

Faculty Senate Meeting

September 17, 2020 at 3:12pm.

Call to order:

The meeting was called to order at 3:12 pm via Zoom Video Conferencing. A video recording of the meeting can be viewed at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gyAarwIzB_k&feature=youtu.be

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, Ron Goulet, Liz Hathaway, Joanie Jackson, Barry Kamrath, Beth Crawford, Bernadette DePrez, , Wes Smith, Brian Rogers, Anne Swedberg, Jodi Caskey, Irina Khmelko, Eleni Panagiotou, Donald Reising, Mengjun Xie, Sarah Einstein, Hill Craddock.

Senators not in attendance: Nicolas Boer, Priscilla Simms-Robertson, Ignatius Fomunung

Approval of minutes:

a. August 20, 2020 minutes.

No one objected their adoption, so they were adopted.

Administrative reports:

Chancellor Steve Angle

Did not have any specific report to add but offered to address any question. A senate member presented a concern to the Chancellor related to a rumor that UT system is pushing for all the Universities in the system to take measures for austerity in terms of budgets. He explained that the rumor is that there is a plan for faculty and staff pay reduction of up to 2%. Chancellor Angle affirms that he has not heard anything of what the senate member was referring to. He also mentioned that earlier when they first were looking at COVID-19 and were concerned about the impact in enrollment, they investigated a lot of different options in what could be done. He assures that this is something they probably investigated in March but currently UTC enrollment is up 100 students, housing is solid, budget is in really good shape. He added that he had just spoken with President Boyd and the other Chancellors in a meeting and the subject was not brought up. President Boyd is anticipating based on the State budget which the revenues are up, and he is expecting to get some additional projects funded through the State including the additional 4.5 million dollars to take on another campus in the system with Martin Methodist University. Then he asked Dr Brown who was in the meeting to add any further confirmation on the status of budget.

Dr. Brown, the Executive Vice Chancellor affirmed what the Chancellor had said. He said that UTC is in a strong financial position right now thanks to a great financial planning, great stewardship across the University. He added that they have just closed the University book for the prior fiscal year in the black which indicates we are okay at the present.

Provost Jerold Hale

Provost Hale started by providing an update on the Faculty Q & A Sessions him and Dr. Charlene Simmons have held every Thursdays at 9am. He specifically referred to the one they had held in the morning of this meeting in which there were over 80 participants online. He wanted to share at least five basic information items he passed along in the morning:

1. He hoped the audience was able to log in yesterday afternoon for the opening session of Moc Forward for this year conducted virtually. He also took the opportunity to thank Nicole Brown for the outstanding work on facilitating this session for everyone.
2. He reminded everyone of the virtual Faculty Awards Celebration on the afternoon, this day of September 17th and encouraged everyone to participate and help pay tribute to faculty, staff and colleagues that are retiring and those receiving awards for their excellence on teaching, research or service.
3. He also took the opportunity to remind everyone that the Chancellor's State of The University address which has been recorded, will be uploaded in live to be listen to on Friday, September 18.
4. Provost Hale shared that the results of the pulse survey administrated to students are back. He added that there are few things still being clarified and further analyzed. He then proceeded briefly summarized what was learned form the survey:
 - A. The level of stress- a expected, students are feeling more stressed than in an ordinary semester. However, their level of stress did not seem to temper their expectations for the academic performance and mainly expect to perform very well this current semester.
 - B. Another result of the survey (and this is a concern to both Vice Chancellor Freeman and him) is that students don't feel like they have connected to campus this semester in a way that they would have in a regular semester. He added that this is expected to certain extent because first there are fewer students on campus, many of the student campus activities are not available this semester, and because of the changes on the classroom instructional environment.
 - C. Another important item of the survey was about students' preferences for class modality in the Spring. We found that students have a greater preference for asynchronous online and face to face. They showed the least preference for synchronous online and hybrid classes including rotating schedule. There are also many students that do not want face to face classes.

- D. The results of the survey have been shared with the Senate President Simmons and the Deans which have been encouraged to share them with the department heads as well.
- E. Provost ended by saying that the responses came from a pool of 768 students which is a large sample.

