

2012

Sexual Empowerment and Awareness at Tennessee (SEAT) became a registered student organization at the University of Tennessee-Knoxville (UTK).

August: UTK Chancellor Jimmy Cheek and his cabinet became aware that SEAT intended to apply for funds from student activity fees and university academic units/programs.

2013

January 30: Sex Week agenda was posted online.

February: Sexual Responsibility Week occurred at MTSU

March 14: Fox News columnist Todd Starnes published article, "University of Tennessee uses Student Fees to pay for Lesbian Bondage Expert."

March 18: Representative Dunn made remarks on House floor criticizing the upcoming Sex Week at UTK. He quoted a University of Tennessee (UT) alumnus who said, "My blood runs deep orange, and it's boiling."

March 20: After reviewing the event agenda, UTK Chancellor Cheek determined that Sex Week should not be funded with money derived from state tax or tuition dollars and pulled \$11,145 in academic program/unit support. SEAT retained \$6,700 in student activity fee funding and utilized an online crowdsourcing campaign to raise a little over \$4,000 in private donations.

March 21: SEAT cochairs were interviewed on Fox News "The O'Reilly Factor."

March 25: UT System President Joe DiPietro submitted the *Report of findings on "Sex Week"* to the Board of Trustees.

April 5-12: Sex Week events occurred at UTK

April 11: President DiPietro appointed a review team to carry out a system-wide study on academic support of student organization events.

May 16: The Senate Higher Education Oversight Subcommittee met; officials from the UT and Tennessee Board of Regents (TBR) Systems testified regarding student activity fees. The UT System issued a press release announcing the university would study the processes used to allocate funding for student activities to identify how to better monitor state funding used for student programming.

October 11: Chair of the Senate Higher Education Oversight Subcommittee, Senator Joey Hensley, sent letter to President DiPietro requesting a thorough review of the policies used for student activity fee collection and allocation.

November 18: *Student Activity Fee Review Team Report* sent to UT System Chancellors.

November 26: *Review of Allocation of Student Activity Fee Funds for Student Programs* sent to Senator Hensley.

2014

January 14: SB1608 was filed; the proposed bill would have required student fees paid for student organizations' paid speakers to be distributed proportionally based on organizations' membership. SB1608 was held in committee and no vote was taken.

February: Sexual Responsibility Week occurred at MTSU

February 5: SB2493 was filed; the proposed bill would have prohibited the expenditure of institutional funds, including student activity fees, for guest speakers at all public colleges and universities. SB2493 was held in committee and no vote was taken.

February 5: HJR 661 was filed, condemning the administration of the University of Tennessee for permitting "Sex Week" to be held on the UT-Knoxville campus.

February 12: University Speakers and Events press release was issued by President DiPietro regarding bills proposed in the General Assembly, reiterating university's commitment to the First Amendment. Closed by stating:

Going forward, I hope those responsible for planning speakers and events are sensitive as well as mindful of the diverse opinions of others as to what is or may not be offensive regarding presentations on our campuses. I have confidence that our campus leadership and our students, faculty, and staff will take this to heart and suggest to our elected officials that this is the role of our Board of Trustees to address and monitor these issues with us on behalf of the University.

February 19: Email, University of Tennessee - Stop Illegal Porn Pushing During UT's "Sex Week," was sent to UTK Vice Chancellor of Student Life Vincent Carilli from Senator Stacey Campfield.

February 22: Meeting held with Dr. DiPietro, Dr. Carilli, Senator Campfield, and student members of the Central Program Committee; discussion concerned how speakers are approved, possible ways to amend process to make sure speakers are not invited/disinvited due to ideology.

February 24: House passed HJR 661, which was amended to condemn the organizers of Sex Week (rather than the administration of UT), and expressed displeasure with UTK for permitting Sex Week to be held on the UTK campus for two years in a row. The resolution was not voted on by the Senate.

February 26: SJR 626 filed, directing a change in the collection and allocation of student activity fees in the UT System. SJR 626 was adopted by the Senate on March 13.

Prior to Sex Week 2014: UTK Chancellor Cheek met with student leaders of SEAT and asked them to "tone it down." In response, SEAT leased a billboard on Interstate 40 in Knoxville to advertise Sex Week at UT.

