University Assembly
April 16, 2025
TEAMS Meeting

Members Present: Atkinson, Bare, Bowhay, Chang, Christen, Comer, Craven, Dewar, Edmonds, Fornehed, Foster, Gannod, Grimes, Hanna, Hasan, A. Hill, C. Hill, Holderman (for Mills), Kalyanapu, Kennedy, Killman, Liu, Mabry, Majors, Manginelli, Mann, Nattrass, Nichols, Nucum, Null, O'Connor, Owens, Park, Payne, Russell, S. Seiler, Shank, Slater, Smith-Andrews, D. Smith, Snider, Suters, Tennant, Tidwell (for Westbrook), Timmerman, Trent, Vedder (for Stinson), Warren, Weathers, Williams (for Creter), B. Wilson, M. Wilson, Winkle, Yelamarthi, Zagumny.

Members Absent: Brown, Burch, Carlile, Ding, Donadio, Dye, Fidan, Field, Gotcher, Hewitt, Langford, Le Borne, Ojo, Peng, Rajabali, Rice, Shipley, Simpson, Skelton, Spears, Turner, Upole, Xu.

Others Present: Baker, Braswell, Bruce, Cannon, Combs, Huo, Luna, McCallister, Oldham, Polk-Johnson, Reagle, B. Seiler, B. Smith, Wilkerson, Winningham, Wray, Wright.

Summary of Proceedings:

Approved agenda

Approved minutes from November 20, 2024

Approved revised Data Classification Policy No. 855

Approved revised Data Security and Handling Policy No. 856

Received annual report for Information Technology Committee

Received annual report of International Affairs Committee

Received annual report of University Planning Committee

Received report of the Academic Council for Spring 2025

Received report of the Administrative Council for Spring 2025

Received remarks from President Oldham

Other such matters

Proceedings:

President Oldham called the meeting to order at 3:31 pm. Sandi Smith-Andrews motioned to approve the agenda and Megan Atkinson seconded. Motion APPROVED.

A motion to approve the minutes from November 20, 2024, was made by Smith-Andrews and seconded by Atkinson. Motion APPROVED.

Jason Luna presented on revised Data Classification Policy No. 855. The Information Technology Committee (ITC) created an ad hoc committee to work on this policy. The three main changes the committee worked on were changing Classification 4 from sensitive to restricted, formatting changes, and adding a definition and roles and responsibilities section. Atkinson asked about the repercussions listed in the classification section. Luna stated that the roles and responsibilities were being enforced in the policy to ensure that people classified data properly. Rules and responsibilities were defined in Section 6. Smith-Andrews motioned to approve revised Data Classification Policy No. 855 and Atkinson seconded. Motion APPROVED.

Luna presented on revised Data Security and Handling Policy No. 856. This policy was reviewed by an ITC ad hoc committee, similarly to Policy No. 855. Formatting changes were made to make it easier to read, Classification 4 was changed from sensitive to restricted, and a definition and roles and responsibilities section was added as well. Smith-Andrews asked if there were any specific trainings regarding the Policies No. 855 and 856 so that others outside University Assembly would be aware. Luna replied that there had been a data classification training module in the annual security awareness training within the last year, and he would be happy to present it again in the next annual training with reference to the policies. Atkinson asked if there would be any mention of Record Retention and Disposition Policy No. 113 in the policy. Luna stated that he was proposing a friendly amendment under Section 6 of Policy No. 856 to change the wording to state that when data has reached the end of its useful life and if it is not subject to the retention requirements outlined in Policy No. 113, the following method should be used for data disposal or reassignment for hardware based on its classification following NIST 800-88 guidelines. Smith-Andrews motioned to approve both the amendment and revised Data Security and Handling Policy No. 856. Twanelle Majors seconded. Motion APPROVED.

Brian Seiler presented the annual report of the Information Technology Committee. ITC had seen an increase in engagement in the last few years and there had been more open communication. ITC met on October 31, 2024, December 3, 2024, February 13, 2025, and on April 10, 2025. Many conversations on generative AI had been led by Dr. Jason Beach and Seiler. TAF projects and spending discussions were had as well. Policy updates and approvals for the previously presented Policies No. 855 and 856 were completed.

