we are continuing to look at this issue. We have been able to anonymously check through the Health Department and they responded that 96% of the faculty and staff on campus have already been vaccinated.

**Additional Questions (time permitting)**

None

**Adjourned** at 5:36 p.m.

**Approved:** November 15, 2021