

2008 Tennessee Faculty Senate Summit

Fall Creek Falls State Park – April 4-6, 2008

Representation: ETSU, TSU, MTSU, Austin Peay, Memphis State, UT Knoxville

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Highlights:

[1] There are significant differences in faculty Senate operations, authority, and resources across institutions. For example, unlike ETSU, at some other institutions:

- The Faculty Senate has an office and staff support.
- The Faculty Senate has primary control over faculty appointments to all university standing committees, and recommends appointments for ad hoc committees.
- Senate Officers have release time for their Senate duties.
- Faculty have primary control of the Faculty Handbook.
- At least 50% of the Academic Council membership is composed of faculty.
- The Senate has representation on the budget committee and on master planning committees.

[2] Related and other notable issues include:

- Problems determining the exact nature and scope of TBR regulations, leading to a perception that administrations sometimes act on the basis of inaccurate information. Examples: meaning of “tenure (does it guarantee a faculty position, or just employment with the university?”); meaning of “collegiality;” rules applicable to international study programs.
- Competing philosophies with respect to improving faculty and staff compensation and dealing with salary compression, inversion, and COLA. At one extreme, a focus on extreme cases (medical analogy = adding intensive care and trauma beds); at the other extreme, a focus on the population as a whole (medical analogy = vaccination). ETSU proposal to financially reward tenure appears unique.
- Balance between administration and faculty in university governance - “top heavy” institutions; tension between “top down” administrative styles and faculty desire for greater “bottom up” influence. ETSU Ideas Forum may, at present, be a unique “bottom up” program. Should department chairs be elected by faculty?

- Micro-management and an “empire” of reports, summaries, and other excessive bureaucratically-imposed “low value work.” Some of this is blamed on implementation of technology (“e-dossier”) that has been inadequately tested prior to adoption.
- Adjunct faculty / developmental studies / mis-match between service demands created by lottery scholarships and resources available to meet those demands.
- Problems arising when faculty have a grievance against an administrator, and the administrator controls the grievance process. Potential solution: create a mechanism for constituting grievance committees across institutions to avoid any conflicts of interest. (“change of venue”).
- The Communications Workers of America has a sub-unit titled “Campus Workers of America.” There is significant membership at U.T. in Chattanooga and Knoxville.
- D2L and Blackboard are in litigation, the outcome of which may affect continued availability of D2L.
- Libraries - need to include library allocation as an a priori component of planning for new programs; consider library usage fees; including library in development priorities.
- Problems associated with using indefinite continued growth in student population as a means to forestall double-digit tuition increases.