March 2-7: Sex Week events occurred at UTK

March 5: Senators Gresham and Bell sent a letter to President DiPietro, Chancellor Cheek, and the UT Board of Trustees, expressing "disapproval and dismay at the lack of leadership at the University of Tennessee at Knoxville regarding the events of Sex Week." The letter closed by stating,

This event puts a stain on our beloved university, its supporters and the taxpayers who help fund this higher education institution in our state. We strongly urge you to exercise your authority to end this event and bring propriety and common sense back to the University of Tennessee at Knoxville.

The same day, Senator Bell received an email from a constituent and parent of a UTK freshman who wrote that the organizers of Sex Week have people dressed in genitalia costumes "attacking students as they walk on campus," and that a teacher's assistant decorated his classroom with condoms to "celebrate" the week. The constituent asked why the senator had not taken funding away from the university and why her daughter was paying student fees for Sex Week.

March 6: President DiPietro emailed the Board of Trustees regarding the March 5 letter from Senators Gresham and Bell, expressing that the university administration was working with legislative leadership to change how student activity fees are administered. The email included the following statement:

I hope you will join me in encouraging others to contact their elected officials and ask them to strongly oppose any legislation that has the effect of dictating the collection or use of student activity fees or the content of student programming in any way. Senate Joint Resolution 626 is sufficient to do all that can be done by the University to address the two senators' concerns without running afoul of the First Amendment.

March 10: President DiPietro sent letter to Senators Bell and Gresham in response to their March 5 letter. The letter explained the university's legal obligation to abide by the First Amendment, confirmed that the university would carry out what is set forth in SJR 626, and stated that he could not guarantee that Sex Week or other controversial events would not occur in the future. The letter closed by stating,

I am growing increasingly concerned, however, that the attention focused on this matter by the General Assembly is quickly reaching a point that will cause greater harm and damage to the long-term interests of the University than any programming that may occur as a result of Sex Week. I would hope that our agreement, built on trust, will adequately address this matter by way of this Resolution and that no further legislative or budgetary action will be taken.

March 13: Senate adopted SJR 626, directing the UT board of trustees to implement changes to the assessment and allocation of the student activity fees. The resolution was not voted on by the House.

March 20: Letter sent from President DiPietro to Lt. Gov Ramsey, Speaker Harwell, Senators Gresham and Bell, confirming that the UT Board of Trustees would make changes outlined in SJR 626, and closed by stating "I trust that no further legislative or budgetary action will be taken with respect to this matter."

June 18: UT Board of Trustees unanimously adopted "Policy on a Student Programs and Services Fee" in response to SJR 626. During the board meeting discussion of the policy, one trustee went on the record objecting to the policy, stating that its adoption should not be perceived as an endorsement, but rather that it was the least objectionable of the legislative proposals. In response, President DiPietro said, "The alternatives to this policy were horrific in comparison." No board member went on the record in support of the policy.

Fall Semester: Opt-in procedure concerning the student activity fee and the Student Programming Allocation Committee (SPAC; a majority-faculty and staff board) was implemented at UTK by board policy change.

October 7: ETSU SGA denied funding request from a registered student organization planning a Sex Week for spring 2015, citing potential legislative pushback against ETSU similar to that experienced by the University of Tennessee.

November 30: SEAT appealed denied funding request for Sex Week 2015.

December 8: The Vice Chancellor of Student Life, who makes the final decision on appeals, upheld the SPAC's funding decision.

2015

February: Sexual Responsibility Week occurred at MTSU

February 10-12: Sex Week events occurred at ETSU

February 10: Legislator spoke with the Higher Education Resource Officer (HERO), asking questions about Sex Week, including whether events are held on campus in taxpayer-funded facilities. HERO reached out to UT for information.

February 18: HERO responded to legislator, explaining that SEAT receives opt-in student activity fee funds, gift funds, and private donations, and that SEAT, like all other student organizations, can use campus facilities at no cost.

April 4-10: Sex Week events occurred at UTK

2016

February: Sexual Responsibility Week occurred at MTSU

February 22: Rep. Micah Van Huss' office emailed Vice President for Government Relations and Advocacy Anthony Haynes, asking about SEAT's relationship with the Office of Diversity and Inclusion; also asked about Sex Week funding sources. Haynes confirmed that SEAT is not connected with the Office of Diversity and Inclusion, and explained the sources of funding used for Sex Week.