Vice Chancellor Dr. Brown

Provided more updates on budget and end of the year closes. He said they have closed 2019-20 budget in a solid and strong financial position and that they closed in the black as required to by state law. The interim closed numbers have been presented to the Chancellor and Provost. and every line item in the closure was reviewed. The Chancellor and Provost will shortly be returning to the colleges unspent course fees, FNA's, differential tuition revenues for operating expenses. He re-enforces that the books were closed in a solid financial position even with COVID-19 and much of that is because over the last 3-4 years the University has had strong financial stewardship. He thanked all the faculty for all they have done throughout this experience with COVID-19 and even in the prior years to help keep the University financially strong. He announced that they have already starting to investigate the budget for 2020-21 and have already presented the timeline to the Chancellor and the leadership team and it has been approved. The process will be very similar to the last year. We have had and will continue having good conversations about budget needs with major divisions including all the Deans. He added that inputs from faculty will be obtained from a pulse survey already in place and that HR will be designing a pulse survey for staff as well. The survey will be addressing in depth questions on the experiences (such as stress level) with COVID-19 situation and help decide what can be done to make things better.

Jim Hicks, UTC Dean of students wanted to participate in this meeting and address to the faculty about the process of notifying faculty of students coming in and out of quarantine or isolation due to COVID-19 and to talk about the challenges encountered:

- A. He assures that first and foremost, they want to create an experience where students and faculty feel safe. There have been some challenges, a staff member got sick and that has contributed to put them two or three days behind in notifications. He added that his department usually gets about 50 to 100 forms a day and that can result in many emails and he has heard some faculty lamenting the number of emails sent. Currently, they have caught up on the number of emails sent every day. There have been situations where students got a letter and then got another letter a couple days later. Situations like that should not happen as much and everything should be done to prevent that, but few situations could still happen.
- B. He mentioned other things about the system that are difficult to manage: typically, the system uses a 10-day isolation period and a 14-day quarantine period. The 14 days can be 24 but for both of those time periods the beginning date is either the day of exposure or the day the test result was received. However, student don't always communicate with the Dean of student the same day they were exposed or received a test result. This can lead to certain confusion and give an idea that certain students are having shorter periods of quarantine or isolation as compared to what is set by the system.

Dean Hicks encouraged everyone to reach out to him for questions whenever there is any kind of confusion about the forms/emails that can result from the kind of situations described before.

Alexandra Zelin thanked Dean Hicks for his clear explanations and shared that some faculty are concerned about the number of emails coming about different students in terms of being in and out of isolation/quarantine. She wanted to know whether there is a system where faculty can see what kind of disability accommodations such as extra time for test and other things students have. She believes that having one system in one location rather than trying to keep multiple emails coming at multiple times when teaching multiple sessions and multiple modalities would be better. Dean Hicks answered that currently there are four systems working together in this process and acknowledged that it can be confusing sometimes. He liked the idea of having one system and promised to reach out the right office and then get back with feedback to follow up on the suggestion.

Committee Reports:

No committee reports

New Business:

Charlene Simmons, the president of senate made some updates and announcements:

- A. Academic calendar has been updated for the Spring 21. Spring semester will start a little later, Tuesday after MLK day. There will not be a Spring break She explains that she is part of the committee that suggested the academic calendar. One of the concerns of the committee was about people returning to campus right after having attended New Year's Day festivities and not yet knowing that they were ill. Another reason behind this academic calendar was to try to limit the number of three days weekends and travel opportunities but still be able to observe MLK day. Although the Spring break was not recommended by the committee, the campus was overruled on that by the system and therefore UTC will observe Spring Holiday. This means the Spring semester will end a week later than usual. A survey has been sent out to faculty to obtain their input on preference to adjust future calendars. The survey included two options for this coming Summer. One option was to shorten summer school by one week (eleven weeks instead of twelve) and the other was to maintain the 12 weeks summer and then start Fall one week later and end one week later. The vast majority of faculty voted for the 11 week choice. The results of the survey revealed that there are some departments that might struggle with a shortened 11-week summer. The registrar has revisited with a lot of the programs particularly quite a few in CHEPS and talked to them about the impact of an 11-week summer. Based on what we've learned, the committee is in the process of drafting a recommendation which will be sent to the Provost next week. At this point everything indicates that the committee will be recommending an 11 week just for this coming summer and then that would allow us to go back to the original Fall 2021 calendar.

