

## **Faculty Senate Meeting**

**January 21, 2021 at 3:10 pm.**

### **Call to Order:**

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://youtu.be/5817syOY51g>

**Senators in Attendance:** Charlene Simmons, Tammy Garland, Nominanda Barbosa, Jamie Harvey, Zibin Guo, Nicholas Boer, David Giles, Julia Cumiskey, Susan Thul, Natalie Owsley, Alexandra Zelin, Erika Schafer, 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, Anne Swedberg, Jodi Caskey, Donald Reising, Irina Khmelko, Sarah Einstei, Eleni Panagiotou, Mengjun Xie.

**Senators not in attendance:** Hill Craddock, Chandra Ward, Ethan Mills.

### **Approval of the minutes:**

Approval of the minutes of the November 12, 2020. There were no revisions nor objections, so the minutes were approved.

### **Administrative Reports:**

#### **Provost Jerold Hale**

Had one major item to briefly report because this is an item that has been discussed a lot in a variety of public forums

- A. He wanted to bring in attention the planning and anticipation for Fall 2021 schedule. We are asking department heads, program directors and deans to plan for two different contingencies. One is optimistic and it would look like a schedule we had in the Fall 2019 or pre-pandemic but also plan for one as a back up plan in which we would have a schedule that looks more like what we have currently.

A member of the senate brought a concern:

She reported that even though it was made very clear in the schedule which classes are asynchronous and which are synchronous, several instructors have been receiving emails from students claiming that they were not aware of the course being synchronous. Dr. Hale quickly agreed with the faculty's assessment that it was always very clear in the

schedule which courses were synchronous and which were asynchronous at registration. Therefore, they are asking the faculty to continue teaching the courses in the modalities that were put in the schedule students registered for, without any fear of retaliation.

## **Committee reports:**

### **A. Undergraduate academic standards committee**

Reported by Amanda Clark about a change related to minors:

Last semester a member of the campus community had come to the committee requesting that the below section of the academic catalogue be taken up for discussion and the committee came up with the proposed language also found below:

**Current language:** Students cannot major and minor within the same **discipline**. No more than 6 hours of credit in the major department may be applied to a minor. Students majoring in Art may also minor in Art History. Students majoring in HHP programs may also minor in Nutrition.

**Proposed language:** Students cannot major and minor within the same **program**. No more than 6 hours of credit in the major program may be applied to a minor.

The proposed language was voted on this past Fall semester and it was unanimously supported and today, the committee is bringing it to the faculty senate for consideration.

#### **Discussion of the proposed language change:**

A senate member used a specific example from his specific department in which a student would want to major in a major and minor both within the same department and him as the department head had to say no to that. He wanted to make sure that the new language proposed would make things much clear to avoid that. He did express a little concern on the interpretation of the word “program” but he ensured that as long as the new language makes the understanding clear he would support it.

To that, Amanda Clark clarified that with the new language proposed, the intention is to assure that the misunderstanding of the word “program” does not happen and that the course codes would have to be different to account for the major separately from the minor.

The president Simmons moved to voting for or against the proposed language: The proposal passed with 34 Yes -0 Abstention -0 No.

### **B. Reimagining General Education Committee**

Reported by Lauren Ingraham, chair:

Chancellor Angle announced in his Sept. 2020 State of the University Address that thoroughly reviewing our General Education program was a top priority.

Our initial work seems to be aligning well with current work to update our Strategic Plan related to creating meaningful learning experiences for students.

“Reimagining” is an important word for our work. We’re looking forward, not relying on our current model, as we consider new, innovative models for our UTC General Education program.

The committee voted by email and only one committee member did not respond but this was otherwise a unanimous adoption of these design and process principles. The principles were opened with a preamble that follows:

The Reimagining General Education committee is leading UTC’s work to design an innovative academic program that prepares our 21st century students for a long, rich, and varied life after graduation. To that end, we aim to develop a program that offers students an array of meaningful learning experiences, invites and allows them to study in multiple disciplines, addresses their need to learn about diverse perspectives other than their own, and prepares them for informed and effective civic engagement. Improving student learning is the key purpose of our work. The following design and process principles will guide it. For details and design principles please follow the link <https://new.utc.edu/document/55326>

### **Questions and discussions related:**

A senate member wanted to make sure these slides could be made available to other faculty. The president Charlene Simmons assured that the whole packet of slides from this meeting will be made available (and are now available at the link provided above).

