

# Faculty Senate Meeting

**August 20, 2020 at 3:10pm.**

The meeting was called to order at 3:10 pm via Zoom video conferencing. A video recording of the meeting can be viewed at:

[https://tennessee.zoom.us/rec/play/6JUpdrz-rj83T4DBtwSDCvV6W9W0Lq6s1Hnk8\\_MLnU\\_kASYFN1OgYeETMOcdm-FWisk7MCXx8WBj1jsN?startTime=1597949217000](https://tennessee.zoom.us/rec/play/6JUpdrz-rj83T4DBtwSDCvV6W9W0Lq6s1Hnk8_MLnU_kASYFN1OgYeETMOcdm-FWisk7MCXx8WBj1jsN?startTime=1597949217000)

**Senators in Attendance:** Charlene Simmons, Tammy Garland, Nominanda Barbosa, Jamie Harvey, Marissa Colston, Zibin Guo, Nicholas Boer, David Giles, Julia Cummiskey, Susan Thul, Natalie Owsley, Alexandra Zelin, Erika Schafer, Ethan Mills, Christopher Stuart, Jaclyn Michael, Joshua Hamblen, Cuilan (Lani) Gao, Phil Roundy, Spencer Usrey, Stephanie Gillison, Ignatius Fomunung, Ron Goulet, Liz Hathaway, Joanie Jackson, Barry Kamrath, Beth Crawford, Bernadette DePrez, Priscilla Simms-Robertson, Wes Smith, Brian Rogers, Anne Swedberg, Jodi Caskey, Irina Khmelko, Eleni Panagiotou, Donald Reising, Mengjun Xie.

**Senators not in attendance:** Nicolas Boer, Sarah Einstein, Hill Craddock.

## Call to order:

### Approval of minutes:

- a. April 16, 2020 minutes.
- b. June 18, 2020 minutes.
- c. July 16, 2020 minutes.

A motion to approve all three minutes was put forward by Jamie Harvey and seconded by Bernadette DePrez. The motion passed with one amendment on the July 16 minutes, by a majority of voting members.

## Administrative reports:

Senate President Simmons mentioned that Chancellor Steve Angle could not attend this meeting because he was in another meeting happening at the same time as this one.

**Provost Jerold Hale** briefly spoke on behalf of Chancellor Steve Angle that as mentioned by Dr. Simmons was attending a SOCON meeting for presidents and chancellors. Provost Hale said he had spoken with Chancellor in the afternoon before the meeting and through him, he had sent his regrets. He asked that his thanks be conveyed for the faculty senate service. Provost Hale said he could not entirely recreate all the comments from Chancellor

Angle, but he could recall one phrase which was “we need really good people on the faculty senate and that he appreciates their service”.

Provost Hale then proceeded to make his own report. He started by providing an update on the challenges encountered during the first week of starting Fall semester and stated that there have been at least four challenges that have come to his attention:

1. There has been vandalism in one of the campus buildings. However, immediately after the vandalism, facilities and custodian staff cleaned and disinfected the vandalized space then launched a review of security protocols for the affected spaces to make sure there is not a recurrence of what happened before the Monday class sessions.
2. The second challenge we have faced is the tragic death of our colleague, Dr. Kyle Knight, professor of organic chemistry in the department of chemistry and physics and a last-minute decision by a couple of our adjunct faculty members that they would not like to teach for Fall semester. Both of those circumstances created some staffing challenges for UTC. Provost Hale expressed his appreciation for faculty in the affected departments for having stepped up to help meet the staffing needs and took time to extend his thoughts to Dr. Kyle Knight’s family and faculty in chemistry and physics for the loss of a long-time colleague.
3. The third challenge faced was that some technology issues were encountered in two of the classrooms of Lupton because of work done by vendors. He added that the issue had nothing to do with the outstanding work of UTC ITT. The response of the faculty teaching in these two classrooms was incredible and quickly pivoted their classes to online instructions for the week. He hopes that these two classrooms will be ready to operate with all the technology at the beginning of the upcoming week.
4. There was a problem with some classrooms in which the numbers of strapped chairs and chairs available for seating did not match the signage related room capacities. He then stated that he was however pleased to tell that the facilities team and risk management in collaboration with Matt Mathew from academic affairs helped have those problems taken care of very quickly.

