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Faculty Senate, East Tennessee State University

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2012-2013 Faculty Senate

MINUTES—1-28-13

Faculty Senate—East Tennessee State University

UPCOMING MEETING:	FOLLOWING MEETING:
2-11-13, 2:45 pm Forum, Culp Center	2-25-13, 2:45 p.m. Forum, Culp Center

Present: Sally Blowers, Doug Burgess, Randy Byington, Sharon Campbell, Daryl Carter, Bruce Dalton, Don Davis, Laura Dower, Tom Ecay, Mohamed Elgazzar, Susan Epps, Emmett Essin, William Fisher, Virginia Foley, Allan Forsman, Rosalind Gann, Evelyn Hammonds, Jill Hayter, Rick Hess, Ken Kellogg, Dharendra Kumar, Tom Laughlin, Theresa McGarry, Lorianne Mitchell, Alan Peiris, Susan Rasmussen, Thomas Schacht, Melissa Shafer, Kathryn Sharp, Jerry Shuttle, Taylor Stevenson, Bill Stone, Kim Summey, Jerry Taylor, Paul Trogen, Jennifer Vanover-Hall, Teressa Wexler, Meng-Yang Zhu, Yue Zou, Ron Zucker.

Excused: Beth Baily, Jim Bitter, Charles Collins, Keith Green, Kelly Price, Eric Sellers, Jim Thigpen

Guests: Pat Van Zandt, Alison Deadman, Stacy Williams, Cheryl Bates

The meeting began at 3:47pm

President Byington introduced the new Dean of the University Libraries, Dr. Pat Van Zandt.

Dean Van Zandt thanked the senate for allowing her to visit. She said that she is enjoying her time in the library at ETSU. She stated that she has brought in a consultant to help develop a strategic plan in order to give the library a clear, consistent vision. The library intends to be an active partner within the university and through groups such as the faculty senate, student groups, departments, divisions, and colleges on campus to support what the university as a whole needs. They are working on funding and money management improvements. They also intend to work on development of new sources of funds such as donors, consortia opportunities within Tennessee, and a proposed TBR library fee. They would also like to implement an assessment to see what is working and what needs improvement, initiation of new services, and a new organizational system. They are hoping to develop a new infrastructure so that it is reorganized in a subject structure with liaisons for the colleges and departments on campus. Dean Van Zandt also plans to work on marketing the library as well. Since being here she has gotten students involved in an advisory committee and would like to get faculty involved as well.

Senator Schacht asked the senate if they would like to have a voice in choosing the faculty to the library advisory committee or if they would prefer to leave it to the college deans. He asked

Dean Van Zandt what she wanted from the senate beyond nominating some people to the advisory council.

Dean Van Zandt responded that she wanted input. If any senators feel that the quality of the university is not as good as it could be because of lack of resources then she would like their opinions to be voiced.

Senator Schacht asked if there was a place on the library website for people to make suggestions or requests.

Dean Van Zandt explained that the website is being worked on and a new prototype website should be up during this semester and implemented sometime in the summer. In the meantime, she can be contacted via email, phone, or in person. She then thanked the senate for having her.

President Byington gave an update on what has transpired with the Senior Staff. The Senior Staff meeting was canceled on January 28th because President Noland and Jim Bitter are in Nashville working with Chancellor Morgan. Dave Mullins has resigned as athletic director and will be staying until at least July 1st and then may stay on for a period of time after that in an advisory/fundraising role. Eight schools in the Big East announced that they were leaving the Big East and they were forming their own conference which means eight slots are now available. There will be a migration of schools from conferences such as those ETSU plays in on up the chain. The question is will the eight schools who left the Big East take with them the Big East NCAA basketball tournament automatic bid. There are at least three and perhaps as many as five schools looking to leave the Atlantic Sun Conference [ETSU's conference affiliation]. Most likely things will become clear after a substantial period of time.

Senator Laughlin said that there is an article in the student newspaper where the interim athletic director is talking about making a football decision within 4-6 weeks and they're going to discuss this with the students. What sorts of discussions have taken place with the students?

Senator Byington said he is unsure. Most conferences will not let you in without a football team so that is part of the conversation. There are schools that play football with an athletic budget almost exactly what ours is now. It is projected to cost \$2.5-3 million a year which translates into approximately \$125 increase fee per semester. He thinks that the SGA is discussing that at their meeting tomorrow [January 29th].

President Schacht asked if this is going to be brought to discussion with Dr. Noland. President Byington stated that he hopes so, but the next opening on Dr. Noland's calendar is in the range of March 25th.

President Byington continued that another thing that came from senior staff is that this is the sundown year for THEC. There was not legislation introduced in the spring session of the legislature, so if that legislation is not forthcoming, THEC will cease to exist as of June 30th. Lastly from Senior Staff, it was disclosed that ETSU had a 92% retention rate from fall to spring semester; that is a loss of about 250 students.

President Byington then asked for approval of the minutes. All approved with one abstention. He then moved onto the agenda item dealing with the proposed changes on faculty evaluation in the handbook.

Senator Schacht took the floor and explained that there has been a request to consider some changes in language. There is some concern that faculty activity plans in some departments may conflict with established approved P&T guidelines. This document does not specifically prohibit that and there was a request that we consider language that would. Part of how that could be accomplished would add that an important part of the evaluation process according to Board of Regents and ETSU policy is appraisal of progress towards promotion and tenure for all faculty. Also to add a line that would say a faculty evaluation plan should not conflict with approved promotion and tenure guidelines. Then to add one more sentence that would say each faculty member's plan should explicitly address and articulate with approved P&T guidelines. He then added that we also have the bigger question of whether we're going to approve this document at all.