The same faculty member wanted to know how the Reimagining General Education Committee was comprised or how people or members of the committee were selected.

**Lauren Ingraham answer:** she made sure that there was representation from all colleges first. She wanted to include people from the Gen. Ed. Refresh effort some of whom have continued to be deeply involved Gen. Ed. works at the institutional level. She pointed that she also consulted with Academic Affairs (Matt Mathews), Provost hale, Charlene Simmons. In general, the intention was to put together a diverse committee broadly represented by faculty from all colleges, staff who are attuned to student success, staff who ensure that we’re complying with requirements, and students who want to leave a legacy once they become alums. She also reinforced that because this is a “Reimagining Committee” they are trying to look forward and not rely so closely on what they currently do. That said, she added they will be forming work groups that will come out of some of the design thinking and the listening. This will be happening in the next couple of months and we will be wanting to open those up as widely as possible to people that want to be involved.

Another member asked a question related to the passage below (in the design principles presented): Incorporate High-Impact Practices and Experiential Learning into the design through curricular and co-curricular experiences.

Referring to the passage above, to what extent does it seem practical about not having requirements that are entirely devoted to one department? He used the example of English department in which the department has been responsible for the composition course requirement for example.

Lauren Ingraham said that this is something to think about and that one of the things this committee will be doing is to reframe the way we look at the Gen. Education. If we realign the skills for the learning that we are asking from our students to something like quantitative reasoning over math (for example) that can open things up and create opportunities that maybe students don't currently have but they might be really interested in. She reinforced that she does not think there is any way that we can offer this as a strong foundational college education without including English or Math, History and Arts and Sciences pieces etc. She also strives that as we think about a new design, we also need to think of how the design impacts faculty members and faculty members at different ranks.

## **New Business:**

### **1- Covid -19 & Student Achievement**

**Dr. Freeman** wanted to bring an update on what is the student success and what is current over the Spring 20, Fall of 2020 and now Spring of 2021. He also took the time to acknowledge the contributions of Dr. Mathews from Academic Affairs Office, Vice provost in the Academic Affairs Office and Stacey Grisham who is in the enrollment management student affairs. This information is helps determine how we do programming around student success and how we need to pivot, and so they are on the call and will help. He also wanted to point Dr. Sherry Marlow Ormsby who is in the institutional research area who is the most indicated person to ask for information related to data and information as we try to determine how to maneuver and try to change things. To see the whole presentation slides, go to the link that follows:

<https://new.utc.edu/document/55326>

### **Questions, comments or concerns related to the above presentation:**

A senate member asked clarification on a presented slide about “undergraduate grade distribution comparison”. He specifically wanted to know whether a benchmarking has been made historically to look at these kinds of numbers to ascertain whether we are okay, we are improving or not.

**Dr. Freeman's answer:** yes, this is done every year. This kind of data is looking at pre-Covid-19 and the current situation. There is data as well in terms of how students have continued to

progress, and we've seen very good metrics across our campus. There is a reason why we are doing very well in the performance funding formula for Tennessee that is measuring success outcomes around retention progression graduation. It is because these metrics continue to improve. Our freshman retention rate continues to improve. This past year the cohort was 77%. Overall, it is getting better but there is so much more work to do.

The same faculty senate member has a second question related to the topic: He said that he had looked recently at the courses that fall under the SI (supplemental Instruction). He added that he saw some information on math and some on chemistry but no freshman level engineering courses. Is there a critical mass that is involved in setting one up?

**Dr. Freeman, asked that** Stacey Grisham which was in the call answer the question: we look at the DFW rates and the number of total students enrolled so we do target some of the higher enrolled courses but we're always trying to grow the SSI program and would be happy to partner with faculty that could benefit from it. Please reach out to me and or Dr. Freeman and we will get you connected with department to start exploring how to get an SI leader added.

