



THE UNIVERSITY of TENNESSEE

KNOXVILLE, CHATTANOOGA, MARTIN, TULLAHOMA, MEMPHIS

UNIVERSITY FACULTY COUNCIL

Meeting #52 with President DiPietro

May 14, 2015

226 Capitol Boulevard

Nashville, TN

UT Faculty Council Voting Members (Quorum, 5 voting members, established)

Present:

UTHSC Phyllis A. Richey (Campus Representative)
UTK Joanne Hall (Faculty Senate President)
 Candace White (Campus Representative)
UTM Brian W. Donavant (Faculty Senate President)
 Jenna Wright (Campus Representative)
UTC Susan Davidson (Faculty Senate President)
 Jennifer Ellis (Campus Representative) (via teleconference)

Trustees (Ex-Officio voting)

 Thad Wilson (Board of Trustees faculty voting member)
 David Golden (Board of Trustees Faculty non-voting member)

UT Faculty Council Ex-Officio Non-voting Members

UT Joe DiPietro (System President)
UT Katie High (System Office of Academic Affairs and Student Success)

Faculty Council Guests

UT India Lane (System Office of Academic Affairs and Student Success)
UTC Joanie Samprek (Faculty Senate President-Elect)
UTK Bruce MacLennan (Faculty Senate President-Elect)

Call to Order 9:55 CDT

Minutes of April 15, 2015 were approved unanimously.

Introductions of new and old members and guests.

President's Remarks

Joe DiPietro began by stating we had a decent year budget-wise, the second best in the previous nine years. In terms of salaries, he is trying to assemble a 3% pool. Currently the figure is 1.5 increase. As has been done in the past, Chancellors would be given latitude to distribute as cost of living (COLA) increases versus merit-based increases. It has been a good capital outlay year. For example, a new 4-H building, and a science building at Knoxville were passed, after efforts by Anthony Haynes and the Advocacy team, which is positive news. Joe holds that UT now has more influence than in the past seven years.

Joe reviewed that the 3-3-0 plan was in "version 2." When outlining this at the budget hearing to the legislature, members of that body wanted examples of entrepreneurship. The example given was admitting more out of state students. Memphis has out of state students in bordering counties allowed to

pay in-state tuition rates. Such agreements would be needed at the other campuses. THEC may do away with its ruling on this. Capital maintenance fund gains were good, but there remains 400M in deferred maintenance.

The new budget model has been advanced by budget advisory groups and chancellors are ready to implement it. The President said we will have a tuition increase. He followed by saying we need to close salary gaps. Though there is strong buy-in from partners, he predicts there will be some bumpy air as we proceed. That said, he reiterated that this will be the second-best state reward and the hope is to have that scenario in 2 of the next 10 budgets. The state has a structural budget defect, and UT has to develop alternatives. A strong rationale for change is that it is “the right thing to do.” Continued tuition increases and reliance on the state will not solve the long-term problem of deficits.

Changes in the Board were discussed. In District 5 M. Murphy will rotate off. Thad Wilson will rotate off as voting faculty Trustee, and David Golden will then be the voting faculty member. There is a vacancy at Interim Vice Chairman wherein an appointment will be made.

Joe stated that at the recent commencement at UTM, when graduates were asked if they were first generation college graduates to stand, about half did so. We are reaching needed populations in the state.

Tom Rakes will be returning to a faculty role. (not sure of his current role or where he is?)

Response and Discussion

Candace reviewed goals. All 4 faculty senates have been set up in the advocacy system, so that rapid email and call responses are now facilitated when needed. This was helpful in the situation of the new 4-H building being funded. Candace referred to several “puzzle pieces” that fit together as a more holistic picture. Brian began by pointing to the Joint Resolution on shared governance, stating it was passed by 3 campuses and the fourth (?) passed a similar one, which differed only in that it called for increased faculty as well as administrative responsibility. The reason for the Joint Resolution is to show a unified faculty, rather than staying in silence. Joe appreciated the word “urgency” in the resolution, which should be a theme in dealing with legislators and leadership and continued that the message needs to be that UT is a good thing that deserves legislative support. Brian discussed having the UFC and President work more closely together.

Candace opened the discussion on COLA versus merit salary increases, pointing out that increases are unevenly distributed across faculty versus administration. Thad argued for COLA versus merit increases because the COLA is so low, we will not be able to make up for past lack of COLA increases over the past 10 years. Dividing COLA and merit still maintains this COLA deficit over time. Joe referred to the Consumer Price Index (CPI), which is better than HEPI; he holds to be more accurate, and reiterated that the goal is to make of for the deficits. A combination of COLA and merit is needed. In the system, units vary and the data reflects this. The directions faculty take with each chancellor should take this into account. Candace pointed out that in terms of the 3% pool, the administration receives the full amount. Phyllis enjoined that it is also staff who get the increase—everyone but faculty. Thad remarked that if merit is about performance, if faculty are underperforming, the administration would also be underperforming in its role. What is missing is a good examination of administrator burden. A nationwide trend seems to be adding administrators and resources. Joe responded that he does not tolerate underperformance in administrators. Joanie (guest) pointed to the increasing numbers of assistant deans and directors. Joe pointed out that many of these new administrators have been hired because of federal regulations, such as Title IX, which pressure the system to have more administrators.

In discussing merit, the point was raised that it is applied very diversely and through many formulas. Relatedly, there is inflation in evaluative metrics because some heads won't deliver bad news of underperformance by faculty. Joe asked for examination of merit, that virtually all get some merit, less than 100 people got zero increase. Are COLA and merit issues really comparing apples and oranges?