Provost Hale continues and concludes by saying that the start of the Fall semester from the stand point of academic affairs was not without glitches but as we get to the Spring semester faculty and staff from across multiple divisions have really stepped up to help. He mentioned the outstanding work from staff and faculty working with the university health services, the work done by Dr. Ford as the contact tracing team, the IT facilities along with risk management team effort’s to make campus as safe as it could for the beginning of the term and finally the faculty whether teaching online, face to face or hybrid mode that have allowed a smooth start. Provost Hale also reported that the enrollments are holding and thanked the efforts of all who have contributed to it.

A senate member asked Provost Hale whether the enrollments were up as compared to last year. He answered that enrollments are up slightly, but he would not have the exact numbers to share now. He added that the enrollment for graduate enrollment is up for

about 29 students. The undergraduate enrollment is also up slightly. He added that this was a very pleasant surprise to him because he was not sure the enrollment would go up under the present circumstances, he was at least hoping the enrollment would remain constant to where it was last year.

**Vice Chancellor Dr. Brown** provided updates on budget and end of the year closes. He said they have completed final interest for end of the year closes. He announced that they are projecting that the calls again are in really good shape in the black as required to by state law, but he is positive that is going to be another good interim call for the University, and he thanked all for their good financial Stuart ship specially in times like this.

He then commented on enrollment as an aid to the provost's previous comments and said that he usually does not look at the head counts but instead at the FTE (full time equivalent) number which is up, indicating that the base budget projected will hold and stay strong to the fourteen day count which in turn means the University's budget planning projections will hold.

He also expressed his satisfaction on three projects finished on time and within budget: the Lupton project, Fine Arts building, and Rollins College of Business. He took the opportunity to announce that the renovation of Hunter Hall is starting to be planned and the project will begin soon.

He added that regarding operation, the University has been able to respond to issues around campus, including deep cleaning when needed. If there is a Covid -19 incident they have the capacity to go in and completely sanitize a building overnight.

He ended his report by saying that regardless, few problems were encountered such as the absence of waste basket, sanitizers and paper towels in many class rooms but that the issue was quickly taken care of and these items were delivered to the instructional areas. He asked that if any issues with facilities are found to contact Tom Ellis directly. At the end, he thanked faculty for their outstanding work. He added that he believes that the enrollment is holding because of the good work done by faculty in terms of delivering instruction both online and face to face. The good work of the faculty certainly helps the campus stay in a good financial position.

Dr. Simmons presented a question on chat from a member in the meeting to vice chancellor on how much was spent to prepare for campus to come back this Fall especially in things like getting the ribbons for the seats, cleaning supplies, new technology etc. Because the funding comes from different sources, he promised to come back with more precise numbers. He listed some of the sources such as state funding, a new grant from the State of Tennessee from the governor over 700,000 dollars they are using to offset some of the responses. He ends by adding that it's a pretty good size number, but they had solid reserves going into this incident and they have been very careful with budgeting.

## Committee Reports:

No committee reports

## New Business:

Confirm Vice President nomination: Ronald Goulet

Charlene Simmons, the president of senate put forward a nomination of Ronald Goulet as the senate Vice President. The motion for confirmation of Vice president was seconded by Susan Thul. Nomination of Ronald Goulet as the senate vice president was approved by majority of voting members.

Confirm Handbook Committee: Roland Goulet (chair), Ignatius Fomunung (CECS), David Giles CAS), Barry Kamrath (CHEPS), Wes Smith (LIB), Chris Stuart (CAS), Stephanie Gillison (RCOB), Provost designee (ex officio).

Charlene Simmons, the president of senate put forward a motion to confirm nomination. The motion to confirm nomination of the handbook committee was seconded by Beth Crawford and it was approved by majority of voting members.

## Unfinished business:

COVID Absence Statement

Senate president Charlene Simmons spoke on the proposed COVID Absence Statement that was looked at on the senate meeting of July. At the meeting, it was decided to go with an electronic vote. She reported that the vote occurred between July 23 and July 30 and it passed with 31 “yes”-0 “no”-6 “abstention”.

