

Faculty Senate Report, 2020-21

The following is a year-end summary of the accomplishments of the Faculty Senate during 2020-21, as well as a list of on-going/unresolved issues. Some items are listed in multiple locations because they fall under several categories.

COVID Response

2020-21 Goal: Represent and support the faculty in the University's response to the COVID-19 crisis.

Accomplishments:

- Created COVID Absence Statements for inclusion in all course syllabi in Fall 2020 and then revised for Spring 2021.¹ Conducted surveys in Fall and Spring to determine if a COVID-19 absence statement was necessary in the next semester.² The Senate will consider a Fall 2021 statement at a called meeting in June 2021.
- Conducted a survey in Sept. 2021 documenting COVID-19's impact on faculty.³
- Conducted a survey in December 2020 asking for faculty input about COVID-19 related issues for the Spring & Fall 2021 semesters.⁴
- Created and shared tips for documenting COVID-19 Impact in EDOs.⁵
- Advocated for administrative recognition of how the pandemic has affected faculty workloads, including the increased preparation time for Spring 2020 and Fall 2020 classes, the impact on research productivity, and the increased service requirements.

Ongoing/Unresolved Issues:

- Need to continue to advocate for administrative consideration of how COVID-19 will impact T/TT and NTT promotions and tenure in the coming years.
- Advocated, unsuccessfully, for faculty choice in course modality.

¹ Fall 2020: <https://new.utc.edu/document/18416> Spring 2021: https://mocsutc0.sharepoint.com/:w:/s/FacultySenateExec/ETmrWrPnTcRKmwJpUEMi9_gB6puPTy8z-60Rhk4-S3aFAw?e=FlcIPk

² COVID-19 Absence statement survey Fall 2020: <https://new.utc.edu/document/28841>; COVID-19 Absence statement survey Spring 2021: <https://new.utc.edu/document/79531>

³ <https://new.utc.edu/document/28856>

⁴ <https://new.utc.edu/document/53336>

⁵ <https://new.utc.edu/document/59501>

Equity & Diversity

2020-21 Goals: Change policies that are negatively impacting BIPOC faculty, staff, and students. Address concerns of BIPOC faculty. Increase opportunities for BIPOC faculty to participate in shared governance. Support an increased awareness of equity and diversity issues at UTC.

Accomplishments:

- Requested a report examining diversity of interim appointments of academic leaders. The report revealed a lack of diversity.⁶ Discussed results with the Chancellor, Provost, and Senate. The Chancellor and Provost are currently drafting a policy/process for the appointment of interim appointments. (Jan 2021)
- The Faculty Senate voted to approve making the ACT/SAT test optional for high school students with a 3.0 GPA.⁷ (April 2021)
- Appointed BIPOC and non-tenure track faculty to the Faculty Senate Executive Committee.

Ongoing/Unresolved Issues:

- Address racial, ethnic, and gender bias in teaching evaluations.
- The Faculty Senate Executive Committee is working with the Commission on the Status of Women and the Black Faculty and Staff Association to request and analysis data related to faculty retention broken down by race and gender.
- Conduct an analysis of faculty pay, comparing salaries based on race, ethnicity, and gender.
- Continue to appoint BIPOC and non-tenure track faculty to the Faculty Senate Executive Committee.

Non-Tenure Track Faculty

Goal: Provide non-tenure track faculty with more opportunities to participate in shared governance. Address non-tenure track faculty concerns.

Accomplishments:

- The Faculty Senate passed recommended changes to Section 4.7.1 of the Faculty Handbook.⁸ The changes were forwarded to administration to forward to UT legal counsel and board. (Feb. 2021)
- The Faculty Senate revised bylaws to increase the number of adjunct NTT at-large members from one to two.⁹ (Feb. 2021)

⁶ <https://new.utc.edu/document/54391>

⁷ <https://new.utc.edu/document/73146>

⁸ <https://new.utc.edu/document/58251>

⁹ <https://new.utc.edu/document/58326>

- The Faculty Senate revised bylaws to create new full-time non-tenure track divisional seats, increasing the percentage of Senate seats devoted to full-time NTT faculty from 5% to 30%.¹⁰ (Mar. 2021)
- The Faculty Senate revised bylaws related to the Non-Tenure Track Faculty Committee composition to allow for a larger committee.¹¹ (Feb. 2021)
- Appointed a non-tenure track faculty member to the Faculty Senate Executive Committee.

