

(Approved 10 Sept. 2003)
Minutes of the Special Faculty Assembly Meeting
April 30, 2003

Present: Antar, Caruthers, Coleman, Collins, Crater, Davis, Garrison, Hailey, Jensen, Joseph, Kimberlin, Kimble, J. Lewis, Merkle, Moulden, Parigger, Ranaudo, Schulz, Smith, Solies, Steinhoff, Whitehead.

Absent: Bomar, Chen, Dahotre, Flandro, Keefer, Kupersmidt, M. H. McCay, Muehlhauser, Petersen, Pujol, Sheth, Vakili.

Guest: Reddy

Meeting began at 10:32 am in E-113 with Schulz presiding.

A quorum was present.

1) UTK Faculty Senate - Antar

Even though the meeting was to be devoted to the revitalization plan and the faculty accountability statement, it was agreed to permit Antar to report on the UTK Faculty Senate meeting held on April 28, 2003. The Senate passed a major revision of their bylaws, which includes the establishment of a caucus, made up of the senators from individual academic units like UTSI. The caucus is to call meetings of its faculty and seek to improve communications between each unit and the UTK Faculty Senate. The number of senators from a given unit was not changed in the bylaws so UTSI will continue to have three senators.

The UTSI Caucus has been organized with Antar as chair and has called a meeting of the UTSI faculty for Friday May 2, 2003.

The Senate also passed a proposed revision of the cumulative review process for faculty. In the revision a cumulative review will be triggered for :

- a. A faculty member whose annual review is Unsatisfactory in any two of five consecutive years;
- b. A faculty member whose annual review is any combination of Unsatisfactory or Needs Improvement in any three of five consecutive years.

The following motion was made by Kimble and seconded by Kimberlin:

The UTSI Faculty Assembly endorses and supports the following resolution that was passed by the UTK Faculty Senate on April 28, 2003, and believes it should apply to UTSI.

Whereas Provost Crabtree has affirmed his support for shared governance, asserting that "administrators must make every effort to involve faculty at critical stages of the decision making process," and...

Whereas the UTK Faculty Handbook (section 2.14.3) Procedures for Revocation of Tenure, part3 states that 'extraordinary circumstances' may involve (a) financial exigency or (b) major program discontinuation. In either case the termination of tenured faculty may take place only after sustained deliberation and discussion of the exigency or of the program change. Such deliberations and discussions must include the faculty of the University through appropriate committees of the Faculty Senate, of the college, and of the department involved."

Whereas, Provost Crabtree affirmed the importance of upholding both the Faculty Handbook and AAUP principles regarding discontinuation of academic programs.

Therefore be it resolved that the UTK Faculty Senate support the Provost in working to ensure the University of Tennessee comply with both the Faculty Handbook and the AAUP Policy Statement on the Discontinuance of Program or Department Not Mandated by Financial Exigency when implementing any future academic program cuts.

The motion passed unanimously.

2) UTSI Revitalization Plan – Schulz

Since the seven-part plan is to use federal research funds to jumpstart UTSI's efforts to revitalize itself, Schulz questioned how present faculty would fit into the process. How do faculty participate if the funded projects do not match faculty interests? Collins felt that the performance goals were even beyond those expected at MIT and questioned what the outcome would be if federal funds fail to materialize.

Reddy passed out an outline of the revitalization plan and also the recommendations of the revitalization committee. He also reminded the faculty that UT finally is committed to UTSI's continuation and improvement. It was also noted that UTSI faculty presently attract an average of about \$100K each in research funding per year. Concern was expressed whether faculty should be expected to achieve a certain level of funding or whether UTSI should just be required to achieve an aggregate funding goal.

When the faculty expressed no sense of ownership in the plan they were reminded by Reddy that certain faculty are associated with some of the major research efforts being pursued:

Prometheus – Merkle, Keefer
HEPS – Keefer, Smith, Merkle, Schulz
Fuel Cell – Garrison, Sheth, Bomar, Smith
Thrust Vector Control – Vakili
Projects with UT Memphis – Kimble, Whitehead, Davis .

Further discussion ensued with the following comments being made about the revitalization plan:

- a) It is risky putting emphasis on federal funds only since getting political money is tenuous at best.
- b) Faculty must be consulted more fully concerning new areas of research to pursue.
- c) Teams have to be formed in order to have any chance for success.
- d) Two years ago teams (research groups) were eliminated at UTSI.
- e) Sabbaticals are required for faculty to establish new areas of expertise.

At this point Caruthers arrived. He announced that the rather severe faculty performance expectations were not being presented without some alternative. An early retirement incentive package of \$35K was to be offered to 13 faculty members that day. They would have 21 days to accept the offer and an additional 7 days to withdraw the acceptance. The 13 faculty selected had less than \$400K in outside research funding during the previous ten years. Searches were to be begun immediately to replace any of the departing faculty.

Caruthers indicated that strict faculty performance requirements would be necessary for UTSI to survive. Both Shumaker and Leonard feel that UTSI must either close or grow, but are willing to provide help at the federal level to gain funds for UTSI. Such "pork barrel" funding is necessary for UTSI to survive. Schulz asked whether Shumaker and/or Leonard had considered a reduction in administration at UTSI as a method for making UTSI a more viable institution.

3) Announcements

The faculty were reminded to attend the meeting called by the UTSI Faculty Caucus at 1 pm Friday May 2 in room E-113.

4) The meeting adjourned at 11:56 pm

Respectfully submitted,

R. D. Joseph
Assembly Secretary
21 May 2003