

THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE AT CHATTANOOGA
2005-2006 FACULTY SENATE MINUTES
 October 20, 2005

<u>Division</u>	<u>Present</u>	<u>Absent</u>
President	Richard Rice	
Past-President	Marvin Ernst	
At-Large	Stephen Kuhn, Claire McCullough, Jonathan McNair Joanie Sompayrac, David Young, Judith Wakim	
Adjunct		Tim Parker
Behavioral	Fritz Efaw, Shela Van Ness, Helen Eigenberg	David Brodsky
Business	Debbie Archambeault, Beni Asllani, Chris Brockman, John Alvis	
Engineering	Joe Dumas, Jim Hiestand, Kathy Winters	Roger Briley
Fine Arts	Matt Greenwell, Jillian Zwilling, Gavin Townsend	
CHEPS	Burch Oglesby, Kay Lindgren, Dana Wertemberger, Ted Miller	Linda Johnston, Robin Lee
Humanities	Vicki Steinberg, Chuck Lippy Tony Steinhoff, Elizabeth Gailey	Jennifer Beech
Library	Priscilla Seaman	
Math & Science	Bob Marlowe, Betsy Darken, Henry Spratt, Sharon Brueggeman	Gretchen Potts
Ex-Officio	Roger Brown, David Pittenger, John Friedl, Jocelyn Sanders, Theresa Liedtka	Richard Brown, Mary Lynn Williamson

Among the Guests Present: Deborah Arfken, Herb Burhenn, Mary Tanner, Linda Orth

SUMMARY

The SGA requested that the use of Blackboard be made mandatory or at least strongly encouraged. A motion distancing the Senate from uncivil language recently used on Raven was defeated. The Senate held a prolonged discussion about apparent changes of direction in the mission of UTC. Concern was expressed that a big increase in emphasis on research would lead to much less attention to teaching. Many members of the Senate called for a broader definition of teaching and better ways of measuring teaching. Some say we are all excellent teachers and others vehemently disagreed. The Chancellor said that all departments have an obligation to discuss the appropriate balance between teaching, service, and scholarship and wants the faculty to tell the administration what the balance should be. The Provost noted that the shift toward more research and

grantsmanship at UTC is a typical change in higher education. Concern was expressed about faculty members being able to have their voices heard at a university that has department heads, not chairs. Department heads have been known to suppress their faculty's voices and move cheeses unilaterally. Some commented that the "workhorses" are being punished and will start leaving the university. Others discussed ways in which faculty members could concentrate on different areas in different years and still be rewarded. The chancellor acknowledged that there is a big push toward more research in the UT system. Mission statements were contrasted with "where the money goes." The Provost said that he wants to hear from the faculty about how to dispense merit increases. Objection was raised to "merit increases" without cost of living adjustments, to the divisiveness that has occurred due to the new system of raises, and to the lack of community.

MINUTES

1. Call to Order

The meeting came to order at 3:03 p.m.

2. Approval of Minutes of September 15, 2005

The minutes were unanimously approved with the correction of the spelling of the name of the Dean of the Library, Theresa Liedtka. (Note: The October 6 Senate meeting was cancelled because of meetings with UT President Petersen.)

With the approval of the Senate, President Rice modified the agenda to insert several items, as follows.

3. Request from the SGA regarding the use of Blackboard

President Rice recognized student Joel Mims of the Academic Affairs Committee of the Student Government Association. Mr. Mims reported that students found the Blackboard Learning System to be very beneficial and requested that the faculty consider making the use of this system mandatory for all faculty, or at least to strongly encourage its use. President Rice commented that the Blackboard system is already being used in over 1000 classes.

4. Negative Comments on Raven

Professor Marvin Ernst made the following motion: "The Senate goes on record to state that the recent negative comments directed at the administration do not reflect the collective thinking of the Senate." The motion was seconded by Joanie Sompayrac. Professor Marlowe asked about the source of the comments to which this motion referred. Professor Ernst responded that recent comments made on Raven by a member of the Senate had referred to administrators as "idiots." Professor Efaw identified himself as the writer of these comments and wondered if all remarks critical of the administration were going to be disowned by the Senate. A discussion followed in which a number of professors decried the use of derogatory words in university discourses, others expressed disagreement with the Raven remarks but noted that they were not official statements from the Senate, and still others mentioned First Amendment rights. The motion was defeated, 9-15-5.

5. Executive Committee Report

President Rice reported the following:

- a. An ad hoc Faculty Club committee is being formed to look into the future and functions of the Faculty Club.
- b. The Academic Standards Committee will be reconsidering the UTC grade replacement policy, in which the grades earned in the first five courses that a student repeats replace the original grades.
- c. Food Services is opening the Chickamauga Room for faculty lunches for several weeks and will continue these lunches if there is a demand.

