

Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes

Date: August 19, 2021
Time: 3:10 pm
Location: online live at <https://tennessee.zoom.us/j/92435742707>
Called By: Tammy Garland, Faculty Senate President

Present: Sherah Basham, John Barnes, Jennifer Boyd (President Elect), Jodi Caskey, Marissa Colston, Beth Crawford, Elicia Cruz, Julia Cumiskey, Bernadette DePrez, Stephanie DeVries, Todd Dockery, Brooke Epperson, Ignatius Fomunung, Tammy Garland (President), Lani Gao (proxy Ziwei Ma), Stephanie Gillison, Ron Goulet, Christopher Hansen, Neil Harper, Irina Khmelko, Devori Kimbro, Thandi Klingbeil, Sara Knox, Hamdy Ibrahim, Dave Locander, Stephen Mandravelis, Ethan Mills, Tiffany Mitchell, Rachel Nall Roger Nichols, Joshua Ozymy (Parliamentarian, non-voting), Joyce McPherson, Carolyn Padalino, Heather Palmer, Eleni Panagiotou, Chang Phoung, Erika Schafer, Lucy Schultz, Charlene Simmons (Past President), Priscilla Simms-Robertson, Wes Smith, Chantelle Swaren, Susan Thul, Laura Tyndall, Yingfeng Wang, Chandra Ward, Oren Whightsel, Cecelia Wigal (Secretary)

Absent: David Debter, Dileep Dileepan, Joseph Jordan, Christopher Stuart, Mengjun Xie

The meeting was called to order by President Tammy Garland at 3:10pm. President Garland welcomed Josh Qzmy as the Faculty Senate Parliamentarian for the 2021-22 academic year.

The Senators were reminded that all meetings will be online on Zoom for this academic year.

1. Approval of Minutes

The meeting minutes from June 17, 2021, were reviewed. There was no discussion or corrections. Minutes were approved.

2. Administrative Reports

Chancellor Angle

Chancellor Angle welcomed all to the new year and thanked all for their service to the Faculty Senate. He congratulated faculty on their reappointments and promotions.

Chancellor Angle provided an overview of the status of the University. This included

- Enrollment is down 2% although graduate enrollment is up. They are waiting on 14-day report for final numbers.
- The Administration is monitoring the Covid situation. They are trying to work toward an expanded mask policy.

Provost Hale

Provost Hale thanked faculty for their dedication to teaching and to the students for the last 18 months. Provost Hale responded to Covid Policy questions, mentioned that the Provost information meetings will continue this year (dates and times are being finalized), and reported on the progress of the new University Strategic Plan.

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Brett Fuchs, Associate Dean of Students

Brett noted that some students are worried about contracting Covid from other students. He then clarified Covid procedures for students such as:

- Students should wear masks in instructional spaces.
- If students refuse to wear masks faculty should ask them to put one on.
- If students continue to refuse to wear a mask, then faculty should ask them to leave the instructional space. Faculty should follow up this action with an email to the Student Outreach and Support.

Yancy Freeman, Vice Chancellor for Enrollment Management and Student Affairs

Dr. Freeman discussed undergraduate enrollment and student activity. He also mentioned that students are developing their own initiatives to get vaccinated. We, faculty and staff, should continue to support vaccination and mask wearing. He also mentioned that staff can also ask students to wear their mask.

Julia Cummiskey voiced a concern about students attending events unmasked. She also mentioned that students not returning to the University does not seem to be all about lack of student activity. She mentioned that there is a large group of persons on campus who want more Covid safety but are not being heard.

3. Committee Reports

There are no committee reports at this time.

4. New Business

Mandatory Reporting and the Role of the Women's Center-Sara Peters

Sara reviewed what the Center for Women and Gender Equity (WAGE) does and discussed mandatory reporting. She reminded us that most of us are mandatory reporters and reviewed when we can report. She mentioned that reports have been significantly down over the last year. This may not be good for the students – reporting numbers have been static over the last 30 years. A decrease in reporting may indicate we are not providing appropriate paths of reporting or support for students.

Confirmation of Vice President - Wes Smith and Secretary - Cecelia Wigal

There were no discussion or objections to the proposed appointments. Confirmations were approved (unanimous)

Confirmation of Faculty Handbook Committee

There was no discussion or objections to the membership of the Handbook Committee: Wes Smith (chair), Stephanie Gillison (RCOB), Katie Gohn (LIB), Elizabeth Pearce (CAS), Chris Stuart (CAS), Dalei Wu(CECS), NTT Faculty TBD (CHEPS), Provost Designee (ex officio)

Confirmation was approved – Vote (unanimous)

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Bylaws and Handbook Updates

President Garland thanked all who are working on the Faculty Handbook committee. They will be working on updating the Bylaws as well.

The handbook posted on the website is up to date. Please reach out to Wes if you have any questions or concerns about the Handbook content and process. The goal is to finalize all handbook updates by the beginning of April.

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COVID-19 Restrictions

We can not ask our students to vaccinate on our campus; however, we can recommend that they be vaccinated. We cannot ask students if they are vaccinated.

5. Unfinished Business

COVID-19 Absence Statement

President Garland reviewed the background on the need to review the COVID-19 policy due to the change of the Covid environment in Aug 2021. She mentioned that the vote regarded a return to a preapproved absence policy and that the motion, that was conducted electronically, passed 26-5.

There is a motion on the floor, from Senator Ron Goulet, to declare the vote null and void. Dr. Goulet's basis for this motion is that the Faculty Senate Bylaws were not followed regarding the online vote. Specifically, the Senate did not have an opportunity to discuss the motion. Stephanie Gillison agreed with Ron's concerns and stated that the spring policy was approved over a year ago and the fall Covid conditions are now different.

Following is a summary of the discussion on this motion and the result.

- President Garland noted the Senate needs to address the Bylaws since it does not address emergency situations such as Covid.
- Vice President Smith suggested that the Bylaws needs a summer voting policy.
- No one seconded Dr. Goulet's motion.
- Susan Thul motioned to reaffirm the vote made on canvas. Sara Knox seconded. There was little discussion. The reaffirming vote passed 31 to 1.
- President Garland confirmed that the Bylaws will be revised to address online voting of the Faculty Senate.

6. Faculty Concerns

Sara Knox mentioned that being exposed to delta, even if you are vaccinated, is very concerning. There are break through cases that we need to be concerned about. We need to face this.

Roger Nichols mentioned there are leaks in the roofs of Lupton Hall and wants to know when repairs will be made. Vice Chancellor Tyler Forrest. Tyler Forrest responded that roof was not completed as part of the recent renovations. However, building supplies are presently arriving and work is in progress.

President Tammy Garland noted the ongoing health insurance discussions between CHI Memorial and BlueCross Blue Shield. Vice Chancellor Tyler Forest is optimistic that an agreement will be worked out. The issue is being monitored and pushed on UTC's end.

Julia Cumiskey mentioned she is frustrated that people are saying they did not expect to be working in the Covid environment again. Predictions indicate that pandemics will happen more frequently. We need to be work on being prepared.

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7. **Announcements**

There were no announcements.

8. **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 5:03pm.