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Faculty Senate, East Tennessee State University

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2013-2014 Faculty Senate

MINUTES—April 7th, 2014

Faculty Senate—East Tennessee State University

UPCOMING MEETING:	FOLLOWING MEETING:
April 28, 2014, 2:45 pm Forum, Culp Center	August Retreat TBD,

Present: Katie Baker, Robert Beeler, Jim Bitter, Sally Blowers, Patrick Brown, Burgess Burgess, Randy Byington, Kathy Campbell, Mohamed Elgazzar, Susan Epps, William Fisher, Virginia Foley, Allan Forsman, Ron Hamdy, Evelyn Hammonds, Tammy Hayes, Jill Hayter, Ken Kellogg, Tom Laughlin, Mary Ann Littleton, Fred Mackara, Theresa McGarry, Jerome Mwinyelle, Bea Owens, Thomas Schacht, Melissa Shafer, Kathryn Sharp, Taylor Stevenson, Bill Stone, Kim Summey, Jerry Taylor, Jennifer Vanover-Hall, Yue Zou

Excused: Charles Collins, Bill Hemphill, Dharendra Kumar, Kurt Loess, Lorianne Mitchell, Kerry Proctor-Williams, Deborah Ricker, April Stidham, Paul Trogen,

Absent: Beth Baily, Sharon Campbell, Daryl Carter, Bruce Dalton, Rosalind Gann, Keith Green, Nick Hagemeier, Jim Thigpen, Teresa Wexler, Shimin Zheng, Meng-Yang Zhu

Guests: Cheri Clavier, Amy Johnson

CALL TO ORDER: Vice President Foley called the meeting to order at 2:50pm

Vice-President Foley announced we would begin with Dr. Johnson who is here to give us an update on the Quality Enhancement Plan [QEP].

Dr. Johnson thanked the senate for giving her time to talk about the QEP. She introduced Dr. Cheri Clavier, the Director of Assessment for the Quality Enhancement Plan. She said that Senator Sally Blowers was on the Quality Enhancement Plan Development Team and is also on the IN top FORM leadership team and that Senators Susan Epps and Patrick Brown are Faculty Fellows. Dr. Johnson thanked them for their service. She continued that she would focus today on the two parts of the plan that most impact faculty, the programs of study and the faculty fellows. Then she would talk a little bit about the student support and engagement projects that the plan has funded, some unanticipated opportunities that have arisen, and finally where we're going to be next year with INtopFORM.

To start, we have 13 undergraduate programs of study participating in the QEP this year. Dr. Johnson said that she often says it is really 14 programs of study because the College of Nursing is participating, but there is a traditional on campus program and then a distance education program. So there are 13 programs but 14 assessment plans in the Quality Enhancement Plan. The major focus of the QEP is on faculty mentoring and faculty development. She said that we began that process with a workshop this past summer. It started in August and they spent three days discussing the six INtopFORM learning outcomes/learning competencies. They talked about in-depth about what those INtopFORM competencies mean specific to discipline. They also shared teaching ideas for each of the 6 learning outcomes. 79% of the faculty said they were excited about participating in INtopFORM at the conclusion of that workshop.

They extended the work of the workshop in six faculty learning communities; five of those are faculty in programs of study and the sixth faculty learning community is the faculty fellows. There are 32 faculty members who are participating in the programs of study and seven faculty who have received fellowships, so that is 39 faculty members all together. That represents about 6% of the ETSU faculty population if you exclude the College of Medicine and the College of Pharmacy. Over the course of 5 years at that same level of participation, it will affect about a third of faculty on campus.

At the conclusion of the fall semester they did a faculty survey about how things were going in the faculty learning communities. 85% of the faculty said learning communities demonstrate ETSU as committed to excellence in teaching. Those communities share ideas about the kinds of things that are happening in their classrooms specifically related to each of the 6 learning outcomes. The learning communities are also talking about assessment metrics and using assessment data to improve student learning. For example, they discussed CCTST data. They gave participants their department level CCTST scores, the college level CCTST scores and the university level CCTST scores. From those discussions there were two programs that said they would like us to proctor the CCTST in our classrooms. What happened with that is that the time spent on the CCTST for each student was at least 40 minutes. The university average is 26 minutes. So that was a notable increase. The average score in those programs ended up about 19.6 whereas the university average is somewhere around 16.5.

