Minutes for the meeting of the Tennessee State University Faculty Senate, 11/19/2015

In Attendance:

Dorsuren Badamdorj, CLPS, Mathematical Sciences

Beverly Brown, COHS, Nursing

Thomas Broyles, CAHNS, Extension Program (**Parliamentarian pro tem)**

Diane Campbell, COHS, Nursing

Michael Catanzaro, Liberal Arts, LLP **Chair**

Sean Daniels, Liberal Arts, Music

John Dossett, Education, Psychology

Melissa Forte, Liberal Arts, Communications

Terrie Gibson, COHS, Speech Pathology

Kirmanj Gundi (for Eleni Coukos Elder), Education, Educational Leadership

Patricio Jara, CLPS, Mathematical Sciences

John Kelly, CLPS, Mathematical Sciences **Secretary**

Xiaoming Li (for Vaidas Lukosius), Business, BADM

Brenda McAdory, CLPS, Biology

Pinky Noble-Britton, COHS, Nursing

Kushal Patel, COHS, Public Health

Nsoki Phambu, Science and Mathematics, Chemistry

Joyce Radcliff, Library and Media Services

Achintya Ray, Business, Economics and Finance

Ann-Marie Rizzo, CPS, Public Administration

Sachin Shetty, Engineering, Electrical Engineering

Robert Smith, Liberal Arts, Criminal Justice

Amir Shirkodaie (for Muhammad Akbar), Engineering, Mechanical Engineering

Lee Williams (for John Miglietta), Liberal Arts, Political Science

I. Meeting was called to order at 2:40 PM with a quorum

II. October minutes were approved unanimously with the following changes: Change the notes on Committee reports to include the names of all committees, not just the committees that reported. (Dr. Ray moves and is seconded.)

III. Grading System changes – Dr. Hardy has requested that the Senate vote to determine if we should pursue and inquiry about changing the grading system at TSU. Dr. Ray moves and is seconded by Dr. Badamdorj. Dr. Catanzaro notes that TBR is working on mainstreaming all General Education courses at all TBR institutions, so that all names and course numbers match across institutions. At the TUFS meeting, it was also discussed that the Universities might also move to the same grading system. If we pursue an inquiry, we need to create a survey to be sent to the faculty. The survey might have 3 options – no change, a plus / minus system, or a plus only system.

There is a discussion that touches on grades in General Education courses and if adding a C- will increase failure rates in those courses. Alternatively, for students at the top of each grade scale, this will be a boon to them, as Dr. Ray notes. Senators from Nursing do not feel this would be a good fit for them. In the end, it is noted that we’re simply voting to create a survey for the faculty. The motion is approved unanimously. We will vote on the language for the survey at the January meeting.

IV. Update on the Amendment Vote – Dr. Catanzaro describes the process of the vote, which had to be extended to get up to 50% threshold needed for the vote to count. Dr. Catanzaro managed, though personal calls, to get to the threshold at the very last instant. Dr. Catanzaro was frustrated by the poor turnout for the vote.

The amendments passed with very high approval rates (>90%).

The amendments now go to the President; for a summary of the process either see Part Five of the Constitution or the Agenda for the November meeting.

If approved by President Glover and TBR, Senate must note that Dr. Ray would have a two year term as President, and the Chair-elect must be a new Senator who would serve two year term as Chair-elect, and then two years as President. With that in mind, the Nominations Committee might encourage a former Senator to run for a new term with this process in mind. The Nominations committee is also tasked with recruiting Senators to fill other Executive Committee posts coming in Spring 2016. Dr. Catanzaro is recommending that we vote at the February 2016 meeting. Dr. Catanzaro encourages Senators to talk to good candidates in their departments and colleges.

V. Update on TUFS (Tennessee University Faculty Senates) meeting at TSU in September 2016

The Executive Committee has met to work out a budget for the event, and Dr. Ray and Dr. Catanzaro have met with President Glover to discuss the budget. President Glover did not object to the budget request. In fact, she was very enthusiastic about making the meeting as good as possible. Quiana Taylor from the Nashville Convention and Visitors Corporation has provided us with pricing and availability for 32 hotels, and narrowed our choices to 6 possibilities. The Executive Committee needs to choose one hotel.

Dr. Smith suggests that a committee is formed to make sure everything comes off without a hitch. He makes a motion to form an ad hoc advisory committee to the Executive Committee to oversee the meeting. The committee does not have to be formed by Senators only. Sean Daniels volunteers to be on the committee because Music often gets requests for performances and he’d like to provide input on that. The motion is approved unanimously.