Another senate member brought a question related to the same topic: He mentioned that he recently saw an article that stated that if you look across the board or across many universities when many programs went online, they saw an uptake in student's performance. So, based on that, he was wondering whether this aspect was also accounted in this data as well. He enforced the effect of online exams when many courses went online.

Dr. Freeman acknowledged the question as a good point but answered that he has not reviewed or studied this aspect. He asked that other administrators in the call provide if any, some information that might support or reject the theory that grades went up with the online instruction. He pointed that in terms of looking at demand for UTC several students in the past Fall 20 semester said they wanted more face to face courses and then in the Spring 20 they came back and said they wanted more online courses. However, he has no answer to the question. Dr Mathews added that it is very hard to answer the question especially because instructors used a variety of different ways to test students on online tests. Faculty have a lot of freedom to evaluate students the way they want and because of this it could be difficult to figure this type of information.

Dr Mathews took the time to add that they did see an increase in W grades which he believes in the data, but he thinks that it is worth pointing that we also moved the W date later in all the terms that were Spring 2020 and later. So, there is a bigger window for students to choose to talk a W. He thinks that this is going to lead to a natural increase in W grades by itself irrespective of how the semester was delivered. Another thing he wanted added was related to the earlier comments of Dr. Freeman about the midterm grades. Dr. Mathews said that they have been pushing hard to get faculty to engage with those when we can. He thinks that the results from the Fall were promising and he hopes to see more engagement. He believes that we've done better just about every term in terms of getting midterm grades in but in the ones that are not reported (see slide) we saw a decrease.

Another senate member asked for more information on the role of an SI leader, how they're going to interface and help faculty if they're in the classroom because he knows that there are courses like in engineering where this could be a useful tool.

Dr. Freeman provided clarification on the above: we do work with the department to select the SI leaders. Is usually a person who's an upper classman in the same major and we oftentimes ask the faculty member if he or she is aware of the student, or whether they have a student they would like to recommend so that there is a synergy between the faculty member and the student and make sure that as they are covering the material, they're doing it as the faculty member would. He pointed that he thinks there is a lot of value on creating SI leaders in certain course or set of courses.

The same senate member also brought two questions related to the presentation:

- a. Related to DFW rates (presented in ppt. slides): Is there any tracking of transfer students versus freshman coming in? More specifically, he wanted to know whether there is a correlation between a transfer school coming in versus others in terms of DFW rates that may be indicative of how well these students are prepared to take our courses.

Dr. Freeman acknowledged the question as a good question for Dr. Marlow and institutional research: She answered that she appreciated the question, but they have not specifically looked at that instance of transfer students. She mentioned that usually on their fact books they break it down by colleges and subject to provide a little bit more narrative in context for the DFW rates. She is sure there are many factors that go into what could impact the student withdrawing from a course but if interested, she asked that the faculty member contact her and maybe continue the discussion in more details.

- b. When looking at changing of majors does DFW's factor in with the rates, or is it just looking at a given snapshot of a course in a given semester?

Dr. Marlowe answered that is only looking at that snapshot for the course of the term.

Another senate member presented this question still related to the presentation: I am assuming that the course completion data (presented) is coming from a time once incomplete are taken care of, did you see any changes in the proportion of incompletes in the pandemic environment? She also wanted to get some insight perhaps to faculty load changes.

Dr. Freeman answer to the above question: not especially large increase in the number of students who took incomplete courses. We also made an adjustment for when incompletes had to be done as well back in Spring 20 that I think helped students overall because we backed it up to the last day of the term versus  $\frac{3}{4}$  away through the term. I think that by maneuvering some of our processes it may help us eliminate some of the incompletes we've had but we did not see a marked increase in incomplete during this same time.

## 2- UT Online Consortium

**Presented by Dr. Matt Mathews:** we have been working with a steering committee at the system level on this initiative and they had suggested that we might want to make sure that our campuses knew about the initiative. So, we chose to present to faculty senate. This is part of President Boyd one UT initiative and in a nutshell it's a consortium to share existing online courses amongst the four campuses, UT Chattanooga, UT Health Sciences, UT Knoxville and UT Martin. The group that is heading it up arranging the meetings and making sure that the work moves forward is Vice President Linda Martin's office. The steering committee has about four to six members from each campus, the committee was appointed by President Randy Boyd. The representatives from our campus recommended by the Chancellor and the Provost: Vice Chancellor Vicky Farnsworth assistant Provost Down Ford, director of Gen. Ed. Lauren Ingraham, Emily Thompson from library, Joe Welsh from university registrar and me.

