

UTC Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes AY 2022-23

(attendance follows the notes)

Meeting date: February 16, 2023 (via Zoom)

Call to Order

Welcome: the meeting was called to order by President Jennifer Boyd at 3:10 pm.

President Boyd first described the Full Faculty Canvas discussion boards and encouraged everyone to use them. The topics of these boards are: Faculty Safety on Campus, Academic Honesty, Faculty Wellbeing, the Post-Covid Classroom, and Student Recruitment. People can post as themselves, or anonymously.

President Boyd then asked for approval of the minutes from the January 19, 2023 meeting. Jack Zibluk moved and Darrell Walsh seconded. There were 32 approvals, 2 abstentions, and none opposed.

1. Old Business

Vice Chancellor for Finance and Administration Brent Goldberg discussed safety on campus. He updated the attendees on staffing issues amongst police and security officers. His office has budgeted for twenty-one sworn officers and eight security officers. Some of these positions are active, some are currently in training, and some are vacant. Compensation has been an issue, since UTC has been a bit behind of other local and regional employers.

Goldberg mentioned recent safety concerns in Hunter Hall, EMCS, 540 McCallie, and during evening classes generally. Issues raised include the placing of podiums, emergency land line phones in classrooms, the status of exterior doors, and the placing of cameras. One aspect that is being considered is the location of staff during evening class timings.

Goldberg described a Door Access and Camera project. As part of this, proximity readers will be installed around campus. New UTC Mocs ID cards with chips are available at this time. Campus cameras and door contacts are being evaluated. This project is tentatively slated to be completed by December 2023.

There is a Campus Safety Evaluation initiative that is looking at safety issues around campus. A sub-committee comprised of diverse stakeholders has been convened. Transparency and communication are priorities in this work. Tasks for this sub-committee include: active shooter policy and procedures, training in buildings, data / monitoring / controls, the Guardian application, blue phone upgrades, Birdie personal alarms, and IT/ Building Systems Monitoring.

Brian O’Leary asked if the safety evaluation will look at differences in perceived safety based on multiple demographics, such as race and gender. Goldberg said that the goal is to get meaningful input from diverse demographics as well as positions across campus.

Hannah Wakefield asked about the possibility of using a phone application for personal alarms. Vicki Farnsworth described a few applications like this that are being considered. She discussed the need to have options that students and staff will use, that can be rolled out broadly, and that is feasible in terms of cost.

Jennifer Boyd asked about safety incidents and how UTC compares to other similar institutions. Goldberg described some of the research he has done and shared that our ratio of patrol officers to students is 1 to 705. UTK has 1 officer per 505 students. The College of Charleston has 1 officer for every 608 students. Another matter part of this larger picture is the modality of patrol. Goldberg mentioned the desire to have more officers on bike patrol and more golf cart type vehicles for officers.

Jennifer Boyd asked about active shooter incidents, given the recent shooting at MSU, and what kinds of training is being considered. Goldberg said that policies and training are areas that their office is looking at as part of these initiatives. Active shooter drills once a semester is something that is also being discussed with the safety team. Communications, and campus-wide trainings, are something this team is working on as part of this work.

Hannah Wakefield asked at what point did active shooter incidents factor into the planning for campus buildings, such as Lupton Hall. Also, Wakefield asked about best practices with regards to campus construction and safety. Goldberg mentioned some factors that are part of best practices with building design and the active shooter mitigation process, including how bullets may go through drywall and glass walls differently. Goldberg mentioned that as new buildings are developed, time should be spent focusing on ingress and egress design and control.

Several senators asked about pending state legislation about carrying firearms on campus, and how that might factor into future safety trainings. Goldberg mentioned that over 40 bills are pending in the legislature that would impact the presence of guns on campus. He described it as a 50/50 chance that some of this legislation would get passed and would result in increased guns on campus. The UT System government relations team is doing what they can to mitigate this situation. His office is hopeful that this legislation would be limited as much as possible.

