AAUP TN Conference Minutes for 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 meeting at 10:00a.m., and the Senior Associate Provost Mark Stephens welcomed the State Conference to the TTU campus.

1. Minutes from meeting in the Fall of 2016 were distributed and approved.
2. A new web-master, Sharon Henry, has been updating the state conference website.
3. John K. Wilson presented information about his research on free speech for the book “The Myth of Political Correctness”. The following are key points from his presentation.
   1. The Trump administration plans to deregulate businesses to increase profits, cut funding to science and technology, the Department of Education and student funding.
   2. “Big Agenda” by David Horowitz offers a conservative agenda that Trump’s advisers will probably adopt. These include a school voucher program, Academic Bill of Rights, a political balance among faculty, textbooks that have a balance of conservative and liberal ideas.
   3. At the state level, we might expect an attack on tenure, more legislative control of universities and colleges, cuts to funding for public institutions of higher education, cuts to funding for special programs, threats of cutting funding to manipulate decision-making at universities.
   4. On example of an issue regarding the freedom of speech is the closing down of the office of Diversity at UT Knoxville over the controversy surrounding “sex week” on campus.
   5. Another example is the dismissal of a reporter at UT Chattanooga because she did not identify herself as a member of the press at a meeting of the LGBT student organization. She later reported on a legislator’s attendance and comments at the meeting and this was grounds for her removal.
      1. Recommendation: develop advisory boards for media outlets on campuses.
   6. A bill introduced and passed the TN Legislature, Tennessee Freedom of Speech on College Campuses (a.k.a. Milo Bill). This bill was introduced because many representative see universities and faculty as their enemies.