We see this as an away to expand the courses that are available to all students within the UT system. There are courses that we offer that other campus may not and vice-versa. We would like to make this a system that is fairly straightforward for students so they would pay the cost at their main campus. If there is a course that is in the system that a student would like to take at for example in Knoxville, the student would be able to enroll in it as part of the consortium. Our Chattanooga student could pay to take the course as if it was UTC course, but it would be delivered by someone at UT Knoxville. The credit would come directly to their local transcript, so it does not require being a transfer student.

The goal would be to expand the enrollments in our courses. So, if we have online courses that have open seats it would have an opportunity to be filled with students from other campus.

One of the things that has been mentioned is to offer incentive opportunities when the money from the extra students comes back to the campus. There is even been mentioned offering incentives to the department or to the specific faculty member. That would be a local governance issue, but it has at least been raised.

We are partnering with a company called Higher Learning Partners run by Regis University which is in Colorado, with thirty years of experience running a system like this and they are only here to facilitate the Consortium part (not involved in the academic).

There is a lot of work ahead. Next you will find an outline of what the steering committee and subcommittees have been asked to do: identifying issues – governance, coordination, technology, etc. We have several systems that will need to work together. For example, if students from Knoxville campus would like to enroll in UT Chattanooga course, they will have to get a log into UT Chattanooga Canvas system so that we are not required to put the course in their instance of Canvas. The steering committee mission is to provide recommendations for implementation of the consortium. We are recruiting local campus partners & courses to offer – we will start probably with Gen Ed. then expand from there. The focus initially is on undergraduate but certainly graduate could be considered. Faculty input will be key. It has been stated as a principle for implementation that each campus will get to determine what courses it offers to other

campus. This would eliminate some concerns that would naturally come up namely that we would be competing for our courses. We are expected to provide a report to the President by summer with a UT BOT presentation in October 2021 Board of Trustees meeting. For more details please visit the link that follows: <https://new.utc.edu/document/55326>

**Questions, comments or concerns related to the above presentation:**

A faculty member has two questions related to the presentation:

- a. Students can take courses at other campus. In this case, courses that are not being offered in the local campus. How courses to take in another campus would be determined?
- b. Would the home campus students have priority to register before students from other campus are permitted to enroll?

Dr. Mathews answered to the above questions: the answer to the above may be to be determined. I believe that this is the kind of things where the chief academic officers, the Provost at each respective campus will want to have a say on how this can be implemented. Even if the steering committee comes back with certain recommendations, I would expect that the chief academic officers, the Provost at each respective campus would be able to have an input on the final say on that.

Another member from the steering committee added some notes to the answer provided by Dr. Mathews: There was a demo of the system on how it works from the background and the key to remember is that all of this is really focused on choices. There are a lot of choices on the professors that might be teaching the course. Basically, there is going to be like another catalogue that the students have access to when registering. The professor teaching will have to choose to open seats on UT online (other campus). If for example a course at UTC has 15 seats but it only gets 4 students from UTC, the faculty teaching the course would have the option to put it up on the UT online and have other students help make up the numbers.

The President Charlene Simmons wanted to add few notes to complement the answers above from a shared governance perspective because this has been discussed several times at UFC (University Faculty Council) meetings which has representatives from the four campuses and have been and will continue discussing this topic and asking for clarity. One of the things that Linda Martin (Vice-President or Chief Academic Officer) basically the Provost of the whole system had said and assured us is that all classes will go through curriculum reviews. So, if UTK puts a class online and UTC wants to accept it, UTC Curriculum Committee will have to review and approve it and add it to UTC catalogue. UFC has questions about how that is going to happen, how we are going to process so many curriculum proposals. They have said that they are going to start with classes that already have been matched and there are some classes already matched across the system.

Another senator member asked for more clarification on the role of Regis in this initiative: Regis is consulting and providing a platform that they have developed and have used with many other Universities.