Dr. Johnson continued that another thing that programs of study are required to do is create their own assessments for their program participating in INtopFORM. They developed an assessment philosophy that really had the following things in mind: one, don't assess anything that we are not going to use- the focus is on student learning. They are flexible in terms of the assessment plans that programs develop, the emphasis is on usability, not perfection. They are not going to send back the assessment plan over and over. They are going to look at the assessment plan, meet with the program participants about it and make the changes in that meeting, no report writing. Then, they are going to go forward with the assessment plan that was developed. If that plan is not perfect, that is ok. Changes can be made to that assessment as it is moving through the program.

Dr. Johnson said that they created this spreadsheet which takes those ratings and translates them to the INtopFORM learning outcomes. So the faculty member still fills out just this paper

rubric that they've been used to using for years. She said that they send us the data and we translate it to INtopFORM and send it back. Departments are now working on improvement plans which are very brief table documents. She continued that every fall, once we have the data that they've collected using one of these metrics, we'll meet with them and bring up their improvement plans and discuss those improvements. They'll write no reports, we'll document the improvements they've made and whether or not they have worked. We really want the focus to be on improving student learning and not on report writing.

Dr. Johnson said that the student support engagement projects are grants given to anyone on campus. Another thing they have done is create some college department and college committee workshops; they took the INtopFORM workshop and put it into bite size pieces. They have been able to go and do some 2 hour workshops in units when requested. The INtopFORM Tip of the Week evolved from faculty who were sharing really wonderful ideas in the learning community groups. They wanted to find a way to capture that and send it out to the other faculty who are participating in INtopFORM. Next year there will be 19 programs of study that are participating in INtopFORM and 11 faculty fellows.

Vice-President Foley asked how one finds the Tip of the Week if he or she is not part of the email list. Dr. Johnson replied that you can go to etsu.edu/intopform. On the left navigation you'll see tip of the week and it will get you to all the tips.

Senator Schacht said that on the Power Point slide regarding assessment philosophy there was something about protecting confidentiality. He asked what the confidentiality that applies to faculty and programs is. Dr. Clavier replied that they want the faculty to use the data that they collect for improvement. They don't want to use this for any kind of comparison or for it to be seen in any type of evaluation. So the data collected for INtopFORM for a particular program of study is available to that program and is not shared with anyone else. If the program chooses to share it with other folks, they can, but she said that they won't share a program's data among all of INtopFORM or even in the university level reports that they are doing. Dr. Johnson added that when they report program data it will be programs A-M and not reveal the name of the program. They report most data through the aggregate.

Senator Kellogg said that he would play devil's advocate and asked if a department chair could take this information and use it against the faculty. Dr. Johnson replied no, because the data are for the whole program. They're not collecting data in individual classes. They're collecting program level data.

Senator Schacht commented that the way this is set up you will not be able to know about individual differences among the teachers that matter. You are deliberately blinding yourselves to that level of analysis and you are doing so on the basis that you want to protect people from the possibility that the data would be embarrassing. To use a healthcare analogy, if you are running a hospital then you want to know whose patients are dying. If you're running a university, you want to know whose students are not learning. At some level you need to preserve individual level faculty data so that somewhere down the road you can look at that rather than simply assuming it doesn't matter.

Senator Brown responded that data are being conserved at the level of the unit that is taking part in the study. In order to get people to agree to do this thing, you have to give them some sort of carrot – ensure that they are not going to be punished for trying something new. So those data are there. They're within the department or the program that is implementing the change. If they choose to make those available to others, they can. A lot of people aren't going to want to make a risky change because of how it might affect their student evaluations. And if you add one more potential evaluative factor hanging over their head, then you're going to have a much harder time getting people to volunteer to participate in a program like that. That is why they are doing it but those data don't disappear in some black box never to be seen again. They are there; they would just have to be requested from the program that is carrying out that study.