April 2: Rep. John Ragan forwarded email correspondence he had with an upset constituent to Haynes, who responded, "Thanks for sharing. Well said John." Rep. Ragan replied, saying that he had received many emails from constituents, and implored the university to do something about Sex Week.

April 4-8: Sex Week events occurred at UTK

April 4: Haynes sent email to all members of the Tennessee General Assembly regarding Sex Week, stating in part,

The campus administration has neither sanctioned nor encouraged programming related to Sex Week or the student organization that hosts it. The event also is NOT connected to or affiliated with the UTK Office of Diversity and Inclusion. No state appropriated funds are used for this event. Although the event occurs on a state-owned campus and in public buildings, UT and other state lawyers have determined the students are within their constitutionally protected right of free speech. . .

. . . When used, the guaranteed right of free speech often can be controversial, noisy and offensive. But that does not take away the constitutional right nor the choice of others to decide whether to support or attend an event.

The email also recounted the changes UT had already made regarding the opt in for student activity fees and included information about university-sponsored sex-related programming.

April 5: Several legislators sent reply-all responses to Haynes' April 4 email:

Rep. Martin Daniel: "...I support freedom of speech, but the government does not need to financially support that speech or any underlying programs. I would be interested to see what efforts the University is involved with to encourage real freedom of speech."

Rep. Tillman Goins: "I think UT supports sex week as long as it isn't a Christmas Party in disguise [smiley face emoji]."

Rep. Andy Holt: "Student organizations are not sanctioned by the university? Interesting."

Rep. Roger Kane: "Since everyone else is mass emailing, here is from the group SEAT's website . . . the history of sex week at UT. It clears up some of the confusion." (pasted history of sex week).

Rep. Andy Holt asked why Sex Week events were advertised on the university's website, why a UT employee was speaking at a sex week event, and why an advocacy alert was issued to have UT stakeholders oppose student activity fee legislation, stating, "In fact, there are many posts advocating against our position on Sex Week on the University's website. However, I have yet to find one in favor of our position."

April 21: House and Senate passed PC 1066, which states in part, that "state funds shall not be expended by the University of Tennessee to promote the use of gender neutral pronouns, to promote or inhibit the celebration of religious holidays, or to fund or support sex week." (Emphasis added.)

2017

February: Sexual Responsibility Week occurred at MTSU

February 6-10: Sex Week events occurred at ETSU

February 15: UTK Chancellor Cheek stepped down; Dr. Beverly Davenport assumed role as UTK Chancellor.

April 2-7: Sex Week events occurred at UTK

April 13 and May 1: Senate (April 13) and House (May 1) passed PC 336, the Campus Free Speech Protection Act, reaffirming First Amendment protections for free speech at public colleges and universities in Tennessee.

October 9-13: Sex Week events occurred at UTC

2018

February: Sexual Responsibility Week occurred at MTSU

April 5: Fox News columnist Todd Starnes published article, "University's 'Sex Week' sounds like a porn film title - But unbelievably, it's real." The article included a quote from the UTK Director of Media and Internal Relations, who said Sex Week is "organized and funded by students who opt in for a student fee at the beginning of the year. The speech of the registered student organization is protected by the First Amendment and the Campus Free Speech Protection Act. . . No state funds are expended for Sex Week."

April 6-12: Sex Week events occurred at UTK

April 6: Franklin Graham posted link to the Fox News article on Facebook, stating:

I'm saddened, disappointed—and yes, shocked—to see that University of Tennessee-Knoxville is promoting a "Sex Week" for its students. This Fox News story refers to it as "Sodom & Gomorrah." It's even worse than the name sounds when you read the events and classes on their own website <http://sexweekut.org>. They're actually pushing this filthy trash on young people whose parents are paying good money to send them there for a quality education. What could Chancellor Beverly Davenport be thinking? There's nothing healthy or educational about all of this. It's just simply promoting sin. I think parents should take steps to see this stopped—or pull their students out. Alumni and the residents of Tennessee who fund the university should make it clear that this does not have any place at their state university. I think pastors across this great state should speak out against it, and I hope Governor Bill Haslam will step in and make sure the group responsible is no longer allowed to do their damage at UT. Email your concerns to the university chancellor's office at chancellor@utk.edu. Let me know what you think in the comments below.

