

## **UTC Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes AY 2022-23**

*(attendance follows the notes)*

Meeting date: August 18, 2022 (via Zoom)

### **1. Call to Order**

Welcome: meeting called to order by FS President Jennifer Boyd at 3:10 pm.

President Boyd reminded everyone about using the Faculty Senate website, how to stay informed and connected, about Robert's Rules of Order, speaking during meetings, and voting eligibility.

### **2. Approval of Minutes**

President Boyd asked for approval of the minutes from the April 21, 2022 Meeting. Jack Zibluk moved, Beth Crawford seconded. 26 approvals, none opposed.

### **3. Administrative Reports**

#### **a. Chancellor Steven Angle**

The Chancellor reported that things are in good shape and that enrollment is strong, but not as much as we'd like. This year UTC has the second largest Freshman class. The Chancellor thanked the faculty for participating in shared governance, and for participating in Operation Move In.

#### **b. Provost Jerry Hale**

Provost Hale discussed the new Campus Syllabus. In the process of creating it, the document went through lots of iterations based on feedback from lots of campus leaders. The Syllabus is an attempt to reset student expectations about what classes, and to set clear parameters about faculty decisions regarding illnesses and absences, and in relation to other public health related questions. Hale told faculty to feel free to incorporate the Syllabus into your syllabi, or on your Canvas course pages. He also asked faculty to consider using some of your class time to discuss the Syllabus and encourage other colleagues to review and use the Syllabus.

#### **c. Interim Vice Chancellor for Finance and Administration Vicki Farnsworth**

The remaining HERF dollars will go to ongoing projects, to potential revenue loss, and student emergency funding. There will be a future state audit concerning these funds soon. UTC received state funding for the renovations to Brock, 540 McCallie, and other campus buildings. The Office is watching the costs of construction because many bids are coming in over budget. An update will be sent to campus regarding construction in the Fall. Finance year end meetings have been held with all the units, and reporting out will happen in September. Farnsworth mentioned the budget priorities: marketing (from an enrollment perspective), compensation review, SACS-SOC reaffirmation, research items, capital projects, finalizing the campus master plan, and space management.

d. Vice Chancellor of Enrollment Management and Student Success Yancy Freeman  
Vice Chancellor Freeman thanked everyone for participating in Operation Move In and encouraged faculty to attend Convocation in the Arena on August 19. Freeman shared the current enrollment numbers (11,039 students, so 96 less than at this time last year and 85.67 in terms of FTE). A new program from the Bursar's Office resulted in 60 % of the students who had been dropped due to non-payment had re-registered. As the Chancellor said this is not exactly where we want to be, we want to be over the previous year's numbers. Freeman is talking to colleagues around the state about enrollment and has developed 41 strategies that will be shared with the campus as part of a Strategic Enrollment Plan. Freeman introduced the new Title IX Coordinator, Anitra Barrett, who has served the University in several roles. The campus will learn more about changes in Title IX mandated by the Biden administration soon.

e. Vice Chancellor for Diversity and Engagement Stacey Lightfoot  
Vice Chancellor Lightfoot informed the faculty of some of the Office's goals and efforts based in celebrating difference and using diversity to create opportunities for engagement. She noted that this Office has only been in existence for a year. The Division houses the Office of Equity and Inclusion, led by Rosite Delgado, which provides resources and runs recruitment trainings. The Vice Chancellor provided some highlights from last year, such as building the team, which meant hiring five new staff. They invested a substantial amount of money in scholarships, graduate assistantships, and professional development. They partnered with URACE and others to create a new research experience award for traditionally under-represented students, for study abroad and research. The Division collaborated with Dr. Dawn Ford and the MPH program to provide need-based travel grants. They collaborated with the Music Department and the Tivoli Foundation to host the Singing Mocs and Reuben Studdard's Master Class. The Division's goals are to work to increase enrollment, especially from minority backgrounds, to increase study abroad, and connecting with alumni. This Division will lead the Carnegie national re-classification process and will be forming a committee soon. President Boyd asks about graduate students who are from an under-represented group, who may need funding—can this office help? Vice Chancellor Lightfoot says yes, and noted that the Division recently revamped the graduate assistantship program and the process is now housed under the Academic Colleges.