Related to the calendar, Alexandra Zelin had a concern about the fact that if Fall is pushed back it would only leave two weeks between when grades are due for Winter semester and when Spring semester starts in 2022. Charlene Simmons explained that one of the things that is unique

about academic calendar in general is that usually there are three to four weeks in between the end of Fall and the start of Spring semester and every 4 to 5 years (she was not sure on this; it could be 3 to 4 years) is shortened one week due to the calendar adjustment. This coming Winter was supposed to be the shorter where there would be like 3 weeks between Fall and the start of Spring. This has been extended to 5 weeks. She assures that if the 11-week summer is adopted this summer and Fall is as original then it will go back to 4-week winter break next year. If the 12-week summer is maintained, then it would shorten it to three-week Winter break.

- B. A faculty pulse survey was sent out to both full faculty and adjuncts. There were over 350 responses to the survey from both categories. Charlene said she is in the process of reviewing the responses and that her goal is to finish by the weekend and share the results ahead of the full faculty meeting coming on September 22 so it can be discussed.
- C. She announced that Beth Crawford and herself serve on the UFC. This is where all the faculty from UT campuses come together every month and talk about several issues. There was a meeting yesterday and she wanted to share some of the items discussed at the meeting:
 - one of her priorities as the senate president is to push UT system to reopen the discussion about 9-month faculty sick leave. This was discussed on the meeting and UFC is in the process of drafting a resolution that would encourage the system to revisit the issue of 9-month faculty sick leave. The goal is to have something put together in time to go to the board.
 - The UT system has begun the process of drafting shared values for the system. They've hired a consultant which we meet with yesterday and had some conversations on what the shared values might be for the system. She has also met with the Chancellors. They are going to visit all UT campuses. The campuses will be doing focus groups so we should be reaching out to faculty to get involved to the focus groups and help shape the values of UT system.
 - The UT system is in the process of creating an online consortium where the campuses could put some of the classes already offered online to a consortium and allow other UT system students to take the classes. This is still very much a work in progress. Details are being worked out, but the hope is to launch it this coming summer with two classes per campus. More conversations will be taking place about this process. There are some unanswered questions but will continue to follow up.

Beth Crawford added to Charlene's notes that Christina Vogel is also serving in the CFU committee as the statewide faculty representative to the education research and service committee for the board. She reminded that there is only one faculty member on this committee and this year is Chattanooga's campus turn. She also mentioned that they received a brief update about the potential acquisition of Martin Methodist University. She finished by reminding everyone that have questions and concerns they want to bring to UFC to feel free to discuss with the representative members including herself.

- D. Her and the senate executive committee have been talking to the Chancellor and the Provost about how to move forward and develop some kind of workload policy. The senate had looked at this in the years 2014, 2015 and 2016. There was a workload policy presented to the faculty senate in April 2016 but then all discussions stopped on that topic. Currently, there are discussions ongoing on ways to revisit it and possibly form a committee to oversee the subject which is one of the priorities. Charlene said that she was able to obtain the draft of the workload policy from the archives. However, the copy of the report sent to the Provost in 2015 has not been found. She advances that if anyone in the meeting happened to have been a member of the committee of 2014-2016 and still have any additional documents related to the draft of the workload policy, she would appreciate that they share. There were some conversations that followed to identify names of certain faculty that might have been in the committee of 2014-2016 and could possibly be of great help. Charlene also read a comment on chat from Berry Kamreth pointing to the fact that graduate council is also looking onto workload policy for graduate faculty. Charlene assured that the committee would work in tandem with the graduate council because there are lots of faculty that teach undergraduate and graduate classes. The developed workload policy would take all these into account.

Unfinished business:

The Senate President needed to address some of the faculty concerns either brought up at faculty senate meetings or submitted via email or anonymous form.

