



THE UNIVERSITY of TENNESSEE  
KNOXVILLE, CHATTANOOGA, MARTIN, TULLAHOMA, MEMPHIS

UNIVERSITY FACULTY COUNCIL

Special Called Meeting  
26 February 2018  
Videoconference  
MINUTES

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

UTHSC	Martin Donaldson (Faculty Senate President)	present
	Phyllis A. Richey (Campus Representative)	present
UTK	Beauvais Lyons (Faculty Senate President)	present
	Bruce MacLennan (Campus Representative)	present
UTM	Chris Caldwell (Faculty Senate President)	present
	Robert Nanney (Campus Representative)	present
UTC	Gretchen Potts (Faculty Senate President)	present
	Gavin Townsend (Campus Representative)	present

**Trustees (Ex-Officio voting)**

	Susan Davidson (Board of Trustees faculty voting member)	absent
	Terry Cooper (Board of Trustees faculty non-voting member)	absent

**UT Faculty Council Ex-Officio Non-voting Members**

UT	Joe DiPietro (System President)	present
UT	Linda Martin (Vice President, Academic Affairs and Student Success)	present

**Faculty Council Guests**

UT	India Lane (System Office of Academic Affairs and Student Success)	present
UTK	Misty Anderson (UTK Faculty Senate President-Elect)	present
UTIA	Bonnie Ownley (Immediate Past Senate President)	present

**The Meeting began shortly before 9:00 AM EST**

The meeting was called to address tenure policy revisions and BOT restructuring with President DiPietro.

Joe: if the faculty and administration don't keep talking openly, we're going to be in trouble.

Since the Aug 17 workshop, we've been talking about this restructuring. The administration has delayed implementation of any new policies pending feedback from faculty. I did not receive the questions from Bruce until this morning.

Bruce suggested we proceed through the questions systematically.

Beauvais: what is meant by "program review"? Joe: we have in mind the sort of data gathered by the EAB (Education Advisory Board<sup>1</sup>) for UTC. This would include information about teaching workloads. We would like to expand EAB data collection to the system level.

Beauvais: where do the "standardized academic program reviews" required by THEC fit into this? Joe: they'd be included; the external reviews by THEC and such would supplement the internal reviews generated by EAB. David Miller is the "implementer of that approach." Linda noted that this information would be used to help make decisions about hiring new faculty, among other things.

Beauvais: would the chancellors at each campus be responsible for applying and interpreting the data? There is concern that the BOT might use the data to make decisions about program termination, regardless of the wishes of the campus. Joe: the BOT is not interested in such decisions, and, even if they were, they would initiate a review through the president.

Misty: EAB is focused on teaching loads. How can it be used at the system level when the campuses have very different missions? Shouldn't the data be gathered and used by the chancellors? Joe: you can't have autonomy as a campus without some accountability. The BOT is frustrated that it can't get data on UT faculty teaching loads. Currently, only UTC has the means to provide that data.

Bonnie: how would EAB program review work for the Space Institute, where teaching load is not part of the equation? Joe: external reviews would be sufficient in that case. The whole process has not been refined yet.

Phyllis: how does "comprehensive faculty review" (CFR) differ from EPPR? Joe: the former would occur regularly, say every six years, while EPPR is triggered. We have not yet determined the processes and procedures for comprehensive post-tenure reviews. Other university systems have comprehensive reviews; only one has been identified that mandates external letters. There are many different approaches.

Phyllis: so how does CFR differ from our annual reviews? Joe: CFR helps ensure that the department heads are doing their annual reviews the right way. We want to avoid situations

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.eab.com/>

where department heads treat the annual reviews like informal “fireside chats.” The process of annual review must be strengthened to encourage fair but rigorous reviews. In departments where the process of annual review is done well, the CFR should be no problem. It might even allow outstanding faculty to be better recognized. The CFR should also enable better identification and remediation of underperforming faculty.

Bruce: sounds like the motivation for instituting a CFR lies with distrust of department heads.

Bonnie: why impose CFRs at campuses like the Space Institute where faculty are not only reviewed annually but also comprehensively every three years? Beauvais noted that annual reviews *are* post-tenure reviews.