Ongoing/Unresolved Issues:

- The Handbook Committee needs to continue reviewing Faculty Handbook language related to the promotion process for non-tenure track faculty.
- Work with the Non-Tenure Track Faculty Committee and Academic Affairs to adopt a university-wide annual review process tailored to NTT faculty.
- Advocate for non-tenure track faculty to receive competitive salaries and ensure non-tenure track promotion raises are guaranteed.

Handbook & Senate Bylaws

Goal: Revise the Faculty Handbook and Senate Bylaws were needed.

Accomplishments:

- Hosted a town hall for faculty to suggest changes to the Handbook. Results were shared with the Provost, the Vice Provost, and the Faculty Senate.¹² (Mar. 2021)
- The Faculty Senate passed recommended changes to Section 4.7.1 of the Faculty Handbook.¹³ The changes were forwarded to administration to forward to UT legal counsel and board. (Feb. 2021)
- The Faculty Senate revised bylaws related to Non-Tenure Track Faculty Committee composition to allow for a larger committee.¹⁴ (Feb. 2021)
- The Faculty Senate revised bylaws to increase the number of adjunct NTT at-large members to two.¹⁵ (Feb. 2021)
- The Faculty Senate revised bylaws to create new full-time non-tenure track divisional seats, increasing the percentage of Senate seats devoted to full-time NTT.¹⁶ (Mar. 2021)
- The Faculty Senate updated the Senate Bylaws to add the Honors College as a division.¹⁷ (Apr. 2021)

¹⁰ <https://new.utc.edu/document/58326>

¹¹ <https://new.utc.edu/document/58336>

¹² <https://new.utc.edu/document/72486>

¹³ <https://new.utc.edu/document/58251>

¹⁴ <https://new.utc.edu/document/58336>

¹⁵ <https://new.utc.edu/document/58326>

¹⁶ <https://new.utc.edu/document/58326>

¹⁷ <https://new.utc.edu/document/72481>

- The Faculty Senate updated the Senate Bylaws to include the election process for FARC members.¹⁸ (Apr. 2021)

Ongoing/Unresolved Issues:

- The Handbook Committee needs to continue reviewing Faculty Handbook language related to the promotion process for non-tenure track faculty.
- The Handbook Committee needs to review and consider feedback provided by faculty during a townhall on suggested improvements to the handbook.¹⁹
- The Handbook and Faculty Senate Executive committees need to work with Academic Affairs to consider feedback provided by faculty on ways to improve the EDO process.
- Determine whether policy changes are needed related to faculty office hours, including whether the Faculty Handbook needs to be updated.
- The Handbook Committee needs to review the new Student Handbook to identify overlaps with the Faculty Handbook and compare overlaps for similarities and differences.
- Does the Senate want to change the Faculty Handbook to create set terms for department heads? Faculty expressed such a move in the shared governance survey conducted in Spring 2021.²⁰

Shared Governance

2020-21 Goal: Increase faculty participation in the shared governance of the university.

Accomplishments:

- Conducted a series of surveys asking for faculty input on COVID-19, as well as a survey on shared governance.²¹
- Hosted a series of town hall meetings to discuss major issues including COVID, annuals reviews, and the Faculty Handbook.²²
- Co-hosted weekly Q&A sessions with the Provost.
- Faculty Senate and full-faculty meetings held via Zoom – resulted in increased attendance.
- UTC’s Faculty Senate passed a resolution calling on the UT Board to amend their bylaws to ensure a rigorous, open and inclusive search process for system presidential searches.²³

¹⁸ <https://new.utc.edu/document/66441>

¹⁹ <https://new.utc.edu/document/72486>

²⁰ <https://new.utc.edu/document/61556>

²¹ Shared governance survey results: <https://new.utc.edu/document/61556>; COVID-19 fall survey results: <https://new.utc.edu/document/28841>; COVID-19 Spring 2021 Survey: <https://new.utc.edu/document/53336>; COVID-19 Absence statement survey Fall 2020: <https://new.utc.edu/document/28841>; COVID-19 Absence statement survey Spring 2021: <https://new.utc.edu/document/79531>

²² Report on EDO townhall: <https://new.utc.edu/document/63481>; Report on handbook townhall: <https://new.utc.edu/document/72486>.

