

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

December 6, 2021

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by the president, Dr. Burt Sharp, at 12:02 PM on December 6, 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, MD, Mace Coday, PhD, Julio F. Cordero-Morales, PhD, Terry Cooper, PhD, Denis DiAngelo, PhD, Tina Dudney, MD, Ian Gray, MD, Jensen Hyde, MD, Chris Ledbetter, MD, Patrick McConville, MD, James McLoughlin, MD, F. Matthew Mihelic, MD, Haavi Morreim, JD, PhD, Lawrence Pfeffer, PhD, Crystal Pourciau, MD, Reese Scroggs, PhD, Burt Sharp, MD, Laura Sprabery, MD, Joy Steadman, MD, Neena Thomas-Gosain, MD, Jerome Thompson, MD, MBA, Joe Willmitch, MPAS, PA-C, Thad Wilson, PhD, Nikki Zite, MD

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

Scott Strome, MD, Fruz Pourmottabed, 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

Dr. Strome began by discussing recent developments. Last Friday, December 3, featured our first joint meeting with the VA hospital, to begin discussing collaboration on clinical care, research and other kinds of cooperative effort. Communication channels are being established, hopefully for future collaboration on faculty hiring and other matters of mutual interest. The first-ever cancer retreat also occurred last week. Since February of 2020, with the withdrawal of West from the UTHSC affiliation, UT has now recruited 10 oncologists, as well as oncologic surgeons and, in the near future, oncologic radiologists. We are now close to offering a position for a new chair of Plastic Surgery. We are additionally working toward additional vascular and CV surgery recruits as well as a number of other new faculty recruitments. We also expect soon to inaugurate a new leukemia service at ROH.

In terms of research, our first sequencing in the Regeneron project has been completed. This will allow us to study genetic diversity far more closely, and to understand better the genetic underpinnings of disease, especially in minority populations. This will be done in collaboration with several other major institutions around the country.

The GME probation situation will be used as an avenue for enhancing GME across the board. An outside consultant is reviewing our entire GME program across the board, and is expected to report back in January. The goal is to achieve a great, not just acceptable, collection of programs.

Regarding LCME, one issue has concerned timely submission of grades. This is being addressed. LCME has also noted that, technically, the CoM ByLaws indicated that the Dean has ultimate control over the curriculum. Changes have now been entered, in draft form, and are to be voted on by the DFAC at this meeting today, hopefully to be followed by full-faculty approval. Dr. Strome also pointed out that, in fact, our practice has always been for faculty to control the undergraduate medical curriculum. The Faculty Handbook already makes it clear that the faculty controls curriculum and, inasmuch as the Handbook supersedes the CoM ByLaws, this has always been the policy at UTHSC CoM. Still, it is important to update the ByLaws.

Dr. Griffith is making some changes to the strategic plan for research, and he will share them with DFAC soon.

Dr. Terry Cooper, chair of the Policy Committee, then went through the proposed changes to the ByLaws. Many changes are administrative/technical/grammatical rather than substantive. That said, the key substantive change is the above clarification, namely, that the Committee on Undergraduate Medical Education, not the Executive Dean of the CoM, will have final authority for approving all aspects of the curriculum. Following Dr. Cooper's description of these and other changes, the DFAC unanimously approved all of them. The next step will be to obtain the approval of the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs. Following that, a special meeting of the Faculty of the CoM will be convened. Pre-meeting voting will be invited and encouraged, given that many faculty may not be able to attend directly.

In a second substantive change, the Policy Committee indicated that they would meet further to consider and negotiate revision of the COM Bylaw addressing subcommittee appointment procedures: "Whenever necessary, subcommittees shall be appointed by the Executive Dean of the College of Medicine in consultation with the chair of the appropriate standing committee and the Dean's Faculty Advisory Council to address specific policies, procedures, or program activities." The goal of the revision will be for the Dean to consult with DFAC as an element in the appointment of subcommittee members.

Pres. Sharp then invited Dr. Larry Pfeffer, on behalf of the Research Committee, to update DFAC. Dr. Pfeffer reported that the committee is attempting to gather information regarding how many faculty are unfunded, and for how long, so that ideas can be created regarding how to help those faculty either obtain new funding or integrate appropriately into existing/ongoing projects. Dr. Julio Cordero, co-chair of the committee, discussed his outreach regarding similar efforts at other universities, for assisting unfunded research faculty.

DFAC members discussed the increasing difficulty of obtaining research funding and the surrounding challenges as to how faculty should be recognized for their efforts at research, publication and funding, even where a paucity of available money renders grant efforts unlikely to succeed. It was indicated that faculty evaluations should not, and generally no longer do automatically register "does not meet expectations" simply because that person does not currently have funded research. One question was raised about whether a faculty member with excellent research productivity but no funding could be evaluated as "exceeds expectations" rather than "meets expectations." Further discussion is needed, regarding how best to support faculty whose expectations include raising research grants. It was suggested that there is a need for further clarity of the dynamics involved. Optimizing the success of research faculty in the UTHSC COM research enterprise requires a clearer description of UTHSC institutional obligations to faculty and, conversely, the obligations of individual faculty to the research enterprise. Each side of that equation, it was suggested, involves obligations that require careful

definitions followed by operational plans to fulfill the respective obligations. A productive dialogue between DFAC and the Administration on these issues should be an important part of the conversation, going forward.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the committee will be held on January 3, 2022, at 12:00n CT / 1pm ET by Zoom.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:04 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

E. Haavi Morreim, JD, PhD
Secretary