

TUFS Minutes from Fall 2018

Members/Delegates Present

Dr. Bonnie Ownley, TUFS President (UTK)
Dr. Pippa Holloway TUFS President-elect (voting, MTSU)
Dr. Randy Byington, TUFS Past President (ETSU)
Dr. Sandi Smith-Andrews, TUFS Secretary (TTU)

Dr. Jack Zibluk (voting-UTC)
Dr. Kate Kemplin (UTC)

Dr. Justin Gardner (MTSU)

Dr. Phyllis Camilleri (voting-APSU)
Dr. Sally Lundin-Schiller (APSU)

Dr. Geoffrey Burks (voting, TSU)

Dr. Troy Smith (voting, TTU)

Dr. Misty Anderson (voting, UTK)

Dr. Stephen Hendrix (ETSU)
Dr. Susan Epps (ETSU)
Dr. Bill Flora (voting, ETSU)

Dr. Martin Donaldson (voting, UTHSC)

No Representation

UTM
U of M

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Friday, October 19, 2018

The group convened for a lovely dinner at the Shelbridge on Friday from 5:30-7:00 PM graciously hosted by Dr. Brian and Mrs. Nolan. No notes taken.

Saturday, October 20, 2018

The meeting was called to order by Dr. Ownley at 8:59 AM. She opened the meeting with a brief overview of the purpose and structure of the meeting. The initial part of the meeting will be to discuss key issues facing member institutions.

Post-tenure review (Enhanced post performance review) seems to be a topic being addressed at most schools. There's a major disconnect on what it takes to achieve tenure and the annual evaluation process at universities. There seems to be a major disconnect on what it takes to achieve tenure and the continued annual evaluation process by BOT members, legislators, and general public. Benefits of tenure include the long-term stability for students, productivity, workforce, foster new ideas, room to innovate, return on investment, mentorship, entrepreneurial capacity, and institutional knowledge.

The finger seems to always point to faculty. Dr. Ownley suggested a shift in responsibilities toward administration to solve problems instead of attacking tenure.

Faculty and the University: A brief from the University Faculty Council was distributed as an example of a guide (including talking points) to issues within higher education. A copy is available in the drive.

The council is also planning a “goodwill” trip to legislators paired with students to help change the negative views toward higher education and faculty.

A Brainstorm of topics for the day:

Post-tenure review

Laws on tenure

Partnership with AAUP and UCW

Communication and conversations with BOTs

Outsourcing

Diversity

Meeting with Senate Representative: David Hawk

Discussed “Drive to 55” and similar programs designed to create opportunities for those who might not traditionally have access to higher education.

- a. Initial perspective is positive
- b. Motivation was to attract industry to the area
- c. New awareness that the programs will ultimately have to expand to 4-year institutions
- d. Hopes higher education constituencies will have input into how “this shakes out”

Geoffrey Burks (TSU) suggested a constant evaluation of available monies to adequately fund student education.

Hawk described that the initial year of the lottery was “banked” so the interest could be used to fund the programs which originated the monies for the programs.

Kate Kemplin (UTC) expressed concern about the lack of support for Humanities and their benefit and necessity in creating individuals capable of critical thinking and decision-making.

Misty Anderson (UTK) inquired how could we help each other with our “image problems”? Those within the system are well aware of “what it takes” to get tenure and keep it but the “outside” perception is a problem that needs to be addressed. It was noted that 32% “spin-out” before the tenure decision point.

Bill Flora (ETSU) expressed concerns about the P-12 education testing data for the last three years. Failure aversion due to the testing movement is hurting entrepreneurial thinking among those students. This becomes a problem when they enter university. Tenure allows professors to invest time into something they “failed” but still provides relevant information to the field.

Randy Byington (ETSU) noted that “grit” has a higher correlation with success and CAN be taught. Successes have been noted in economically depressed schools where Principals focus on social/behavioral determinants of success.

Further discussion about skyrocketing mental health issues, costs of “failure of trust”, and public monies paid to private vendors ensued.

Concern was raised about:

- a. “Performance-based funding” tied to degree completion increasing pressure to inflate grades or administrators forcing grade changes.
- b. Community college articulation agreements that do not ensure the necessary rigor to be successful in 4-year institutions.
- c. Importance of research experiences for undergraduate students was addressed with the tie to Federal grant funding.

- d. Adjunct pay is so bad that the quality is decreased
- e. Community colleges are rushing to get students to complete but then those students are not ready for the next level (university).
- f. Tennessee is suffering nationally and internationally due to negative “brand” happening because of bad attitude between legislators and higher education. How can this be remedied?

Senator Hawk recommended getting to know senators and representatives to try and build a better rapport.

Senator Hawk asked for feedback about BOTs:

ETSU-very happy with their experience;

MTSU-would be much more effective if they would begin to think strategically toward the long-haul;

TSU-has observed that the board seems to be focused on “saving face”;

TTU-first year was occasionally rocky but are now optimistic. All will work better with less micro-management and a shift toward long-term planning;

UTK-the biggest problem is the lack of communication and misrepresentation (only one faculty member). Also, a misperception of the important issues.

