

Minutes for the meeting of the Tennessee State University Faculty Senate, 11/20/2014

In Attendance:

Michael Catanzaro, Liberal Arts, English
Sam Comer, CAHNS, Agricultural Sciences
Sean Daniels, Liberal Arts, Music
John Dossett, Education, Psychology
Xuemei Ge, Library
John Kelly, Engineering, Math and Physics (Secretary pro-tem)
Lewis Laska, Business, Accounting
Jacqueline Lewis, COHS, Nursing
Vaidotas Lukosius, Business, Business Administration
Dr. Schmeller (substituting for John Miglietta), Liberal Arts, History etc.
Rebecca Moore, CPSUA, Social Work
Kushal Patel, COHS, Public Health
Nsoki Phambu, CAHNS, Chemistry
Sachin Shetty, Engineering, Electrical Engineering
Amir Shirkodaie, Engineering, Mechanical Engineering
Robert Smith, Criminal Justice
Artenzia Young-Siegler, CAHNS, Biology

Item 1: Since Secretary is not able to attend this meeting, a Secretary pro-tem must be elected. John Kelly is nominated, and unanimously approved.

Item 2: No additions are made to the agenda

Item 3: Marc Brinkley from the Office of Diversity and International Affairs is here to discuss international students with the Senate. He reports that the number of international students has grown from 79 in 2012 to 702 in Fall 2014. About 2/3rd of international students are undergraduate students, and 1/3rd are graduate students. Mr. Brinkley emphasized the importance of retention, progression, and graduation of international students. He discussed current English language entrance requirements, and how they are being increased for the Fall 2015 semester. He also discussed that the Graduate School is considering raising the requirements for graduate admission even farther, and the Office has recommended that they do. He then opened the floor to questions and comments from faculty.

Dr. Catanzaro discussed that as an English teacher he spend about 3 to 4 hours every week helping international students in his classes, and still only 2 of 9 passed. He thinks that we need a class that is specifically geared to help students improve English skills, especially reading and writing. Perhaps a special lab course could be developed.

Mr. Brinkley noted that Saudi students in particular have low reading / writing sub-scores on the IELTS.

Mr. Brinkley challenged faculty to identify international students who are struggling as early as possible and direct them to the Office of Diversity and International Affairs where they can get extra support. Use tools like Tiger Alert, or simply ask the students to visit the Office of Diversity and International Affairs.

Dr. Catanzaro suggested that professors who do in-depth mentoring and language work with a small number of international students could perhaps get a course release to do that.

Mr. Brinkley informed us that international students have a good network, and the word gets around about professors that work well with international students – if you have a lot of international students, consider it a compliment!

Mr. Brinkley also informed us about how the Saudi government supports students, and how TSU has no funds earmarked specifically for supporting international students. Saudi students can get extended support to do graduate work after undergraduate, and visas can be extended as well. Our non-Saudi students struggle much with finances and paying for their education. (About 538 students are Saudis.)

Dr. Patel recommended some sort of recruiting video be made for when TSU personnel make international trips they can help in recruiting.

Dr. Lewis re-affirmed that word of mouth is very important, and TSU has many international students thanks to the fact that we treat them well. Mr. Brinkley encourages us to be patient with language problems, and take them seriously.

Item 4: The Health and Welfare committee submitted its report via email; Senators are encouraged to review if they have not already.

Item 5: The Constitution and Bylaws committee submitted its report via email; Senators are encouraged to review if they have not already.

Item 6: A comment was made about the lateness of the committee selection process, and how that has held up the work of committees; unfortunately, there is nothing the Senate could do about it as Academic Affairs and the Deans are responsible for this.

Item 7: The Research committee reports on concerns with the Office of Sponsored Research's website, which is out of date. They also reported that release time is still not properly being given; grant funding does not give more release time as it should. This leaves funded researchers without enough time to complete work. Another barrier for researchers in departments with graduate students is the application turn around time is unacceptably slow – reported as being from 6 to 12 months. As a result, we lose good candidates, and lose Masters students who would like to go on to pursue a Ph.D. Dr. Shirkodaie reports that the director of the Graduate Schools reports problems with an overload of international applications. Dr. Shirkodaie also reports that we return too much research funding to granting agencies due to problems with purchasing, etc.; this hurts our chances of getting further funding. He also reports that we do not take care of intellectual property well here, and do not take advantage of intellectual property generated at TSU.

Item 8: Dr. Young-Siegler reports that she's had monthly meetings with Dr. Hardy, and plans to continue them in the future. She also reported that she discussed concerns about religious diversity at University events, and hopes that she'll take in into consideration. She also reported on discussing mandatory office hours with Dr. Hardy. The "mandatory" 10 hours is in no official documentation; it's not a policy, but a practice. Dr. Hardy has directed chairs that if they wish faculty in their department to hold 10 office hours, that faculty only need to be available – not in the office – for those 10 hours. Dr. Hardy also discussed the policy on chair appointments.

Item 9: There was a motion by Dr. Catanzaro to adopt the new Constitution; it was seconded and approved unanimously by show of hands.

Item 10: There was a motion by Dr. Kelly to hold an extra Senate meeting on December 11th from 2:40 until 4:00 PM. Dr. Catanzaro seconded, and it was approved unanimously by a show of hands.

Item 11: We will elect chairs for committees that need them via email.

Item 12: Dr. Catanzaro moved that the meeting be adjourned; Dr. Kelly seconded, and it was approved by a show of hands.