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2009 December 7 - Faculty Senate Minutes

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MINUTES—December 7, 2009

Faculty Senate—East Tennessee State University

UPCOMING MEETING:	FOLLOWING MEETING:
February 1, 2010 2:45 pm Forum, Culp Center	February 15, 2010 2:45 pm Forum, Culp Center

Present: Alsop, Bitter, Brown, Buerkle, Burgess, Byington, Calhoun, Champouillon, Crowe, Dorgan, Emma, Fisher, Glover, Granberry, Grover, Hamdy, Harker, Hemphill, Horton, Kaplan, Kelley, Kellogg, Kortum, Martin, Mullersman, Odle, Peiris, Price, Reed, Roach, Schacht, Shafer, Shuttle, Slawson, Smurzynski, Stone, Stuart, Trainor, Trogen, Wang, Zhu, Zou

Excused: Arnall, Bartoszuk, Bates, Campbell, Creekmore, Ecay, Gerard, Loess, Morgan, Mustain, Scott

Guests: Tennessee State Senators Rusty Crowe, District 3 (sen.rustycrowe@capitol.tn.gov), and Mike Faulk, District 4 (sen.mike.faulk@capitol.tn.gov); Representatives Matthew Hill, District 7 (rep.matthew.hill@capitol.tn.gov) and Eddie Yokley, District 11 (rep.eddie.yokley@capitol.tn.gov); ETSU Staff Senate President Jamie Simmons and several other staff senators; several ETSU students

CALL TO ORDER: President Champouillon called the meeting to order at 2:52 pm.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Minutes of the November 23, 2009, Faculty Senate meeting were approved.

CONTINUING BUSINESS: Faculty senators approved Senator Todd Emma by voice vote as a trustee of ETSU's Faculty Sick leave Bank.

The Senate approved Dr. Emmett Essin (History) as proxy for Senator Melissa Shafer for spring 2010 by voice vote.

NEW BUSINESS: Champouillon welcomed the visiting legislators and visiting staff senators and students. He asked that Past Senate President Trogen, who arranged the Legislative Roundtable, to introduce the legislators. Trogen did so, explaining that Rep. David Hawk, District 5 (rep.david.hawk@capitol.tn.gov), had also planned to attend but was called into a meeting on the restructuring of higher education by Governor Bredesen. Trogen asked the legislators to comment on higher education.

Senator Crowe said that Senator Delores Gresham, District 26 (sen.delores.gresham@capitol.tn.gov), had planned to attend ETSU's meeting but was also, as Chair of the TN Senate Committee on Education, meeting with Bredesen. Crowe reported that the Governor really wants to restructure

higher education before his term ends and feels that, with the chancellors of both TBR and UT leaving their positions, now is a good time. Also, he has appointed most current members of THEC and TBR, and he feels they will work with him to accomplish his goals. Bredesen is especially concerned about increasing graduation rates; Tennessee's are among the lowest in the country. He would like to draw on the support of Bill and Melinda Gates' Consortium to Improve Higher Education. THEC is considering switching the basis for formula funding from enrollments to graduation rates.

Bredesen also wants to increase use of community colleges to prepare students to join the workforce in their communities; he wants these students to be helped through state lottery scholarships. In addition, Bredesen plans to enhance UT's role in research and cut down on duplication of programs throughout the state. He favors the North Carolina model for the structure of higher education governance, with all schools in the same system. According to Crowe, West Tennessee legislators outvote those from Upper East Tennessee, but East Tennessee legislators are united in their support for ETSU.

Senator Faulk thanked the Faculty Senate for the opportunity to meet with those attending the meeting. He received his B.S. from UT-Martin and his M.S. and law degrees from the University of Memphis. He called himself a rookie who is learning to listen. He represents rural areas, Hancock and Hawkins Counties, and chairs the Senate Calendar Committee. Faulk said that Bredesen is concerned with what higher education can market to benefit the state's economy. Bredesen wants to strengthen relationships between community colleges and local governments. Bredesen seems to favor having separate governing boards for community colleges and universities. Faulk suspects everything is on the table in budget considerations.

Faulk is concerned that we are creating a new class of debtors, students who are going bankrupt with their student loans. He will take our concerns to Nashville but is unsure of what will happen.

Representative Yokley, a graduate of ETSU, said he came to the meeting to listen. The economic crisis is causing radical changes in the country. We can free up millions of dollars by preparing students for college work in high school, thus doing away with remedial education. We must use Pell grants and other means to promote graduation; Tennessee currently has about 35,000 potential graduates who lack only about 35 hours of credit to get their degrees. We must prepare our young people for good jobs to ensure their and the country's welfare.

Representative Hill, an ETSU alumnus who also attended NESCC, is serving his third term on the House Higher Education Subcommittee. He said ETSU needs a staffing solution to ensure fair pay and avoid RIFs. Also, he is concerned about problems related to tuition. The surplus in HOPE scholarship money is disappearing, and there will be a deficit next year because gpa requirements

were lowered, non-traditional students have been included, and a “do-over” semester was made possible. Some students do not make it through a third or fourth semester, much less graduate. A third concern is that we honor the commitment to Quillen medical students and the state by supporting the COM.

