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

August 4, 2008

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by the president, Dr. Len Lothstein, at 12:06 PM on August 4, 2008, in the Hyman building, Room 101.

Attendance

The following members were present:

Martin A. Croce, MD, Maggie DeBon, PhD, Elizabeth Fitzpatrick, PhD, Elias A. Giraldo, MD, Gary Keyes, PhD, Stephen King, MD, Leonard Lothstein, PhD, E. Haavi Morreim, PhD, William R. Morris, MD, A.P. Naren, PhD, Lynn Patterson, MD, Renate Rosenthal, PhD, Claudette Shephard, MD, Robert S. Waters, PhD, Thad Wilson, PhD

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

John Petersen, PhD, Steve Schwab, MD, Karen Johnson, MD, MPH, 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

Pres. Lothstein began the meeting by resuming last month's discussion about whether and how CoM faculty might evaluate department chairs. A potential model had been distributed earlier, from the College of Nursing. Discussion of this model suggested, for instance, that under "leadership," there might be separate listings for research, service, and teaching. On the other hand, it was noted that in some cases it may not be appropriate to apply all three of these. The department as a whole may have all three responsibilities, but the chair him/herself might not reasonably be expected to undertake all three with an equal measure of activity. Hence, the evaluation might include an element for effectiveness in promoting research and research collaboration.

Other suggestions were to include an item(s) evaluating whether the chair consults with faculty regarding department priorities, mission(s), and resource use. Alternatively, it was proposed that perhaps a much simpler survey would be useful, with a few items that can most lucidly such matters as whether the chair is effective as a leader, communicates well with faculty, and whether the chair is fair.

The purpose of these evaluations would be, not to create some sort of tabulation, but rather to enrich the conversation between the dean and the chairs during annual evaluation. Dr. Schwab indicated that his annual evaluations of department chairs rely mainly on discussions regarding
whether the department is objectively meeting previously stated expectations regarding research, outside support, clinical productivity, and the like. The proposed survey of faculty members would supply an additional element that could be of use in the overall evaluation.

Dr. Schwab also noted that a department in turn-around is likely to have rather different evaluations, compared with a department that is long-established and successful. A survey should be able to provide feedback that is genuinely helpful as well as informative at the department level, and should be capable of helping the institution as a whole.

It was proposed that Renate Rosenthal develop a simplified version, with the assistance of Martin Croce and Len Lothstein.

Pres. Lothstein then invited Dr. Schwab to address budgetary issues and also the space allocation policy, which is soon to be released.

Regarding impending budget cuts Pres. Lothstein noted that, in the past, F&As have been used to pay for a variety of things, including faculty members' journal subscriptions and society memberships. The question arose regarding whether faculty would need to pay for their own, if F&A money is redirected to the CoM. Dr. Schwab began by noting, broadly, that the need to cut the budget can not be changed. Basically there are two areas to target other than faculty stipends, support staff, and growth funds. One, the incentive plan, is the larger of the two and was deemed to be more important to preserve intact. They carry considerable flexibility and are closely tied to rewards for faculty success in winning grants. In contrast, the F&A indirect money was deemed to be somewhat more malleable than the incentive funds.

To achieve the necessary financial rearrangements, Dr. Schwab also pointed out that the GME program was the source of significant financial transfers to cover the required cuts. This institution was only required to cut 2% initially, but another 5% "tax" must also be generated, which is required by UTHSC as a whole. This money will come, inter alia, from substantial fund transfers, and reductions in portions of our mission that are not essential to the wellbeing of the institution. A final proposed budget will then be proposed to the Chancellor, and its elements will then be open to broader discussion.

Dr. Schwab was then asked about the proposed space allocation policy and plan. The current status of the space plan is that there is little hope for state money for at least the next year and a half. Therefore, any construction money for the near future will require creativity. One option would involve bonds and a debt service. The cancer building, for instance, has been funded in this way. It is anticipated that it will be possible to construct a substantial research building within the next two years, using this method. The state has the capacity to help the CoM obtain very favorable terms for initiating such construction projects under a debt servicing framework. This approach would preserve the expected $70 million of state funds for other construction projects in the future.

Further discussion noted that, for existing buildings, space needs do not necessarily correspond to grant amounts. Of two equal grants, one project may need distinctly more space than another. Current policy provides that chairs and institute directors will generally have the discretion to allocate space according to that department or institute's priorities.