## Faculty concerns:

Charlene presented an electronically submitted form for a request to have a more transparent Covid-19 dashboard that contains more information about a variety of data points including number of students in quarantine on campus etc. She ends by saying that she will forward this request during the weekly Covid-19 crisis meeting.

Wes Smith from Library added to the concern above mentioned. Several concerns were passed as well regarding the transparency of the COVID-19 dashboard. A call was put forward and they got a health response from faculty members.

Ethan Mills from Philosophy and Religion and member of the United Campus Workers organization spoke. He shared a link on chat for the results of a survey an invited everybody to take a look if interested:

([https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1QyzsiUmwvAgM9d\\_bW\\_zX3bA2EKLVBsudv-FzMQr4XRI/edit#slide=id.g8e1d1585a2\\_0\\_115](https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1QyzsiUmwvAgM9d_bW_zX3bA2EKLVBsudv-FzMQr4XRI/edit#slide=id.g8e1d1585a2_0_115)).

He pointed out that there is also an open letter that everyone is free to sign. In addition to the above he continues to say that as a faculty senator, one of the findings from the survey is that

there was a lot of support for resolution to allow faculty to more choices in terms of the modality in which they teach. He suggested that if anyone is interested in crafting a resolution may be is something to work on to think of next meeting and have in effect in the Spring. He asked that anyone that might want to participate whether in the crafting of the resolution or possibly interested in United Campus Workers organization to let him know.

Beth Crawford announced that this year, Chattanooga has three members on the United University Faculty Counsel. The members are herself as the representative of the University Faculty Council along with the faculty senate president Charlene Simmons and another member representative that serves on the ERS board of Trustees. This committee meets monthly with Randy Boyd, the academic affairs in Knoxville and other people and is open to receive faculty input or faculty concerns that can be brought to the system level.

Charlene Simmons brought a concern from Tammy Garland which was in the meeting but was experimenting sound problems. Her concern was about the fact that she noticed some faculty not wearing face mask in some areas of campus (indoor and outdoor). Charlene reminded everybody to follow the campus policies about wearing face masks. She stated that these policies are to be followed by everyone on campus and faculty need to be role models to the others. She described some of the policies as follow: all Students, Employees, Contractors, and Visitors are required to wear face masks while outdoors on University-controlled property, except while in an area in which social distancing is being actively practiced and can be maintained without risk of interacting with others as well as all Students, Employees, Contractors, and Visitors are required to wear face masks while inside of any University-controlled facility, with the exception of designated dining areas (e.g. Crossroads Dining Hall, University Center Food Court, West Campus Food Court), specified areas within the Aquatic and Recreation Center, or areas without risk of interacting with others (e.g. private office, residence hall room).

A member of senate brought a concern from several faculty belonging to her department regarding parking fee refund for Spring 2020 semester. Because faculty were off campus from march to June due to pandemic and student received their refund for parking, she and other faculty wanted to know if there would be a refund for faculty and staff. Dr. Simmons took the time to invite Dr. Brown to answer the question. Dr. Brown confirmed that the issue was reviewed, and it was determined short time that maintenance and all other issues with parking would remain and therefore they would not refund parking fees to faculty and staff. However, he stated that if wanted, he could open the issue and revise it with the parking authority. Charlene added a note to the comments of Dr. Brown that faculty and staff that are staying off campus (not coming to campus), are not required to purchase a parking permit.

Jaclyn Michael thanked Dr. Charlene Simmons for holding the townhalls earlier this month. She wanted to assure that the faculty concerns expressed during these townhalls were communicated to the leadership team and wanted to know what to expect next. Charlene informed that the faculty senate executive committee provided a summary of the concerns to the Chancellor Angle and Provost Hale prior to our executive committee meeting (the summary was also distributed to full faculty via email). Discussions took place on the key points. One of the points/ concerns was the fact that scheduling for Spring 2020 was planned to start the week of August 24 and that maybe more conversations should be taking place and changes made on how to identify teaching modalities to better define them. She uses the example of hybrid classes which is a very broad category that does not necessarily identify how the class is going to occur. Charlene added that

Provost Hale pointed out that this issue would be under the jurisdiction of Vice Chancellor Freeman because that is an enrollment issue and the Chancellor thought that maybe we need to form a working group. She ended by saying that this is where the discussion of the issue stays at this moment. However, we are talking to the Vice Chancellor Freeman and registrar and will continue discussing the issue. To add to the discussion on this issue, Matt Mathew, the vice Provost announced that CPI users, the system that plans the schedule, were notified that the starting of schedule will be delayed so that conversations can continue about this issue.

