

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

March 6, 2023

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by the president, Dr. Mace Coday, at 12:03 PM on March 6, 2023, in person and on the Zoom online platform.

Attendance

The following members were present:

Mark Bugnitz, MD, Mace Coday, PhD, Julio F. Cordero-Morales, PhD, Terry Cooper, PhD, Denis DiAngelo, PhD, Ian Gray, MD, Chris Ledbetter, MD, F. Matthew Mihelic, MD, Haavi Morreim, JD, PhD, Katherine Nearing, MD, Lawrence Pfeffer, PhD, Crystal Pourciau, MD, Burt Sharp, MD, Claudette Shephard, MD, L Joe Willmitch, MPAS, PA-C, Jillian McCarthy, Ph.D., CCC-SLP

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

Scott Strome, MD, Alicia Diaz-Thomas, MD

Approval of minutes

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

Business

Pres. Coday reminded DFAC members about UT Pres. Boyd's address and also an upcoming guest lecture regarding research, upcoming March 9. She also indicated that chairs must complete their APPR evaluations of faculty by March 15.

Dr. Diaz-Thomas reminded DFAC members that the CAPT/College Appointment, Promotion and Tenure committee needs nominations for faculty members. This year, a few people will be rolling off, so we will need replacements. Some will need to be PhDs, and we may need a PA member. She also discussed a proposed change in timelines for the promotion and tenure season. At some times of the year, a lot of activity is compressed into a rather short timeframe. Ideally, dossiers should be provided earlier than Dec. 1, because it would be helpful to have additional time to ensure that every dossier is complete and correct. Thus, a proposed deadline of mid-Oct might be better, for expecting dossiers to be submitted. She discussed additional changes that would likewise be needed, if the deadline for submitting dossiers were earlier.

Dr. Terry Cooper then provided an update regarding the proposed extension of the tenure clock. He indicated that, in conversation with UT attorneys, he inquired what is the difference between "extending" versus "suspending" the tenure clock. Extension only applies to situations in which something has prevented a faculty member from completing his/her work. Suspension covers only 3 specific situations:

[1] the person has accepted a part-time position, [2] has accepted an administrative position, or [3] has accepted a modified duty assignment. These limited policy provisions, however, do not fit a variety of other circumstances, such as childbirth, catastrophic illness, or a major change in funding directions.

There are two potential tracks for securing a policy change from the Board of Trustees, he indicated. One is through the vice chancellors of the 5 campuses, who meet regularly. The other is to come through University Faculty Council (UFC) via the campuses' respective Faculty Senates. The UFC meetings are attended by President Boyd and other high-level administrators in the UT system. Overall, a formal policy change is needed in order for tenure suspension to be broadened. Conservatively, the process to accomplish this change, if successful, would likely take a year if not more. Dr. Strome, weighing in, supported this effort.

It was moved, seconded and unanimously supported by DFAC that Pres. Coday, on behalf of the DFAC, ask the Faculty Senate to move forward seeking changes in Board Bylaws that broadens acceptable reasons for suspending the tenure clock.

Pres. Coday then focused on trends in NIH funding, which suggest that, even for clinical research, many of the recipients are PhDs rather than only MDs. She used this as a platform for encouraging collaboration among PhDs and MDs. DFAC discussion suggested that it would be useful for this information to reach the chairs of basic science departments.

Finally, Pres. Coday referred to a program recommended by DFAC's Research Committee several years ago, for supporting and mentoring junior faculty as they grow their (especially) clinical research [ref. DFAC minutes 2-18-20, 3-2-20, <https://www.uthsc.edu/medicine/faculty-affairs/dfac.php>]. She inquired regarding the current status of that proposal. Dean Strome responded that Chancellor Buckley has engaged an independent entity to review the entire UTHSC research program. An important part of the discussion will be to explore how we're doing on mentorship, especially for clinical faculty who are largely paid on an RVU basis, hence leaving limited time for mentoring junior faculty in clinical research. Accordingly, a significant question is how we might fund such systematic mentoring, given that financial reality. Dean Strome suggested that this would be important to include at this time, now that UTHSC's research is under broad re-examination.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the committee will be held on April 3, 2023, at 12:00n CT / 1pm ET by Zoom and in person in room 502, 910 Madison building.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

E. Haavi Morreim, JD, PhD
Secretary