More discussion on salary increases included that administrators are always getting above COLA. Brian said at Martin salaries are at 85% of comparison figures, and asked how we will get to 100%, indicating that the present approach seems to be that we cannot close the gap, and so why try? Joe reassured that at Martin this gap will eventually be closed. Candace raised the point that the faculty, staff and administration ought to be treated the same. Arguing in favor of merit, Joe said that it is an investment in retention, matriculation, etc. Candace pointed to many programs that have been started that require evaluation as well, such as One Stop, the Teaching and Learning Center, which employ many staff, and it is not clear what the outcomes are. Joe urged the group to think about all of the information, and stated that UTK was able to give mid-year salary increases based on merit, and that he hopes this can continue to be a possibility each year.

In terms of promotion and tenure, sometimes deans grant only "meets expectations" when the individual exceeds, to save money. Is there a quota? Evaluations can be uneven as a result. As has been brought up earlier in the year, department heads need training and orientation on doing evaluations, and Candace stated the task force on tenure and program evaluation prioritized this as the first concern.

This led to a discussion on handbook changes and problems were raised by Phyllis and Thad that administrators have actually rewritten parts of the handbook on a website, and that administrators spin new interpretations of the intended meaning. Phyllis said the common theme of the puzzle was not following the faculty handbooks. Joe stated that these events need to be addressed through grievance at the time of occurrence to Katie or himself; that he would not tolerate deviating from the handbooks. There was general agreement that in addition to the handbooks, departmental bylaws should be clear about criteria for P&T, but it was clear not all departments had specific bylaws to cover these criteria. More transparency is needed as to how one can earn "exceeds expectations" on many units. Phyllis stated that deviations from the handbook need to stop and that the reason grievance is not made is fear of retaliation and lack of confidence in the leadership. Joe asked what he can do, and the group generally asked that deans and chancellors be made aware from the top down that such treatment of the handbook is not acceptable. Additionally the excess "bloat" of administration should be looked at, and administrator training on these points is essential.

The point was raised that there are not only procedural implications but that there are legal risks when department heads operate independently from documents. Katie stated that the part about legal issues has been raised. Susan stated that in some cases faculty are bringing someone else to advocate for them or to sit in on evaluations. In one case, the faculty member then got "exceeds expectations." More discussion ensued on differences between "meets" and "exceeds" and, as Joe pointed out, all at "meets" or above are eligible for merit pay. It remains that there is a great deal of discretion that heads and deans have in determining who gets merit and how much, and that rationales differ. Joe agreed that unit cultures differ on this point as do the various campuses. Jenna asked whether these decisions would be made by campus or system. Joe stated there was still deliberation but that he favored a mixed model, although in some units it may be necessary to base all on COLA. Ideally we need another 1.5% from the state. He would like to see similar approaches in similar geographic areas. He believes that no one is willing to go beyond 3%, and that even human resources departments make arguments against COLA increases versus merit.

The discussion turned to the Cumulative Performance Review (CPR). Joe stated that the CPR takes a very long time, and is really done for efficiency and effectiveness, not primarily to remove tenure. He suggested that underfunded or non-funded faculty members could teach more, but illustrated with one

case that then the teaching could be sabotaged by that faculty member. CPR rarely goes to termination, rather people are incentivized to retire and encouraged to leave.

A few faculty may not be pulling their weight. Yet, Candace pointed out that the vast majority of faculty work very hard all the time, and that although the faculty is sometimes bragged about for research, and increased enrollment, we are treated unfairly in the system. The point was made that often faculty do not get key information. Twelve month faculty are usually “hybrid” administrators also, and get more information than faculty do. Phyllis said that faculty get mixed messages. Many agreed that service is “encouraged” but not rewarded by administrators. Various breakdowns in workloads discussed indicated that usually 5% is allotted for service (or no more than 25 in rarer cases), though the faculty member may be devoting far more time to service than this percentage. Deans state they value it. On one campus the deans were invited to the Senate meetings, but few ever attended. Joe asked why faculty (members present) do service. Answers included that it was highly valued, important and that if some did not step up, no one would do the work. Susan said that the faculty do raise their voices on this, she had done so in an email exchange and the administrator’s response was that the faculty are too busy to run for the senate, etc.

Candace asked the President what we as faculty and UFC can do about the value of service by deans and department heads. Joe suggested that in some cases there is pay for service, using the example of UTIA outreach efforts, adding that not all units can afford to pay for service.

At 11:45 President DiPietro left the meeting.

The meeting broke for lunch and reconvened at 12:15

Several more items were discussed regarding funding for faculty senates and Thad suggested that such funds might be used to bring in an outside person to examine upward evaluation.

Candace announced that the minutes should show that we as the UFC appreciate Jenna Wright’s service, and that we send best wishes to her upon retirement. She was declared “UFC Emerita.”

In other business, Brian Donavant was elected new UFC chair by acclamation. Bruce MacLennan agreed to take on the Secretary role.

Candace stated she would be writing a letter to the President and that this would be circulated.

India reminded the group that dept. heads need training, and that in addition faculty in units have responsibility to make sure there are bylaws in place for evaluation, that there are regular peer reviews of performance, etc. Katie encouraged faculty to see what are in dept. bylaws, and to determine what these mean in each. There was general agreement that each unit should have a conversation about expectations, that these will change over time and that evaluation, whether self or by others should reflect the unit and university’s mission.

Announcements

The next meeting will be held June 24, in conjunction with the BOT meeting June 24-25 in Knoxville. The Knoxville UFC group will reserve a room at Chesapeake’s for the dinner on the 23rd. The meeting adjourned at 12:30 pm CDT.

Respectfully submitted,
Joanne Hall
UFC Secretary