

Tennessee Tech University (TTU)  
Faculty Senate Retreat  
August 20, 2018

I. After breakfast was served, President Oldham made the following introductory remarks:

A public / private residence hall with the theme of innovation is being proposed.  
freshmen class may be the third largest ever.

Transfer student numbers were flat this year.

-year graduate rate broke 50%.

There are resources, but we must be vigilant on how we spend them.

It would be nice to control future tuition increases and lock in tuition rates, but there are problems with doing this.

The budget is currently being prepared for Board approval. More details will be forthcoming after the final fall enrollment numbers are known. The budget will come before the Board in October. The current revision includes a conservative tuition estimate

C. It seems that the Board, some TTU administrators, and many in the community do not understand what faculty do. In a recent Board meeting, when faculty workload was que

President Oldham noted that a lot of money is being invested in them and wondered if any assessment was done to see their effect on retention. Senator Stein replied that he had done some initial assessment and that no effect on assessment was found.

F. A Senator asked whether salary increases would strictly be merit-based in the future.

President Oldham replied that this is probably the case and asked if this was fair. A Senator replied that academic unit size calls into question the merit-based system. President Oldham conceded this point. He continued that if faculty did a reasonable job last year, they got something. Some discussion ensued on issues surrounding raises. Ultimately, the Department Chairs decide who receive raises or not. President Oldham observed that when he first began at TTU, there were low faculty salaries and that the student / faculty ratio was 22:1. Now, faculty salaries are 15-20% higher and the student / faculty ratio is 18:1. These points were a priority for President Oldham in the past and will continue to be so in the future.

G. President Oldham asserted that the use of adjuncts should not be to reduce costs, but rather as an opportunity to bring in specialized experts to teach a class on their area of expertise that students would not be able to attend otherwise.

President Oldham closed on some final thoughts. We are blessed to have careers in Academe. He takes our comments and concerns seriously and continues to work on shared governance.

III. Dr. Debbie Barnard, Chair of the Financial Aid Committee, addressed the Faculty Senators and asked them for input on how to improve communication with the Financial Aid Office. Some comments, questions, and suggestions follow and others will be sent to Dr. Barnard directly by Google doc:

1. Normally a faculty member does not know who has financial aid in class and who does not.
2. What are the degrees of freedom for financial aid?
3. A Financial Aid 101 workshop would be beneficial for faculty and advisors.
4. When advising for summer school, it would be beneficial to know (or implement) the extent Hope scholarships can be used and what constitutes satisfactory academic standing.
5. What is the status of university and academic scholarships? How many have been awarded? How are these scholarships determined?
6. Clarify the application of federal work-study and assess how it may conflict with a

11. Can students receive their financial aid in their accounts earlier? Every semester some students indicate that they cannot buy their books until a week or two after the semester has begun, putting them behind in their studies from the beginning.

IV. The Senate President asked Senators to break up into groups and consider some important issues that will need to be taken up by the Senate in the 2018-2019 academic year. These issues included:

1. Tenure situation at TTU. It is direly important to indicate the importance of tenure to the Board. Senator Stein made two important points: first, we will not be able to hire the best faculty if tenure is not available at TTU, and second, tenured faculty members were terminated in recent years for performing poorly. The tenure system is working here and need not be changed. Senator Killman stressed the need to advocate for tenure at all levels, including Board members, administrators, community members, students, etc.
2. Definition of productivity. Discussion on this point ensued. Some saw the need for the Senate to create a wide-ranging definition of productivity and to make it a Senate resolution. Others thought that each department should take responsibility for coming up with a definition specific to their academic unit.
3. Ask for a role (representation) in the tenure review report mentioned by President Oldham.
4. Follow up on the study of gender equality pay conducted last year.
5. Examine treatment of valued emeriti faculty (issues of parking, office space, etc.).
6. Examine salary inversion issue (Department of English).
7. Set time limits in Senate meetings to get through business efficiently.
8. Receive update on Fitzgerald issue. Also, revisit and revise the 780 policy.
9. Discuss whether to invite VP Stinson and Provost Bruce to Senate meetings with the President. Some felt that they will be able to answer questions that the President cannot, while others thought that they might take up valuable time unnecessarily. (SEPT 10 AGENDA)
10. Discuss the possible restructuring of gen ed requirements and understand what were TBR

**These notes were discussed at length at the September 10, 2018 Senate Business Meeting and corrections and critical feedback were made. See the Minutes of the September 10<sup>th</sup> Senate Business meeting for these discussion notes.**

Respectfully submitted,

Mark Groundland, TTU Senate Secretary