

**THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE AT CHATTANOOGA**  
**FACULTY SENATE MINUTES**  
 March 3, 2005

<b><u>Division</u></b>	<b><u>Present:</u></b>	<b><u>Absent:</u></b>
<b>President</b>	Richard Rice	
<b>Past-President</b>	Marvin Ernst	
<b>At-Large</b>	Neal Coulter, Jonathan McNair, Stephen Kuhn, Greg O’Dea, Claire McCullough	Jim Henry
<b>Adjunct</b>	Tim Parker	
<b>Behavioral</b>	Fritz Efaw, David Brodsky	
<b>Business</b>	Chris Brockman, Valerie Taylor, P. Dileepan	Obasi Haki-Akan
<b>Engineering</b>	Joe Dumas, Jim Hiestand, Roger Briley	
<b>Fine Arts</b>	Matt Greenwell, Stacy Ray, Gavin Townsend	
<b>CHEPS</b>	Ann Johnson, Ted Miller, Burch Oglesby Nicholas Boer, Randy Walker	Robin Lee
<b>Humanities</b>	Vicki Steinberg, Joseph Wilferth, Elizabeth Gailey Chuck Lippy, Talia Welsh	
<b>Library</b>		Priscilla Seaman
<b>Math &amp; Science</b>	Bob Marlowe, Linda Collins, Henry Spratt, David Ashe, Gretchen Potts	
<b>Ex-Officio</b>	John Friedl, David Pittenger, Theresa Liedtka	Jocelyn Sanders, Fred Obear, Richard Brown, Mary Lynn Williamson

**Among the Guests Present:** Deborah Arfken, Linda Orth, Melanie McCoskey, and Ron Bailey

***SUMMARY***

1. The Senate approved by a vote of 14-13 a motion to adopt a new calendar that includes a few modifications to the Spring and Fall Semester schedules and major modifications to the summer schedule, replacing the current 5-term summer schedule with two 6-week terms and one 12-week term. This is a major issue that will be taken to the full faculty. Topics of discussion included:
  - a. Whether or not courses taught during short summer terms maintain the same academic standards as fall and spring courses;
  - b. Whether the proposed summer schedule would be too inconvenient for faculty and students;
  - c. How early in January Spring Semester should start;

- d. How short and how long summer terms should be; and
  - e. How happy or unhappy faculty members are with the current summer schedule.
2. The Service Committee reported that the UT System is ruminating about legal defense for employees sued while doing university service.
  3. The Quality Enhancement Plan Committee will be conducting a survey to ascertain what is meant by “student engagement” as it relates to student learning.
  4. The Handbook Committee will present a revision of Chapter 3 to the Senate at its next meeting.

### *MINUTES*

**1. Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 3:03 p.m.

**2. Approval of the Minutes**

The minutes of February 17, 2005, were approved unanimously.

**3. Executive Committee Report**

**a. The Plus/Minus Grade Issue**

A few years ago, a committee chaired by Professor Fran Bender chose not to recommend changing our grading system. This year the Standards Committee investigated the issue again, found no clear trend on average GPAs when pluses and minuses were added, and suggested that an ad hoc committee be formed to investigate the issue further if enough faculty were interested in pursuing the matter. The Executive Committee intends to take no further action unless faculty members express interest in forming this ad hoc committee.

**b. Committee Reports**

Committee chairs are reminded that committees are to submit annual reports. The Senate will start hearing such reports after Spring Break.

**c. Decreased Number of Fire Alarms at UTC Place**

President Rice reported that Jim Pulliam and the safety department have been working successfully to deal with the problem of frequent false fire alarms at UTC Place. The number of false alarms has dropped dramatically since last fall.

