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2013 February 11 - Faculty Senate Minutes

Faculty Senate, East Tennessee State University

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2012-2013 Faculty Senate

MINUTES—2/11/13

Faculty Senate—East Tennessee State University

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| UPCOMING MEETING:2/25/13 | FOLLOWING MEETING:3/11/13 |
| Date, 2:45 pm Forum, Culp Center | Date, 2:45 p.m. Forum, Culp Center |

Present: Dave Arnall, Beth Baily, Jim Bitter, Sally Blowers, Doug Burgess, Randy Byington, Sharon Campbell, Charles Collins, Bruce Dalton, Don Davis, Mohamed Elgazzar, Susan Epps, Emmett Essin, William Fisher, Virginia Foley, Allan Forsman, Rosalind Gann, Ron Hamdy, Evelyn Hammonds, Jill Hayter, Ken Kellogg, Dhirendra Kumar, Tom Laughlin, Theresa McGarry, Lorianne Mitchell, Alan Peiris, Susan Rasmussen, Thomas Schacht, Eric Sellers, Melissa Shafer, Jerry Shuttle, Taylor Stevenson, Kim Summey, Jerry Taylor, Jim Thigpen, Paul Trogen, Teresa Wexler, Meng-Yang Zhu Ron Zucker.

Excused: Daryl Carter, Rick Hess, Kurt Loess, Kelly Price, Kathryn Sharp, Yue Zou,

Guests: Rich Ashley, Cheryl Bates, David Champouillon, Alison Deadman, Diana McClay,

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

President Byington introduced guests Diana McClay and Rich Ashley from Human Resources who were scheduled to speak on the training program Skillsoft. Guest McClay announced that this new online training system was free to all faculty and staff. It was introduced in August and has not gotten much use, so she wanted to let the senate members know more about it and that it is also open to the faculty's students. There are different ways that it could be implemented to students and supervisors can assign the training to employees.

Guest Ashley said that the system is called SkillSoft. It can be accessed through the ETSU human resources website. There are two types of resources available. One resource is the hour long courses (there are over 100 courses). There are also 3-7 minute short videos on how to perform certain functions and various desktop applications. There are also videos on how to assign the courses.

President Byington asked if the URL could be put as a module on d2L sites. Guest Ashley replied that if a professor wanted to use it with students, the professor should contact him with a list of the students and he then would assign the professor administrative privileges to assign courses to those individuals.

Senator Schacht asked what the cost of the program was to the university and why is this not part of the library's database. Guest Ashley said that the expenses annually are \$7,777.20 for 100 courses which are available for everyone on campus. If you break that number down, the cost is approximately \$3.50 per person. Guest Ashley said that the library is a possibility and that they would certainly have to work with OIT to make a seamless interface with the supplier of this product.

It was pointed out that there are tests that accompany the courses and asked if these were assigned to a student, would the professor be able to see if it was completed and the score. Guest Ashley said yes and explained that there is a report feature for administrators.

President Byington thanked Guests Ashley and McClay and then moved on to senior staff updates.

President Byington announced that on Thursday, February 14th at 10:00AM at the Millennium Center there will be a press conference to announce the Arts Initiative. The Arts Initiative is in conjunction with the announcements around the Performing Arts Center. A normal press conference at the university typically invites about 50 people. This press conference will try to involve as many members of the community as possible and there were 500 invitations sent out.

President Byington continued that the next update involved the Salary Equity Plan for 2013-2014. A minimum of 1.5% has been set aside in the equity pool. Last year's equity pool was about 2%, so we're looking at roughly the same amount of equity pool money as last year or a little bit less.

Senator Burgess asked if this year's equity pool is going to include lecturers. President Byington answered that the Equity Committee as well as Dr. Noland is asking for our recommendation on that particular topic. The only pool of full time benefitted ETSU employees that were excluded from ETSU's equity pay plan last year was lecturers.

Senator Arnall asked for clarification on what the Equity Plan included. President Byington explained that the equity plan will be distributed next year, the same as it was this past year which was a minimum of \$750 per employee and a maximum of \$5000. We have the issue that there is one group of full time employees on campus that did not get a raise last year.

Senator Schacht made a motion that the senate encourage the administration to include lecturers in the Equity Plan. Senator Laughlin seconded. The motion was amended to include any benefit accruing employee. The motion passed without dissent.

Senator Bitter expressed that in the coming years he hoped that senate would continue to have faculty representatives on the Equity Plan Committee and that at some point we will address the difference in peer group between administrators and faculty.