²³ <https://new.utc.edu/document/55331>

The resolution mirrored one passed by UTK and UTM. UT's UFC then passed a similar resolution with plans to share it with the UT Board at the June 2021 meeting. (Jan 2021)

- Created a tracking system for faculty concerns, so faculty can see what actions are being taken on their behalf.²⁴

Workload

Goal: Adopt a workload policy that ensures workload equity across campus.

Accomplishments:

- Helped with the creation of a state-wide workload survey conducted by the Tennessee University Faculty Senates (TUFS). State-wide results were shared with UTC administration and faculty in February 2021.²⁵ Campus level results were shared in April 2021.²⁶ Also helped to draft UT system-wide results to be shared with the UT Board in June 2021.²⁷ Results not only address how COVID-19 has impacted faculty workloads, but also document how much uncompensated work 9-month faculty do each summer.

Ongoing/Unresolved Issues:

- Work with Academic Affairs to restart the process of creating a workload policy.
- Look at ways to document the service workloads of BIPOC faculty and compare their service workloads to other faculty.

9-Month Faculty Leave

Goal: Persuade the UT system to adopt paid family and medical leave policy for 9-month faculty.

Accomplishments:

- UTC's Faculty Senate passed a resolution calling on the UT system to adopt a paid family and medical leave policy for 9-month faculty.²⁸ (Nov. 2020) Advocated for UT's University Faculty Council (UFC) to make a similar request. Following a survey of UT faculty that showed wide-spread support for paid FMLA for 9-month faculty, the UFC recommended to the UT board that such a policy be created.²⁹

²⁴

<https://mocsutc0.sharepoint.com/:x/s/FacultySenateExec/EeIsQuML3g9DinX3ga9OYaYBOBFHDWmveyAuW52OI-OHyQ?e=w3yIS8>

²⁵ Exec summary: <https://tnfacultyssenates.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/TUFS-Workload-Feb2021.pdf> Full results: <https://new.utc.edu/document/60216>

²⁶ <https://new.utc.edu/document/73001>

²⁷ <https://new.utc.edu/document/79081>

²⁸ <https://new.utc.edu/document/59646>

²⁹ <https://utchattanooga.instructure.com/courses/1777/files/2573488/download>

Ongoing/Unresolved Issues:

- Continue to advocate for the UT system to adopt paid family and medical leave policy for 9-month faculty. Senate President Charlene Simmons will speak before the UT Board on this topic at the June 2021 meeting.

Annual Review Process

Goal: Determine what changes need to be made to the annual review process. Advocate for these changes.

Accomplishments:

- Hosted a townhall to seek faculty input on what changes are needed to the EDO process. Provided a summary of the feedback to the Provost, Vice Provost, and the Faculty Senate Executive Committee for action during the 2021-22 academic year.³⁰ (Mar. 2021)

Ongoing/Unresolved Issues:

- The Handbook and Faculty Senate Executive committees need to work with Academic Affairs to consider ways to improve the EDO process.³¹
- Work with the Non-Tenure Track Faculty Committee and Academic Affairs to adopt an annual review process tailored to NTT faculty.

Faculty Salaries

Goal: Provide faculty with salary data collected by Sibson. Advocate for competitive salaries and for compression pay.

Unresolved Issues:

- Persuade UT and UTC administration to publicly release salary data previously collected and reported by Sibson. Advocate for the data to be made available in formats that are useful.
- Advocate for competitive faculty salaries, including compression pay to adjust the salaries of long-serving faculty members.
- Advocate for non-tenure track faculty to receive competitive salaries and ensure non-tenure track promotion raises are guaranteed.

³⁰ <https://new.utc.edu/document/63481>

³¹ <https://new.utc.edu/document/63481>

Curriculum

Goal: Increase the speed at which curriculum proposals are reviewed and approved.

Accomplishments:

- The Undergraduate Curriculum Committee implement changes to the review process for undergraduate curriculum proposals.

Summer School

Goal: Improve the budgeting and scheduling process used for Summer School.

Unresolved Issues:

- Review the budgeting process for summer school. Is the inclusion of 12-month expenses hurting summer school? To what extent is the budget driving the creation of class schedules? Is summer school meeting the needs of students?
- Ensure that all faculty are being paid using the same salary formula for summer school.

Office Hours Policies

Goal: Determine whether policy changes are needed related to faculty office hours.

