



THE UNIVERSITY of TENNESSEE

KNOXVILLE, CHATTANOOGA, MARTIN, TULLAHOMA, MEMPHIS

UNIVERSITY FACULTY COUNCIL

Meeting 55
September 16, 2015
Videoconference

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

UTHSC	Thad Wilson (Faculty Senate President)	present
	Phyllis A. Richey (Campus Representative)	present
UTK	Bruce MacLennan (Faculty Senate President)	present
	Candace White (Campus Representative)	absent
UTM	Roberto Mancusi (Faculty Senate President)	present
	Robert Nanney (Campus Representative)	present
UTC	Susan Davidson (Faculty Senate President)	present
	Elizabeth O'Brien (Campus Representative)	present

Trustees (Ex-Officio voting)

	Brian W. Donavant (Board of Trustees faculty non-voting member)	present
	David A. Golden (Board of Trustees faculty non-voting member)	absent

UT Faculty Council Ex-Officio Non-voting Members

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

Faculty Council Guests

UT	India Lane (System Office of Academic Affairs and Student Success)	present
UTHS	Terry Cooper (Faculty Senate President-elect)	present

Call to Order 4:05 PM EST by Brian Donavant

Minutes of August 19, 2015 were approved unanimously.

Old Business

Joint Resolution: Susan reported that the resolution had been passed by the UTC Faculty Senate and that it would be sent up through the UTC chancellor. It was also agreed that the UFC as a body would send the resolution to Joe via Katie.

Letter of Appreciation: It was agreed that UFC would send a letter to Joe expressing our appreciation for the progress toward mandatory training for department heads and deans.

Supporting Faculty Senate Service: Susan observed that at UTC there is expressed support for Faculty Senate service, but that not everyone is on the same page. Department heads and deans are not getting that message from the provost and chancellor, and therefore faculty are not encouraged to participate. Brian said that there is generally good support at UTM, but that something is lost in translation at each level. Phyllis said it was similar at UTHSC; faculty were elected to the senate because they drew the short straw; senate service is not valued because does not bring in any money. Thad added that their chancellor would like to incentivize some roles with additional money. On the clinical side, however, senate service is viewed as a waste of time. Moreover, the de-emphasis of tenure-track positions is impacting the senate and shared governance, since it must be handled by a dwindling number of tenure-track faculty. However, that's a larger issue.

Brian remarked that there are actually several issues. One is incentivizing service and making it count as a percent of effort. The other is financial support for travel etc. UTM is emulating UTK and adding to the P&T some language that defines more robustly what service means. However, there is no uniform procedure across the system for funding UFC. Susan said that she shared with her chancellor the letter UTK has about extra salary for the FS president, and he said it was "interesting." She added that they do have support for travel. Brian said the situation is similar at UTM, but that it could change with a new provost.

India reported that she had heard a little about the training for deans and department heads. One module is on shared governance, and as it is assembled they will ensure they get UFC input on what goes into that module. Brian said that is very welcome. India also noted that it will take nuanced support to deal with funding, since the chancellors provide what is needed. It raises the question, "What's the problem?" Sometimes the money that you get informally is the good kind, but she agreed that you need to know what your budget is. Thad remarked that Peter is very supportive, but that the winds can change quickly. India acknowledged the value of being able to manage your own budget without having to ask for things.

New Business

Draft Access Policy: Katie explained that in the 2014 legislative session legislation was proposed that UT adopt access policies that would make all digital instructional material accessible to people with disabilities. UT kept the legislation from being written by forming a study group that came up with recommendations. All institutions would adhere to a policy that all instructional material should be accessible and follow federal guidelines. All campuses and units must develop accessibility plans, which have to have priorities and a timeline, with provisions to make people aware of the guidelines and train them. The plans will go to the president's staff. All the campuses now are in the process of developing plans. (UTC has been doing it for about a year.)

We should look at the plans to see if anything looks peculiar. The Board of Regents is taking a hard line: every website has to be accessible down through the first 20 layers. UT is not being so prescriptive and is modifying webpages as they need to be redone. It will apply to material developed after a certain date, not retroactively. Tennessee Teaching & Learning Center are being made aware of it and technical staff are being sent to Murfreesboro for training. It was noted that some reader software for the blind cannot handle pdfs. Bruce asked how to handle technical material, such as mathematics, diagrams, and pdfs from journals. India replied the the Office of Civil Rights understands that some material cannot be made accessible, and that we should do the best we can. Katie added that Purchasing is ensuring that all new technology is in fact accessible (and not just marketed as accessible). We can circulate the policy to interested parties, but should note that most of it is dictated by federal policy and that it has been passed already by General Counsel.

Resolution from UTHSC Faculty Senate: Thad presented a resolution from the UTHSC Faculty Senate urging “the University of Tennessee System Administration to require the UTHSC Administration, including anyone in a position to evaluate faculty performance, to refrain from using altered documents for the conduct of faculty evaluations, and to direct the UTHSC administration to restore the original, Senate- and Board-approved APPR document to govern the annual faculty review process.” He explained that the existing handbook has been modified inappropriately, and General Counsel is trying to decide what has been properly approved. Katie said she is continuing to meet on this matter. She has five inches of material to go through to see how they got where they are since 2003. She is working with GC. She has the Board documents and tracked changes on the documents, but many of documents are undated. UTHSC will send Katie their senate minutes to help sort this out. Phyllis remarked that the party line is that these are editorial changes that do not need Board of Trustees approval, but the faculty doesn’t think they are editorial. Katie said that Joe and Peter know she is working on the issue.

Transfer Students: India said she is working on a variety of statewide issues to help transfer students. She will be asking, probably in October, for information about how faculty are involved in handling transfers now. She noted that students in TN are relatively mobile, and in a year or so we will need to know how we will handle transfers from TN Promise.

Underprepared Students: Katie explained that the funding formula gives us credit for graduating “underprepared students,” but it is unclear how they are defined. They are not students in remedial classes, because we don’t have those anymore. How do the campuses define “underprepared student”? We need a definition we can use in reports to THEC. She will send each Faculty Senate president a letter requesting this information.

Textbook Cost: Katie said that this summer’s study group would focus on the cost of textbooks. She asked if there are conversations on the campuses about this and said she will send a letter to the FS presidents requesting this information. TSU charges each student \$300 and provides all textbooks digitally. We are now doing an audit of all texts in the bookstores, and trying to see if there are some that everyone uses in common, so that we can get a deal on these. Phyllis remarked that publishers don’t want us to go in together on a deal. Katie mentioned that a legislator has heard a complaint that not all the required books for a class are used (e.g., only 2 out of 5). Brian asked how new editions are handled, and India replied that at TSU everyone had to agree to use the same books.

Meetings: The next meeting will be in conjunction with the Board of Trustees meeting in Knoxville, Oct. 8–9. Brian will send the information to Bruce so he can make arrangements including somewhere to eat Wed. night (Oct. 7). Thad said that he would be meeting with Joe at the Board meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:02 PM EST.

Respectfully submitted,
Bruce MacLennan
UFC Secretary