

Faculty Meeting, Tennessee State University

January 11, 2010

Minutes recorded by Dr. Elizabeth Dachowski

In attendance: 96 faculty and 6 administrators

Dr. Jane Asamani convenes meeting at 3:03 PM, mentions challenges facing TSU, specifically

- (1) changes in students admitted (by 2013 no developmental studies students will be admitted)
- (2) Faculty Handbook needs to be completed this semester (currently no handbook in use; the 1989 Handbook is out of date in such areas as a list of departments and colleges and administrative changes that have been made but not officially added to handbook); we hope to have one before the SACS visit in March; when completed the draft handbook will be placed on-line for comments before the faculty vote

3:08 - Shared governance policy will be examined today; vote by faculty after meeting

3:09 - Dr. Robert Newkirk takes the mike and gives a brief history of the shared governance document: In Fall 2009 at a full faculty meeting (recognized by the president) a resolution on shared governance was approved; the resolution required that an ad hoc committee create a shared governance policy to be voted on at the January 2010 Faculty Meeting. The ad hoc committee convened as called for and carried out their task. They presented a draft document for faculty comment later in Fall semester; a number of faculty submitted comments to the committee. The resulting policy is a statement of recognition of shared governance by administration and faculty and an outline of how this is to happen. There will be additional changes and reviews by administration and faculty; both faculty and administration must agree and understand the relationship. The Faculty Senate is the voice and agent of the faculty; a policy is necessary for this to work.

3:15 - Dr. Mary Ann Asson-Batres takes the mike and goes through the provisions of the Shared Governance Policy under consideration.

FIRST PARAGRAPH: Articulates the idea of sharing of decision-making by faculty and administration in making changes; notes that this is not a new idea or unique to TSU but reflects ideas put forth by AFT, AAUP, and other universities. Administrators with academic appointments will be considered separate from faculty in order to avoid conflict of interest.

POINT #1: Not unique to this community; a common idea used by AAUP, AFT, and other universities; works on the assumption that faculty are professionals in their fields

POINT #2: Read with no comment

POINT #3: These areas are a primary mission of the administration but faculty input is needed to point out problems and make suggestions in order to help the administration to make wise decisions.

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POINT #4: Again, not unique to this proposed policy; feedback and dialogue are necessary.

POINT #5: If we had had a policy on this, we could (for example) have had the SACS reports that we are now looking at two years ago.

POINT #6: Academic freedom is essential to shared governance.

POINT #7: It can't be shared governance if the administration chooses which faculty will participate on committees.

POINT #8: Read with no comment

3:30 - Dr. Asson-Batres reviewed the ballot. The ballot has three sections: (1) Acceptance or rejection of the proposed policy; (2) support/oppose the policy (if approved) being put in the Faculty Handbook; (3) support/oppose (if approved) the policy being put on the Policy Central web site (not currently there, even though there is a place for policies under review).

3:33 - Dr. Asson-Batres opened the floor for discussion.

Dr. Barbara Kilbourne expressed concern that there is a low turnout at the meeting and asked whether that would affect the validity of the vote? Dr. Asson-Batres replied that the vote would proceed as scheduled because it was well-advertised.

Dr. Keith Hargrove asked if the definition and criteria for who was faculty and who was administration was how AAUP handled this issue. Dr. Asson-Batres answered, yes. Dr. Anthony Blasi added that as the committee's appointed parliamentarian for this meeting, he can state that the Faculty Handbook describes faculty as full-time teachers; as an active member/officer of the AAUP he knows that when faculty take administrative positions they move to non-voting status for the duration of the administrative appointment.

Dr. Oscar Miller raised questions about the AAUP's description of academic freedom, as he felt that the current document does not take into account several nuances and limitations that are raised by the AAUP policy (specifically the extent to which freedom within the classroom to present information on one's area of expertise is different from freedom on other topics and in other venues). He also noted that no actor was specified in the policy and thought that the phrase "faculty or designated body" should be substituted for "faculty" in order to make clear that the Faculty Senate had a role. Dr. Blasi responded that this document is a statement of principles and not specific procedures and that the Handbook and similar documents would have more detail on this point. Dr. Miller countered that this document did not seem completely consistent with the AAUP's materials. Dr. Newkirk stated that the Faculty Senate draws its existence from the faculty; the faculty retains the right to designate activity to the senate; to have this given to the faculty senate by the policy would take away from the faculty as a

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whole. Dr. Miller responded that the policy could add “or designated body” with only three words, not making the document excessively long.

Dr. Miller tried to pursue these issues, but Dr. Asson-Batres indicated that he had held the floor long enough; when he persisted she reminded him that he was an associate dean speaking at a faculty meeting and should yield the floor to the faculty.

Dr. Quain added that he would support the current wording as there are times (such as in curricular decisions) when faculty have input into decisions without necessarily going through the Faculty Senate.

Dr. Asson-Batres called for additional questions or comments, and hearing none closed this portion of the meeting.

3:45 - Dr. Asson-Batres outlined voting procedures: Once the meeting is adjourned, Faculty will be asked to go to the appropriate table in the lobby (alphabetical by last name), sign next to their name on the list, fold ballots in half before casing them. Those whose names are not on the list may vote provided that they add their names to the list. Dr. Samuel Hargrove and Dr. Tim Quain will oversee counting of ballots once the balloting has ended.

Dr. Blasi moved to adjourn and Dr. Kimberly LaMarque seconded.