Vice President Foley recommended that instead of saying 'should not conflict' it should instead say 'must support or must be in line with'.

President Byington asked for questions. Senator Burgess moved to approve and Senator Zucker seconded. The changes to the Handbook were approved without dissent.

President Byington said that Jim Bitter had asked that the Senate put on the agenda a discussion of the UT Resolution for Benefits Equity for Non-married Couples. He then turned the floor over to guest Allison Deadman.

Dr. Deadman explained that she is here with Dr. Stacy Williams and Dr. Cheryl Bates. They are members ETSU's Safe Zone Group. She then proceeded to read a written statement:

"As representatives of the ETSU SafeZone group and as faculty facilitators for the ETSU SafeZone training, we applaud ETSU senate's discussion of the ways that ETSU can afford same-sex partners the same benefits currently enjoyed by opposite-sex spouses. The ultimate goal of SafeZone is to have the entire campus a safe zone for LGBT faculty students and staff – a place where they are accepted, celebrated, and treated as equal with all. Part of this goal is, of course, to be afforded the same benefits as others.

We believe the senate's discussion is aligned with the diversity-affirming intent of ETSU's policy statement on sexual orientation, which reads:

East Tennessee State University is committed to a policy of non-discrimination and equal opportunity that extends to all members of the University Community. All persons are treated equally in the University's programs and activities, recruitment and admissions, and employment practices.

The State of Tennessee's current policies concerning benefits and their access to the families of employees runs counter to ETSU's stated commitment to a safe and just community for all of its members: faculty, students, and staff. ETSU is committed to making its commitment to providing (or being) a safe and just community, and must make every effort to ensure that all of the policies and guidelines for access to campus, services, and benefits that are in its power reflect these values; and the community states its protest to state policies which it regards as discriminatory and incompatible with achieving a truly just and safe community not just for LGBT colleagues, but everyone.”

President Byington explained that he emailed 3 drafts on this topic: the position UTK took and forwarded to their central office, the draft of the policy that UT Memphis full senate will discuss, and a resolution written by Jim Bitter for our consideration which basically substituted ETSU where Memphis appeared in their document. He then asked if there were questions, discussion or a motion.

Senator Epps voiced her concern that it does not say how the partnership has to be documented and this poses a potential difficulty for those seeking benefits.

President Byington replied that he is unsure and does not know how the HR department verifies that.

Senator Burgess explained that it is also an issue that extends to heterosexual couples. There are many couples who choose not to marry. As far as HR is concerned, if the faculty member pays the insurance premium for the person he or she designates as the beneficiary, there should be no question. If the relationship dissolves, then it stops.

Senator Carter stated that although he is sympathetic to this issue, he does not think that it is feasible, especially with the current legislative makeup.

Senator Gann replied that this is a social justice issue. Even if it cannot be done, it still should be voiced because it is the right thing to do.

Senator Schacht agreed with Senator Carter's assessment of the political situation. However, he said that he can see nothing that could stop the ETSU Foundation from establishing a separate fund for the purpose of providing benefits to faculty who are not otherwise covered by the state.

Senator Campbell agreed with Senator Carter, Senator Gann, and Senator Schacht. A carefully worded resolution, though, in the way that Senator Bitter has worded it says non-married couples. This means that ETSU is not redefining the definition of marriage as the law

states; they would be defining a policy for non-married couples. She thinks that this could pass.

Senator Dalton made a motion to support the resolution as Senator Bitter circulated it.

President Byington asked if there was a second. Senator Burgess seconded. President Byington then asked for discussion of the motion to support the resolution that was drafted by Jim regarding benefits for non-married couples.

Senator Schacht voiced his concern for the 4th of 5 criteria for a domestic partnership. His concern was the term 'exclusive'. He was worried that it could refer to sexual exclusivity, which could exclude people of the same gender. He said that instead, that should be changed to a relationship between two people.

Senator Dalton was concerned with what exactly item number three means. It says that two partners must share a committed relationship, but what defines that?

Vice President Foley asked if children brought into the relationship by a partner would have benefits extended to them, which includes going to ETSU at a reduced rate.

Senator Stevenson said that there should be a contract between the two people.

Senator Schacht thought that a bullet should say that it will provide equal benefits to employees who are married or involved in a domestic partnership.

Secretary Shafer asked if there was a way to involve the language that Dr. Deadman had brought forward with the Safe Zone, specifically the ETSU policy statement on sexual orientations that 'all persons are treated equally in the University's employment practices'. President Byington replied that he thought so.

Guest Deadman suggested that after the first reference to a domestic partnership, a parenthetical comment that says no matter the gender pair.

Senator Schacht moved to table any further action on this until the executive committee has had an opportunity to discuss it with Dr. Noland, Dr. Bishop, and Dr. Bach by the executive committee, and adding the resolution to the minutes. Senator Forsman second. The motion to table was passed with 28 in favor, 3 opposed and 2 abstentions.

Senator Zucker moved to adjourn.

Secretary Shafer said that she was contacted by someone from the Campus Workers Union about increasing adjunct pay. A resolution draft came in her email and she was going to bring it up at the next meeting.

Senator Schacht said that some campuses have fired people in part-time positions to avoid the requirement to provide health insurance under the Affordable Healthcare Act. This may be a

factor here at ETSU. There needs to be a plan for health insurance for part time people. The IRS is currently working on how to calculate the work effort of adjuncts because it is obvious that three teaching hours is not working three hours. This is going to be part of the behind the scenes debate about what happens to adjuncts here.

Senator Fisher said that tonight is the Governor's address to the legislature so the senate will know what he's proposing to do or not to do in the coming year.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 4:40 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).