

# THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE AT CHATTANOOGA

University Planning and Resources Advisory Council Meeting  
Thursday, March 12, 2015  
UC Foundation Room, University Center

## MEETING NOTES

Dr. Jerald Ainsworth welcomed the group and asked if the committee had seen the minutes from the last meeting, February 20, 2015. Because many committee members had not yet read the minutes, the minutes will be discussed and voted on at the next UPRAC meeting.

- I. Amendments to Academic Affairs Recommendations: There was a brief discussion about two amendments to two previous proposals that were voted on by UPRAC. Dr. Jeff Elwell briefly explained both:
  - a. Amendment 1: The merger of the Southeastern Center for Education in the Arts (SCEA) and the Department of Art should be eliminated from the Academic Affairs recommendations.
  - b. Amendment 2: This amendment is a modification of the initial recommendation to combine MCLL and Philosophy and Religion. It allows both departments to remain separate but to share a department chair and an administrative assistant. It was noted that the savings under the original proposal were \$50,500 and the savings under the amendment were \$70,331 + benefits. Dr. Randy Walker asked if the \$2500 stipend and course release proposed for an associate department head is consistent with what had been done with other departments. Dr. Elwell answered that it is consistent. Noted for UPRAC was if this amendment was approved that it was contingent upon the department head of Philosophy and Religion taking voluntary retirement (the department head had indicated he was planning on doing this) and that the departments could be located within the same building.
  - c. UPRAC voted on the two proposals via secret ballot, Drs. Ainsworth and Brown did not participate in voting. The amendments both passed 19-0.
- II. Faculty Presentations: Dr. Jerald Ainsworth introduced the second part of the meeting- presentations from three groups concerned about the Academic Affairs proposal. Each group was allotted 15 minutes to present to UPRAC including time for UPRAC to ask questions.
  - a. Department of Physics, Geology and Astronomy: Dr. Manuel Santiago, UC Foundation Professor, Chemistry; Dr. Habte Churnet, Department Head, Physics, Geology and Astronomy; and Dr. John Tucker, Department Head, Biological and Environmental Sciences, presented their concerns about the Academic Affairs proposal to merge portions of the Department of Physics, Geology and

Astronomy with the Department of Chemistry and/or the Department of Biological and Environmental Sciences.

Dr. Churnet began the discussion about the logistics of the move and its potential impact on student success. He noted that the Department of Biology and Environmental Sciences and the Department of Chemistry are both large and if portions of Physics, Geology and Astronomy were apportioned to them, additional assistants and associate department heads would be needed for support. This would reduce cost savings. He also discussed the loss of stature for physics and geology majors and noted that physics is doing well per the Delaware study and that there is a growing number of graduates in both physics and geology.

Dr. Tucker noted that the Department of Biological and Environmental Sciences is already taxed to the breaking point and that the current model is not sustainable. Adding additional students would require more support staff, thus reducing proposed cost savings.

Dr. Manuel Santiago presented that in fall 2013, the Department of Chemistry serviced 25 percent of the students in the College of Arts and Sciences. He noted that although the proposal looked like it created cost savings, the move would actually cost more with administrative support, etc. UTC is in the top 10 percent in its production of chemistry majors and there are 47 graduates a year.

Dr. Brian O'Leary asked the presenters if the current proposal would have an impact on UTC students getting into graduate school. Dr. Hubte Chumet stated that was an unknown variable but that he was concerned about the intangibles.

Ms. Theresa Liedtka noted that the conversation boiled down to a concern over student identification with the departments, management concerns, the unknown impact the decision would have on students applying to graduate school and the fact that physics and geology majors are steadily increasing.

- b. STEM Education: Dr. Peggy Kovach, STEM Education Director; Dr. Matt Matthews, Interim Department Head, Department of Mathematics; and Dr. Cecilia Wigal, Professor, Engineering, presented regarding the proposal to move the STEM education program from the College of Arts and Sciences to the College of Health, Education and Professional Studies.

Dr. Kovach presented that the STEM program started in 2010 and it currently has 78 majors. The first cohort of 5 graduated in 2012-2013. In the 2014-2015 academic year there are a projected 11 graduates. The impact of the Academic Affairs proposal would mean no longer utilizing the master teachers to teach students how to teach math and science. The proposal would replace core STEM Education courses with regular Education courses.