**d. Budget Meetings**

President Rice announced that UTC Budget hearings will be held during the week of March 20. The Academic Affairs budget proposal is scheduled for presentation at 8:30 a.m. on Tuesday. Past President Marvin Ernst asked if the Faculty Senate will have an opportunity to provide input on budget priorities. He had been given an opportunity as Senate President to speak at these hearings. "I filibustered," he commented. Provost Friedl graciously offered to give some of the time scheduled for Academic Affairs to President Rice, who graciously accepted the offer.

#### **e. Report on UT Board Meeting**

President Rice reported that the text of the speech he gave at the UT Board of Trustees meeting just held at UTC is available on Raven. The concerns he raised were shared by the other UT faculty presidents. These concerns included (1) the February 17 draft of the THEC master plan, which is virtually identical to the draft that was critiqued by the UTC faculty in the fall; (2) the issue of academic freedom; and (3) compensation issues. He also reported that our Trustee, John Thornton, did a fine job of representing the concerns of UTC. In particular, Mr. Thornton pointed out to the Board that the list of peer institutions assigned to UTC was untenable.

#### **4. Service Committee Report**

Professor Marvin Ernst, chair of the ad hoc Service Committee, reminded the Senate of the situation that arose last year when a faculty member was sued in connection to his service on a local committee. Although the professor has since been removed from the suit (and also relieved of money spent on legal defense), the broader issue remains of whether the state should provide legal defense for faculty members sued while doing university service. The committee sent a request for information to the UT system office through the UTC Provost's office. Professor Ernst said it "hit like a bombshell." This matter has major ramifications not only for university employees but for all state employees. It certainly relates to the question of what job-related service faculty members are supposed to be doing. He does not anticipate a quick response from the system on this matter.

#### **5. Chancellor Search**

Marvin Ernst, a member of the Chancellor Search Committee, reported in place of the chair, Verbie Prevost. Eight of 37 applicants are to be interviewed. This process will take place rapidly with open meetings. These may include meetings with executive committees. Professor Ernst urged everyone to meet these great candidates and provide input to the committee. He also pointed out that these interviews are a two-way affair: the candidates are checking us out even as we check them out. He suggested that we sell the campus to them. In response to a question, Professor Ernst said that comment forms will soon be made available on-line. No anonymous comments will be accepted.

#### **6. Quality Enhancement Plan Committee**

Vicki Steinberg, chair of the QEP Committee, reminded the Senate that SACS now requires each university to prepare a Quality Enhancement Plan that “addresses a well-defined issue or issues directly related to improving student learning.” The QEP Committee has chosen to focus first on defining “student engagement,” an issue perceived to be directly related to student learning. The committee has considered the UTC Fresh Life program and studied the National Survey of Student Engagement. The results of this study were enlightening but not surprising. The committee wants faculty and student input to define student engagement, perhaps developing our own definition or modifying the definition used in the national survey. They will conduct a poll on this question through April 1. Ideas and comments can be sent to [QEP@utc.edu](mailto:QEP@utc.edu). Professor Steinberg asked interested faculty members to consider volunteering for the QEP Committee. Next year this committee will review and assess progress toward a Quality Enhancement Plan. The committee will report back to the Senate after April 1.

President Rice remarked that UTC could be a national role model for enhancing student engagement at a commuter school. Two thirds of UTC’s students are commuters, a fact that makes it more difficult to create a student learning culture. He mentioned that the Tennessee legislature may be interested in insisting that students complete their higher education in four years. The current average is 4.7 years.

Professor Jim Henry asked about engagement vs. learning. Professor Steinberg said that the committee sees increasing student engagement as a means of improving learning.

## **7. Curriculum Committee**

Burch Oglesby had nothing to report since an expected proposal had failed to materialize.

## **8. Handbook Committee**

Matt Greenwell laid out the plan for consideration of revisions to Chapter 3.

- a. March 17 Senate meeting: Discuss part or all of this chapter, with no motions.
- b. April 7 Senate meeting: Discuss and vote on the chapter.
- c. April 14 Faculty Meeting: If approved by the Senate, this revised chapter will be taken to the full faculty for the first reading.
- d. September Faculty Meeting: If approved at the first meeting, the chapter will receive a second reading at the first full faculty meeting of 2005-2006.

