

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

September 12, 2022

### **Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order by the president, Dr. Mace Coday, at 12:07 PM on September 12, 2022, in person and on the Zoom online platform.

### **Attendance**

The following members were present:

Kevin Beier, MD, EM, Mark Bugnitz, MD, Mace Coday, PhD, Julio F. Cordero-Morales, PhD, Terry Cooper, PhD, Denis DiAngelo, PhD, Mitch Dizon, MD, Ian Gray, MD, Chris Ledbetter, MD, Patrick McConville, MD, F. Matthew Mihelic, MD, Erica Mitchell, MD, MEd SE, FACS, DFSVS, Haavi Morreim, JD, PhD, Katherine Nearing, MD, Lawrence Pfeffer, PhD, Crystal Pourciau, MD, Burt Sharp, MD, Claudette Shephard, MD, Laura Sprabery, MD, Joe Willmitch, MPAS, PA-C, Thad Wilson, PhD, Nikki Zite, MD

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

Scott Strome, MD, Alicia Diaz-Thomas, MD, Jillian McCarthy, Ph.D., CCC-SLP, Andrea Malkin, JD

### **Approval of minutes**

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

### **Business**

Pres. Coday first requested that DFAC members introduce themselves, followed by an invitation that anyone with an announcement please make that known.

With no such announcements forthcoming, Dean Strome then presented a few updates.

**Education:** the GME site review was roughly 3 weeks ago. One of our GME sites was on probationary accreditation. An external firm, let by Andrew Roth, did a 360° review that affirmed our strengths and identified some areas needing improvement, especially the GMEC, which does oversight. An important question concerned plastic surgery, which faced problems that went on for a long time. A liason, Melody Cunningham, MD, was hired to serve in a confidential ombuds-like function. Mark Bugnitz, MD, has also been brought on to assist in improving GME, do programmatic reviews and ensure that measures for improvement stay on track. Dean Strome said the GME site review went well. Instead of next January, the review will hopefully be completed next month. Commonly the process tends to move step-wise, hence it is more likely that we will improve by a step before receiving full accreditation.

LCME gave us 12 "unsatisfactory" ratings, with plans that they will return for further review. They did return recently and UT's COM described various ways in which problems are being remediated. This fall

we will receive a "briefing book" for collecting specific data. In about a year, further evaluations will occur.

Important upcoming events: the GME retreat is this Friday, and also an upcoming chairs retreat will also focus on education. Dr. Strome noted that in 2018, students' "satisfaction" with the school was essentially the worst in the country, with similar evaluations for financial aid. It now ranks in the 75% percentile.

**Research:** Since 2018 we have more than doubled our NIH funding. We also have the 'hundred thousand genome project', which will become very important as we move forward. Dean Strome noted that although grants are emphasized, it is the actual work that is truly important and should be celebrated.

**Clinical:** The breakup with Methodist had unanticipated consequences, needless to say. Some good things have emerged, nonetheless. ROH will have a new vascular suite. A new ROH cancer service now treats leukemia, lymphoma, and other complex cancer care. Meanwhile we are building a cadre of people who are committed to caring for the people of this community. A new "master affiliation" agreement is now in place at LeBonheur, and we have new relations with the VA and with Baptist, as well as across the state. The goal is to make UT's CoM a statewide entity.

**Community Outreach:** We have built one Health Hub already, and a second one is now planned for Whitehaven. The basic idea is that everyone should have someone who cares for him/her. The community farm is working out quite well, and another planting is planned for this fall.

Dr. Terry Cooper, on behalf of the Policy Committee, then presented the committee's further work regarding how it might be possible to extend the tenure clock, if that concept is to be enacted in the CoM, e.g. in cases where research grants take longer than the otherwise-usual 6 years for a faculty member to ask for tenure. He began by presenting basic requirements in the Board of Trustees' policy regarding tenure. He then presented a series of questions that would need to be answered, in order for a policy to be framed, proposed, and potentially approved. He emphasized that it will be difficult to convince the Administration to adopt more flexibility in the tenure clock in the absence of clear policies that equally protect the University and the faculty member.

Dr. Cooper invited DFAC comments especially on two issues:

[a] what criteria would be deemed acceptable justification by which to request an extension of the usual tenure clock; and

[b] how should the duration of delay be determined

Regarding [a], DFAC discussion suggested that all tenure-track faculty mid-tenure evaluations be replaced with evaluations at 2 and 4 years. Perhaps at year 4, anyone not progressing satisfactorily, should consider requesting an extension if there is a good reason to do so. Another observation was that, especially for women faculty, it is well-documented that those who have children often progress more slowly than other faculty. Conversely, it might be asked: by what criteria would we not grant a delay. Additionally, it may be important to specify more clearly what is required, generally, for tenure. This may vary by college and by department. In writing a policy governing extension of the tenure clock, one option might be to consider writing the policy in quite an open way, e.g. to encompass "extenuating academic circumstances" and "extenuating personal circumstances." Similarly, given the difficulty of identifying precise criteria, an option might be "for good cause shown," a case-by-case approach to be accompanied by individual-specific descriptions of what is needed and how it might be achieved during the faculty evaluation at year 4. Another perspective: documentation that the candidate is progressing very well, and documentation as to what is needed to bring the candidate into line for a likely tenure award, may be helpful. Specific items should be identified, with detailed commentary. Irrespective of the approach, when a request for extension of the tenure clock is made, it should be accompanied by all prior

annual reviews, as well as by special pre-tenure reviews and documentation. It was also pointed out that University policies would likely be more general than campus policies and that college policies could be made be more specific than campus policies and department policies yet more specific than college policies yet consistent with college, campus and system policies.

#### Next Meeting

The next meeting of the committee will be held on October 3, 2022, 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 1:20 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

E. Haavi Morreim, JD, PhD  
Secretary