2. New Business

Vice Chancellor Goldberg spoke about the current summer funding model. He discussed how this has been in place for several years and seems to be applied differently across campus. More research needs to be done regarding the current model, followed by an evaluation, and then discussion with people across campus. Any impact or changes would not occur until Summer 2024, and research in this area is ongoing.

Vice Provost Lauren Ingraham discussed alternative models for course learning evaluations. Several UTC administrators attended the CUMU (Coalition of Urban and Metropolitan Universities) conference in October 2022. While there they participated in a presentation of an evaluation model developed by the University of Nebraska at Omaha. This is called “IMPACT: Inventory of Methods and Practices Associated with Competent Teaching.” The process of evaluation is a two-part method: faculty self-report on high-impact practices they developed, and then students are asked to report which practices they observed or did not observe. The goal is to significantly reduce implicit bias in student evaluations. Development of the model was supported by an NSF grant and has been proven to significantly reduce implicit bias in course learning evaluations.

More information on the UN-Omaha model can be found on their website:

<https://www.unomaha.edu/academic-affairs/stem-trail-center/research/impact.php>

Ingraham shared some examples of how faculty could identify high-impact practices. She also identified next steps in the process to consider this method of evaluations, which include learning more to answer key questions about the model, bringing one or more people from UN-Omaha to campus (possibly as early as April), and seeking input and collaboration from faculty. If anyone would like to be involved, they are encouraged to email Lauren Ingraham at lauren-ingraham@utc.edu.

Jennifer Boyd offered some observations after doing a test-run of this model in her Ecology course. Many of the practices she had already been using are identified as high-impact ones. The report gave her a lot more feedback about specific pedagogy she could implement, compared to customary student evaluations. She has asked the Course Learning Evaluations committee to discuss this model in this semester. She also encouraged faculty to contact her if they would like to discuss a test-run of this model in their classes.

3. Committee Reports

Jennifer Boyd reported on the recent TUFS (Tennessee University of Faculty Senates) meeting from February 4. They got a report about legislative topics of interest to the UT System, and two were emphasized. One was a North Carolina bill about tenure that is circulating amongst Tennessee legislators. This legislation allows the presidents and trustees at two NC universities to test-run them with a business model over the next two years. The second bill would mandate that THEC must eliminate under-performing academic programs. The status of this latter bill is not known at this time. Other items for discussion at the meeting included budgets, summer schedules, student success and recruitment, and faculty well-being.

The UFC (University Faculty Council) met on February 15. Attendees heard about the Tennessee Technology Transfer from the UT Research Foundation. The UT Research Foundation is a non-profit that promotes commercialization of UT intellectual property to promote state economic development. For those who may have questions about this work they should contact the office here: <https://utr.f.tennessee.edu/>.

Also at this meeting there was a more general discussion of how to support faculty research with Bernie Savarese, who is the UT System Assistant Vice President of Student Success. Ideas discussed included ways to foster more cross-institutional collaboration and funding core facilities and resources that can be used across the System.

The attendees received updates from UT System Academic Affairs. There is an upcoming site visit for the new UTC Master of Management program, the online offerings for students in the grow your own teacher program will be expanded, and there is a student experience survey that will be conducted across the System in March.

Boyd mentioned that the winter meeting of the UT Board of Trustees will be next Thursday and Friday in Chattanooga. It will be webcast and the public can also attend in person. Some of the proposed topics for discussion include: divisive concepts, code of conduct changes at the System level, a proposed nine-month sick leave policy, course learning evaluations, and standardized test requirements for admission. Boyd will give an update at the Full Faculty meeting on February 28. The upcoming UT BOT agenda can be found here: <https://trustees.tennessee.edu/materials/2023-winter-meeting/>

4. Administrative Reports

Provost Jerry Hale gave an update on the new THEC (Tennessee Higher Education Commission) recommendations. At a recent retreat (UT Summit) for administrators across the state, some clarifications were made about what THEC does. An important development to report from this meeting is that the recent change made to implementing new academic programs that would require Board of Trustees approval at both the beginning and ends of the proposal process has been reversed. They are also trying to streamline the process for implementing new academic programs.