Senator Hawk thanked the group for candid and enlightening conversation. He further remarked that he wished his fellow legislators could see and hear what he did during the meeting.

Campus Reports (Full reports are available in the drive)

APSU (Phyllis Camilleri)

1. 3.9% growth
2. Doctorate of Educational Leadership started Doctorate in Psychology in the works.
3. Family Leave addressed with 6 weeks available.
4. Faculty and staff raises averaged 5%.
5. Faculty given prior service credit are expected to perform at equivalent year level.
6. Faculty only evaluate up to the chair level (chairs evaluate deans, etc.).
7. There are ongoing concerns about the large number of adjuncts (50% of student credit hours are taught by non-tenured professors).

TTU (Troy Smith)

Troy Smith (TTU) asked how promotion raises are funded at the other universities. The general raise pool funded the promotions first and the rest went to merit.

1. A general disapproval of tenure was implied by the Board and the process of “getting rid of” unproductive faculty was too complicated during the Spring meeting. The university is now looking at a post-tenure review process lead by the new Provost.
2. Senate President has been meeting with BOT members to discuss their perceptions of work load and all issues related to tenure. Headway is being made to inform.
3. Two committees are looking to define tenure and create a new post-tenure review process.
4. The research misconduct case that brought TTU negative press is expected to conclude shortly.
5. The “unexpected” budget shortfalls seem to continue year after year.

TSU (Geoffrey Burks)

1. The university is experiencing “trying times” and the BOT seems to be too focused on “saving face”.
2. Faculty Sick Leave Bank is now functioning.
3. A university payment plan was implemented. They had to write off more than \$5 million in bad payment plan debt over the summer. The system will need to be further evaluated to prevent the problem in the future.

4. Some international faculty feel targeted and the Senate is working on a "Safe Workplace" initiative to stop the problem.
5. The Senate is hopeful to function as a positive force in these unprecedented "trying times".

UTC (Jack Zibluk)

1. Tenure, post-tenure review, and early tenure are front and center for the faculty handbook.
2. Senate Handbook Committee is reviewing all language from last year's rewrite.
3. The implementation of a faculty grievance/complaint system is established.
4. A new course learning evaluation (CLE) system is underway with 11 departments participating initially.
5. Concern the UTC is relying more and more on non-tenure track instructors.
6. The Budget and Economic Status Committee is reviewing compensation data to advocate more effectively for faculty salary increases.

U of M (Martin Donaldson)

Did not receive a copy of the report.

MTSU (Pippa Holloway)

1. MTSU is still reeling from the law school denial by THEC.
2. Salary increases were 1.5% across the board with the rest in equity raises.
3. Revisions of "Tenure", "Promotion", and "Tenure Appeals" policies were implemented.
4. Start time of BOT meeting has been an issue.
5. Conducting a "data dig" into faculty salaries, budgets, and etc..
6. Conducting analysis of annual faculty survey, workplace bullying, and evaluation of Chairs policies.

ETSU (Bill Flora)

1. Affirmed new TUFs Constitution.
2. Executive committee continues to meet monthly with the President and Provost while continuing to meet monthly with SGA.
3. The Faculty Senate President serves on the Budget Advisory and Strategic Planning Committees.
4. A working group is looking at revision to all policies with the move to a new BOT.
5. Case of "termination with cause" for a tenured faculty member is concluded.
6. NCAA investigation of former tennis coach is also concluding.
7. Culp University Center is closing for two years for extensive renovations. All current services are being moved to temporary homes.

UTK/UTIA (Misty Anderson)

1. Annual retreat for Senators and Administrators was held.
2. A series of "better communications initiatives" is being launched to "renovate" the image of faculty and better inform the public about higher education.
3. Additional post-tenure review policy was added for every tenured faculty member.
4. Conducted the OpEd Project training to make a more effective public-facing argument for higher education.
5. Expect search for next permanent Chancellor of UTK to conclude soon.
6. UTK Senate plans to continue to watch legislative issues closely.
7. Communication is the number one priority.
8. Still concerned about Pride Center's outlawing with other schools having a presence.
9. UTK are increasing their presence on FaceBook and YouTube (social media).

Minutes Discussion

1. Motion Pippa Holloway to approve.
2. Second by Martin Donaldson.
3. Discussion:

- a. remove “mostly due to graduate dean” from MTSU’s report.
 - b. UTK number 8 should be handbook, not “handboot”.
 - c. Correct Pippa’s name (has two Ps).
4. Minutes approved.

WebPage

1. Solve issues with access and update ASAP.
2. Expand use of FaceBook or other existing social media.
3. Potentially create a Twitter for TUFS.

Other Issues

1. TUFS-like organization is potentially going national. Is there an interest in participating?
2. Action item to find out more information and discuss later.
3. Dual enrollment can be a great recruiting tool and warrants further discussion. Concerns about dual-enrollment legislation favoring 2-year schools is a potential problem for institutions currently participating.
4. Thoughts about creating a TUFS YouTube channel focused on informing legislators, BOT members, and the general public warrant further discussion.

Next Meeting

MTSU will host the Spring 2019 meeting. Information is forthcoming.