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Faculty Senate, East Tennessee State University

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2013-2014 Faculty Senate

MINUTES—December 2nd, 2013

Faculty Senate—East Tennessee State University

UPCOMING MEETING:	FOLLOWING MEETING:
January 27th, 2014 2:45 pm Forum, Culp Center	February 10 th , 2014 2:45 p.m. Forum, Culp Center

Present: Dave Arnall, Katie Baker, Robert Beeler, Sally Blowers, Patrick Brown, Doug Burgess, Randy Byington, Kathy Campbell, Bruce Dalton, Mohamed Elgazzar, Susan Epps, Virginia Foley, Allan Forsman, Rosalind Gann, Ron Hamdy, Evelyn Hammonds, Tammy Hayes, Jill Hayter, Ken Kellogg, Dharendra Kumar, Tom Laughlin, Mary Ann Littleton, Fred Mackara, Theresa McGarry, Lorianne Mitchell, Jerome Mwinyelle, Kerry Proctor-Williams, Melissa Shafer, Kathryn Sharp, Taylor Stevenson, Bill Stone, Kim Summey, Paul Trogen, Jennifer Vanover-Hall, Teresa Wexler, Yue Zou.

Excused: Jim Bitter, Sharon Campbell, Kurt Loess, Deborah Ricker, April Stidham,

Absent: Beth Baily, Daryl Carter, Charles Collins, Tom Ecay, Keith Green, Nick Hagemeier, Bill Hemphill, Alan Peiris, Thomas Schacht, Jerry Taylor, Jim Thigpen, Shimin Zheng, Meng-Yang Zhu

Guests: Cheri Clavier, Mike Hoff

CALL TO ORDER: President Byington called the meeting to order at 2:50pm.

President Byington introduced Mike Hoff, Director of Institutional Research. Dr. Hoff stated that he would give the second half of the presentation and then introduced Dr. Cheri Clavier, Director of Assessment and Teaching.

Dr. Clavier stated her job was to make sure that student's take the senior exit exam , the California Critical Thinking Skills Test and to report the results to the state for performance funding. It is used to evaluate the General Education core and it measures critical thinking. It is state mandated and is required of all of our graduating students. There are 34 possible points for the test. The national mean is 16.7. Our mean score was a 16.5 in 2013 and in 2012 our mean score was a 17.63. We dropped a full point. We aren't quite sure what happened and we certainly don't want this trend to continue. There are lots of different causes for this drop. We

think one of the biggest factors is motivation. Students feel this test doesn't matter. Our students only spend about 30 minutes out of the 45 minutes given. If students put more time on this test we feel this test would be more successful.

Senator Kumar asked is there any way to put this on their transcript so students think it's important?

Dr. Clavier stated that it is something we talked about but decided against. Part of the reason is students who are bad test takers etc. Senator Hayter asked what other schools are doing to motivate students.

Dr. Clavier replied that it is hard to research as there are three possible vendors and tests universities could use. A number of universities within the TBR system are encouraging students at the faculty level and have the students take the exam together in class.

Senator Kellogg students can take it after they have 90 hours. Do you track how students at the low end of credit hours perform vs. students at high end? Dr. Clavier replied that we don't but we have the possibility of compiling that data.

Senator Blowers asked if retakes are allowed. Guest Clavier replied that it is possible if they know a student spent 5 minutes on the test, but it is cost prohibitive.

Senator Gann commented that if you have a test that evaluates the school and not the student, the student doesn't care. Dr. Clavier said that we are seeing that. One academic program as a part of In Top Form had the seniors take the exam together in a class and that group took the full time on the test and showed an increase in score by 2 points.

Senator Hayter inquired if there is data on scores broken down by program.

Dr. Hoff presented a slide with the mean scores by category for each of the colleges. He pointed out that we dropped a full point in every category. These are students that we are ready to hand a diploma to and by these standards they have done worse they have done in the past.

Senator Laughlin commented that it was stated that this test is our measure of critical thinking. If we don't even know what the questions are he said he wouldn't consider it our measure. Is there any consequence for not taking this? Dr. Clavier stated that there is funding implications.

Senator Burgess stated that he was on the committee that picked this test about ten years ago. He said that the committee looked at a couple of tests and this seemed best fit for the needs we were trying to fix at the time.

Senator Mwinyelle asked if there are figures to compare to other institutions. Dr. Clavier replied that some universities that do really well post their results on their web sites but the vendor will not provide that information. Senator Mwinyelle asked what grade is considered good. Dr. Clavier said that an 18 is considered a strong score in critical thinking.

Senator Gann stated that the test is just a way of assigning a number to the school and comparing it to other universities. Dr. Hoff replied that it is the system THEC uses to assess the institution's success and the system we have to work with.

Senator Kellogg said that he assumes that they haven't changed the test in 10 or 15 years. We change our curriculum all the time. We are using a test but we aren't teaching to that test. Senator Burgess replied that his recollection was that the test wasn't discipline centric. They were all general circumstantial questions.

Senator Proctor-Williams asked how much the university gains from this test. Dr. Clavier replied that if it we do it well we get about \$525,000.

Senator Mitchell asked why are we pining over this if the students don't take it seriously? Dr. Hoff said that the thing to remember is that they weren't taking it seriously two years ago too and we were doing better.

Senator Arnall commented that when you have a test with a no consequence end result; you're going to lose from day one.

Dr. Hoff asked if we are the only university with apathetic students. Senator Arnall replied that he thinks we have more of them here.

Dr. Hoff commented that other universities had improved so significantly that the vendor changed the scale. Senator Kellogg clarified that the national mean was moving up so quickly that those who were behind the mean had the mean adjusted so it doesn't look as bad? Guest Hoff said he has a lot of questions on how they calculated the scores.