VI. Revised Chair Hiring Policy – President Glover has asked the Senate to revise the policy. She has asked that the language regarding 3 year terms removed, and that instead there will be annual evaluations, and chairs need approval of the majority of tenured and tenure-track faculty. The evaluations will be reported back to the faculty by the Deans. A review can happen earlier than once per academic year by the call of the Dean OR a majority of tenured or tenure-track faculty. By the end of every Fall semester the faculty will know if a chair has been renewed or not. Dr. Hardy insisted that the Faculty Senator will oversee the internal search process for a new chair. Dr. Ray moves (and is seconded) that we approve the policy and send it to President Glover. Dr. Shirkodaie questions the evaluation term as too short for a chair to show what they can do. For example, a chair could start August 1, and be evaluated by the end of October by their faculty. Dr. Catanzaro notes that the President insisted on the evaluation cycle, and noted that if a brand new chair was rejected that early, the Dean and President Glover would reject that decision and give the chair more time. Dr. Shirkodaie also notes that this would cripple external searches for chair as well – Dr. Catanzaro thinks the new system is actually better than the current policy, which says 3 years and you’re out. Dr. Ray notes that all administrators – Chair, Dean, etc. – serve at the pleasure of the President. This proposal clarifies the process, and gives faculty a voice in the process. Other faculty are concerned about the objectiveness of faculty, but Dr. Catanzaro states that the faculty vote is fundamentally only a recommendation. The final decision is with the Dean and the President. Dr. Shirkodaie suggests that instead there is a probationary period for new chairs. Dr. Catanzaro notes that the faculty vote is more about notifying the Dean and the President of faculty feelings. Even a 100% vote of no confidence does not remove a chair automatically.

Several Senators voice support for the transparency aspects of the new policy. Dr. Ray encourages Senators to go back to their departments and educate other faculty members about the new policy. Dr. Shirkodaie suggests a cap on the total years of service of a chair, and that cap is a hard limit on the number of years a chair can serve. Dr. Catanzaro informs us that President Glover has categorically rejected term limits. Dr. Shirkodaie feels that this is important enough to stand up to the president. Dr. Jara suggests that we vote on the proposal, and make modifications later. Dr. Catanzaro insists that we vote this month, by the Presidents request. The motion is voted on and is approved with two Nay votes.

VII. Faculty Senate Committee Reports

1. Academic Committee – Senator Thomas Broyles: will send a report via email.
2. Alumni Relations and Development Committee – Senator Robert Smith: will send a report via email.
3. Budget Committee – Senator Achintya Ray: Working on analyzing the university budget and salaries. Dr. Badamdorj did extensive work collecting information on revenue and salaries from several TBR institutions. The staff salary schedule is now complete, but Ms. Spears asked for more justification on faculty salaries. Dr. Catanzaro is upset that Ms. Spears does not seem aware of the data already collected on this matter. Dr. Ray tells us that we were asking the wrong question – not if TSU is underpaid relative to other academic salaries, but if we were underpaid *relative to* our productivity. He notes that TSU puts a significantly smaller portion of its revenue into academic salaries compared to other TBR institutions. So the question is not “why are we not paid more?” – the question is “why does TSU spend so little on academic salaries relative to total revenue?” It is noted that this basic issue has been coming up over and over again. The standard administration response has been we simply don’t have the money. The new question is: given our revenue, why don’t we allocate more of the money to academic salaries? They’re also going through to take out administrators which likely inflates the academic salaries number.
4. Constitution and By-Laws Committee – Senator Michael Catanzaro
5. Curriculum Committee – Senator Diane Campbell
6. Executive Committee – Senator Michael Catanzaro
7. Faculty Grievance and Appeals Committee – Senator Beverly Brown
8. Faculty Benefits and Welfare Committee – Senator John Miglietta
9. Information Technology Committee – Senator John Kelly: will send a report via email.
10. Library Committee – Senator Joyce Radcliff: New TSU sources: Browzing an app that allows scholarly articles to be accessed. Designed for tablet use. We also have a new tool for journal searching that does full text searches in journal articles. Full details will be forwarded to the Senate.
11. Nomination and Appointment Committee – Senator Vaidas Lukosius
12. Professional Development Committee – Senator Sean Daniels: Friday faculty research day has proposed a one hour block of time be set aside for Friday meetings. A report will also be submitted via email.
13. Research Committee – Senator Sachin Shetty: The research committee is working on clearly identifying research revenue, and breaking down by department. The goal here is to identify more clearly total revenue generated by department, combining research and tuition revenue. Another goal is to increase transparency regarding returning overhead funds. There is also a problem with the overhead funds being returned in that the percentage returned was unilaterally changed. Dr. Jara suggests that colleges and departments should have budget committees so that faculty are more aware of what the budget is and where it is spent.
14. Student Appeals Committee – Senator Pinky Noble-Britton – working on a policy to create a grade appeals committee. That policy should be ready for a vote at the January meeting. The standard process for a grade appeal is faculty then chair then dean then VPAA, with the student having the option to keep moving the appeal up that chain. VPAA has the final say, and can reverse the decision of all levels below him. This new policy would add a committee just below the VPAA to hear the students case and present an unbiased review of the information to the VPAA.

XIII: Meeting adjourned at 4:36 PM