Senator Schacht stated that they can't be requested if they're confidential. Dr. Johnson said that it can be requested from the program. They are not just going to give other people the data. One of the things discussed in faculty learning communities is there is a possibility that if you try to do some of these things that your SAI evaluations are actually going to decline in the first couple of years that you're trying some of these things. We're trying to balance some of the risk involved in taking part in something like this.

Dr. Clavier said that the focus is on quality enhancement. We are just trying to take things that may already be working well and bring it up another level. Vice-President Foley said that when you're asking people to try something new instead of reverting back to what they know and have always done, confidentiality probably allows them to have that courage to keep pushing through. She wondered if that confidentiality will keep us from knowing what works and what doesn't. Dr. Johnson replied that we continue to publish things that folks have done. That's happening in faculty learning communities already. Folks are sharing ideas and sometimes they're sharing that something didn't work well.

She continued that Faculty Fellowships are open to all kinds of faculty at the university. Adjuncts can apply for faculty fellowships, lecturers can apply. A lot of people think INtopFORM is only for undergrad students and that is where the main focus is, but INtopFORM can be a graduate experience as well. If you're in a program that only offers graduate programs, then you can still participate.

Vice-President Foley thanked Drs. Johnson and Clavier for their presentation. She then moved on to the Senior Staff update. She said a large part of that meeting was spent on a presentation of change in policy for students and sexual harassment. The policy change is required by a change in federal law. It's been thoroughly developed. Included in the policy changes are training opportunities for students and new faculty at the university. There is a website that will be helpful to students who feel like they are a victim of harassment or assault including cyber-stalking. It's a very comprehensive change on student policy. It will now go to executive staff and then to academic council. It's in the works.

Senator Schacht asked if it has any implications for faculty. Vice-President Foley replied that we will have Dr. Howard come to an early faculty senate meeting in the fall. If a student comes to

us and reports they feel like they have been compromised or that they are being harassed, we need to know how to provide them support in the direction that they need. That is really the biggest implication for faculty.

Vice-President Foley continued that Dr. Jordan related that there were TBR grants for access and diversity. ETSU applied for three and received one; a \$40,000 grant to improve access and success for supporting students with dependents. Dr. Collins announced the parking garage is open. He also relayed the removal of \$12.9 million dollars from the state's budget that was going to go to higher education. They also took back faculty raises that they were mandating so those raises look like they won't be coming forward. Capital improvements did move forward so the elevators on campus that were going to be worked on will still be worked on and the community college building projects will still happen. Vice-President Foley said that President Noland reported on legislation. The Tennessee version of the Dream Act is moving through. That is an act that allows undocumented people who graduated from high school in Tennessee to attend college at in-state rates. He said that the religious freedom bills that were moving through have found their appropriate homes and have fallen by the wayside. He also announced that Tennessee Promise is moving forward.

Senator Schacht announced that he sent out a copy of a proposal to create a mechanism by which faculty at this university could have a referendum. This was prompted by the recent move by the College of Arts and Sciences chairs to hold a referendum in their college on the issue of term limits. There is not currently a mechanism for a general referendum. That makes the faculty senate different from the student government. The SGA has in their operating rules a procedure where by the student body as a whole can initiate by a petition a matter to be brought to the SGA and they can also actually pass something by a student referendum that gets put on the ballot as a result of such a petition. Senator Schacht said that he wrote something modeled partly after the SGA mechanism. What it says is faculty reserve the right to approve or reject actions by the faculty senate or to take action by direct initiative. The right is exercisable by a petition and then there are some procedures. The first element of the procedure is any eligible faculty member can initiate a referendum by submitting to the president of the senate a petition. He said that he left blank for our discussion how many people had to sign the petition or what percentage of eligible faculty had to sign it. Then the procedure says that the senate will determine whatever the form of authentication requirements are for such a petition. Upon receipt of a petition, the president will present the matter to the faculty senate at a scheduled meeting. At that point, the senate can vote on the issue and if the senate agrees with the subject matter of the petition and adopts it, then that's the end of it. On the other hand, if the senate rejects the subject matter of the petition then the senate will determine by majority vote whether to submit the matter of the petition to an immediate faculty vote or to first hold a faculty meeting to discuss the matter. If the senate wants to call a faculty meeting, there are procedures for faculty notice. The meeting shall be recorded and made available on the internet for faculty to participate in. Senator Schacht said that another option he didn't write in is that we could create a web blog for people to have online discussions and so forth. Then there are some additional procedures for how to hold a vote.

