

Staff Advisory Committee

March 16, 2016

Members Present: Becky Asher (presiding), Kevin Edwards, Jerry Keeton, Debbie Mayberry, Randal McCloud and Valerie Nash

Others Present: Leslie Crickenberger, President Phil Oldham, Terri Taylor, Emily Wheeler

President's Comments

There are several big topics to cover that will be affecting the TTU campus in the upcoming weeks and months.

The first of those is the SACSCOC 10 year reaffirmation meeting that is happening at the end of this month, March 29-31. This pinnacle on-site visit involves a team of eight reviewing TTU's Quality Enhancement Plan with the focus being on the EDGE Curriculum Grant Program. There is nothing more important than this visit, as the results decide the continuing accreditation of the university.

The next topic of importance is the FOCUS Act. This piece of legislation allows for an independent board to govern each of the TBR's six universities independently. The bill has made its way through most of the committees and will be up for vote on the Senate floor in a few weeks. July 1 is the expected effective date for this new bill, but there will likely be a 9 month transitionary period that will allow time for the boards to be established. An open forum has been scheduled for April 14, at 11 a.m., in the Tech Pride Room to further discuss this tremendous opportunity for Tennessee Tech.

President Oldham also touched on the various changes that will be occurring over the next few months, involving parking on campus. Because of how quickly the plans for the new science building are coming together, the new parking plan will be going into effect sooner than anticipated. The first phase has been approved by the TBR and will begin with the upcoming academic year. An open forum has also been set for March 24, at 11 a.m., in the Derryberry Hall Auditorium to address any parking questions or concerns.

Another area of interest presented by President Oldham was financial matters at TTU. State funding is improving this year with an almost 25% increase over THEC's recommendation; Tennessee Tech could receive up to 3 million dollars from the 50 million to be distributed among Tennessee's public universities. In regards to Tennessee Tech's recent Carnegie reclassification, President Oldham is working to get an amendment added to a bill that allocates additional funding for doctoral level institutions, which would contribute an additional 2 million dollars to the university over the next three years. In regards to tuition, THEC has recommended a 3% increase of tuition and mandatory fees for the 2016-2017 school year. The board will likely adhere to this increase which means an additional 2 million dollars for TTU. These increases will cover the previous year's deficit that the university was able to cover without making any cuts.

At President Oldham's request, Dr. Crickenberger addressed the implementation of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) new exemption status that will likely affect approximately 174 TTU employees in regards to how they are paid by the university.

President Oldham addressed the concern of outsourcing of support jobs. According to the Governor's Office, each university has the ability to opt out of this decision if they choose to do so. Although there have been discussions at the government level of outsourcing in order to have greater efficiency and savings, there is nothing that says it will happen at this time.

Several committee members were interested to learn more about the recent donation of the Cookeville Golf Club to the university. The golf club was gifted to the TTU Foundation and will remain so until all details have been completed. At that point, it will be transferred to the university. The property appraised for 3.8 million dollars and was an incredibly generous gift that the university plans on keeping as an operational course for the time being. The course is considered a viable business operation and President Oldham looks forward to Tennessee Tech enhancing the current level of the business.

Facilities purchasing methods will be addressed at an upcoming meeting with Facilities staff members, which is set for later this week.

Budget Model

Director of Budget and Planning Emily Wheeler gave a presentation on the new budget model that TTU has implemented. The presentation can be found at the following link:
<https://www.tntech.edu/planning-and-finance/budgeting-and-planning/budget-model>.

Other Such Matters

Associate Vice President for Human Resources Dr. Leslie Crickenberger discussed Tennessee Tech's Sick Bank Policy with the committee. The policy is currently restricted by TBR. The current Sick Leave Bank Policy allows only for consideration of the awarding of hours for an employee's illness and does not allow for illnesses associated with an employee's spouse or dependents. These policies are open for future review.

There being no further business of the committee, the meeting ADJOURNED at 12 p.m.

Terri Taylor, Recorder