Linda: it’s the norm among our peer institutions to have both annual reviews and EPPR.

Misty: we already have EPPR, which is still in its infancy, so why try now to impose CFR on top of all these other review mechanisms? Deans and CAOs already have the means to annually review department head performance. Shouldn’t we be concerned about the exponential increase in workload that a CFR would entail? Joe: the points are well taken, but we should be able to do EPPR and CFR together.

Beauvais: we already have multiple systems of review; why add another time-consuming service burden? Joe: annual reports on faculty are skewed; too many faculty are recommended for exceeds expectations.

Misty: so why not address the problem by enhancing department head education? Have you seen the results yet of the first year of EPPR? The data from those should indicate which department heads are doing their jobs well. Why not wait until we have a chance to see what comes of EPPR?

Beauvais: what happens if a faculty member gets good annual reviews but then a bad CFR; how would that discrepancy be resolved? Joe: in that case, if I’m a dean, I’ve got a problem with my department head.

Phyllis: so, this is a check of department head competency? Joe: yes, it’s part of a checks and balances system.

Beauvais: what happens if the CFR reveals that a faculty member who has only been getting meets expectations every year should in fact be getting exceeds expectations? Joe: we are still developing the policy. Linda: it may be that the CFR will only include two scores: meets expectations or needs improvement (pass/fail); there would be no effort to differentiate good

from excellent. Joe: we haven't yet had time to develop the policy to answer these questions.

Beauvais: so why attempt to institute a policy now – a policy that still needs development?

Bruce: and why impose a hastily-written, unrefined policy on top of a carefully-written EPPR?

Martin: could we faculty be involved in the development of this CFR policy? Joe: you should definitely be able to give us feedback.

Phyllis: we have annual reviews; we have EPPR; but we lack the means to confirm that we faculty, especially department heads, are “taking care of business.” Is this the purpose of CFR?

Joe: yes. Phyllis indicated that she is in favor of CFR now that she understands the purpose. She underscored both the wish to include faculty in the development of the policy and the concern about the extra service load on faculty and the administration that this policy might entail. Joe: we'll try our very best to minimize the burden.

Beauvais: it may be that CFR could involve little more than gathering six years' worth of annual review material and any supporting documentation already uploaded to the “faculty annual review portal.” Joe: there are many ways to structure the peer review committees; they might involve only a few faculty, some chosen by the candidate and some by the dean. Phyllis: so, it might actually be a seamless process, at least for the candidate. We at UTHSC just adopted Digital Measures; that might help with any CFR. Linda: other university systems with CFR call for candidates to include a CV, six years of reports, and a one or two-page summary. Beauvais: presumably the annual reviews would include the head's evaluations? Linda: yes.

Misty: there are different software packages used on different campuses. And some of these can generate very lengthy, comprehensive reports – 30 pages or more. Joe: not every faculty member is using the software available or updating their annual reports as they should. We need a system that captures everyone.

Misty: if the real problem lies with department heads who are failing to rigorously review faculty every year, doesn't it make sense to correct the problem with the heads?

Beauvais: the perception among faculty is that CFR involves external peer review. The policy needs to be written to make it clear that external reviews are not part of a CFR.

Bruce: CFR should not be necessary given improvement in department head training, better departmental bylaws, and clearer expectations.

India: EPPR was introduced in part because the vagueness of the earlier Cumulative Performance Review (CPR) policy. The new EPPR involved a lot of give-and-take with the

faculty and peer benchmarking.

Beauvais: the old Cumulative Performance Review (CPR) resulted in identifying how many cases of underperforming faculty? India: there were 25 cases, “a number of them” leading to retirement and resignations. The lengthy procedure for rooting out weak faculty under CPR is what led to the development of EPPR, which is triggered by a single “needs improvement” rating.

Beauvais: I served on the review committees of two of those 25; each involved more than 40 hours of work. CFR promises to remove the most productive faculty from their research and teaching time to participate in these reviews. Bruce: these review committees also cause “bad blood” among colleagues.

### **Restructuring the BOT**

Beauvais: what is gained by removing the student and faculty representatives from the BOT?