f. Associate Vice Chancellor of Information Technology Tony Parsley  
Associate Vice Chancellor Parsley reports that the office is busy making sure the classrooms are ready. All rooms have been visited, and instructors should contact the IT Help Desk if you have any classroom issues. The IT office is continuing the work to protect university accounts using DUO. They are discontinuing long-term equipment loans for employees and will work with instructors to make sure they have access to any technology they may need. The demand for this service had diminished. Parsley is asked if the DUO two-factor authentication will be required for students, and yes they will be required. They will have several options to authenticate their passwords which will be shared with students.

g. Chief Health Affairs Officer Chris Smith  
Officer Smith says that the words "personal responsibility" is a nice concept we should reinforce with our students and our colleagues and fellow staff. At present there are 176 new Covid cases in Hamilton County. We are Covid weary and learning to live with the virus. No one is

screaming with their hair on fire right now. UTC is transitioning from a Covid mindset to an infectious disease mindset. There are limitations on what we can and cannot do, such as requiring people to wear masks, to require vaccination, isolation, or quarantine. There are no rooms set aside for Covid related needs, like isolation. All students have been informed that they need an off-campus plan if they need to isolate. The University will do everything they can to assist students facing hardships so that students who are ill will be accommodated. Facilities is planning to sanitize highly trafficked areas and spaces. This is the University's mindset every season because this is communicable disease season, so the challenges are not just Covid.

Testing is available on campus at no charge. All staff are charged a \$25.00 copay if they need to see a Nurse Practitioner, to be paid at the time of the visit. This is because students are charged a fee that funds Health Services, and everyone is encouraged to see their own provider if they wish. Masks will be available on campus in high trafficked areas like the UC and the ARC. Vaccination rates are still low in Hamilton County. UTC will provide flu vaccines on September 19<sup>th</sup>, in collaboration with Walgreens. People who want to get the flu vaccine on campus should bring their insurance card. Health Services will inquire about the new Covid booster that is sensitive to the new Covid variants. A quick note on Monkeypox, Health Services is not going to have a lot of conversations about it like they did with Covid. Smith reviewed the case numbers of Monkeypox nationally and locally. Smith notes there is a plan for infected campus people and says she does not need to go into specifics at the moment.

In the Zoom chat someone mentioned if a poster can be prepared for students that would be similar to the TN pledge posters. Smith notes that this should be deferred to University Counsel and the Chancellor. Susan Thul asked what faculty can do about students coming to school or work sick is not a good idea—whether it be Covid, or colds. Smith responds that this is a fine line and reiterates the idea of personal responsibility, and that we have to be very careful about implicit coercion. We should couch it in terms of take care of yourself and take care of others—this is the safest way to go. Smith is happy to speak to University Counsel about it. There are going to be a lot of questions about what can be said and communicated to the campus community. We have to be careful that we treat everyone the same and not seen as making someone do something that they don't want to do. Thul asked for any guidance for how to have respectful conversations. Smith mentioned that official statements in process or prepared about masking have gone out to students, and mentioned that the University has reserved the right to alter programming if there are concerns related to public health. Smith reiterated that we have to treat everyone the same. Policies have to be consistent in terms of students and employees. David Steele confirmed the existence of this statement and posts it in the chat.

Brett Fuchs says that the University will continue to send notices (absence notes / leniency letters) about students sick with Covid and Monkeypox if that comes up, just as they have done with other communicable diseases like mononucleosis.

#### h. Vice Provost Matt Matthews

Vice Provost Matthews updated the group that approved and posted bylaws in two colleges: BGS, English, Math, and Physical Therapy. Several departments are in the queue: Communication, CSE, EMT, HHP, History, School of Education and School of Nursing, and the School of Professional Studies. A new version of the Faculty Senate Handbook is up on the FS

