AAUP TN Conference Minutes for business meeting on April 8, 2017

Tennessee Technical University

Members in attendance: Julia Gruber, Dora Estes, Jon Jonakin, Mathe Wierdl, Troy Smith, David Lee, Michael Ginter, Josie McQuail, John Wilson, Yvonne Simerman

Dr. Josie McQuail opened the business meeting which followed the conclusion of a presentation by John K. Wilson.

1. NSCC free speech issues: Y. Simerman reported that the AAUP chapter at Nashville State Community College has been directed to cease sending announcements or newsletters about AAUP to campus personnel and to stop using campus resources to support AAUP. The VP has determined that AAUP is an “outside organization” to the school and as such, is banned from using campus resources (including the email system). As a result, the local chapter has been rendered ineffective and has not been able to communicate effectively with its members.
   1. McQuail and others discussed ways to rectify the issue including writing a letter or an article in the newspaper, threaten to suit on constitutional grounds, contact the ACLU for legal support.
2. TTU free speech issues: J. Gruber reported that faculty mail has been opened by a secretary and a sticker placed on it for identification. Legal experts were consulted and agreed that this is a legal action. Many faculty members consider this a violation of their rights to free speech and privacy.
3. TTU issue of harassment over email: J. Gruber described her experience as the adviser to a student organization for LGBTQ. She sent an email message to the campus faculty asking them to support students in any of these categories. One faculty member reacted with disparaging messages in response. The Daily Roll Call blog included the incident in an article accusing TN Tech faculty of treating students unfairly. TTU Faculty Senate asked the University President to release a statement identifying the campus as a safe space for LGBTQ students. The president responded that there is no problems with this on campus and a statement is not needed.
4. Memphis U. salary study: M. Wierdl presented data and offered a comparison of administrative and faculty salaries at Memphis U.
   1. The tenured or tenure-track faculty outnumber administrators or staff in operations by 2 to 1. However, between 2009 and 2017, the administrative salaries have increased by 5 times those of faculty.
   2. The median salary increase for administrators was 17.4% while tenured faculty salaries increased by 7.3%. The inflation rate for this period was 14%.
   3. Why? Do the governor, politicians, administrators believe this will improve the quality of education?
   4. When Dr. Wierdl presented his data to the Faculty Senate, the President stood up and contradicted the statistics. This same president has enjoyed a salary increase of 30% in the last 3 years.
   5. Wierdl recommended that every university conduct a similar study to understand the salary rates on their campus.
5. Local Boards of Universities are decentralized from TBR: Jonakin reported on his observations of the process at TTU.
   1. Governor Haslam attended the first meeting of TTU Board. He is choosing board members from businesses with attention to ethnic and gender diversity. There is no attempt to diversify on the bases of profit/non-profit organizations.
   2. Local businesses are controlling the focus of the university with no discussion of liberal arts as important to educational goals.
   3. The board voted to affirm President Oldham with no mention of layoffs, financial or other problems at the University.
   4. Jonakin suggests that faculty members need to interact with board members outside of administrators’ perview.
   5. Another suggestion is to hold an educational session before each board meeting where faculty members can give information to the board. This would establish a traditional, consistent opportunity for faculty and board members to interact.
   6. U. Memphis has established a committee to advise the faculty representative to the board.
6. Outsourcing: Smith reported that Governor Haslam has offered the possibility that Universities can “opt-out” of outsourcing. This is not in writing and does not appear in the offers before the administration. The opt-in option is a-la-carte.
   1. The Governor has established an Office of Consumer Oriented Government which overseas this process.
   2. Haslam plans to outsource IT in the long run and eventually outsource nearly all aspects of government services.
   3. Problems with outsourcing include timelines for project completion are inconsistent between the school/faculty information and the contractor.
   4. College Democrats and UCW plan to protest this issue at the end of April.
   5. A bill has been proposed to outsource services in TN State Parks.
   6. A bill has been proposed to require that any contract with expenses over $5 million must be approved by state legislature.
7. Proposed Resolution to support HB675/SB612: Holloway wrote a resolution that was voted on and passed by the TN State Conference of AAUP. See below.

WHEREAS

Governor Haslam has challenged Tennessee with his "Drive to 55" campaign, aimed at increasing the number of Tennesseans with a college education to 55% of the population by the year 2025. However, college education is out of reach for a significant portion of our high school graduates who are charged out-of-state tuition because they lack immigration documentation. Many of these students are "lawfully present" after being granted deferred action through the federal program Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA). Moreover, these are students in which our state has already invested thousands of dollars through the public education system.

Many of them are choosing to go out of state or to private colleges, and Tennessee's state colleges and universities are losing the opportunity to educate some of our brightest and most-promising residents.

RESOLVED

The Tennessee State Conference of the American Association of University Professors supports HB675/ SB612, the Tuition Opportunity Act. As college and university professors, we, too, understand the benefits of a college education and seek ways to make such education available to all qualified Tennesseans. We believe that all graduate of Tennessee high schools should have access to the excellent public education that our institutions provide.

1. Treasurer’s Report: Estes provided income statements for periods ending in December 2016, and March 2017. The statement ending with March 2017 includes the expenses that AAUP paid to reactivate the foundation and establish its tax exempt status totaling $570.
2. State of Tennessee Foundation: Estes and McQuail reported that the Foundation has been reactivated and has a separate account with a total of approximately $2,500.
3. State Conference By-laws/Constitution: McQuail reported that the website has been updated with the most recent revisions to the constitution.

Meeting adjourned at 1:30 PM.