Vice-President Foley asked if we need to have a motion before we discuss or can we just have this conversation? Senator Bitter said that he moved that the bylaw and handbook changes as written by Senator Schacht be adopted after the “to be determines” have been determined. Senator Blowers seconded the motion.

President Byington said that we don’t know what levels of signatures will be required. We haven’t discussed that yet, but we should approach it in a way that doesn’t advance special interests. He said that he sometimes thinks people believe that the faculty senate speaks on issues that are not really within the purview of faculty senate. As we make these percentages, we should be mindful those perceptions are out there.

Senator Beeler said that to get a motion before the faculty senate is the first part of the petition. Should we have at least 100 faculty members that want something considered? Should we at least talk about it in the senate even if we bump it out?

Senator Mackara asked isn’t it our job to bring forward items that the faculty asks us to bring to faculty senate? If that’s the case then only one person has to suggest it. Senator Bitter said that there is a difference between someone coming up to me and saying “hey could you bring this before faculty senate?” and having demonstrating a strong enough faculty grounds for it to be considered as a possible referendum. It is a different kind of thing. He said he probably doesn’t want 180 to do it, but he probably doesn’t also want to have 10. 50 is a nice round number.

Senator Schacht said that part of why he did this was that there was a subtext in the recent Arts and Sciences emails that involved a narrative about people feeling disenfranchised, feeling like the faculty senate had become an exclusive club. Words like cronyism were used and so forth. Having a mechanism like this is a culture statement to the rest of the campus that they have a pathway to have a voice and to create outcomes that are equivalent to what the senate can do if they latch onto an issue that can mobilize the faculty.

Senator Laughlin said that a way of looking at it that would be instructive is a worst case scenario, what you would want in terms of a no confidence petition towards the administration. What would be the minimum number of people needed in order to advance that?

Senator Kellogg said that if he understood the first sentence, “The faculty of ETSU reserve to themselves the right to approve or reject actions by the faculty senate or to take action by direct initiative,” it is basically saying if faculty don’t agree with something the senate has put in the faculty handbook, they can do this.

Senator Schacht replied that was not quite correct because we don’t get to put something in the faculty handbook without it going through the Academic Council and the rest of the flow chart. The most the faculty as a whole could do would be to tell the senate, “Do not send it to the academic council. You don’t have our permission.”

Senator Bitter said that we are missing a couple of paragraphs. We would all have to agree with a vote of no confidence, and then the petition shall be deemed concluded. If not, then the

senate will determine by majority vote whether to submit the matter of the petition to an immediate faculty vote with or without senate proposed amendments or whether to timely convene a faculty meeting for debate on the matter. There is nothing in there that suggests anyone could send something forward and just cancel everything all at once or get rid of somebody all at once. It would have to go through here.

Senator Laughlin said that the minimum it is saying is that if x number of people want to have a no confidence vote of some sort, even if the senate turns it down we at least have to have a session for referendum. We don't want ten people to be able to send that.