Jerry Gannod asked if Seiler could summarize the discussions on generative AI. Seiler answered that there was movement toward what could be campus-level supported AI platforms, similar to ChatGPT. Microsoft Copilot was being investigated as an option since it was already integrated

into the Microsoft products on campus. Other discussion included what generative AI was and if additional policies were needed. Alfred Kalyanapu asked what the short-term or long-term goals and timelines for generative AI use. Seiler replied that the University would likely adopt Microsoft Copilot and was in the testing stages now. There was a team reviewing the security implications for that and decision making would occur in the upcoming summer. Smith-Andrews noted that the ITC had discussed that any campus-wide adoption of AI would not prevent faculty from utilizing alternative technologies in their classes. Seiler stated that this was correct, but he had been referring to the software that ITS would support campus wide. Gannod motioned to approve the annual report of the Information Technology Committee. Lisa Zagumny seconded. Motion APPROVED.

Charles Wilkerson presented the annual report of the International Affairs Committee. They met twice and had discussed the Center for Global Experiences moving locations and discussed renewal and editorial changes to International Undergraduate Admissions Policy No. 242, Transfer Credit for International Undergraduate Students Policy No. 243, International Undergraduate Students Readmissions Policy No. 244, and International Health Insurance. Policy No. 247. Dr. Justin Lee was elected as the new chair of the committee, and Padmini Veerapen was elected as co-chair. Darron Smith motioned to approve the annual report of the International Affairs Committee. Kalyanapu seconded. Motion APPROVED.

Dewayne Wright presented the annual report of the University Planning Committee. The report was about the 2025 goals, and this was the first year since the goals were established that all of them were in positive territory against the baseline. Wright gave kudos to the faculty and staff that had worked to implement the Tech Tomorrow plan. The report included documentation of the progression of non-numeric goals, such as growth in online programs, strengthening career development among students, and recognition as a champion of rural Tennessee. Student self-evaluation surveys were completed in conjunction with Institutional Assessment, Research and Effectiveness. Of the five areas tested in the survey four proved to be statistically significantly higher for cohorts that were involved in learning communities: understanding of course material, faculty approachability and support, comfort in class participation, and relationship with their peers. Zagumny motioned to approve the annual report of the University Planning Committee. Jennifer Mabry seconded. Motion APPROVED.

Kimberly Winkle presented the report of the Academic Council for spring 2025. Winkle thanked Academic Council, as well as Amy McCoy and Angie Denson for their administrative support. Academic Council met three times during the spring semester, on February 5, 2025, March 12, 2025, and April 9, 2025. On February 5, the council approved both reductions and increases in credit hours for three degree programs and heard informational items related to revisions on Policies No. 205 and 206. On March 12, the council approved a change of admissions requirements, a master's degree credit hour change, a program name change, and received the first reading of three policies. On April 9, the council approved the annual reports of committees that report to Academic Council for 2024-2025, approved the General Education Committee procedures, general education curriculum changes, general education history requirement delegated authority request, revisions to Faculty Tenure Policy No. 205 and Faculty Promotion Policy No. 206, University Committees Policy No, 102, and received the first reading of revised Tenured Faculty Policy No. 207. Three degree name changes for new certificates, change of

admission requirements for one concentration as a new MS degree program, change in credit hours for an MS degree program, and a reduction in requirements for one certificate were approved. A chair was elected for the academic year 2025-2026.

Kalyanapu noted that the dates were not correct on the report for Academic Council. Winkle stated they would make a friendly amendment correction to this. Brian O'Connor stated that Academic Council had voted on a different wording in Policy No. 205 than Administrative Council and it needed to be reconciled. Winkle stated that because the intent and meaning had not changed, it was okay to make revisions. O'Connor stated he did not know if everyone agreed that the changes were not substantial. Smith-Andrews stated that based on conversation with Faculty Senate members, one word had been changed to two words: the word 'devolve' was changed to 'move forward' and it was meant to be a friendly amendment. Zagumny stated that the word was changed from devolve to eliminate the negative connotation. President Oldham stated that Administrative Council would have a chance to vote on it in the meeting. Zagumny motioned to approve the report of Academic Council for spring 2025. Linda Null seconded. Motion APPROVED.