## **9. Calendar Committee**

Professor Claire McCullough, co-chair of the Calendar Committee, presented the calendar proposal unveiled at the last Senate meeting. (Robin Lee, the other co-chair, has taken maternity leave. Professor McCullough commended Professor Lee for her excellent work as co-chair.) She commented that it would be a major issue needing approval of the full faculty and that a new calendar for the 2006-2007 academic year would need to be approved by early 2006 at the latest. Jim Henry moved and Matt Greenwell seconded approval of the proposed revised calendar.

The primary changes contained in this proposal are as follows:

- a. Replacing the five current summer terms (three 4.5 week AM terms and two 6.5 week PM terms) with three summer terms, including two 5.5 week terms and one 11 week term; it was noted that the proposed summer terms are not AM and PM terms, unlike the current terms;
- b. Beginning Spring Semester in mid-January instead of early January;
- c. Beginning summer terms around May 22 instead of early May;
- d. Moving the Spring Semester withdrawal date to after Spring Break in order to help students make better decisions about whether to drop courses.

[The full proposal is available under “Issues” and “Academic Calendar” on the Faculty Senate website. Members of the committee emphasized that the 2005-2006 dates used for this proposal are for discussion purposes only. The actual 2005-2006 calendar has already been approved and is not affected by this proposal.]

A long discussion ensued. [The Secretary has chosen to organize this discussion by issue, as opposed to chronologically, to improve the chances that it will make sense to her readers.]

#### *Breaks, Withdrawal Dates, and Commencements*

The Calendar Committee found no consensus for changing the current fall break to a full week and so did not include any revisions to this break. Jim Hiestand asked about what sort of feedback the committee had received about a full week fall break. Professor McCullough said that people were in favor of a full week break as long as the term did not start any earlier or end later....

The proposal includes two options for spring break, one in later March and the second in mid April. Professor McCullough said that it is not feasible to schedule UTC’s spring break to coincide with the Hamilton County school system’s break.

The proposal also listed two options for commencements, either Saturdays or Sundays.

Jim Henry made and Matt Greenwell seconded a two-part amendment to the motion: (1) delete the second option for spring break, and (2) delete Sundays as an option for commencement. There was discussion about problems with commencements on Mother’s Day and commencements on the Jewish Sabbath (Saturday). Claire McCullough summarized by saying there are problems with any day chosen for commencement. The amendment passed.

#### *Beginning of Spring Semester*

Jim Hiestand moved and Matt Greenwell seconded moving the beginning of Spring and Summer Semesters to one week earlier than proposed. This would move the first day of Spring Semester up from January 16 to January 9. Steve Kuhn eventually offered a

friendly amendment that this motion be restricted to Spring Semester only. This friendly amendment was accepted. Jim Hiestand argued that the beginning date of January 16 created a month-long Christmas break which he said was unnecessary—except possibly for skiers. It would be better to put this extra week in the summer. Steve Kuhn agreed.

Betsy Darken pointed out the “creeping phenomenon” of beginning dates moving backward one day—and sometimes two days—from one year to the next. [Now why is that?] In her observation, Fall Semester has been sliding back further into summer than it used to. There ought to be a range of dates designated for the first day of Fall and Spring Semesters. In particular, the earliest possible date for starting Spring Semester needs to be established—or before we know it, we’ll be starting on January 3 again.

The amendment to move the beginning of Spring Semester to January 9 passed by a vote of 21-10.

### *Changing Summer Terms*

Comments about summer school ranged the gamut.

Melanie McCloskey argued in favor of keeping the current schedule rather than adopting the proposed summer schedule. She said that the current schedule is good for faculty with children since the first AM term ends at the beginning of June. This also allows more time for research. In the proposed schedule, the earliest summer term ends in late June, which cuts time with kids and time for research. She added that as a member of the Grade Appeals Committee she knows that the problem of students appealing grades and starting the semester late is only a Spring Semester problem and involves only the weakest 100 to 125 students at the University. Why should the whole academic schedule be changed to accommodate these students? If we are to change anything, we should do so to accommodate the *best* 125 students.