Joe: this is the governor’s bill, not mine. I would assume that the faculty and students were excluded on the Big Board since they were included on the campus advisory boards. Also, the AGB (Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges) recommends the exclusion of faculty and staff from governing boards. Beauvais cited contrary data from the “Cornell Group” indicating the value of having faculty and staff representation on such boards. It’s as if the BOT were afraid of a “true marketplace of ideas.” Joe: I assume the governor sees the BOT primarily as representing the interests of the citizens of Tennessee; faculty -- employees of the state -- can be seen as having a conflict of interest. Still, there are amendments floating around HB 2115 that may end up allowing student, perhaps even faculty, representation on the Big Board.

Misty: the governing boards of the TBR schools do include student and faculty representation. Does the governor see that arrangement as a failure? Joe: I don’t know.

Beauvais: I see the campus advisory boards as “perfunctory shells” that are only required to meet three times a year. Yet we already have campus advisory bodies in the form of faculty senates, alumni boards, the UFC, etc. Aren’t these proposed advisory boards going to be inefficient and duplicative? Joe: these advisory boards will represent the local campuses better than our current arrangement. As is, the BOT spends most of its time on issues regarding UTK exclusively.

Beauvais: the BOT deals with issues related to UTC and UTM and the UTHSC “all the time.”

Joe: I disagree. A local advisory board would get deeper into financial issues than the Big Board ever would. Chancellors attending BOT meetings would be compelled to assure the Big Board that they had consulted with their campus advisory boards.

Phyllis: not having a faculty vote on the Big Board is akin to taxation without representation. Why would the UT president support such a move? And why does the UT president think it is best to remove himself a voting member of the BOT? Joe: as is, I am “hamstrung” as a voting member from lobbying for what is best for UT. I anticipate having more flexibility to interact with board members, one-on-one, if I am not a voting member. That said, I do have some misgivings about a situation where I would disagree with the BOT and not be armed with a vote.

Beauvais: don’t board members interact now with each other via email and such? Joe: not when it comes to formal motions. Two people constitute a meeting when it comes to the BOT, and such meetings out of earshot of the entire BOT are not permitted.

Phyllis: again, if TBR boards can be seen as a template for all the FOCUS Act schools, why then would the governor not want to follow that template for UT and include faculty and students on the BOT? Joe: it is what it is. If the legislators want to amend the policy, they could.

Martin: even the presence of non-voting faculty and students on the BOT would be helpful. They’d be in a position to offer important perspectives during discussions. As proposed, the BOT is sheltering itself from such insight. Joe: well, I guess you could speak to the BOT as an employee. But your point is well taken. I don’t know what to tell you. Beauvais: we have four non-voting faculty members (senate presidents) on the Academic Affairs and Student Success committee of the BOT. Those members certainly inform the deliberations and policies of that committee.

Beauvais: about these “commonly held standards in the discipline.” As written, there’s concern that those vague standards could be used in lieu of the tenure requirements detailed in handbooks and bylaws. Shouldn’t the CAO audit all departmental bylaws to ensure that the standards for rank and tenure are in place? Joe: sounds like a small language fix would solve the problem.

Beauvais: shouldn’t procedures for tenure be defined at the campus level? We can’t have individual departments offer varied procedures. Joe: all bylaws have to be valid. But the “operational” aspects of the bylaws can be left up to individual academic units as long as they are consistent with board policy.

Beauvais: Ron Kirkland, UT alumnus, contends that this new BOT restructuring plan will convert the UT system into something resembling the TBR system. It could lead to the breakup of the UT system. Joe: I disagree. I don’t want the system dismantled. And nobody, outside of Ron, is talking about doing so. I also disagree with Ron about the worth of the advisory boards.

Misty: I’m concerned about the sheer amount of institutional change before us. Is now the time to amend tenure policy and such?

Phyllis: Thanks Joe. It's been enlightening and encouraging. We faculty want to be involved as much as is appropriate.

**Meeting ended 9:58 AM EST**

**Next Meeting: March 22. Time: TBD**

Submitted respectfully,

Gavin Townsend

UFC Secretary