

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

November 1, 2021

### **Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order by the president, Dr. Burt Sharp, at 12:03 PM on November 1, 2021, on the Zoom online platform due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

### **Attendance**

The following members were present:

Penny A. Asbell, MD, Dave Bhattacharya, MD, Ryan Buckley, MD, Mace Coday, PhD, Julio F. Cordero-Morales, PhD, Terry Cooper, PhD, Denis DiAngelo, PhD, Mitch Dizon, MD, Tina Dudney, MD, Ian Gray, MD, Jensen Hyde, MD, Chris Ledbetter, MD, Patrick McConville, MD, Haavi Morreim, JD, PhD, Katherine Nearing, MD, Lawrence Pfeffer, PhD, Crystal Pourciau, MD, Reese Scroggs, PhD, Burt Sharp, MD, Claudette Shephard, 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, Frusz Pourmotabbed, PhD, 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**

Dr. Strome stated that the CoM has hired a firm to help us navigate recent GME probation issues. The ACGME's primary question concerns the duration over which the CoM apparently allowed some problems in the Plastic Surgery department to persist. The firm will additionally be tasked to review all our GME programs within the next few months.

The LCME site visit last month went well. The LCME members will meet in February to finalize their results. Prior to that time, the site visitors will inform us of their findings so that we will be better prepared to respond when we later receive their Final Note. The CoM has hired outside consultants to help us on any issues here, as well.

In our first community garden, last week the first harvest came in, including kale and other kinds of greens. A "greens cook-off" will be held soon, to encourage great recipes for healthy eating. Additionally, the first UT CoM Health Hub was opened this past week, in Uptown Memphis. It will include health coaches to help the community especially address hypertension, diabetes, or obesity. The goal is to provide pathways of care, not simply an ordinary medical clinic.

At the end of this month we expect the first sequencing of patient data from our genomic project. Dr. Strome indicated that the CoM has now been invited to join a large consortium including Harvard, Cincinnati Children's and several other prominent institutions. The database will be thoroughly searchable to focus on narrower patient populations. It should be an excellent platform for broadening our collaboration within the CoM and with institutions outside UTHSC.

At ROH things are proceeding well, and the patient care volume at ROH has expanded by 25%. That growth is largely due to the facts that a number of new faculty were hired, and that a number of faculty were moved from Methodist to ROH. Altogether, e.g., we now have 12 new medical oncologists, a significantly larger GI division, etc. Unfortunately, the current physical facility is not really suited to accommodate that sort of growth. Plans are afoot for improving and expanding the infrastructure. In the end, Memphis and UT need an academically-based hospital, and in collaboration with ROH's Dr. Coopwood and others, Dr. Strome is focusing keenly on evolving ROH into a stronger, larger partner for UT's CoM. Meanwhile, various services are already being significantly enhanced, e.g. radiology, GI, cardiology and others.

Dr. Strome noted that a new CoM building is in the planning stage, which will include some clinical space that could help alleviate space shortages at ROH. Nevertheless, considerable background work must be done, involving Shelby County, the ROH administration, and the state legislature among others, to find funding as well as to determine what sorts of improvements or building should be undertaken, and how it should be financed (e.g. whether to use bonds or some other/additional pathways for financing). The first task is to develop a strategic plan describing what sort of growth and change will emerge. UT needs its own hospital, to accomplish its overall goals. We can't continue in a situation where we do not have the capacity to control our own destiny, as evidenced by the recent breakup with Methodist.

The affiliation agreement between LeBonheur and Methodist still has snags, as the pediatricians are concerned about not being adequately included in recent changes in the relationship between Methodist and UTHSC.

Two candidates for UTHSC Chancellor are about to visit, later this week and also next week.

Dr. Penny Asbell then reported for the Branding committee, whose goal is to enhance UT's presence and make UT's CoM a go-to provider for healthcare services throughout the community. The committee has been invited to help select the next person serving in the position of community relations for UT. Once that person is selected, the Committee will work with that office for optimizing outreach in ways that make sense in Memphis, for our population and culture.

Dr. Lawrence Pfeffer, co-chair of the Research Committee with Dr. Julio Cordero, then presented that committee's update. The committee is exploring various considerations regarding tenure, including the idea that there might be an option by which a faculty member might be able voluntarily to forego tenure in exchange for greater financial reward. He indicated that considerably more exploration will be needed, before the pros and cons are well enough understood. The committee's report is just below.

As the meeting wrapped up, the question was raised why, when the legislature approved a 4% raise for faculty, CoM faculty actually received a 3% raise. Dr. Strome affirmed that this correctly describes the distribution and that he believed the remaining 1% should be given to the staff. Many are financially struggling, and the goal was to help them, because \$15/hour (said to be a 'living wage,') is only \$30,000/year. The CoM gave as much as possible to staff, and the rest went to a pool for faculty merit raises.

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DFAC Research committee report, 11/1/21

Chairs: Lawrence Pfeffer

Julio Cordero

Members: Ramesh Narayanan (Medicine-Hem/Onc)

Katherine Nearing (Neurology)

Jon Jaggar (Physiology)

Mihelic, F. Matthew

Hyde, Jensen

Jim McLoughlin

Megan Mulligan (GIG)

KU Malik (Pharmacology)

Victor Chizhikov (Anatomy)

Discussion of Dean Strome's concept 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.

1. The members of the committee expressed the concern that, although this would be an optional program, it would represent an "erosion" of the concept of tenure. This may result in unintended consequences on recruiting faculty, as well as incentivizing faculty to leave UTHSC.
2. The group felt that there was a need to survey faculty interest in this possibility.
  - Who should be surveyed? All faculty, Non-tenured faculty, etc.
3. We need data to come up with alternative proposals. How many tenured faculty that are research-intensive and unfunded? How long have they been unfunded?
4. Alternative ideas:
  - Discussion of other mechanisms to approach this issue.
    - a. Identify faculty who obtained good application scores, but not funding, to offer them resources/guidance to increase the chances to get funded in the next application submission.
5. The option of requesting a higher salary in exchange of tenure could be attractive if the raise is significant. It can be offered to faculty when they come up for promotion from assistant to associate professor.
6. The committee agreed to work on this program after we receive the requested data and survey results.

### **Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the committee will be held on December 6, 2021, at 12:00n CT / 1pm ET by Zoom.

### **Adjournment**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:06 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

E. Haavi Morreim, JD, PhD  
DFAC Secretary