Claire McCullough responded that no changes can be made in the calendar unless the summer school schedule is changed. She then pointed out that it is almost impossible to teach the same course in the summer as is taught in fall or spring semester due to time constraints.

David Brodsky also opposed changing the summer school schedule. He said the proposed schedule would impact the number of courses that could be taught during the summer and reduce faculty opportunities to teach summer school courses. President Rice asked the Provost about the financial impact of the proposal, but the Provost said he could not estimate this. The summer budget, which is controlled by the Vice Chancellor for Finance and Operations, is based on enrollment. Deborah Arfken asked if the committee had looked at enrollment data, especially the distribution in enrollment among the five current summer terms. The committee had not.

Professor Dileepan also opposed the proposed changes, arguing that the Business School offers lots of courses during the PM sessions [6.5 week sessions], which are hard enough

on students, and it would be even harder on students to do these courses in 5.5 weeks. Professor McCullough pointed out that the proposal includes an 11 week summer term. She said that trying to teach an entire course during short summer terms is like “pouring a bucket of water over dry ground.” It is too much for students to absorb. Teachers recognize that it is not effective to do a whole course during the summer terms so they shorten their syllabi. Professor Dileepan responded that no one would want to teach the 11 week courses and that the current PM courses work very well.

Marvin Ernst did not see the point of a large gap between spring and summer terms, nor did he think that students would want to take 11-week courses.

Steve Kuhn was concerned that teachers would not be able to take summer classes since the proposed summer terms either start before elementary and high schools end or end after these schools start.

Ron Bailey commented that the summer schedule is an appropriate faculty concern, but the concern must be first for students. It is important to maintain the appropriate number of contact hours. Registrar Linda Orth pointed out that the norm is 750 contact minutes per semester hour. A discussion ensued regarding the contact minutes for summer terms, with Claire McCullough saying that there are fewer contact minutes in summer. Matt Greenwell said the proposed schedule includes more contact minutes than the current schedule.

Matt Greenwell commented that in the summer students want to “get in and out quick.” Betsy Darken said that seems to be true of faculty members too—so who is thinking about the quality of learning? Many faculty members shorten their syllabi for the shorter summer courses because of time constraints, so that students learn less. Some students even plan to take courses during the summer because they know these courses are less demanding. What does it say about the quality of a degree from UTC when there is such a gigantic loophole in quality control? While we’re at it, why don’t we just shorten spring and fall semesters. Ah, we already did that: we’re down to 14 weeks. President Rice commented that even when the number of contact hours remains the same, quality time is lower during short summer terms. For a history course he dropped one of three book requirements for the summer course because there was not enough time. While students prefer shorter terms, the issue of maintaining quality is important.

Randy Walker was concerned about the effect of the proposed change on the summer Physical Therapy program. Currently PT students take clinical courses that do not conform to the current summer schedule. Could these clinical courses be offered under the proposed schedule?

*Substitute Motion: 6-Week and 12-Week Summer Terms*

At this point, Joe Dumas moved and Jim Hiestand seconded a substitute motion to replace the proposed schedule with a new schedule that includes the following features:

- a. Fall Semester unchanged from current;

- b. Spring Semester beginning on January 9 and ending on May 2, withdrawal date moved to end of March, otherwise unchanged from current;
- c. Three summer terms:
  - (1) One 12-week term;
  - (2) Two 6-week terms;
- d. Summer terms are to begin a week after Spring Semester ends.