Hill said that combining UT and TBR governance may not save money, but it could streamline processes, such as students’ transferring from one school to another, and eliminate duplication of administrators. He applauds TUFs for being pro-active about higher education reform. He said Representative Hawk is concerned about increasing scholarships to community colleges; Hawk also wants to use those schools for remedial education and increase graduation rates.

Crowe said that the \$1.2 billion in Stimulus dollars for the state can help higher education, but it is one-time funding. Compared to other states, we are in relatively good shape with about \$550 million in our rainy day fund, even though that money is “a drop in the bucket” of our total budget.

Trogen said a major TUFs concern is that individual schools continue research related to their missions and teaching. Also, though programs may seem duplicative, they are often needed at several schools to serve local communities and to avoid the overcrowding that would result if they were concentrated at one school. For example, both ETSU and UT-K need accountancy programs, and research is an accreditation requirement in accountancy, so support of ETSU’s research in accountancy must continue.

Crowe invited citizens to go online to watch legislative committees in action. We can influence what happens by communicating with legislators via email and the phone numbers made available on the legislative website.

Champouillon said UT lobbyists got funding for capital projects despite budget shortfalls and their failure to adhere to legislated procedures. Such favoritism hurts higher education across the state.

Faulk pointed out that East Tennessee’s influence is growing, although it will take some time for the power shift to manifest itself. Crowe added that constituents need to use politics to their advantage; knowing alliances and keeping in touch with legislators can be helpful. Hill agreed, saying we must prioritize our concerns and keep our representatives in Nashville informed.

ETSU Faculty Senator Bitter said that ETSU has problems with persistence to graduation because open admission permits poorly prepared students to begin programs they cannot complete. If Furman and Notre Dame, among other schools, can ensure a 98% graduation rate, we can too by limiting admission to prepared and capable students. Our options are either open access or the California system—admit only the top 10% of applicants. We cannot hope to increase graduation rates radically and retain open admission.

Champouillon asked attending students to express their concerns. Ashlee Henderson said students arrive expecting one kind of education, often find ETSU an unsafe place to learn, and drop out. Students want programs for marginal students to help them achieve their goals. Students are also concerned about inequities in pay for ETSU employees: many administrators and some faculty make over \$100,000, but there are also 215 employees who make less than \$20,000 in full-time wages. She hope legislators will address these matters.

Hill asked how much discretion is given to institutions to determine pay. He is not sure legislators can affect pay if schools have limited discretion. Crowe answered that some discretion is at campus level. He has wondered why administrators are often paid much more than faculty and some staff are not paid living wages.

ETSU Faculty Senate Vice President Schacht said ETSU senates are working to address such issues, but one problem is a lack of accurate, accessible information. Our budget is incomprehensible; though it is a public document, our requests for a table of contents have been rebuffed.

Faulk said such problems are further compounded by our not wanting legislators looking over our shoulders. Schools' budgets are funded less by the state, and the state has less control than it did.

ETSU Senator Stone commented that current economic troubles may require a workforce reduction. To limit the damage as much as possible, we need to streamline procedures. For example, making esignatures mandatory could save time and money. We can also consider transportation and computer systems to implement improvements. Yokley added that students could save \$700-\$1000 each semester by getting away from hardcopy textbooks. Then, they could better afford tuition to remain in school and support faculty positions, in addition to lessening their debts.

ETSU Senate Treasurer Kortum said Governor Bredesen favors giving more money to UT-K because of its higher graduation rate, but ETSU has a greater percentage of non-traditional students who cannot graduate within six years because of family and work responsibilities. Also, facilitating students' transfers from one school to another may actually work against increasing graduation rates because students entering a school with standards higher than those of the school they leave may not be prepared enough to succeed.

Crowe said that both Republicans and Democrats in the legislature want to prioritize items in higher education and welcome information that will help them improve the system.

ETSU Senator Hemphill said that Tennessee is lagging three years behind in faculty pay, with no increase anticipated in the next two or three years. We could

lose faculty in a serious brain drain, further hindering students. Hill said that specific numbers could help support legislators' initiatives to remedy such problems.

Champouillon said that costs of dorms and tuition have increased, but faculty and staff salaries have not. ETSU President Paul Stanton has tried to help by requesting a one-time bonus, but TBR refused.

Crowe said a 2.3-2.5% COLA raise was proposed for retirees, but it was denied. Yokley said the money for the COLA would have to come from somewhere, and the budget does not have it.

ETSU Senator Stuart asked where Tennessee's budget stands; Yokley replied that it is over \$100 million in the red.

Schacht asked if the effect of requiring health insurance has been considered. Faulk replied that discretionary categories are being shut down; the budget has been cut 9%. But TennCare is getting 8,000 new applicants each month. Tennesseans with health insurance may see a 60% increase in their premiums to support funding for those applicants' insurance.

Faulk repeated that legislators welcome constituents' interest, information, and suggestions. He said all legislators are readily reachable by phone or email, with addresses and information available on the Tennessee government website. He asked that we call or email him with any concerns.

Champouillon thanked the legislators and others for attending the meeting and sharing their ideas. He asked that Trogen arrange future legislative roundtables; Trogen agreed, also thanking everyone for participating.

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business, Champouillon adjourned the meeting at 5:00 pm.

Please notify Kathleen Grover (grover@etsu.edu or x96672), Faculty Senate Secretary, 2009-2010, of any changes or corrections to the minutes. Web Page is maintained by Senator Doug Burgess (burgess@etsu.edu or x96691).