Kris Craven presented the annual report of Administrative Council for spring 2025. On January 29, there was discussion on Policies No. 205 and 206. On March 5, the council received revised University Committees Policy No. 102, revised Faculty Tenure Policy No. 205, and revised Faculty Promotion Policy No. 206 as first readings. The council approved Annual Leave Policy No. 610, Sick Leave Policy No. 611, and approved procedures from the new Export Control and Radiation Safety Committees. On April 2, the council approved the Athletics annual report for 2024-2025 which included diversity issues and gender equity, annual reports of committees reporting to Administrative Council for 2024-2025, revised University Committees Policy No. 102, revised Faculty Tenure Policy No. 205, revised Faculty Promotion Policy No. 206, received revised Tenured Faculty Policy No. 207 as a first reading, and elected a vice chair for the academic year 2025-2026. Smith-Andrews motion to approve the annual report of Administrative Council for spring 2025. Mabry seconded. Motion APPROVED.

President Oldham asked if there was any discussion needed and if the council was comfortable with the changed wording in Policy No. 205 that was referred to earlier. Elijah Tidwell stated that as he understood it, the council could decide to approve the change of wording without meeting again. A voice vote was held and the motion PASSED to approve the change in wording. None were opposed.

President Oldham thanked everyone for the body of work this academic year as it had taken a tremendous amount of effort and discussion. He had been in Nashville earlier at the Tennessee House of Representatives meeting to honor Captain Barry Wilmore and his family. Captain Wilmore's safe return from space had provided the university with much positive publicity. He hoped to have Captain Wilmore and his family on campus in the coming months. Enrollment was looking positive and was on track to bring in another freshman class of 2,000 or more students. Strategic implementation went into these efforts and the University was doing a better job of reaching out to transfer students at the community colleges that held Tech to You events, such as Pellissippi State and Vol State. He thanked faculty and staff for all the work they did to

prioritize preview days and showcase events, writing personal notes, and making phone calls. It was looking possible to reach an enrollment count of 11,000 students for fall 2025.

The legislature would be voting on the budget bill soon. It was not the best budget, but it was still good, and the University would likely see a 2.6% salary pool. The third and final round of Mercer compensation study adjustments would be made. This would not be the last of salary adjustments made, there would still be routine adjustments. There would be money for the Advanced Construction and Manufacturing Engineering (ACME) building as well, and it was coming out of the design phase. Groundbreaking for the building would likely be in the upcoming fall 2025, as well as groundbreaking for the JJ Oakley Innovation Center and Residence Hall. Rural Reimagined should receive another $1,000,000 of appropriation as they had in the past, but this time it would likely be permanent funding. The Board of Trustees were going to have a special called meeting to discuss setting the tuition rate for fall 2025. Work at the Crossville site with the Crossville Research Center in the former TAP building was in the works with local and industrial partners such as Whisper Aero.

On campus, there had been an increase in food venues. Volpe Library now had Poet's Coffee, an event was held for the grand opening of Poppie's Ice Cream Shoppe in the RUC, and Taco Bell would hopefully be back on campus by fall 2025. Tennessee Tech celebrated 100 years of Golden Eagles and had received some publicity from that. The University continued to be the top producer of teachers in the state of Tennessee, thanks to the College of Education & Human Sciences. A PhD in computer science, separate from engineering, would be in place moving forward. New board-approved master's degree programs in Agriscience Technology and Child Life were additions to the academic framework. The Board of Trustees would vote on the interdisciplinary computing degree in the special-called meeting on April 30, 2025. Purna Saggurti, a 1982 graduate with a master's degree in chemical engineering, former Board of Trustee member, and executive at Bank of America in New York would be the spring 2025 Commencement speaker and recipient of an honorary doctorate degree.

Women's basketball had a phenomenal year and represented Tennessee Tech well in the NCAA tournament after winning the OVC tournament. The pedestrian walkway was completed. The new West Stadium progress was moving along. Johnson Hall was actively being renovated. The University had also disclosed a project for a new student event center located at the south end zone of Tucker Stadium. President Oldham again thanked everyone for helping make all these things happen. Campus continued to evolve in very positive ways, both physically and most notably in academic improvements such as research. He believed the best days were still ahead.

There were no other such matters.

Smith-Andrews motioned to adjourn. Tidwell seconded. Motion APPROVED.

Meeting was adjourned at 4:30 pm.

Becky Smith, recorder

Documents on file with minutes:

1. Agenda
2. Minutes of November 20, 2024
3. Approved revised Data Classification Policy No. 855
4. Approved revised Data Security and Handling Policy No. 856
5. Received annual report for Information Technology Committee
6. Received annual report of International Affairs Committee
7. Received annual report of University Planning Committee
8. Received report of the Academic Council for Spring 2025
9. Received report of the Administrative Council for Spring 2025