A follow up question was: are students selecting the courses from or taking the courses on the platform?

Answer: If students are taking the course with UTC, they take it with UTC's Canvas, and they will have they own log into that. For example, consider a UTK student registering for classes at UTC. Regis helps platform helps that request to UTC for approval and get it into the student's transcript.

Another senate member had few new questions:

- a. As a member of the curriculum committee within my department, I would like to know what exactly that looks like for us with regards to suddenly they can take another psychology class at a different department (it has been said that the curriculum committee has to approve it) but do we have now to provide overrides for majors and minors and concentrations and so on?
- b. Also, will this come down to deleting faculty positions? What is the impact on the number of faculty in our department and how to keep it from becoming a power grab of who's taking what students and where and when?

Dr. Mathews answered both questions: in terms of the first question, he feels that is a local governance issue. In terms of faculty positions and the impact on the numbers, let me offer a slightly different perspective. One of the examples I've considered that might make sense for this system is as an example the music program here at UTC. We have been having conversations with music program and the faculty understood that this incentive could possibly be a way for them to offer the courses that are needed to reactivate their master's program in music without having to hire the faculty to do that. The music theory course that you don't necessarily have a faculty member for here is offered in one of the other campuses. Another example for example is that Martin do not have a major in physics, but they do have a minor. UTC may be able to expand the enrollments in our own physic courses by offering courses that their students might want to expand on their minor and maybe even begin to build a major. These two examples are instructive in how we might benefit from classes at another place and how we might offer classes somewhere else, and in both cases, we may be able to keep or even add faculty positions here not in one area or not necessarily lose them.

Dr. Mathews asked Provost Hale to add some notes on the concern about deleting faculty with the implementation of the system: unless things have changed, I have stepped away from those meetings since giving recommendations. However, he adds that the idea was that our students would only be able to go to the other campuses to take classes if there were no seats available for them in our own sections of those classes here. All the campuses have been very protective of their own faculty to make sure that what was mentioned above in the second question would not be realized.

A comment from another faculty member: I am concerned about the courses that we already have that have multiple sections and we already see instances of professors shopping based on rate my professor reviews and based largely from data largely on sex and ethnicity and I am afraid that the implementation of this system could exacerbate some of those trends. This may not be obvious, but it could have a real impact on the way that we' are able to recruit a diverse faculty which we know has great benefit.

Another faculty member brought a quick reminder to also consider in conversations that happen outside the classroom. She left few questions to consider: which office would manage academic integrity issues or the provision and implementation of accommodations? Would that be the other institution?

Dr. Mathew answered that his hope is by having Joel Wells (from registrar) on the representatives from UTC will make sure that those other support areas are covered.

### **3- Diversity in Academic Leadership Appointments**

**Presented by senate President Charlene Simmons:** at the end of last semester, there were some faculty concerns about diversity in academic leadership appointments particularly related to interim appointments. So, I put in a request with OPAIR to run some data for us. The report is on the faculty senate website, I will be presenting it as informational item then we can discuss it. What I've requested is interim leadership appointments in the academic side of the house, but they gave us additional information. We asked for breakdowns by race and gender for central leadership which would be Chancellor or Provost, Associate Provost level and then college leadership, the Deans and Associate Deans, Department Heads. It is clear by the numbers seen on data, it is clear we have not had a very diverse body of appointees and we have significant problems with race and ethnicity. They also ran a search of chart to see if there is a change when we get to the permanent appointments and we see a slight improvement but, in my opinion, they are still quite low. Among the data presented, these were academic appointments, but they also ran a chart for nonacademic appointments. This report has been shared with leadership, the Faculty Senate Executive Committee has met with the Chancellor and the Provost and has begun discussions around this topic. The full report can be found through the link provided here: <https://new.utc.edu/document/55326>

#### **Questions, comments or concerns related to the above presentation:**

A member brought some concerns about recent permanent executive appointments that have happened seemingly to my knowledge without any competitive searches, either externally or internally. He asked for more transparency from the executive leadership team on why these were not competitive searches and what procedures were followed and whether this is being consistently applied to all units on campus or may be more exemptions are allowed because it's at certain level.

