

Dean's Faculty Advisory Council  
University of Tennessee, College of Medicine

October 4, 2021

### **Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order by the president, Dr. Burt Sharp, at 12:03p CDT / 1:03EDT on October 4, 2021, on the Zoom online platform due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

### **Attendance**

The following members were present:

Penny A. Asbell, MD, Suleiman W. Bahouth, PhD, Mace Coday, PhD, Julio F. Cordero-Morales, PhD, Terry Cooper, PhD, Haavi Morreim, JD, PhD, Katherine Nearing, MD, Lawrence Pfeffer, PhD, Crystal Pourciau, MD, Ryan Rahman, MD, Reese Scroggs, PhD, Burt Sharp, MD, Claudette Shepherd, MD, Laura Sprabery, MD, Neena Thomas-Gosain, MD, Jerome Thompson, MD, MBA, Joe Willmitch, MPAS, PA-C, Kevin Beier, MD, EM, James Bienvenu, MD, Ryan Buckley, MD, Richard Ian Gray, MD, Patrick McConville, MD, F. Matthew Mihelic, MD, Nikki Zite, MD, Mitch Dizon, MD, Dave Bhattacharya, MD, Jensen Hyde, MD, James McLoughlin, MD,

The following guest(s) was (were) present:

Scott Strome, MD, Andrew Griffith, MD, Tayebah Pourmotabbed, PhD, Polly Hofmann, PhD

### **Approval of minutes**

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved as written. Minutes had previously been distributed by electronic means.

### **Business**

Dean Strome began by discussing the unexpected news, received last Friday evening, that ACGME has placed the CoM's graduate education programs on probation. We will not know for up to 60 days what the reasons were, he indicated, and it was surprising that we went from "full accreditation with commendation" to "probation" in the span of 4 months. For now, Dr. Strome stated, we will likely hire a consultant to help us address whatever issues precipitated this finding. It is at least possible that they might concern some problems that had occurred in the plastic surgery program, or perhaps the abrupt change in resident placement away from Methodist. If these are the ACGME's concerns, it would seem somewhat draconian to place the entire CoM graduate program on probation. That said, we will address the problems forthrightly, and Dr. Strome will keep the CoM faculty up to date. The ACGME will re-review in September 2022.

The LCME (re)accreditation process, for which we have been preparing for 2.5 years, has begun as of today. Dr. Strome shared with them the new information from ACGME, as well as his letter to the faculty, sent yesterday evening. The LCME visit appears to be proceeding well. The situation with

Methodist continues to present challenges, e.g. addressing continuation of the Data Use Agreement so that we can continue longstanding research projects.

Dr. Strome added that we have nearly doubled our NIH funding since 2019, thanks to the hard work of our faculty, and to recruitment and retention. Under Dr. Griffith's leadership, we now have a very good Strategic Plan for research within the CoM. Sentinel projects include our genome initiatives, including around opioid abuse. Community outreach includes ongoing efforts to address covid. The very first community farm, of 140 plots of blighted land planned throughout Memphis, has now produced its first crops including collard, kale, mustard. A community health neighborhood outreach has now begun under the direction of Dr. Jim Bailey, particularly focusing on such conditions as diabetes and hypertension.

Dr. Strome then presented a request for DFAC. For the Promotion and Tenure committee, he asks DFAC to identify 3 names of potential *clinician* candidates to serve on that committee. We should present the 3 names unranked, and with attention to diversity, equity and inclusion. The candidates need not necessarily be full professor rank, although anyone less than full professor must recuse him/herself from discussions regarding full professors. Similarly, an untenured person must recuse him/herself from discussions regarding an application for tenure. The nominees should be willing to serve on this committee, for this important task. Dr. Sharp proposed that DFAC should collect nominations during this week, then submit them to the secretary, Dr. Haavi Morreim. The term of service is 3 years, potentially renewable.

Dr. Strome then turned to a couple further issues. When we have a new endowed chair, he observed, there has historically been very little fanfare. Going forward, he would like to create a formal induction ceremony, to which department members, family and others would be invited. It is intended to celebrate academic life, and should be celebrated as a way of honoring our faculty and their accomplishments. He invited DFAC to provide input on what that ceremony should look like.

Additionally, Dr. Strome offered an idea of creating 2 basic tracks regarding tenure. Sometimes, tenured faculty are no longer able to get grants. We want them to continue as faculty, but perhaps there should be a separate option, namely, to opt for a higher-than-market salary in exchange for foregoing tenure track. Someone might, e.g., feel confident in his/her ability to continue to bring in grant funding, and prefer a higher salary to the opportunity to have tenure. Importantly, this would be a faculty member's choice, not a mandate. He invites the DFAC to consider the pros, cons, and alternatives to this idea. Because this would be a faculty choice, likely little or no modification of CoM procedural rules. The choice would likely need to be made at the time of actually being awarded tenure, as the faculty member would choose whether to keep that tenure or to receive a higher ongoing salary. Perhaps it might also be selected at a time of post-tenure review. Dr. Pfeffer proposed that the Research Committee would be appropriate to work on this issue, insofar as it involves researchers and their funding. Dr. Cooper and the Policy Committee will also work on this issue.

Finally, another way to celebrate faculty, aside from simply awarding tenure and promotion, is to present the information about each candidate recommended by the CAPT for promotion/tenure to the department chairs' council. It might prompt chairs of other departments to reflect on who, in their own departments, might likewise deserve promotion or tenure. Also, in the case of 'mixed votes' for P&T, Dr. Strome noted that the final decision is left to the dean. For these cases, it might be helpful at this level for chairs/senior leaders to discuss what their own criteria are, and perhaps reflect further what they should be, for tenure and promotion. This would be advisory only, for the dean. If this advisory is strictly informal, likely no changes in the Faculty Handbook would be needed. The advisory process could be formalized in the CoM Bylaws, which are allowed to be more specific than the Faculty Handbook. Dr. Cooper will work with the Policy Committee to address this further and provide input for Exec. Dean Strome.

As the meeting drew to a conclusion, Pres. Sharp noted that his communication with Pres. Boyd regarding the search for a new Chancellor resulted in [a] an invitation to offer our criteria for the attributes a new Chancellor should have and [b] an invitation for DFAC to interview candidates when they are eventually selected. He then invited brief comments from each of the committees – Branding, Research, and Policy. The DFAC Secretary will separately invite new DFAC members from Nashville, Chattanooga and Knoxville to consider whether/which committee(s) they may wish to join.

### **Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the committee will be held on November 1, 2021, at 12:00n CT / 1pm ET by Zoom.

### **Adjournment**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:07 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

E. Haavi Morreim, JD, PhD  
Secretary