April 6 & 7: Senator Pody emailed the Fox News article to President DiPietro, who responded, along with UTK Chancellor Beverly Davenport:

Senator Pody: "Just a few days ago we talked about working to build a stronger bridge between UT and the State Legislature. This is does not help to build any confidence that UT has heard what we tried to express. The people in the 17th district are asking me why I have not done anything to address this. You asked that I reach out to you on issues that we need to discuss. This is a big one."

President DiPietro: "[T]he bottom line is (1) while I believe sex education for students is needed, I am sorely disappointed in the judgement of the students and faculty, who came up with these titles/talks, (2) we have implemented all the things the General Assembly has requested in dealing with sex week over the years – opt-in payment, reports of what student activity fees are spent on to students and their families, etc., and (3) dealing with the issue is complicated by First Amendment rights. The only other thing that could be done is that the legislature enacts a law that says we cannot have it? In turn it will be ruled unconstitutional, and likely lead to a lawsuit that we will lose."

UTK Chancellor Davenport: "I too am deeply disappointed and frankly very embarrassed by some of this year's language and topic choices for Sex Week programs. . . [S]ome of these titles certainly do not appear to meet the academic standards I expect of our campus. . . I am going to turn to the students this week and ask for a clearer set of criteria for determining what is funded with their opt-in fees. I will . . . remind them of the potential reputational damage of awarding funds to topics with titles of this sort and the responsibility they have to create high academic expectations for program funding just as we do. I can understand your concerns and trust that the activities of a small group of students will not overshadow the many great things happening on our campus everyday."

April 10: Legislative leadership requested that the Comptroller's Office "look into the use of state resources, direct or indirect, used in promotion of the University of Tennessee's Sex Week."

April 11: House Education Administration and Planning committee approved nine gubernatorial appointees to the new UT Board of Trustees (one nominee, a member of the previous board, withdrew from consideration prior to the hearing).

April 11: Chancellor Davenport sent letter to Lt. Gov. McNally and Speaker Harwell. In the letter, she expressed her embarrassment and disappointment in the choice of titles and language used for the Sex Week 2018 events, stating that no taxpayer dollars are used to support the event given the board policy change from 2014, and "...the language used to describe these programs is also protected by the First Amendment. We do not organize, promote or condone these events, but we are obliged by the law to allow the student-funded and organized event to take place. This applies across student-funded events." Chancellor Davenport also added that she met with the student organizers and asked them to "consider the impact of their language choices."

April 11: UT board nominees appointment hearing held before Senate Education Committee.

April 12: Senate Education Committee approved five gubernatorial nominees (none of whom served on the previous board) to the new UT Board of Trustees. One nominee, a member of the previous board, withdrew from consideration prior to the hearing, and four nominees failed to receive the necessary votes for confirmation. Three of the four nominees who were not confirmed by the Senate Education Committee were members of the previous Board of Trustees. Some legislators and university administrators concluded that this occurred due to a perceived inaction by the board regarding Sex Week.

April 17: Senator Briggs requested an Attorney General opinion regarding PC 1066, stating "I am making this request so that the faculty and staff of The University of Tennessee can understand how to conform their conduct to [PC 1066] concerning 'Sex Week.'"

April 24: Letter sent from Representative Van Huss to President DiPietro and UTK Chancellor Davenport, and signed by 32 additional legislators. The letter asked several questions about Sex Week and referenced the continued use of campus facilities despite the passage of PC 1066.

April 26: Attorney General responded to Senator Briggs, declining to opine for several reasons, including that its advice would be more effective if provided directly to the university (in which case the advice would be subject to attorney-client privilege).

May 2: President DiPietro sent letter to UTK Chancellor Davenport, stating that her term as Chancellor would officially end June 30.

May 7: Wayne Davis assumed role as UTK Interim Chancellor.

May 15: UT General Counsel responded to Rep. Van Huss' letter, stating that the university consulted with the Attorney General's office to interpret PC 1066 (which does not define key terms: "state funds," "fund," or "support"), and that the university would apply the provisions of the law in manner that would not violate the constitutional protections of free speech.

September: Comptroller's Office interviewed university officials and the current student cochairs and faculty advisor of SEAT at UTK.

November 21: President DiPietro retired, and Randy Boyd assumed role as Interim UT System President.