Since there were no responses, President Charlene suggested that the same member bring the concern to next meeting when the Executive Committee gets to speak with the Chancellor and Provost.

Another faculty member asked for a clarification on the date of the data collected which was clarified by the President Charlene, but he also wanted to echo the previous concerns expressed by the faculty member.

The Senate President ended by saying that this is an issue that the Executive Committee will continue to discuss and welcomes any ideas, motions etc. She expressed that personally she would like to see some policy procedure put in place to ensure diversity. She added that Interim appointments are key because they are a foot in the door to move up and if we don't have diversity in the interim, we are not going to have much diversity at the permanent positions. She assures that she will continue advocating for the matter and she welcomes ideas on how to advocate for changes.

A suggestion from another faculty: maybe we need to look at how the interims are selected. Maybe the process at which interims are being selected needs to be changed. Maybe the selection of interims should go through a process similar but not the same as searches for hiring permanent positions. Maybe after the selection there should be some kind of review to make sure that is the best person for the position.

There were few more faculty also expressing that their concerns not only apply to the interim positions but also permanent appointments and called for more transparency on both processes and find more creative ways to do both. The senate president took the word to say that she agrees with the concerns and suggestions and that this is something to continue discussing. In fact, as part of the Tennessee University Faculty Senate (TUFS) they have begun discussing this topic in December of 2020 and plan to revisit it this Spring. She added that the discussion that then took place began with Tennessee Tech. University asking "how many of you (campuses) are using the procedure in which you can be an interim, but you can apply for the permanent job? Their concerns were related to the fact that it appears that it's the female candidates that are told that they can never apply for permanent jobs and yet the male candidates seem to be allowed.

Another concern was expressed by a faculty member about the data presented, calling the attention that by looking at the chart alone presented here, we all can agree that these aren't acceptable numbers. However, she felt that the chart may not be representing the whole picture to help understand what the pools look like. In trying to understand the pools and if they do not represent diversity then that may lead us to where we direct our effort or if they do reflect diversity and these are still being made to reflect this chart then that's a whole other set of issues. So, how can we complete the picture to really understand the data? President Charlene Simmons answered by saying that this has been a topic of conversations with the Chancellor and the Provost. Often these positions need to be covered by a full professor and our full professor ranks aren't very diverse and so maybe one thing to do is increase the diversity in the full professors. Historically, women and faculty of color often carry a heavy teaching loads and service loads and so we need to find a balance so there is a greater pool.

To that, a faculty member suggested that maybe one thing to do about hiring new faculty which could bring some value is to make it blind, such as removing names of candidates and other things during the search and only look at qualifications of the individuals when evaluating them, at least at the beginning of the source. That would not certainly apply to on campus interview phase, but it might possible remove certain inherent subconscious biases that may be selecting or cause people to score differently. He used the example of course evaluations and he said he has been in numerous faculty meetings where some faculty brought up the fact that women and minorities received some of the poorest course evaluations, regardless of how well they teach the course compared to their white male counterparts. Because of all that, he finished by saying that he thinks we should look at that as a possible way of coming to maybe address the lack of diversity in the permanent positions as well.

### **3- President Charlene brought two informational items:**

- a. The results of the recent faculty survey about the start of the Spring 21 and Covid-19 and the levels of perceived safety have been posted on the Senate website. The survey sent in December also includes information about the Fall and it was provided to the UFC (the University Faculty Council) and to the president of the system. We will continue using the information to also figure out how is the Fall going to look like, particularly some of the information about faculty desires for Fall.
- b. The Faculty Senate Executive Committee is putting together a tip sheet that in the moment we're calling 'documenting Covid-19 impact in the faculty EDO's'. The idea is to help faculty do a better job this year and in the future years in documenting the impact of Covid-19 on all the different aspects of job performance whether teaching, research, sand service. The document is available on the Senate Website and I encourage you to look at it and possibly add comments. In the impossibility of adding comments directly on the documents, send an email with additional tips to Charlene Simmons. Once finalized, the document will be sent to all faculty (by the end of the month) before faculty begin to do work on EDO's.

