

Tennessee Tech TUFFS Report

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Our spring semester, while including such actions as appointing a new faculty representative to our board of trustees and dealing with the roll-out of the university's new website, has largely been notable for the policy issues we have been dealing with. At the charge of our board, revised policies concerning both the attaining of tenure and the specifics of the duties and responsibilities of faculty after attaining tenure have been presented by committees composed of faculty. The revised policies have been presented and discussed before senate and then sent to the appropriate councils. They will go before the board at their June meeting; it remains to be seen how the revisions will be received by trustees, as –while detailing and streamlining the process of dealing with faculty who receive across-the-board unsatisfactory reviews –the new tenure policy does not introduce regular post-tenure review or an expedited process for administration to quickly remove tenured faculty members, which seemed to be what at least some of the trustees were asking for in their initial charge.

We also heard from a representative of the committee working on the university's official intellectual property policy. The senate passed a resolution stating that our position is all materials created and used in the classroom by faculty, other than syllabi, are the property of the faculty and cannot be used by or disseminated to others without the faculty member's consent. We are optimistic that this language will make its way into the official policy.

We created a committee, chaired by Jeff Roberts, to work with the provost's office in drafting a revised policy about emeriti. In recent years, many of the benefits traditionally enjoyed by our emeriti seem to have eroded, such as parking privileges and office space. Representatives from IT, as well as our VP for Planning & Finance, were not happy with the plan agreed upon by our committee and the provost's office which would enable retired faculty to retain university email accounts, saying it was too much of a security risk and too expensive; their preference is to purge all former faculty, staff, and students from university email. This preference was stated to the board at their most recent meeting, with me voicing my opposition. The result was a charge from the board for faculty senate, the provost's office, and IT to collaborate on an acceptable definition of "university affiliation."