6. Administrative Reports

Chancellor Brown announced that funds for faculty research projects this year will come from University reserves and not the Foundation. He expects that the UC Foundation will continue funding such grants in the future when their return on endowments makes it possible to do so. He also drew the Senate's attention to the United Way campaign, remarking that he is proud of the tradition of strong support for the United Way by the UTC faculty and staff.

7. Discussion of Questions Raised by the Executive Committee

President Rice opened the floor to discussion of questions posed by the Executive Committee: (a) Where is UTC Heading? Are expectations for faculty undergoing a major change? What are these expectations? (b) How can the faculty participate in a positive fashion to the changing UT culture? (c) How can teaching, service, and research/scholarship expectations be balanced effectively and rewarded appropriately, not only on an individual but also at the college and university levels? (d) Stars, workhorses, and deadweights: if stars get rewarded and deadweights get removed, what happens to the workhorses? (e) How does all this tie in with creating a friendlier and more civil campus? (f) What will be the methods used for distributing pay raises this coming year? Will they be the same as last year?

President Rice drew the Senate's attention to Matt Greenwell's eloquent written comments regarding the first question and asked for discussion. Professor Jonathan McNair asked for information on the role of teaching at major research universities. Professor Chuck Lippy: teaching was valued at Princeton. Professor Sharon Brueggeman: at the two Big 10 institutions with which she has had experience, both farmed out teaching to graduate students and post-docs. Professor Claire McCullough: at UTK, where she taught five years as an instructor, research was the only important activity. A question was raised as to whether UTC is still a place for professors who just want to teach. Marvin Ernst commented that when he came to UTC from the UT Health Sciences Center, where there was a major push to get soft money, UTC bragged about having small classes. Now many classes at UTC are double sections. Professor Shela Van Ness: the code in academe is well known: research and publishing. But she added that if you want research, you can't have professors teaching large sections; a reward structure is needed that includes giving faculty opportunities for obtaining grants; now we are being asked to do it all.

Professor Vicki Steinberg referred back to Matt Greenwell's written comments. For some of us, teaching is our *raison d'être* and from teaching springs research. Good teaching is related to such activities as the Quality Enhancement Program mandated by SACS, which is focusing on the question of engaged students. While we often chafe under SACS requirements, SACS may be providing an opportunity here. Research needs to be done on what we do in the classroom that engages students.

Professor Eigenberg contested Professor Greenwell's reference to being at a crossroads. We need an ongoing dialog because developing an institutional identity is a process of metamorphosis, not a confrontational and sudden process. Professor Greenwell commented

that he had no intention of portraying this situation as confrontational. Rather, having three new or relatively new higher administrators creates an opportunity for reconsidering our institutional character, for having a “big conversation” that does not happen often enough.

President Rice recalled President Petersen’s remarks indicating that UTC could have more autonomy and asked Provost Friedl and Chancellor Brown to comment. Provost Friedl: In 1969, when the University of Chattanooga merged with the UT system, it was a small Methodist college focused almost exclusively on teaching. Since then, UTC has changed as higher education has changed. There is now more focus on research and more diversified sources of funding. Research is expected at a graduate-degree granting institution such as UTC. We must start with certain assumptions, including the assumption that all faculty at UTC are excellent teachers. Who in this room, the Provost asked, would admit to not being an excellent teacher? An evolution has occurred in higher education. We are not moving away from teaching, but broadening our goals to include research.

Chancellor Brown congratulated the Senate for engaging in this broad discussion. He has already raised these broader questions, first at a retreat with the Vice Chancellors and then at budgeting sessions. It is important to clarify UTC’s mission. He himself has spent time on faculty senates and committees and serving as faculty president. The heart of a university is faculty governance. Each department has an obligation to decide the relative importance of teaching, scholarship, and service. “You tell us,” the Chancellor said, “You must be engaged in the process.” What is important at UTC, how can this be measured, and how can it be rewarded? The development of a revised university mission must involve fully informed and engaged faculty.

Professor McCullough disagreed with the Provost about all faculty being excellent teachers. It is important to improve our methods of measuring teaching. She added that it is easier to be a better teacher at a school with stronger students, such as UTK. She has been told that the average ACT among electrical engineering students at UTK is 29. It is much lower at UTC. It is harder to teach weaker students. Professor Claire McCullough commented that expectations related to teaching vary considerably from department to department. In her department, the faculty is expected to post 10 hours per week of office hours, while at other departments, 1.5 hours is the norm. There has to be some sort of balancing. We cannot do everything. President Rice agreed that it is harder to teach at UTC than at an elite institution. We have many first generation college students and teaching such students is more difficult.