Senator Schacht added that the history of that was that the committee spent most of the summer talking about what peer groups were going to be. It was focused on the definition of the phrase "Doctoral Institution". The whole process came to a rushed conclusion at the end of the summer when the committee stopped meeting and what nobody realized was that there was enough ambiguity in the language to allow the term doctoral institution to end up being defined differently for administrators and faculty. So the group that ended up in the administrator's definition of doctoral institution included a bunch of private institutions, religious institutions, and even one for profit institution.

President Byington commented in order to prevent administrative raises from taking more of the equity pool than faculty raises Dr. Noland set the \$5000 maximum cap this past year.

Senator Schacht continued that if we simply learn from that last year's experience and make sure that the committee's work proceeds in a timely way so that there is a deadline for producing a pro forma of what the plan is going to look like then there won't be this kind of surprise again.

Guest Champouillon responded that the senate has had 7 months to complain about this and force that committee to meet again. He stated that Dr. Noland told us a week or so ago that it is too late in the year now and they are using the same program as last year.

Senator Schacht replied that there is nothing to stop this body today from passing a resolution to ask Dr. Noland to convene the committee immediately. It may not be too late for this year.

Senator Zucker commented that we could at least ask for some of these meetings to be held when the majority of faculty are in session rather than during summer break when people aren't here. President Byington stated that there is a TBR schedule as to when they look at budgets, tuition and fees which may be driving when things happen.

Senator Zucker replied if they're talking about equity raises for next year perhaps before our last meeting in April we could put together something to say this is our stand.

President Byington stated that his goal has been to make sure that every chance he gets he makes sure that equity is moving up; that it is at the top of the list of budget priorities, from a strategic budget management committee to meetings with Dr. Bach and Dr. Noland. He understands Senator Zucker's concern.

Senator Blowers stated that she made the motion that we send a resolution to President Noland asking him to convene the committee immediately. Paul Trogen seconded the motion.

Senator Bitter stated that it does no good to convene a group with no other directions. He would prefer a motion that says something like no administrator's raise shall be

larger than the largest raise given to a faculty member based on the system. Senator Laughlin asked about insisting that the equity pools be the same group. Senator Schacht proposed that we simply encourage convening of the committee, then the next step is to see what Dr. Noland's charge to the committee is. We might have some suggestions for modifying that charge after we see it where we could get into all these details.

President Byington said the motion on the floor is for us to ask for a convening of the equity committee to look at the upcoming year's Equity Pay Plan. He asked are we ready to vote on this? The motion passed without dissent.

President Byington moved on to the last Senior Staff update, the proposed cost of living increase for state employees which is currently 1.5%. Out of that 1.5% the state funds about half of that and the institution has to fund half. Now what happens is usually whenever TBR and THEC are considering tuition increases, one of the things that they factor in is how much money does it take to cover the institutions' portion of this 1.5%. If nothing happens in the Legislature there will be at least a 1.5% cost of living adjustment.

President Byington asked for approval of the minutes from the January 28th Senate Meeting. Senator Bitter moved to accept and Senator Epps seconded. The motion passed without dissent.

Senator Fisher reported on the Legislative Update. He stated that there is a 2/3 Republican majority in the senate and house, enough members to establish rules and regulations and do as they please as long as it's within the constitution. There are three things that are likely to come up. First is a state constitutional amendment to be voted on in the November 19th, 2014 election eliminating any possibility of a state income tax on wages and salaries. Second is that THEC has been authorized to exist until June 30th 2013. Unless things change, after that date THEC will no longer be in existence. The Governor does not anticipate major activities in higher education for this session of the legislature. The major activity that the Governor will have is the implementation of ObamaCare. The state must put a couple hundred more people on TennCare and that is the number of people that Bredeson had asked to cut from TennCare to fund it for the next couple of years. So the major activity is going to be healthcare in the next session. Also, the revenues for the state of Tennessee in the month of December were 22 million dollars above budget estimates. So things are looking good at the present time. One other thing is that a bill that passed last year decreed legislatively that your longevity pay will come with your regular paycheck. To some extent that has occurred here in the past.

Senator Bitter added that Senate Bill 514 essentially says that the Departments of Counseling and Psychology and Social Work shall not be able to discipline or eliminate a student who for religious grounds does not want to participate with certain kinds of clients. He hopes that the faculty senate will address this. He also said that 'guns on campuses' will go through this year. Once this passes other social issues will arise.

Western Governor's University, which is a completely online university, will be a part of the Tennessee system. Part of it may be under THEC, but independent of UT or TBR. People who attend that university will have the same access to hope scholarships for their students. The university will be able to present complete programs, and it offers the cheapest education in Tennessee. Students pay \$3000/semester and take as many courses as they can get done in that time.