Senator Epps commented that it would cost us little if we encouraged our students to take this seriously. It costs nothing to tell our students that the test affects the funding the university receives and therefor it is of benefit to them. Senator Stone added that behavioral scientists have discovered that the mere fact of suggesting before hand that someone behave ethically seems to have an effect and people will behave more ethically. He supports Senator Epps suggestion. Senator Epps continued that we call it the senior exit exam and it is misleading. Why not call it the California Test of Critical Thinking and students will have a better expectation of what the test is about. Senator Kellogg said that he thinks Senator Epps has a point. We have the departmental exit exam and the senior exam and it confuses students.

Dr. Clavier stated that part of the reason they were here today is to try to raise awareness of what the exam is about.

President Byington asked that the discussion move on to the second topic which is a predictive model for enrollment.

Dr. Hoff stated that Dr. Bach asked him to create a predictive model for enrollment this coming fall. The enrollment goal was 15,500. He looked at a number of attributes of past data to predict a future outcome based on a model or template that is used successfully at Memphis. Studies

have shown it to be accurate for 1 year predictions. On this model the prediction will be 14,430. We're off by 1,070 students.

Senator Gann asked why does Dr. Hoff think we're going to have a drop on enrollment. Dr. Hoff responded that his personal belief is the economy. It is popular right now to bash colleges. The national media right now is asking if the expense and debt load is worth it. Dr. Hoff added that it also has to do with birth rates – which were in decline 18-20 years ago. Senator Laughlin asked if Dr. Hoff believed the economic situation is a bigger factor. Dr. Hoff replied that he did.

Senator Arnall stated that in the west parents say that the economic times are bad so their child should go to college. He wonders if in this region parents just tell the kids to go work because they don't have the money to pay for it.

Dr. Hoff added that students often have family obligations and other circumstances that affect their success. Part of our mission is to have an impact on the region and he has concerns about the declining numbers and student success. He offered that people don't need to be told that they can do anything and more rigorous guidance might prevent some student failures. Dr. Hoff said that in order to gather more information he is partnering with the Math Department and the Research Institute on campus to create a survey for students who drop out. He is open to ideas regarding data points and invites the faculty to share those thoughts with him via email.

President Byington thanked Dr. Hoff for his presentation and turned the floor over to Senator Dalton.

Senator Dalton stated that the AAUP is the largest association of university professors in the country. In 1940 they published their policy statement on Academic Freedom and Faculty Governance which has been very influential and can be found in our faculty handbook. In some regions the AAUP is a union with collective bargaining rights. In some places it operates as an employees association. It's also a trade group. This is the largest advocate for our trade of being an academician. He has left membership applications on the sign-in table if anyone has further interest.

President Byington the business we need to attend to is in regards to a faculty ethics complaint. He commented that an ethics complaint is extremely rare at the university. But currently there is an ethics complaint, a grievance, and an EEOC complaint that have generated from the same circumstance.

Senator Burgess added that there is also an ancillary issue that has arisen with the accrediting body.

President Byington continued that there is a standing faculty ethics committee. However the faculty ethics committee was short some members. This past week the executive committee has worked to fill those vacancies and at this meeting we need to affirm those persons. Don Goode from the College of Education, Bill Stone from the College of Medicine, and Marie Jones from the University Library have agreed to serve. That brings us up to a full committee. If you go to the university website governance page you can see the full roster of members. President Byington announced that he would entertain a motion from the floor to accept the slate of

names for the committee. Senator Burgess moved to accept the committee members. Senator Epps seconded. The motion carried with none opposed or abstaining.

President Byington continued that there are procedures for grievances and tenure and promotion complaints in the Faculty Handbook; however, there are no procedures for ethics complaints. It has been suggested that the committee use the procedures for tenure and promotion as a guide. Tenure and Promotion procedure says that the chair of the committee be a no- voting member. Dr. Richard Kortum, associate professor in the Department of Philosophy has been suggested to chair the Ethics Committee. President Byington asked if there was a motion to accept Richard Kortum as chair of the committee. Senator Epps moved to accept the slate of nominees. Senator Mackara seconded. There was no discussion. The motion carried without dissent.

President Byington continued that this particular grievance originated in Public Health Affairs. Dr. Bishop has already ruled on the grievance complaint. She feels that she should not rule as acting-president as it creates a conflict with due process. Senator Burgess has been in contact with Dr. Jordan and others in the President's office, and the executive committee has put forth a list of at least four alternates from which the complainant can choose to rule should President Noland still be out on medical leave. TBR Chancellor Morgan, Vice-chancellor Denley, and the President of APSU who has a background in constitutional law Dr. Timothy Hall have all been named as possible arbitrators.

Senator Arnall asked if we could assume that the ruling from Dr. Bishop went against the individual. President Byington responded that yes it had.

President Byington announced that in the months of February and March Faculty Senate will meet every week with the exception of the first Monday in February and Spring Break.

Senator Epps stated that she is chairing the Instruction Development Committee. They have been looking at how lecturers are not included when it comes to grants. She said that they are proposing a change to the Faculty Handbook that states "full-time tenured, tenure track, clinical and research faculty and lecturers are eligible to apply for Instructional Development Grants. Should an individual recipient of an Instructional Development Grant leave the university or no longer be employed by ETSU during the term of the grant the grant funding will be forfeited". Senator Foley moved to make the change and Senator Blowers seconded the motion. There was no discussion and the motion passed without dissent.

President Byington asked if there was a motion to adjourn. Senator Epps moved to adjourn.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 4:37 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).