Professor Tony Steinhoff commented that good teaching takes time and includes activities like organizing oral presentations and developing curricula. Having served on the General Education Committee, he can attest to the variation in time and effort devoted to teaching. There are some faculty who do not devote time to either teaching or research. However, he disagreed with Professor Ernst that large classes are related to poorer teaching. As someone who used to teach three sections of the same course at three different times, he can attest to the fact that his third rendition of the same lecture was lacking. Professor Ernst responded that large classes did not necessarily mean bad teaching.

Professor Steinhoff added that the system of department heads as opposed to chairs severely constrained the ability of faculty to participate freely in discussions about the future of UTC, the relative importance of teaching, etc. For instance, a number of years ago his departmental faculty developed a policy document that was vetoed by the department head and never became official.

Professor Darken commented that she has had similar experiences on the General Education Committee as Professor Steinhoff. It is clear that some professors devote much more time and effort to developing and teaching good courses than others. She disagreed with the Provost that all professors at UTC are excellent teachers. It is important to develop methods for measuring good teaching as well as good service. Good teaching involves not only being able to give good lectures and write fair tests but also developing up-to-date curricula, giving students extra help, encouraging student engagement inside and outside class, and so on. Obviously some faculty are better at this than others. We all know that. The same is true for service activities. There are ways of measuring excellence in both teaching and service activities. For instance, as Secretary of the Faculty Senate, Professor Darken remarked that she could immediately identify three or four individuals who made outstanding contributions in the service area last year. If we choose to exert the effort to develop good ways of identifying and rewarding such activities, we could do so.

President Rice remarked that he can speak from personal experience on the power of department heads. At one point in his career at UT, he often received exceptional merits. Then a new department head was hired and “the cheese really moved.” Matt Greenwell’s statement about research informing teaching was very appropriate. There are more kinds of scholarly activities than traditional research.

Professor Sompayrac commented that it is vital to define the activities associated with good teaching and develop better ways to measure effective teaching. She herself spends a great deal of time advising students and going the extra mile for them. It also takes extra time to insist on good writing—she has become a “grading machine.” She recognizes herself as a workhorse, not a star. She is not against merit and recognizes and appreciates the stars. Nor does she think that across-the-board increases make sense—this is unheard of in business. However, she now feels she is getting punished for doing a good job. The stars are rewarded, the deadweights have no mobility, and so only the workhorses will leave.

Professor Kuhn said that we are not all the same and that one professor can concentrate in one area one year and another area the next. He himself has spent some years concentrating on grants and other years doing large amounts of committee work. Chuck Lippy said that he has worked at institutions that use numerical evaluation systems to take such diversification into account. Professors could negotiate a higher percentage of their time doing research one year, service the next, etc. However, such a numerical system can be a lot of trouble. Marvin Ernst reiterated that not every faculty member has to do everything every year, but it is important for departments to balance out activities among its members. Matt Greenwell agreed with these points, saying that teaching and service activities are validated through measurement and that well-run departments are balanced and play to their faculty’s strengths. As a department head, he would like to have university-wide support if he sends someone up for excellent teaching. He wants us to work collegially to make the university better. Vicki Steinberg commented that departments should be regarded as organisms that choreograph their members’ contributions; we should move away from the star system and reward well-functioning departments. Tony Steinhoff said that when he was hired in the History Department, UTC was described to him as “quasi-liberal arts,” but he has found that there are disincentives to good teaching. Writing assignments do not mesh with large numbers of students. It is hard to engage students in general education courses. The goal of credit hour production means that professors give up teaching courses in their specialty for the sake of increased credit hour production in lower level courses.

Richard Rice said that President Petersen seems to want to position the UT system as different from the TBR system. Where does this put UTC?

The Chancellor responded: I see a push to have UT recognized for research, for instance via its connections to such places as Oak Ridge National Laboratory. There is a desire to be recognized in the same way as the Universities of Virginia, Michigan, and North Carolina. There is clearly an interest in big time research possibilities. It would be the kiss of death for UTC to be seen as “quasi-liberal arts.” UNC-Asheville's funding nose-dived when it obtained this reputation. UTC is a balanced comprehensive regional university with professional schools and a strong general education core. It should meet the career and personal goals of its business, nursing, engineering, and other majors. It should be a balanced entity in which colleagues maximize their own strengths, honoring and rewarding all who contribute. This is hard to do, he said, “but this is what I want to work toward.”