Charlene Simmons, the faculty senate president continued reporting on many other general concerns brought to the leadership to convey the townhall faculty concerns. She added that many were general concerns that the administration was already aware of through the weekly Q & A meetings and there isn't any specific resolution on them. However, these are issues that the executive committee will continue to press. She pointed that she has in her agenda as a high priority to continue making sure to documenting through EDO's and other review processes to show all the additional work being done so that is accounted for as faculty go for promotion, tenure, PTR processes and others.

A member of the senate had a question on whether there has been an update on discussions of the Satisfactory/No Credit Grading option for students. She expressed her concern since just in the first week of Fall she has heard countless stories of students that had significant outside issues going on (illness, family illness, losses) and just by looking at what is going on with other Universities, she can anticipate disruptions. She also mentioned cases when faculty will be unable to teach because of illness. Charlene said she could bring the issue up to the administration on the next executive meeting. However, there were some further discussions and Joe Wells from the registrar took the word and proceeded to explain that unlike some institutions, UTC does not offer Satisfactory/No Credit Grading on a broad basis. It is typically limited to selected courses that are approved through the curriculum process. What was accomplished the past semester was to extend the courses that qualify for SNC grading and extension of the deadline to the last day of classes. These were some sort of two-fold departure from the normal process. He reported that under a thousand students took advantage of this opportunity and unfortunately, not all of them helped themselves by making the selection. It was valuable for some, but it was not as utilized as it was expected to.

## **Announcements:**

Most of the announcements that follow were presented by the senate faculty president Charlene Simmons with few aids from other senate members:

The president Charlene announced there is still a need for a Behavioral Social Sciences representative. There are already 2 representatives on this committee but we still in need for a third one. An email has been specifically sent to that division calling for nominations and that if anyone in the meeting knows someone from the division that can run for the seat please feel free to indicate that.

She proceeded to announce that she had also sent an email on the need to elect two people to Faculty Administrative Relations Committee (FARC). This should be done as soon as possible because there are matters pending before FARC. The email was sent to the full faculty calling for

nominations till next Friday (August 28) and if there are more than two nominations, there will be an online election during the week of August 31.

The senate president took the time to announce that the first **full faculty meeting** of the semester will occur on Tuesday, September 22 at 3:00 pm via zoom meeting. An email invitation will be sent shortly and then email reminders.

The senate president continues to announce that she plans to continue having faculty town halls. A schedule will be set, some will be open for the discussion of any topic, others will have a specific topic to discuss. She welcomes suggestions of topics that can be added to the schedule for discussion. There are some topics already suggested such as NTTF and maybe another one could be Gen. Ed. to discuss some upcoming changes.

Dr. Simmons also announced that an email was sent from the faculty grant committee to extend the deadline for applying for a faculty grant. She asked that faculty check the email and confirm the deadline extension.

Charlene also announced that faculty senate web site has recently moved (over this summer) to a different platform called Drupal 8. The process is slowly moving forward and herself and the senate secretary are trying to get hold of all the changes and update the new website. She explained that the big change is with the archives for the faculty senate which format are not supported by the new platform. However, she assures that those archives (with minutes, agendas etc. from many years ago) are not lost, they are being moved to the faculty senate SharePoint and there is a link on the f. s. website available to every faculty. She asked that if anyone need to review one of those very old minutes to contact her, she will make them available.

Finally, and announced by Charlene and confirmed by Stephanie Todd, the NTTF committee is still looking for adjunct representatives to serve and are asking for nominees. Stephanie announced that there are many nominees from CHAPS but none from the other colleges. However, Tammy Garland took the word to clarify that the committee has now nominees from every college except from Computer Sciences Engineering and welcomed volunteers from this college.

## Adjournment:

At approximately 4:30 pm Beth Crawford called for adjournment. The call was seconded by Joanie Jackson.

The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully,

Nominanda Barbosa, Senate Secretary