Unresolved Issues:

- Advocate for the recognition of digital exchanges (including emails and video conferencing) as a form of office hours.
- Review office hours policies across campus to see if the policies are equitable.
- Determine whether policy changes are needed related to faculty office hours, including whether the Faculty Handbook needs to be updated.

Other

Goal: Address other issues as they emerge.

Accomplishments:

- Created and shared with faculty a handout explaining changes to the UTC Honor Code and the process for reporting violations.³²

Ongoing/Unresolved Issues:

- Ask the Academic Standards Committee and the Grade Appeals Committee to review the grade appeal process outlined in the Catalog to see if there are ways to improve the language and/or process to make it clearer to students, faculty, and administrators the process for grade appeals.

³² <https://new.utc.edu/document/34016>

Committee Work

Faculty Senate committees continued to perform important work within the university. Examples include, but are not limited to, approving curriculum proposals, certifying and re-certifying general education proposals, deciding student petitions, conducting Honor Court hearings, and making recommendations related to grade appeals. Below is a list of items brought forward to the Faculty Senate by committees.

Accomplishments:

- The ad hoc committee on 9-month faculty leave presented a report and draft motion calling for the UT system to provide 9-month faculty with paid family and medical leave.³³ The Senate passed the motion.³⁴ (Nov. 2020)
- The Faculty Rating of Administration proposed changes to the faculty rating of administration survey.³⁵ The Senate passed the changes. (Nov. 2020)
- The Undergraduate Academic Standards Committee proposed changes to the catalog related to minor requirements.³⁶ The Senate passed the changes. (Jan. 2021)
- The Undergraduate Academic Standards Committee proposed changes to the catalog related to undergraduate certificates.³⁷ The Senate passed the changes. (Feb. 2021)
- The Handbook Committee proposed changes to Section 4.7.1 of the Faculty Handbook.³⁸ The changes were passed by the Senate. (Feb. 2021)
- The NTT committee proposed changes to the Senate Bylaws to the Non-Tenure Track Faculty Committee composition to allow for a larger committee.³⁹ The changes were passed by the Senate. (Feb. 2021)
- The NTT committee proposed changes to the Senate Bylaws to increase the number of adjunct NTT at-large members to two.⁴⁰ The changes were passed by the Senate. (Feb. 2021)
- The NTT committee proposed changes to the Senate Bylaws to create new full-time non-tenure track divisional seats.⁴¹ The changes were passed by the Senate. (Mar. 2021)
- The Faculty Senate Executive Committee proposed changes to the Senate Bylaws to allow non-Senators to serve on the Handbook Committee.⁴² The Senate passed a modified version of the changes. (Mar. 2021)
- The Undergraduate Admissions Committee proposed to make the ACT/SAT test optional for high school students with a 3.0 GPA.⁴³ The Senate passed the changes. (Apr. 2021)

³³ <https://new.utc.edu/document/34011>

³⁴ <https://new.utc.edu/document/59646>

³⁵ <https://new.utc.edu/document/34411>

³⁶ <https://new.utc.edu/document/54476>

³⁷ <https://new.utc.edu/document/58256>

³⁸ <https://new.utc.edu/document/58251>

³⁹ <https://new.utc.edu/document/58336>

⁴⁰ <https://new.utc.edu/document/58326>

⁴¹ <https://new.utc.edu/document/58326>

⁴² <https://new.utc.edu/document/66436>

⁴³ <https://new.utc.edu/document/73146>

- The Faculty Senate Executive Committee proposed changes to the Senate Bylaws related to the Faculty Administrative Relations Committee (FARC).⁴⁴ The Senate passed the changes. (Apr. 2021)
- The Faculty Senate Executive Committee proposed changes to the Senate Bylaws to add the Honors College as a division.⁴⁵ The Senate passed the changes. (Apr. 2021)
- The Undergraduate Academic Standards Committee proposed changes to the catalog related to Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) credit.⁴⁶ The Senate passed the changes. (Apr. 2021)

Ongoing/Unresolved Issues:

- Create a Faculty Awards Committee. The Faculty Senate Executive Committee drafted some potential bylaws language, but the Senate did not have time to address this matter and the Executive Committee decided the matter could be address in Fall 2021.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ <https://new.utc.edu/document/66441>

⁴⁵ <https://new.utc.edu/document/72481>

⁴⁶ <https://new.utc.edu/document/72996>

⁴⁷ <https://new.utc.edu/document/66446>