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Faculty Senate, East Tennessee State University

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MINUTES—December 1, 2008
Faculty Senate—East Tennessee State University

Upcoming Meeting: January 26, 2009 2:45 pm Forum, Culp Center

Following Meeting: February 9, 2009 2:45 pm Forum, Culp Center

Present: Alsop, Bitter, Brown, Burgess, Byington, Champouillon, Crowe, Dorgan, Drummond, Ecay, Elhindi, Fitzgerald, Franklin, Granberry, Hamdy, Hemphill,
Horton, Kaplan, Kelley, Kortum, Martin, Metts, Mozen, Price, Roach, Schacht, Shafer, Shuttle,
Smurzynski, Stone, Stuart, Tarnoff, Trainor, Trogen,
Zhu

Excused: Arnall, Campbell, Cecil, Cherry, Creekmore, Gerard, Glover, Govett, Grover, Loess, Morgan, Mullersman, Peiris, Scott, Zou

ETSU Faculty Senate - Minutes of meeting 12-01-08

The meeting was called to order by President Trogen at 2:50 PM. In the absence of Senator Grover, who was ill, notes were taken by Senator Schacht.

Senator Alsop moved to approve the minutes of the previous meeting. The motion was seconded by Senator Bitter and approved without dissent or amendment.

1. Honors College

Dean Rebecca Pyles made a presentation on the history and current status of the Honors College. She indicated that a copy of the Powerpoint slides used in her presentation will be posted on the Honors College website.

Dean Pyles described the Honors College as an amalgamation of resources from across the university and expressed the overall goal of the Honors College as campus-wide creation of exceptional quality programs and academic opportunities. Major programmatic elements of the Honors College include the University Honors Scholars program, the Honors-in-Discipline Programs, the Midway Scholars Program, the Fine and Performing Arts Honors Program, undergraduate research, international education (including faculty development), and exchange and collaborative programs with other institutions both nationally and internationally.

Dean Pyles reported that standardized test scores at entrance and upon graduation both favor Honors Scholars by a wide margin (Admission ACT ~ 22 all freshmen vs ~ 28 Honors Scholars ; graduation Critical Thinking Test ~ 17.4 ETSU mean vs 22.9 Honors mean). Honors Scholars historically earn superior GPA's. ETSU's retention rate for its Honors Scholars is nearly double the national average for programs requiring a senior thesis (~ 91% vs 48.7%).

Senator Bitter inquired into the finances of the Honors College and presented his own detailed calculations of per capita comparative administrative costs of the Honors College vs the overall College of Arts and Sciences. Dean Pyles disagreed with some of Senator Bitter's calculations and indicated that she would supplement her presentation with additional financial information to be submitted.

Senator Champouillon requested and received clarification regarding stipend payments to Honors College program directors. Senator Champouillon inquired into a rumored "Chinese Opera" and Dean Pyles disavowed any knowledge of ETSU paying for such an event. Senator Champouillon also inquired into the prospects for the Honors College to become "self-sufficient," a concept he attributed to past statements by Dr. Bach. Dean Pyles referred him to Dr. Bach on that issue.

Senator Hemphill inquired into international travel subsidies for Honors students, and Dean Pyles indicated there were no such subsidies except for Roan Scholars or for the international study abroad program that is available to all ETSU students.

2. Chancellor Manning - TBR Memo of November 20, 2008

President Trogen opened the floor to discussion of Chancellor Manning's memo regarding options for a new business model for TBR institutions. There was discussion of the potential impact on academic programs of the "business model" presented in Chancellor Manning's memo. Senator Bitter characterized the Chancellor's proposal as "the business model for the University of Phoenix."

3. State Financial Crisis

President Trogen presented possible scenarios of voluntary buyout, voluntary reduction in hours, involuntary furlough, and reduction in force. He initially requested that the Senate vote on a preference for these various scenarios. By a majority vote (18/30 present), the Senate voted that "furlough is unacceptable." However, following this vote, the remainder of the voting process on other alternatives was truncated by concerns that the Senate lacked sufficient information at this time.

Extensive discussion ensued as to the lack of available information on the various scenarios, including furlough, and the appropriate course of action for the Senate in the face of a possible furlough.

Senator Stone asked if consideration had been given to reducing bookstore costs to help offset the impact on students of any possible tuition increase; he also inquired into the potential cost savings that could be accomplished from increasing class sizes.

There was a suggestion that projected attrition of administrators and analysis of administrators' workload be incorporated into the universities ongoing budget analysis.

Senator Bitter inquired into the duration of any furlough. He also expressed concern that if a furlough was successful in managing the budget crisis, it would become a recurrent event. For this reason, he proposed that any furlough plan come at some type of cost that would tend to discourage routine or repeated use.

Senator Shuttle noted that while salaried personnel could continue to work during a furlough, hourly staff must be given time off (presumably due to differences in applicable labor law). He also expressed concern about the potential for a selectively worse impact of a furlough on those personnel who are in highest demand and therefore most likely to leave and most difficult to replace.

Senator Burgess expressed concern about the moral implications of an expected disproportionate impact of a reduction in force on ETSU's lowest-paid employees. He stated that he would personally prefer to sacrifice some salary to save jobs.

There was discussion of perceived discrepancies in implementation of current austerity strategies, such as cancellation of the Shelbridge Christmas party to save \$11,000, on one hand, while reportedly spending more than twice that amount on salary augmentation for a particular administrator. In characterizing such discrepancies, the term "hypocrisy" was ventured by some Senators.

Senators Bitter, Hemphill, and others proposed several principles as potential guides for any furlough. These included:

[a] more accurately naming "furlough" as a "temporary salary reduction" because, at least for faculty, there would be no corresponding reduction in expected productivity;

[b] to the extent possible, making any furlough voluntary rather than involuntary;

[c] making any furlough targeted rather than across-the-board;

[d] assigning a higher targeting preference to administrators' reduction over cuts affecting program faculty or staff;

[e] exempting personnel with salaries below a designated minimum level from any furlough and creating a graduated scheme for remaining personnel according to base compensation;

[f] spreading the financial impact of any furlough over an extended period, ideally an entire fiscal year, rather than imposing it in a single month.

President Trogen also shared an e-mail from Tim Winters, President of TUFS, stating that authority for a furlough was scheduled to appear on the TBR meeting agenda on 12-04-08 as a "consent" item (meaning it would be open only to an up or down vote, without debate) and requesting that ETSU take certain actions to insure that the issue was opened for debate.

Senator Bitter moved, seconded by Senator Hemphill, that the Senate authorize President Trogen to take the following steps as requested in Winters' e-mail: [1] communicate with TBR and request a meeting with the chancellor to discuss the furlough issue; [2] encourage President Stanton to use his voice to try and move the furlough item off the December 4, 2008 TBR consent agenda for debate. The motion passed unanimously.

4. Periodic Review of Administrators

Dr. Bill Kirkwood did not arrive for his scheduled presentation on proposed developments in the Periodic Review of Administrators. Senator Alsop moved to table this issue and to request that the administration not act on this matter until the Senate had an opportunity to hear and discussion Dr. Kirkwood's presentation. The motion was seconded by Senator Champouillon, but then withdrawn in favor of a plan to delegate follow-up to the Senate Executive Committee to be followed by an e-mail caucus of the Senate membership.

The meeting adjourned at 4:52 P.M.