

Faculty Senate Breakfast and Workshop Notes

August 16, 2021

Submitted by K. Craven

Members Present:

Douglas Airhart, Dan Allcott, Michael Allen, Sean Alley, Troy Brachey, Debra Bryant, Melissa Comer, Kristine Craven, Dennis Duncan, Mary Lou Fornehed, Steven Garner, Scott Hagarty, David Hajdik, Katherine Hermann-Turner, Samantha Hutson, Janet Isbell, Mark Loftis, Jeanette Luna, Ann Manginelli, Lori Maxwell, Jennifer Meadows, Holly Mills, Linda Null, Brian O'Connor, Elizabeth Ramsey, Richard Rand, Christopher Reames, Lee Ann Shipley, Troy Smith, Sandra Smith-Andrews, Kimberly Winkle, Russ Witcher, Laith Zuraikat

Members Absent:

Stephanie Adams, Chris Brown, Steven Canfield, April Crockett, Yun Ding, Syed Rafay Hasan, Tammy Howard, Christy Killman, Matt Langford, David Larimore, Emily Lee, Janet Liu, Chad Luke, Joseph Ojo, Drew Sisk, Scott Smith, Holly Stretz, Daniel Swartling, Lenly Weathers, Robert Wilbanks

Guests Present:

Helen Hunt (Director of the Women's Center)

Supplied Handouts

Agenda; Shared Governance; Policy Central; Tennessee Tech Faculty Senate

Welcome and Introduction

Senate President Luna welcomed the group and introduced the Executive Committee members. Each Senator was introduced and gave basic information about themselves.

Overview of Shared Governance

Senate President Luna discussed the principles of Shared Governance. She then introduced Policy Central, how it builds a framework for the operation of the university. She also described the Faculty Senate, its Councils, the University Assembly, and the meeting schedule. It was also noted that shared governance provides the Faculty Senate with considerable voting power in decisions about university policy and procedure. The Faculty Affairs Committee is a standing committee of the Faculty Senate with the members being appointed from the Senators. Recently, a Faculty Senate Cabinet was formed to facilitate faculty input into more immediate decisions, especially that occur outside of normal business hours. This Cabinet is made up of the Executive Committee and all current Senators who are past Senate Presidents.

Senator Smith-Andrews gave a brief synopsis of the Tennessee University Faculty Senates (TUFS) organization. She discussed the make up of the body, the meeting logistics, and the reporting requirements. This organization is also a member of the similar national organization.

Board of Trustee (BOT) Representative Allcott then gave a report of similar information about the BOT. The operation of the BOT is transparent and all meetings will be live steamed. The only exception would be a meeting regarding any pending litigation. It was made clear that he is not a representative of the Faculty Senate but a BOT member. Also, the BOT's voice is through the chair of the BOT and not its members.

Other considerations for Senators – be open to faculty coming to you, bring items from faculty to the Senate, attendance at all meetings of the Senate and the Councils is expected, if you are unable to attend you can designate a proxy to attend and vote for you during the meeting.

The Faculty Senate President attends the President's Cabinet's weekly meetings and meets weekly with the Provost. He/She also attends the Dean's Council monthly meetings and all meetings of several other university standing committees.

Discussion of Priority Items for 2021-2022

Support for New Parents

Special Guest Helen Hunt discussed some of the issues facing university faculty, staff, and students who have recently become parents. According to Institutional Effectiveness, there is a dramatic decline of faculty at the higher ranks because of the loss of tenure-track faculty. The main issues include a lack of lactation locations for new mothers, limited allowance for family leave, a long waitlist for the campus child care with no preference given for employees, and issues with parking.

Budget

The Senate continues to struggle with the need for transparency and a stronger voice related to the university budget. Last year the Budget Advisory Board was formed but there was still not an adequate opportunity for feedback and input into the decisions being made. Another concern is the question of how departments are expected to recoup the loss of student fees in the new model and the fact that there is no consistent model applied to all the colleges. These issues are time sensitive because of the cycle of the budget.

The Launch Pad

This new initiative has experienced a high turnover rate in the advisors. This can signify an issue with leadership. The Senate would like some data and to voice their concerns as well as check with the Deans for their opinions.

Policy 223

There was an ad hoc committee that drafted a memo expressing concerns about the revisions and the need for the administrative council to have a say in the revisions. This issue is not resolved. A revised version of the policy will be coming soon.

The New Calendar

There is question as to whether the extra week of school will impact the retention rate. The pandemic is likely to also have an impact on retention. There is concern as to how to measure these factors to see the effect of each. The Senate was told that there was a new calendar committee formed to look at this issue moving forward. There was no knowledge among the Senators present of the membership or existence of this committee. The impact of the new calendar and course times on the Joint ETSU programs is still unknown.

COVID-19 Pandemic

An announcement about masks is imminent. The university has masks for the new freshman students but does not intent to distribute new masks to the entire student body. The Senators were reminded that this is a university level decision and individual faculty are not allowed to impose other restrictions not sanctioned by the administration.

Approved: September 27, 2021