Hello everyone,

The end of the semester is just around the corner and as you wind down the activities of this academic year and prepare for the upcoming Fall, a new slate of officers of the Faculty Senate will be preparing as well. Officers for the 2014-15 academic year are:

President-Virginia Foley, CCOE  
Vice President-Susan Epps, CCRHS  
Chief Operating Officer-Patrick Brown, COPH  
Secretary-Melissa Shafer, CAS  
Treasurer-Taylor Stevenson, COBT

Executive Committee member: TBR Faculty Sub-Council Representative-Tom Schacht, QCOM.

It has been an honor to serve as your Faculty Senate President. The last two years have brought substantial changes to higher education, to Tennessee, and to ETSU. During that time, the Senate has worked to address a number of shared governance issues that are important to faculty. Examples include:

1. The Senate along with our TBR Faculty Sub-Council Representative, Dr. Jim Bitter, spearheaded an effort that resulted in a change to TBR policy to extend the protection provided by academic freedom in teaching and research, to the realm of service in shared governance.
2. A complete rewrite and expansion of disciplinary guidelines, including right of information, ability to respond in a timely fashion, and progressive discipline has been sent to the Provost and a working committee of Academic Council will refine the policy. When implemented, it is hoped that this will stop anyone from being placed in a position of "resign or be fired," again.
3. The Senate has advocated for changes to the TBR policy regarding current limitations on adjunct pay and on a career path for instructors.
4. We are near a final draft of a faculty code of ethics for the University. UT faculty learned to their surprise last year, that a code of ethics had been imposed upon them. We wish to help avoid that happening here. A code of ethics is a serious matter. That draft will be circulated to you for your review/input in the early fall and should be a topic of discussion for the upcoming academic year.
5. We have facilitated changes to the faculty handbook related to the search process for Department Chairs. Now, those who know the needs best, the faculty of the department doing the search, represent a majority of the individuals on the committee.
6. A 6 year effort has culminated in the implementation of a systematic quality of work life survey at ETSU (Great Colleges to Work For). Substantive changes to work life issues should be made based upon data and GCWF will provide ETSU with data as well as comparative/peer data.
7. The Senate endorsed a faculty initiated resolution for partners benefits and in partnership with ETSU Senior Administrators, advocated for its adoption at the TBR level.
8. The Senate worked to extend the eligibility criteria for internal grants to include lecturers.
9. The Senate has worked closely with Academic Affairs staff as ETSU moved from a paper-base SAI system to an automated system.
10. We are implementing changes to improve the annual Fall Faculty Convocation, some changes you will see this year and others scheduled for implementation the following year.
11. We have streamlined our Standing Committee structure (established in the 1970s) and now have limited standing committees but more ad hoc committees that are formed to address current and emerging issues.

The University is served by a vital, vibrant, and extensive committee structure (University Governance Committees) and the Senate addresses shared governance issues at the University. Each of the issues above were advanced or brought to closure because of the dedication of those who serve in the Senate. The Senate President merely serves others as they work to advance faculty issues at ETSU.
Thank you for the opportunity to serve, and the best to each of you in your future!

Randy Byington

GO BUCS!