### **4- UTK-UTIA Faculty Senate Resolution on UT Presidential Searches**

**Presented by Dr. Charlene Simmons:** UFC is a venue used to communicate as Faculty Senates and share what we're doing and seek others to join us in our effort. So, at the end of last semester the UTK, the UTIA (UT Institute of Agriculture) passed a resolution and the full resolution is on the Faculty Senate Web page:

"...the UTK-UTIA Faculty Senate calls on the UT Board of Trustees to amend its bylaws to ensure a rigorous, open and inclusive search process for future presidential searches."

President Charlene Simmons strived that although this is not directed toward President Randy Boyd, it comes out of the recent process by which he was selected as the permanent president of the UT system. Just to recapitulate, President Boyd was appointed as Interim for about two years and then this past Spring the Board of Trustees decided to move forward with appointing him permanently. There was not a national search. On account of this, UTK has put through the resolution above described. She added that she brings this resolution to the faculty senate as an

informational item but also to ask whether faculty from UTC would want to endorse the resolution, pass a similar resolution or simply do nothing or suggest another way to do it.

A motion to pass the same resolution of UTK but changing the wording so everywhere it says UTK Faculty Senate will be replaced by UTC Faculty Senate was put forward by Sarah Einstein and seconded by Don Reising.

### **Questions, comments or concerns related to the above:**

A senate member wanted to know the reason why President Boyed was appointed the permanent President of the system?

Beth Crawford answered as a member of the UFC: she said that the head of the Board of Trustees talk to the UFC several times and conversations with all the Chancellors, the rationale was that at the time of massive change of leadership in the UT system and Knoxville, the success that Mr. Boyed was having and the request of not putting UT into a vacuum of leadership again considering that we were getting close to the end of that interim position and the Board felt very strong that they wanted the continuation of that. The Board of Trustees does not have the restrictions because their bylaws do not state that the presidential search must be done in a national search.

A follow up question: do they have a rule in how long one can be an interim? Beth Crawford answered that she is not aware of one in the bylaws but would be glad to look that up.

Another Senate member added some notes to the discussion: we do not want to have a president who's endless interim. This does not put him or her in a position of strength.

Beth Crawford provided some information about the appointment and selection of the president (page 17 of the bylaws). She strived that according to the information, there not a limit on how long the Interim position should last. There is a statement that says that when the Board of Trustees deems it's appropriate to fill the position, they can move forward.

A senator wanted to call the attention that although a motion to use the same resolution of UTK with simply replacing UTC by UTC he would encourage reviewing the document carefully. He added that there is reference in the resolution about adhering to the principles of shared governance as reflected in our faculty handbook in section 1.7. However, we do not have section 1.7 and I think all most mention of shared governance has disappeared from the faculty handbook. To add to this concern, President Charlene suggested that we could either delete that as altogether or stop it at "we are committed to upholding expected adherence to the principle of shared governance". The senator agreed with the suggestion in place of the "reference to the handbook". There were no objections to the change, but Dr. Mathews wanted to add that there is the section 1.4 in our faculty handbook about shared governance. After going back and forth, it was agreed to then just replace the reference 1.7 to 1.4 in our handbook.

After discussions, a roll call vote took place to move forward the motion above. The motion passed with a **25 Yes-0 No-1 Abstention.**

**The motion will be posted on the website and will be sent to UFC and UTK.**

## **Unfinished Business**

**Charlene Simmons gave a brief update:** last semester, we passed a resolution calling for some type of paid family leave for nine- month faculty. We have been discussing the issue at UFC. The updates related: first, the UT system is bringing forward a draft paid parental leave policy. The draft was made a year ago but had delayed it because the governor had made a similar call and they wanted to wait to see what the governor had done. The draft that is distributed by UFC calls for eligible employees and it would include both 12 and 9-month employees would have access to six weeks of paid leave when they add a member to their family through childbirth or adoption. In the case of 12-month employees they could add on top of the six weeks any leave they have from sick leave or annual leave. We discussed this policy for quite some time and the Vice President of HR, and the UT General Council were also present in the meeting. I think that the policy is fantastic for 12-month employees, but I do have concerns about it for 9-month employees/faculty since they do not accrue sick leave or annual leave. It is unclear how to get anything beyond the six weeks. She added that another concern is that this will not cover caring for family members who are ill. This is specific to the addition of a family member through child birth or adoption. We all agreed that we need to continue having discussions on how to move forward with ensuring guaranteed paid family medical leave for 9-month employees. To that end UTC passed a resolution I shared with UFC hoping that other campuses will join. There has been some hesitation from the other campuses and the system due to a perception that this might be something that faculty do not want. Because of that, we are going to conduct a survey to all faculty but with interest in nine-month faculty and ask whether they like a guarantee of paid leave and ask faculty for their different approaches to this.