Professor Dumas remarked that it seems that UTC is being redefined due to a shift within the UT system and he asked a “rhetorical” question: Would UTC be better off in the TBR system? The Chancellor responded that he intends to accept President Petersen's remarks about UTC's autonomy at face value. In any case, speaking as a political scientist, he sees any such move as occurring long after his tenure at UTC. Provost Friedl said that as a comprehensive university with master's and doctoral programs, UTC needs to expand its reach beyond southeast Tennessee, hopefully to the southeast. As such it is in competition with other regional comprehensive universities. Being part of the UT System provides some cachet. There is synergy, for instance, between our revived occupational therapy program and the UT Health Science Center, and between our Engineering School, UTK, and Oak Ridge. Being within the UT System provides some real value with regard to our ability to compete. Our goal should be to go after above-average students beyond a 50 mile radius. Everyone says that UTC does “a good job of teaching.” Achievements of the faculty have to go beyond what they do in the classroom. Joe Dumas responded that the question of UT vs. TBR should come up in the future.

Kay Lindgren asked the question: What is our mission? I know what I am, but we need a consensus about the university. Some of the angst will go away if we answer this question. Marvin Ernst reminded the Senate that he is chairing the committee that is drafting a mission statement. He has been giving the new chancellor time to settle in but will be calling a meeting soon. The word “education” *will* be in the mission statement. President Rice commented that he has seen lots of mission statements. The real question is: Where does the money go?

Shela Van Ness said that research is a given. The problem is an overextended faculty that is not rewarded. Now it is every man for himself. However, bean-counting to get rewards is not the right route. We need to build community within departments, with department chairs instead of department heads, with more discussions and sharing of responsibilities within departments. This would make departments more effective.

Professor Sompayrac noted that what we are hearing is a sense of unrest and uncertainty. There is a change of course that is perceived to be handed down from on high. *We* want a say. *We* want to have influence in defining the university and defining ourselves.

Kay Lindgren said that, while one size doesn't fit all, having department chairs instead of department heads is a wonderful idea. Claire McCullough said that the idea of a regional university sounds appealing but there is a brick wall at the state line. At Chattanooga State,

Georgians get to pay in-state tuition but at UTC they have to pay out-of-state. She hears students say that if they have to pay out-of-state tuition, they might as well go to the “real” UT.

President Rice brought attention to the last question on the list: “What will be the methods used for distributing pay raises this coming year? Will they be the same as last year?” Provost Friedl responded that he does not know if the UT system will issue the same directive as before. He wants to hear from the faculty and is not committed to repeating this past year’s system. Professor Rice asked if the pool will again be divided 50-50, with 50% across-the-board and 50% merit. The Provost said he did not know but that merit pay seems to be part of a long term policy. He also said that it makes sense to him not to use a one-year plan for assigning merit pay, but instead to use five-year retroactivity—but he is glad to consider different plans proposed by the faculty. However, any plan that expands the merit group to close to 100% probably will not fly. Assigning merit raises by considering the last 10 years of exceptional merits would have resulted in about 60% of the faculty receiving merit raises this past year. (The figure is lower than the actual percent of faculty receiving exceptional merit during these years due to faculty retiring or leaving UTC.) At UT-Martin, about 70% of the faculty received merit raises. The Provost stressed that he wants to hear from the faculty about how to dispense merit raises.

Professor Van Ness commented that President Petersen has to appear before the Legislature to explain the 1.5% salary adjustment. In her opinion, he will have a hard time explaining why this plan was fair. Describing these as “merit raises” is a trap. They are cost of living adjustments. President Rice reminded the Senate of his comment to President Petersen that faculty who only “meet expectations” will fall drastically behind as cost-of-living increases. President Petersen responded, “Probably.”

Professor Efaw said that this whole discussion has been about exceptional merit, all about win-lose. Faculty are looking for ways to magnify small differences, such as in teaching, to get more rewards. In sports, very small differences can make a big difference. This is what competition is about. If one person gets the prize, someone else doesn’t. This leaves out all the workhorses and creates incentives only for those at the margins. The goal becomes avoiding falling below the lower threshold. Instead, the goal should be giving cost of living adjustments across the board, and then adding merit raises above and beyond cost of living adjustments.

Jonathan McNair urged that research not be judged according to the size of grants obtained. In the arts, grants are small. He had to work very hard to get a \$15,000 grant.

Jim Hiestand wanted to know if this discussion would be continued. Marvin Ernst said the Executive Committee would plan another discussion, perhaps with a more specific focus.

8. Other Business

None.

9. Faculty Concerns

Marcia Noe raised a concern about the new UTC logo, which contains a cross. Chancellor Brown, who came to UTC after this logo had been adopted, said it replaced the generic UT logo and is an attempt to honor the heritage and traditions of UTC. The Executive Committee agreed to look into the matter.

10. Adjournment

The Senate adjourned at 4:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Betsy Darken
Faculty Senate Secretary