website. Matthews noted that here are some important changes to the Handbook, such as the much clearer process for post-tenure review. He thanked Wes Smith and the Handbook committee's work last year on the Handbook. Matthews mentioned extensions for probationary periods for TT faculty due to Covid, which are in process. This was solicited in the Spring and offered to instructors who were appointed prior to 8-1-2022. Faculty will get notices of the extension when the approval process is complete. Matthews has been asked about the availability of extensions for newly hired faculty, and it seems that the Board's language on this will allow for that. His office will provide an update once it is determined. Matthews notes that we have had an activist contingent of non-TT faculty working on process and the fruit of their work is a promotion process that is now in the Handbook. They developed a pilot version of the promotion form using guidelines that RCOB had as their college-wide process. This fall the trial run will be expanded and it is expected that non-TT faculty can use this form to apply for promotion starting in January 2023. Matthews described a new Faculty development opportunity for all instructors and all graduate students: [www.facultydiversity.org/join](http://www.facultydiversity.org/join). Faculty should look into this site (under "The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga") and Matthews explained some of the benefits, including trainings and a writing challenge. UTC now has an institutional membership with this entity. Some of the offerings are not covered by UTC's membership, but could still be provided by a discussion at the Department level.

Matthews discussed classification of the modalities of teaching that have continued to evolve in the Covid-19 pandemic. He mentioned that there are many administrative processes that support diverse modalities that instructors may not be aware of. Our current definitions of modality don't always work for our current situation. Matthews convened a group to discuss how to improve the definitions of modalities, and presented these to Vice Chancellors for feedback. This has been discussed with CAD and now, with Faculty Senate. These are just drafts, and after collecting campus feedback decisions will be made. Matthews encourages that all departments schedule a "roadshow" from the Office of Student Affairs to get information and ask questions. President Boyd will put a discussion of course modalities on the Senate's agenda soon.

i. Vice Provost Lauren Ingraham

Vice Provost Ingraham provided an update on the General Education refresh process and shared the new website: [www.utc.edu/academic-affairs/general-education/rge](http://www.utc.edu/academic-affairs/general-education/rge). New program requirements and learning outcomes were adopted by faculty via electronic vote on May 11, 2022. The implementation work will be done by the FS General Education Committee, which is headed by Dr. Jennifer Stewart. Information is available on the website about the new GE categories, new learning outcomes, requirements, and key features of the new program that will make GE easier for students to progress to graduation. Another feature was to not align categories with particular departments, in order to get more departmental participation in Gen Ed. October 15 is the deadline for departmental approval and November 15 is the College level approval date. Questions about course certifications or re-certs should go to Jennifer Stewart. Questions about GE program assessment, especially as related to SACS-COC reaffirmation, should go to Lauren Ingraham. Ingraham shared a statement from Stewart about the work of the Gen Ed committee this year. Stewart will be sending more detailed info about the recertification process to department heads by the end of Week Two. Joel Wells clarified that that 10/15 is the deadline for the Department level approvals in Curriculog.

j. Vice Provost Shewanee Howard-Baptiste

Vice Provost Howard-Baptiste described her efforts to enhance academic outreach opportunities on and off campus. One initiative is partnering with Hamilton County educators to facilitate dual enrollment. Howard-Baptiste mentioned that instructors should save the date 10/24-10/26 for a campus visit by Dr. Petra Robinson of LSU. This will include training and workshops for faculty on matters of tenure, reappointment, and promotion. Howard-Baptiste thanked Jennifer Glaab for her service to the Walker Center as interim Director, and welcomed Victoria Bryan as the new Director of the Walker Center.

k. Dean of the Library Teresa Liedtka

Dean Liedtka reported that she was glad to be back and see faculty and students on campus. The Library is happy to meet faculty and assist with any needs. Liedtka gave an update on the SACS-COC reaffirmation which is our University reaccreditation effort, of which she is serving as the campus coordinator. This is a comprehensive, ten year evaluation that our campus undergoes. Cindy Williamson is the SACS-COC liaison. SACS is a peer-review process, and for the past six months a group of colleagues has been working to respond to SACS-COC narratives and standards. This submission is due September 8 and the report is in good shape. There are 72 standards, about what we are currently doing and about how we can improve student success and retention. This is called the Quality Enhancement Plan, which at this point has been narrowed down to new learning communities and a first-year experience. Linda Frost will assist in developing this idea and plan. Liedtka notes that a lot of aspects of community were lost in the pandemic, and this could be a method to recover that. There will be a 3-4 day on campus SACS-COC visit in March 2023 that will be widely publicized to the campus. President Boyd expressed her acknowledgement and appreciation of the work of the committee and Dean Liedtka.

l. Vice Chancellor for Communications and Marketing Cassie Mathes

Mathes was not able to join the meeting.

m. Director of the Walker Center for Teaching and Learning Victoria Bryan

Victoria Bryan introduced herself and shared that she's been getting to know the Walker Center team for the past two months. All are encouraged to visit the Center, or have Victoria Bryan visit you, to discuss how the Center can serve all instructors. Victoria looks forward to meeting with faculty this semester.