Senator Schacht said that the Western Governor's issue is something that is of concern to Dr. Noland as well. Essentially what has happened is that straight from the Governor's office, a decision was made that the state of Tennessee's own institutions are not meeting the needs of a particular group of students in a way that the Governor would like them to be met. Rather than coming to the state institutions and saying what can you do about this, he preemptively outsourced this to an institution that's a thousand miles away. There are all kinds of unanswered questions about this. The faculty should be concerned about it.

President Byington said that their accrediting agency is different than every other college and university in the state of Tennessee.

Senator Schacht said that there is a whole list of concerns here with lots of questions that haven't been answered. There is apparently some kind of a memorandum of understanding that's already been drafted that's going to outline the relationship between Western Governor's and Tennessee. He assumes it should be a public document, but he has not been able to find it. The document is referenced in the bill that would authorize all of this, but only to the fact that it exists. This is a worrisome precedent for what it means to be a Tennessee state institution because now you can be one without having to be within the borders of the state of Tennessee. With respect to the other bills, there is a theme that is running through a them which is basically to empower religious authority on campuses so that universities would lose the ability to say anything to students about using religious criteria to exclude other people from membership and student organizations. There is also the issue of faculty losing the ability to set academic standards if students claim conscientious objection on religious grounds to those academic standards.

President Byington moved on to the next item on the agenda, which was the Partner's Benefits Resolution. He explained that there was a motion on the floor to adopt that resolution as we amended it and the motion was tabled until the executive committee met with Dr. Bach, Dr. Bishop, and Dr. Noland. The administrators did not see that it was in any way in conflict with the University's current mission and values. They brought up the fact that at the CPA right now there is the ability to have an employee plus one membership. It was pointed out that the library does not have a similar employee plus one policy. There was a commitment from those three individuals to the extent that there was a local control of policies such as the library and the CPA. They are to go back and review to see if that could be extended to employee plus one. If they felt there would be no issues, they were supportive of it. With that, the resolution is back on the floor but it has the amendment that has been proposed by Senator Schacht which

pertained to clarification of specific language. The motion was seconded by Senator Burgess. The vote was taken and the motion carried with 31 in favor / no opposed / 7 abstentions.

President Byington asked if there was any new business.

Senator Schacht said that the football resurrection was passed by the SGA without benefit of any systematic input from the student body as a whole. He noted that senate did not get an opportunity to have the conversation with Dr. Noland about football. Apparently it is being regarded as a done deal. If the senate has a voice in it, it will not be about the question of whether or not we will have football, it will be about how. The scope and scale and maybe some other things related to that. He questioned whether the senate should do anything about gathering information from the faculty as a whole. He posited a survey of faculty to determine the level of interest, how many would attend games, what would they be willing to pay for a ticket, things like that. Right now, ETSU is planning on a \$30 million dollar decision is going forward without any market research at all.

Vice President Foley would like to have Dr. Sander come to faculty senate to talk about football and about how it is going to be paid for. Then if the senate wanted to get faculty thoughts, at least there would be information to give them.

Senator Bitter proposed that they do a survey where they would ask something more than whether or not faculty is for or against football. He would like to ask questions such as: "Would you be more likely to go if it were on or off campus; would you be more likely to get one end of the campus or the other; would you have some sense of concern about what it might do for minor sports and which minor sports are you most interested in keeping around?"

Senator Kellogg stated that he was in favor of the survey and stressed an informed decision making process. It is more important than finding out 'do you want football, do you not want football'. He believes we can assess whether or not it is wanted and whether or not it is going to survive by putting together a small survey. By asking the question, "Will you spend this much money for a season ticket?" If you find out that people are only going to spend \$30 for a season ticket that starts to put the writing on the wall.

Senator Sellers agreed that is useful information to have. He is not against the survey but thinks the problem with a survey or anything else is it is information gathered from a bunch of people who are as uneducated as we are. We're sitting here talking about this and we don't know what the proposal is. Who has seen the proposal? What does it say? How do we know what it is going to cost? We need some hard facts.

Senator Burgess said that it is Tenure and Promotion Appeal season and asked if he had the senate's permission to continue as chair of the committee. There was general

agreement. Senator Burgess then moved to remain as chair of the T&P Appeal committee. Senator Peiris seconded. The motion carried without dissent.

There was a motion to adjourn.

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

Please notify Senator Melissa Shafer (shaferm@etsu.edu or x95837), 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).