It was further observed that much of the 920 Madison building is not controlled by the CoM, but rather is anticipated to be leased out to rent-paying tenants in the next few years. Several parties
have expressed interest in renting such space. The 910 building is expected mainly to be devoted to UTHSC entities and functions. The Wilson building, near Methodist University Hospital, is to be used for faculty whose practice is mainly at the Methodist campus. Work on the Coleman building is wrapping up, though state inspections are required before each phase can be deemed complete. The new chair of Medicine will be moving into the cancer building rather than the Coleman, in large measure because his major area of research, which concerns hematologic studies, is located in the cancer building. Space allocation will essentially be thematic, with personnel grouped largely according to their research interests.

Other discussion concerned the proposed cap of $5000 for any promotion, whether from assistant to associate professor, or from associate to full professor. This can become a problem if it persists over a substantial period of time, because it could lead to significant inequities among persons at the same rank. It is hoped that such a cap will be short-lived, and it is hoped even more that future budgetary limits will permit retroactive restoration of the traditional 10% raise.

At 1:00 pm UT President John Petersen, in Memphis for the official opening of the Hamilton Eye Institute, dropped by to visit the DFAC meeting. The conversation primarily focused on budgetary concerns. Although this year there were no salary raises, it will be a priority to include raises in future years, to attract and retain high-quality faculty. He also explained that one reason why the budget cuts were not across-the-board was because not all components of UT are supported by tuition, and those that are not tend to be particularly hard-hit by that sort of cut. Decisions must be made regarding the institution's core missions, rather than simply cutting in a uniform, unthinking way. This way, when money returns to the system in future years, the core missions will be supported rather than missions that are less central. In sum, budget cuts need to be strategic rather than across-the-board, because the latter tend to be destructive to the institution as a whole.

For the future, Pres. Petersen observed that UT has been active in seeking collaborations with industry—as with the partnership with DuPont for biofuels, and the attraction of VW to Chattanooga. He also noted that the quest for private and corporate philanthropy needs to be augmented significantly. Historically a key problem has been that, in essence, no one was actually requesting funds. This has changed significantly in the past few years.

Pres. Petersen also identified some ways in which savings will be sought. First: seek out and cut any remaining 'fat' in the system; much of this has already been done, but the search is on to find any residual superfluous expenditures. Second: seek areas in which consolidation can yield funds savings, as for instance with information technology and with human resources departments.

Additionally, he noted that Tennessee's legislators and members of the executive branch have been shown UTHSC's facilities and have come to understand that these are the worst in the system. Moreover, the CoM now is developing a strategic plan, apparently for the first time in its history. With these things in place it will be feasible to initiate a search for a new chancellor and to seek additional philanthropic funds. Facilities and a clear, feasible plan are essential for recruiting major donors, who ordinarily desire specific goals and missions as the targets of their funds.

Questions for Pres. Petersen then turned to the chancellor search. His response was that the important pieces need first to be in place, in terms of plans for the institution and its facilities and capital support. It is hoped that within the next six months UTHSC might be in a position that it will be able to attract top-quality candidates. Another question concerned whether any programs
are likely to be cut. Pres. Petersen indicated that it is likely some programs should be phased out. The goal is not to cut tenured faculty or similar drastic measures, but rather to phase out programs that do not fit optimally with the institution's missions. At UT Knoxville, the program in industrial psychology had no overlap with other departments, had only three faculty, and of 19 graduate students, 17 were all-but-dissertation. Staff from that department will be redeployed into vacant positions elsewhere at UT. Audiology and speech pathology is another department being restructured. It was in Arts and Sciences, and its clinic ran a significant deficit, largely because it did not charge fees to its patients and was used mainly as a means for providing clinical experience for its students. The clinic will likely be redesigned, and it is anticipated that a fee structure will be put in place. In Memphis at the CoM, about a dozen groups are being interviewed in terms of their functions, productivity and other metrics.

As the meeting concluded, Pres. Lothstein encouraged DFAC members to review the DFAC bylaws to consider whether changes are needed.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the committee will be held on September 8, 2008, at 12:00 Noon in the Hyman building, Room 101.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:54 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

E. Haavi Morreim, PhD
Secretary