Dr. Matthews presented that he disagrees with the proposal because it affects student outcomes, will damage ongoing recruitment and will damage the strength of the program. He also discussed that some of the proposed course substitutions do not match well. For instance, STEM 1030 (2) credit hours would be replaced with EDUC 2010 which is (3) credit hours and is not math and/or science focused but a general class about education in the United States. He suggested that there might be a Co-Director in the College of Health, Education and Professional Studies and that the stipend could be split between co-directors.

Dr. Wigal noted that the substitution of courses would have a negative impact on STEM Engineering majors as well and could put them over the 128-hour rule.

Dr. Linda Frost asked if STEM had tracked graduates' success in teaching jobs. Dr. Kovach estimated that 60% had gone into teaching, 20% had gone into graduate programs, 15% had gone into STEM-related jobs and the remainder were in transition.

Dr. Frost then asked if STEM students are required to do the same number of hours of student teaching as Education students. Dr. Kovach answered that STEM students are required to do 6 hours of student teaching, which is on top of the teaching that they do throughout the STEM curriculum. STEM students have an option to sign up for 12 hours, but it is not required. Dr. Valerie Rutledge noted that part-time student teaching is an issue because school systems are often reluctant or refuse to take student teachers who will only be present part-time. Dr. Rutledge also noted that she and Dr. Kovach met jointly with Hamilton County.

Ms. Deborah Hyde asked if the major-related curriculum would change with the STEM move. It was noted that there would be no change in major courses, only the education courses.

- c. STEM, Interdisciplinary Engineering and Nuclear Engineering: Dr. Cecilia Wigal, Professor, Engineering, presented regarding the Academic Affairs proposal. She noted that cutting the STEM program and interdisciplinary engineering provided no savings to the College of Engineering and Computer Science because no additional courses are taught in CECS to support either of the programs.

Dr. Wigal stated that the interdisciplinary engineering degree is a desired degree and that there are a variety of programs offered across the U.S. UTC's program started this past fall and has had one graduate thus far.

Dr. Wigal stated that there is no additional teaching done by the engineering faculty for the STEM program or the interdisciplinary engineering program and she predicted that there will be one STEM graduate this May and one next May.

Dr. Wigal also discussed the nuclear engineering concentration. In the concentration, there are many mechanical engineering courses and five additional nuclear engineering courses. TVA and other employers have asked for UTC to provide this type of degree. Currently the faculty are teaching the nuclear concentration as an overload, but there is an adjunct hired for the fall for \$10,000 who will teach these classes.

At the end of Dr. Wigal's presentation, Ms. Deborah Hyde asked if coursework would stay the same if STEM changed colleges. Dr. Wigal noted that major coursework would stay the same, but there is an issue with course substitutions and changes in credit hours. Ms. Hyde also asked if there are specific interdisciplinary engineering courses. Dr. Wigal stated that there are not. There was also a discussion that there is only one interdisciplinary engineering major currently in the program. Dr. Wigal noted that was because they had not advertised. She also discussed the fact that some students might use this as a completer degree. Dr. Randy Walker asked what the loss of the nuclear engineering concentration would do to our students' chances of getting hired with TVA. Dr. Wigal stated that students would probably still get hired, but that some students want this concentration so that they don't get pigeon-holed by completing a full nuclear engineering degree.

- d. UPRAC discussion: All three proposals were discussed in detail by UPRAC.
- e. Votes: Drs. Brown and Ainsworth abstained from all votes. Votes were taken by secret ballot, with results below:
  - i. Department of Physics, Geology and Astronomy: Proposal passed with 17 yes votes, 2 no votes and 1 abstention.
  - ii. STEM Education: Proposal passed with 17 yes votes and 3 no votes.
  - iii. Interdisciplinary Engineering: Proposal passed with 13 yes votes, 6 no votes and 1 abstention.
  - iv. Nuclear Engineering: Proposal passed with 18 yes votes and 2 no votes.
- f. The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, March 18<sup>th</sup> from 3:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. in the Foundation Room, University Center. Items for discussion are: the Student Development, Institutional and University Relations' budgets.