

University Assembly

November 16, 2022

TEAMS Meeting

Members Present: Abbas, Allcott, Brachey, Brandel (Westbrook Proxy), Canfield, Cherry, Comer, Craven, Crockett, Dorris, Fornehed, Griffin, Gotcher, Hajdik, Hermann-Turner, Honeycutt, Howard, Hutson, J. Isbell, Jared (Hanna Proxy), Jones, Killman, Langford, Lee, Liu, M. Loftis, Manginelli, L. Maxwell, J. Meadows, H. Mills, Mullen, Null, O'Connor, H. Park, Payne, Pickering, Rand, Reames, C. Roberts, J. Roberts, Russell, Shank, D. Sisk, Slater, Darron Smith, Scott Smith, Troy Smith, Smith-Andrews, Stinson, Tidwell, Upole, Weathers, M. Wilson, Witcher, Yelamarthi.

Members Absent: Adams, Alley, A. Brown, Burch, Ding, Duncan, Edmonds, Fennewald, Frye, Hasan, Huddleston, Kruszka, Nelson, Ojo, Rajabali, Rankin, Shipley, Spears, Swartling, J. Taylor, Turner, Wattenbarger, Winkle, Zagumny.

Others Present: Bleignier, Braswell, L. Bruce, Lykins, Oldham, Pinkert, Polk-Johnson, Schrock, Seiler, Diane Smith, Stephens, Vedder, Wray.

Summary of Proceedings:

Approved agenda

Approved minutes from April 20, 2022

Received report of the Academic Council for Fall 2022

Received report of the Administrative Council for Fall 2022

Approved new International Health Insurance Policy No. 247

Received remarks from President Oldham

Other such matters

Proceedings:

President Oldham called the meeting to order. Richard Rand motioned to approve the agenda and Sandra Smith-Andrews seconded. Motion APPROVED.

A motion to approve the minutes of April 20, 2022 was made by Holly Mills and seconded by Janet Isbell. Motion APPROVED.

Lori Maxwell presented the report of the Academic Council for Fall 2022 on behalf of Kim Winkle. Academic Council met three times, September 7, October 5, and November 9. Maxwell summarized the report which had been previously distributed to the group and noted the Academic Council had approved the following: two policies, revised one policy, changed procedures for the Faculty Development Committee, changed courses in one program, changed admission requirements in two programs, deleted the GRE requirement for Joint DNP in the School of Nursing program, received information only on one policy, received two information only reports, changed a graduate course catalog in one department, changed three degree options to concentrations, added one new concentration, and changed one concentration name. Maxwell stated that all documentation would be on file with the Recorder and can be received from Ms. Denson or Ms. McCoy in the Academic Affairs office.

Smith-Andrews presented the report of the Administrative Council for Fall of 2022. Administrative Council was scheduled to meet three times during the Fall 2022 semester: August 31, September 28, and November 2. Smith-Andrews stated that all three meetings were cancelled due to lack of agenda items.

Andrew Bleignier presented new International Health Insurance Policy No. 247. Bleignier stated that Tennessee Tech had always used Tennessee Board of Regents (TBR) Policy to have International students maintain appropriate health insurance policy and this policy would change it to a Tennessee Tech policy. Brian O'Connor pointed out two minor editorial changes in section II, to add a comma after Education and one after Graduate School Executive Committee. Bleignier stated he would make the changes. Lori Bruce commented that the policy states it required an approval from the Graduate School Executive Committee but it does not have a date that it was approved by the Graduate School Executive Committee. Bleignier confirmed that it was approved by the Graduate School Executive Committee. Rand motioned to approve the policy and Mark Wilson seconded. Motion APPROVED.

President Oldham thanked everyone on campus for making and continuing to make Tennessee Tech University the number one public university in the state of Tennessee based on return on investment. Oldham added that enrollment was up, over 9,900 students with the third largest freshman class in history. Oldham gave credit to Cynthia Polk-Johnson and her staff in Student Affairs for the high level of activity and engagement on campus. The amount of learning in the class room has been exceptional from what I've observed.

President Oldham thanked the Faculty and Staff, and stated that student wellbeing and care for students had never been higher. Oldham stated there was a significant improvement in the diversity of Tennessee Tech's students and hoped to continue to see gains in diversity on campus. Oldham added that the students continue to be very good students with an average ACT of 24; one third of the freshman class had a perfect 4.0 GPA adding that we continue to attract some of the very best students in our area. Our first-year retention rate continued to climb back up and was seventy nine percent this year; we're still short of our long-term goal of 82% but we're getting close. Our six-year graduation rate was better than 60 percent and the six-year graduation rate for students of color was also very high, comparable to the general student population.

President Oldham stated that a lot of progress had been made with capital projects and many continued and he asked for patience as Tennessee Tech worked through the temporary inconveniences. We look forward to continuing this process as the facilities on campus are improved. Oldham added that he was excited as we go into this next Legislative Session that our proposed project for replacing Matthews-Daniel and Crawford Halls with a new academic classroom building was third on Tennessee Higher Education Commission's priority list stating we have full expectation in the next funding cycle that we will get some good news in this regard.

President Oldham stated that the Tennessee Higher Education Commission had requested an additional \$150,000,000 in the State's higher education budget for the next fiscal year. Oldham added if the State chose to honor the request, it would carry a working range of 0-3 percent tuition increase for next year. Obviously, we always try to work within our resources to keep tuition and fees at a minimum; we want to make sure that we are an affordable option for all students while insuring that we are providing a high quality level of education. President Oldham was optimistic with the budget going forward despite the substantial inflationary cost increases that impact us all both here and at home, Tennessee Tech would continue to make preemptive adjustments. There is a lot to be excited about looking forward.

President Oldham commented that applications for next year's freshman class were significantly ahead of last year's pace and with the continued recruiting pressure, Tennessee Tech was confident to attract another large freshman class next year. President Oldham asked if there were questions.

Linda Null mentioned the large sign behind the Farr Building with the TBR logo next to the Tennessee Tech logo on it and asked if Tennessee Tech still had a financial connection with TBR. Oldham replied that the one area that there was not a total disconnect between the Locally Governed Institutions and the TBR were particularly around capital projects. Oldham added that it went back to where capital projects were financed in the past and were cross collateralized. In other words, when there was financing through the State Bonding Authority, the debt capacity on all of the campuses were utilized to establish those bond rates and to satisfy the bonding requirements, it could not be disentangled with the Focus Act. Oldham also commented that was why the Peachtree Road project still had a TBR component, to verify that Tennessee Tech was meeting the expectations of the finance requirements.

Other Such Matters: Lee Wray mentioned there was a committee appointed; himself, Sandra Smith-Andrews, Kim Winkle, Dewayne Wright and Mark Stephens were appointed last Spring to determine the purpose, history, and procedures of the University Assembly. Wray continued that there were no procedures as such. Wray stated that the committee would meet in January. Wray explained he had researched University Assembly history back to the mid-70's to find the purpose and had not found anything more than accepting Academic Council and Administrative Council reports. This came up in an Administrative Council meeting to see if there were procedures or decide if procedures were needed. The committee will come back with the history and entertainment of University Assembly through the years.

President Oldham wished everyone a wonderful Thanksgiving and a holiday season that was safe and healthy.

Meeting adjourned at 3:57 p.m.

Diane Smith, recorder

Documents on file with minutes:

1. Agenda
2. Minutes of April 20, 2022
3. Report of the Academic Council for Fall 2022
4. Report of the Administrative Council for Fall 2022
5. Policy No. 247 – International Health Insurance