- A. Some faculty have requested more information on the Covid Dashboard and questions and concerns have been forwarded to the administration. There is an update on classroom technology and if you were on the call (Q & A sessions with Senate President and Provost) this morning Tony Parsley gave an update about class webcam: the 50 web camera bundles that the university has been waiting since June have finally arrived and they are being installed. Contractors are working mostly at night to avoid disturbing classes and the goal is to have them all installed by this Saturday September 19. After that, they will need to work on programming. However, 18 of the rooms already are online. As they outfit the rooms, they should be contacting the faculty about the update. Charlene added that Vicky Farnsworth has also mentioned in another meeting that she is looking for additional funding to try to outfit more classrooms for the Spring. However, acquiring these webcams come with some issues, even if there is money it's about supply chain so no guarantees that more classroom will be outfitted for Spring. However, they are doing everything to try to outfit additional ones. In the meantime, faculty that are teaching in a classroom without a webcam, should request a portable one.
- B. Some faculty had expressed some concerns about scheduling, specifically how the Spring schedule and CPI is done and how to ask for more modalities. They had previously paused phase one, but registrar's office has created now five modalities for the Spring: 100% synchronous online, 100 % asynchronous online, 100% face to face, a face to face rotation which would be listed as hybrid and a high flex where you teach multiple modalities and allow students to pick their modality on a class-by-class basis. Joel Wells from Registrar's was able to speak more about schedule and to confirm the additional modalities for Spring. He hopes that the additional

modalities will be more informative to students than what was available this Fall primarily so that they have an understanding if they need to be on campus on any of the days of the week or will be able to conduct a completely online schedule. We believe that the high flex gives the ability to signal to students whether they need to plan to get to campus or roll out of their dorm bed.

Charlene assures that the senate will continue to advocate for faculty choice in picking those modalities. Tufts is currently having conversations about a resolution promoting faculty choice and teaching modalities. If there are updates, they will be possibly brought to the next senate meeting.

C. There have been lots of different questions about university finances. Richard Brown has agreed to come in October meeting and do a full presentation on how the university closed the book from last year and how the university stands financially as well as answer questions from the faculty.

D. There were some questions submitted anonymously about the academic calendar survey:

- Why the college name was asked? Why was asked that faculty identify their rank? Why the department info was asked?

The senate President wanted to explain why she asked those questions on the survey. She assures that it was not done in an attempt to figure out who people are and that when anonymous surveys are done through campus, they are truly anonymous and then she proceeded to explain each of the questions above:

- We asked for rank to see if any faculty rank was skewing the results. She explains that we were looking into summer school and wanted to tell for example if full professors were voting one way and NTTF were voting another way. This is because full professors rarely teach summer school and also, instructors and adjuncts carry a lot of the load. The main idea was to see whether the results vary with rank. The findings indicated that results do not vary with rank. That was also a reason why it was also asked whether the faculty was 9-month or 12-month.
- The department information was asked because it would help determine whether there was a department that might be impacted by either choice. She gave an example of mechanical engineering being the only department that voted to maintain the 12-week summer. Knowing this result, Registrar's were able to talk to the department in question and investigate whether there would be any problems with an 11-week summer.

E. Another concern is about student evaluations of course this Fall. In the Spring 20, student evaluations were reported only to the faculty member and it was optional for the faculty to report it on the EDO report, tenure promotion or promotion. Faculty wanted to know whether this option is still available for this current semester. A decision has not yet been made about student evaluations for this current semester but will continue having these discussions. Provost

mentioned he is having this conversation and we will continue to ask that question and follow up and advocate for some choices in the reporting of those student evaluations

Faculty concerns:

A member of the senate (Ethan Mills) had a question about dashboard: what is the particular resistance to changing it? Do you have any additional information on that? President Simmons answered: It's been pointed out that there is additional information on the UT system level dashboard and one argument is that we don't want to report information in two different places and have them conflicting with one another. Instead of reporting at UTC level, we will just let the system it. There is also been some discussions about whether certain numbers/data are really effective indicators. For example, if there are a lot of quarantine rooms available is that an effective indicator of how things are going. The problem is that many students go home instead of going in quarantine rooms. About dashboard, Chancellor Angle added that he thinks that people are trying to provide enough information so that everyone get a good sense of what the activity of the virus is on Chattanooga campus. He explains that about the quarantine room, there are more students going home than anticipated when they go to quarantine or isolation. At some level and to report some of the hospital data and so on, is much better to link to those sites. He added that all is done to try having consistent data all in one place.

Announcements:

Two announcements that follow were presented by the senate faculty president Charlene Simmons:

The president Charlene reminded of the faculty award taking place on the afternoon. There is a virtual reception at sis and then the program starts at 6:30pm. She provided the zoom link for the event.

She reminded of the full faculty meeting taking place on Tuesday, September 22 at 3:00 pm and provided the link as well.

Adjournment:

At approximately 4:04 pm Beth Crawford called for adjournment. The call was seconded by Donald Reising.

The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully,

Nominanda Barbosa, Senate Secretary