Senator Bitter replied that he does. He related that in the late 1960's he was on SGA and he went to the president of the university and said "The students here want a clear statement from you on where you stand on civil rights." The president said, "Well I think I've said everything I need to say." We said to him "then we'll bring the students forward and you can talk to all of them here." And he said fine do it. So we called a group meeting. Five people besides us showed up. The president thanked us all for coming and smiled and walked away. If ten people want a vote of no confidence in the president, let them bring everybody to the meeting that they think should do that. If 150 people show up, that's one thing. If 10 people show up, that's quite another. It doesn't mean anything has to go forward from that.

Senator Beeler said that one request he would have is whatever mechanism we would have for getting this petition out to the faculty, we include both a "yes, I approve" and a "no, I disapprove" as well as an option to abstain. Let that sort of stronghold be our guidance in how we vote. Senator Schacht asked if he was talking about the idea of a counter-petition. Senator Beeler replied that it would still come before us, but we would have this extra information of ok, 50 people were for and 100 were against it. That would help us to guide how we would vote as a senate.

Senator Bitter asked if he could make a recommendation. He would suggest that the president of the senate verify a petition signed by 25 eligible faculty and then a second sentence that says eligible faculty shall be all non-administrators who teach courses at ETSU. Then he would suggest that if a matter submitted to referendum receives an affirmative vote then he would be more likely to go to a much higher number. He would be tempted to say that percentage needs to be 25% of the eligible faculty on the bottom end.

Senator Schacht said that is the same as saying a quorum for such a vote is at least half of the eligible faculty and that the affirmative vote is more than half of that quorum. He would propose a quorum for a referendum be 50% or more of the eligible faculty vote. If less than 50% vote, then it's a non-issue.

Vice-President Foley stated that she would suggest that we get all of this on paper and let everybody look at it again. She asked that we table it for the vote today and get all these details on paper for us to look at again.

She moved in to the Code of Ethics. At our meeting last week we voted and passed having the full faculty vote on it and we didn't vote on the document itself. Senator Stone had a concern

about our use of confidentiality and the open meetings law in Tennessee. Vice-President Foley said that she asked Dr. Jasmine Renner to look at that and she's doing some research for us. Dr. Renner agrees that adding the language, "confidentiality in compliance with the Tennessee Open Meetings Act" would cover us and it probably wouldn't change the way we behave. Because she has done some research, Vice-President Foley said she would like for us to revise that document with that language and then next time we meet vote on the document itself and also look at the research Dr. Renner has done.

Vice-President Foley continued that we revised our faculty senate meeting schedule and moved our next meeting to the 28th at which time we will hold elections. Senator Schacht asked if there needs to be a request made to TBR and approved by TBR by its June meeting for pay equity increase. His recollection was that David Collins said we had to have numbers to submit to TBR by March, which we're past that in order to get approval at the June meeting for something that would be implemented in the fall.

President Byington said that he thinks TBR just approves the plan and not the dollar amount; it is how you're going to distribute that dollar amount. One time our equity was actually paid by student tuition.

Senator Schacht asked if we have passed any important deadlines for anything to be actually doable this year.

Vice-President Foley replied that the way that happened the first time is that it was late. They had to do a lot of verification so they calculated what the gap was, but then the deans had to verify information and then it had to be verified one more time at the state level. That is why it was on June 1st and we didn't get it until October, due to a bunch of checks and balances.

President Byington said that the elections committee for this year is Senators Byington, Taylor, and Foley. He assumes that Senator Foley will be on the ballot to be affirmed as president. He asked if there was a volunteer to act as the third person on the election committee for the next meeting. Senator Laughlin volunteered. President Byington stated that if either Senator Taylor or Laughlin are by chance nominated for an office, then they could recuse themselves for that particular vote.

Vice-President Foley asked if there was a motion to adjourn. Senator Brown moved to adjourn. Senator Epps seconded the motion.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 4:30 p.m.

Please notify Senator Melissa Shafer (shaferm@etsu.edu or 9-5837, Faculty Senate Secretary, 2012-2013, of any changes or corrections to the minutes. Web Page is maintained by Senator Doug Burgess (burgess@etsu.edu or x96691).