A second issue concerns the status of the proposed legislation that would impact THEC's ability to eliminate programs, which was previously discussed in the Senate meeting. Hale said it was important to know that across the UT System it is agreed that the best place to make decisions about programs is at the local level and not by a state-wide agency.

Hale reported on a legislative briefing they received at the UT Summit retreat and mentioned that the UT System is closely monitoring the legislative situation. There are several caption bills related to diversity, equity, and inclusion, as well as carrying firearms, that have been filed. Hale said this situation is not new and that it is typical for a number of bills to be filed on these issues. The UT System legislative liaison, Carey Whitworth, and UT President Randy Boyd will work hard to represent the interests of our System faculty. Hale said that if people felt the need to comment in a public way on legislative matters, they should remember that as state employees, they are statutorily prohibited to use state resources to engage in those sorts of communications. It is important that employees express these opinions as private citizens and not as UT employees.

Some guidance on UT policies related to these matters are:

<https://policy.tennessee.edu/policy/ge0003-state-and-federal-government-relations-activities/>

<https://policy.tennessee.edu/guidance-document/guidance-document-ge003-state-and-federal-government-relations-activities/>

David Steele shared this resource to learn more about caption bills:

<https://archive.knoxnews.com/opinion/columnists/tom-humphrey/humphrey-caption-bills-101-when-titles-matter-ep-409994570-359381131.html>

Hale mentioned that mandatory Title IX training is reported to the Board of Trustees and for the last two years, UTC's completion rate has been low compared to other system campuses. Even if we account for some discrepancies related to measurement aspects, UTC has been falling behind on these trainings. Hale said this sends the wrong message to the BOT and the state about how UTC regards Title IX issues. In December 2022 and January 2023 the training completion rate was between 15 and 36%. Hale reported that ultimately 96% of UTC faculty and staff had completed the overall training. He thanked everyone who completed their Title IX training, said it was outstanding, and is the right message we want to send to the System.

Hale also spoke about the recent Gallup survey on campus climate concerns. Surveys like this are legislatively mandated to be conducted every other year. He speculated on some reasons for the genesis for this survey. Hale mentioned some flaws he found in the survey design and presentation. UTC faculty response rate, initially at 7%, increased to 49%, and currently we are second in the state. He felt that a low response rate might feed problematic views that legislators may have about higher education, as has happened in Texas and South Carolina. Lastly, Hale advised that if faculty don't feel safe to complete this Gallup survey then they should not complete it. A final reminder to complete the survey will be sent in the next few days.

Vice Provost Shewanee Howard-Baptiste gave an update on the UTC Ombudsperson search. The committee has been meeting with David Steele, Human Resources, and the Office of Equity and Inclusion. The position posting has been up since mid-December, and a review of applications will begin in mid-February. There is a strong applicant pool and the search is on track to have candidates on campus later in the Spring semester.

Theresa Liedtka, Dean of the Library and SACSCOC Reaffirmation Coordinator, spoke about the upcoming QEP/SACSCOC review team's campus visit on March 6th to 9th. The Library will serve as the main coordination spot for the visit. Group interviews, including some invited faculty and students, will take place on campus during the visit. More information on the process and visit can be found here: <https://www.utc.edu/sacscoc>

Jamie Walden, Director of Enterprise Systems, discussed the process of updating MyMocsNet, which was last redesigned in 2018 and is reaching end of life status. One of the goals of this work is to have new applications that are UTC branded, and to have the roll-out occur this summer. The team encourages feedback using this form:

https://forms.office.com/pages/responsepage.aspx?id=2RNYUX1x3UWeypqhnAnW-YZR00xbaeNArYBJfEHB4_ZUMTVURVZUWk03UE1MSIAxR0syNTRRWIFBVCQIQCN0PWcu

5. Faculty Concerns

No concerns were reported at the meeting.