Randy Walker said that it is important to consider students' and faculty's schedules in the summer. A concern was raised as to whether students would be limited to taking only four courses over the summer. Claire McCullough and Linda Orth pointed out that the maximum summer hours that students can take and instructors can teach are limited to 20 hours and 8 hours respectively. Linda Orth remarked that the "seat-time" for the proposed 6-week/12-week summer schedule is very close to "the industry standard" of 750 minutes for every semester hour. Seat-times for the current summer schedule and the 5.5-week/11 week schedules are lower.

Jonathan McNair returned to the issue of the quality of summer courses. It is the faculty's responsibility to be concerned about this issue and to safeguard academic quality. He reminded the assembly of the concerns that the Senate and many faculty members raised last semester about the proposed master plan of the Tennessee Higher Education Commission. We argued then about the importance of quality education and the value of developing a broadly educated citizenry. We must be consistent in our positions. Claire McCullough added that musicians know that practicing one hour a day for seven days is a very different experience from practicing seven hours in one day. This is why there needs to be an option for a longer summer term.

Professor Dileepan asked, "What is wrong with the current summer schedule?" Professor McCullough said that some things require time to "sink in." Professor Dileepan replied that in his case the proposed schedule, if adopted, would result in courses currently taught in the 6.5-week PM term being taught in a 6-week term. MBA students need to take two night classes during the summer. For the business programs, the current terms work fine. He asked why revisions to the summer schedule were being considered, given that the original issue had been the problem arising from too little time at the beginning of Spring Semester to deal with appeals. Professor McCullough responded that the Faculty Senate had expanded the charge to the Calendar Committee to consider the entire academic schedule because it is impossible to consider changes to one part of the calendar without considering the entire calendar. The Calendar Committees of 1992 and 1996 had reached this same conclusion. The calendar is like a train of closely connected cars. The only way to create more space between cars (e.g., Christmas break and Spring Semester) is to shorten a car. The only car that can be shortened (unless we want the staff to work through Christmas) is the summer car. The summer schedule drives the rest of the academic calendar.

Steve Kuhn remarked that the substitute motion has the same drawback as the original motion. Teachers cannot take courses during two of the three proposed summer terms. Ted Miller remarked that this is not a new problem. Teachers cannot take courses during

the current first and third AM courses. Professor Kuhn said that teachers may not be able to take any summer courses in the proposed schedule.

Melanie McCloskey said that in her summer courses, students do the same amount of material as in the regular semester and their final exams are better. Henry Spratt said that the microbiology courses he teaches in the PM summer courses work better than in the regular semester.

The question was raised as to whether faculty would be paid more for teaching longer in the summer. “No,” the Provost said. Faculty members are paid 1/32 of their salaries per contact hour. [No one raised the question of whether the faculty should be paid less for teaching fewer weeks in the summer.] Gavin Townsend wanted to know the number of classes that could be taught during the proposed summer schedule as compared to the current summer schedule.

President Rice drew attention once again to the quality of learning in summer classes. Matt Greenwell also re-iterated the question of quality. Changes always make waves, he said, but every five to eight years there has been an effort to change the calendar. There seems to be a real need to increase the contact hours for summer courses.

Registrar Orth had the last word: she remarked that students find the AM/PM scheduling of summer classes confusing. The proposed summer calendar would make scheduling more orderly.

The motion to approve the substitute motion containing the fall, spring, and summer schedules, including two 6-week and one 12-week summer terms, passed 14-13.

## **10. Administrative Reports**

These were deferred due to the lateness of the hour.

## **11. Academic Freedom**

President Rice recommended that everyone read his address on this issue.

## **12. Other Business**

None.

## **13. Faculty Concerns**

- a. Concern was expressed about the cancellation of classes due to the basketball tournament. President Rice said that the matter has been addressed by Carol Oglesby. Many classes changed location and were not cancelled.

- b. Concern was also expressed about the departure from campus of numerous sports teams in the week prior to spring break. This included the golf, softball, tennis, and women's basketball teams.

**14. Announcements**

None.

**15. Adjournment**

The Senate adjourned at 4:53 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Betsy Darken

Faculty Senate Secretary