### **Questions, comments or concerns related to the above:**

Alex Zelin recalled that as member of the “**9-month Sick Leave Adhoc Committee**” they had made some recommendations on this resolution (**see minutes of November Faculty Senate meeting**) and she wanted to know whether there was any consideration during this meeting.

Charlene Simmons answered that the report was shared but no one seemed to have responded to it. However, she added that the paid parental leave (PPL), the PPL which is a six weeks leave was draft before and they did talk about it in the meeting. Beth Crawford added that the report was shared with the UFC, but it was not shared with people who came up with this policy. So do not think that this policy was in any way dismissive of what the UTC did. This is a policy that has been very slow working its way in the chain from over a year ago. It’s two different small policies that happen to have a small tether between the two of them.

A member wanted to stress that although faculty senates, we consider all the issues that leave has for all different types of employees regardless of 12 or 9- month faculty and not an issue of 9- month employees.

Charlene Simmons answer: I agree but the only reason I always bring and enforce the 9-month faculty leave is because currently, the only guarantees 9-month employees have of any paid

leave as if they need an organ transplant or pointed out in the yesterday meeting, we become injured during an international competition.

## **Faculty Concerns:**

A member had placed a concern on chat: he was calling the attention that on the time of page of the website there appears to be an absence of links related to parental leave. Charlene Simmons added that the parental leave policy mentioned is a draft so is not out there on the internet. She suggested that anybody who has questions about UT system policies go to Tennessee. edu., click on HR and will find different policies.

Another member also had a question/concern on the chat: does stillbirth constitute birth of a child?

Charlene Simmons answer: The draft was very narrow in its definition of parental leave and it brought up many questions about other scenarios.

The president Charlene then referred to another comment on chat and said: we are advocating for 9-month FMLA paid for a variety reasons: one to protect all of us that are already here and have had needs that options didn't meet but is also a recruitment issue.

**A member had a personal concern:** recent termination of a football coach here at UTC for comments that were broadcast on what he believed was his personal media account. He added that he was surprised with the lack of processing associated with the dismissing a member of the staff and wondered if faculty is subjected to the same violation of process if they make comments that do not conform with certain norms.

President Charlene wanted to make a clarification related to the above concern: the assistant coach was not fired, he resigned. She believed that the local media incorrectly reported that he was terminated.

Brian Rodgers wanted to add some notes to Charlene Simmons comments: he thinks that the question may still be relevant regardless of the situation because he is aware that within the last 5 to 10 years there have been several individuals regardless of having been a quit or resign type situation and so the resignation is at least the part that we hear about when it comes to the official communication on campus. The concern was noted by President Charlene Simmons and will be brought up.

A member of the senate added that when coaches come to campus, they sign contracts so they do have to be careful as to what they do post and what they share on social media account because they can be dismissed.

To that, a senate member added that he also believed that coaches use social media to talk to recruits. So is not only the fact that this is not a personal account, but they use the accounts to communicate with recruits and players.

As one of the people who was asked to oversee the policy for the University, I wanted to add that there is a free speech Protection Act that has much different implications for students and faculty than it does for staff and faculty should be aware of that.

Provost Hale added that the Twitter account that was used on this, specifically listed the employee's affiliation to UTC at this post on campus. So, it could very easily be well construed as him speaking on behalf of the program or the University because the way the account was set up.

### **Announcements:**

No Announcements

### **Adjournment:**

At approximately 5:34 pm Beth Crawford put a motion forward for adjournment. The call was seconded by Ron Goulet.

The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully,

Nominanda Barbosa, Senate Secretary 20/21