6. Announcements

Jennifer Boyd reminded attendees about Faculty Senate Divisional Elections. Most divisions email their constituents calling for nominations, and if there are more nominees than spots available, then there is an election to fill the spots. If there are any questions about this process, please reach out to Jennifer on email.

The WCTL is hosting a new book club on faculty burnout that will be hosted by Victoria Bryan, Jennifer Boyd, and Tammy Garland. This will occur on March 1 and March 8. Anyone interested in participating should email the Walker Center for more details.

UTC Spring Research and Arts Conference (formerly known as Research Dialogues) is upcoming on Wednesday April 12. The submission deadline is February 26, and more information is here:

CAS Dean Pamela Riggs-Gelasco reported that the search for the next CECS dean is underway and more information is here: <https://www.utc.edu/academic-affairs/executive-search/dean-cecs>

The next Full Faculty meeting will be Tuesday February 28th on Zoom, and the next Faculty Senate meeting is Thursday March 23rd (moved due to Spring Break).

Adjournment

Courtney Crittenden motioned to adjourn at 4:52 pm, and Beth Crawford seconded.

Senator Name	Role	2-16		Senator Name	Role	2-16
Sara Knox	Beh Sci NTT			Dave Locander	BUS T/TT	X
David Croft	FA NTT			Nishani Vincent	BUS T/TT	X
Dominic Heinrici	HUM NTT			Ignatius Fomunung	EMCS T/TT	X
Devori Kimbro	HUM NTT	X		Hamdy Ibrahim	EMCS T/TT	X
Lucy Schultz	HUM NTT	X		Erkan Kaplanoglu	EMCS T/TT	
David Debter	MS NTT			Mengjun Xie	EMCS T/TT	X

Hadley Holcomb	MS NTT	X		Beth Crawford	CHEPS T/TT	X
Todd Dockery	BUS NTT			Bernadette DePrez	CHEPS T/TT	X
Alycia Franklin	BUS NTT	X		Brooke Epperson	CHEPS T/TT	X
Chang Phuong	EMCS NTT			Christopher Hansen	CHEPS T/TT	X
Elicia Cruz	CHEPS NTT			Marissa McElrone	CHEPS T/TT	X
Matthew Grubbs	CHEPS NTT			Susan Thul	CHEPS T/TT	
Rachel Nall	CHEPS NTT			Dunstan McNutt	Library	X
Sherah Basham	Beh Sci T/TT	X		Chantelle Swaren	Library	X
Emma McDonnell	Beh Sci T/TT			Cecelia Wigal (CECS)	At Large	X
Josh Ozymy	Beh Sci T/TT	X		Jack Zibluk (CAS)	At Large	X
Stephen Mandravelis	FA T/TT			Courtney Crittenden (CAS)	At Large	X
Lee Harris	FA T/TT	X		Yingfeng Wang (CECS)	At Large	X
Sybil Baker	HUM T/TT	X		Laura Tyndall (CHEPS)	At Large	X
Joseph Jordan	HUM T/TT			Darrell Walsh (CAS)	At Large	X
Heather Palmer	HUM T/TT	X		Oren Whightsel (CAS)	At Large	
Hannah Wakefield	HUM T/TT	X		Jodi Caskey (CAS)	At Large	X
Sandra Affare (CECS)	At Large			Jason Medeiros (CECS)	At Large	
Fernando Alda	MS T/TT	X		Jennifer Boyd (CAS)	Exec Comm	X
Stephanie Devries	MS T/TT			Donald Riesing (CECS)	Exec Comm	
Roger Nichols	MS T/TT	X		Tammy Garland (CAS)	Exec Comm	X
Han Park	MS T/TT	X		Marcus Mauldin (CAS)	Exec Comm	X
Dileep Dileepan	BUS T/TT	X		Jaclyn Michael (CAS)	Exec Comm	X