#### **4. Committee Reports**

There were no committee reports. President Boyd mentioned that all 2022-23 committee assignments are posted on the FS website. Chairs should reach out to committee members at the beginning of the academic year. Boyd expressed appreciation for all who are serving on committee work this year, especially members on the Gen Ed committee.

Jennifer Stewart asked about the student representative to Faculty Senate. Brett Fuchs responded and requested that the FS could email him or Jim Hicks. The student representative would be part of SGA.

## 5. New Business

a. The FS voted to confirm Vice President Joshua Ozymy (25 approvals, none opposed).

b. The FS voted to confirm the Faculty Handbook Committee: Joshua Ozymy (chair; PSPS/CAS), Jodi Caskey (BGE/CAS), Alycia Franklin (MKT/RCOB), Barry Kamrath (EDUC/CHEPS), Yu Liang (CPSP/CECS), Chantelle Swaren (LIB) (25 approvals, none opposed). President Boyd noted that we need another TT member, and preferably someone who is part of FS.

c. Past FS President Tammy Garland gave an update regarding the FS bylaws and Handbook. Most of the new by-laws have been entered and people should stay tuned.

d. President Boyd announced the appointments of Jaclyn Michael to FS Secretary and Marcus Mauldin to the Parliamentarian.

### e. Honor Court Changes

Dean of Students Brett Fuchs described some changes to the Honor Court. There are no changes to the Honor Code. The changes to the Court are in regarding the appointment and population process for faculty participating in the HC process. Faculty Senate will no longer be responsible for populating a committee to serve on the Honor Court. That will be handled by the Dean of Students Office, who will solicit faculty via communication with Department heads. The FS will be asked to approve of the list of faculty. This is a similar process that is done with soliciting students to participate by asking SGA. The main reason for this change is to end the need for FS to populate a committee with no charge, and then having to ask faculty to serve voluntarily. President Boyd noted that this change is mainly administrative, and faculty will continue to have an integral role in the process of the Honor Court. The appointment process is the only change that is happening.

### f. Ombudsperson Vacancy

Previous Ombudsperson Joanie Sompayrac discussed the position of the faculty Ombudsperson which is currently vacant. Section 5.2 of the Faculty Handbook describes the charge, responsibilities, and appointment process of this position. Sompayrac has been at UTC for 30 years and has experience in mediation and as a tax attorney and was the first Ombudsperson of the University. The position is to facilitate informal conflict resolution, is supposed to support fair practices and mutual respect, and is not to advocate on behalf of the faculty. The position also helps faculty navigate the system when they have questions. Sompayrac notes that many of her challenges in the position occurred in dealing with problems related to timeliness in the administration of campus policy, and adherence to proper processes in regard to faculty positions. Many faculty came to complain about situations in their departments. Sompayrac was not welcomed by all departments—some did not return her calls or emails. Some faculty cried in Sompayrac's office about how they had been treated. Sompayrac described various examples of meditation: some departments did not respond to her calls, some mediation efforts took a day, some took more time. One faculty member refused to negotiate.

These last four years as Ombudsperson really opened her eyes to problems related to low faculty morale, but she realized they existed before she took on the role. Faculty reported to Sompayrac that they felt targeted, feel devalued, are seeking mental health counseling, and are seeking restraining orders against colleagues. An investigation was conducted but nothing was done. Sompayrac reported that in her view the essential point is that faculty don't feel heard, which she described as soul crushing. Sompayrac explained that when she got a new Department head that listened to her, it changed her life. She said that too many people on this campus feel broken. Sompayrac had to resign from the Ombudsperson for her own mental health, due to seeing so many colleagues broken. The perception amongst many faculty is that campus leaders have increasingly taken control and taken the smallest tasks away from faculty, and that campus leaders believe that the faculty are self-absorbed and have no idea how a university runs. Decisions are made that aren't explained to faculty. The perception amongst many faculty is that they are treated like children because administration believes they are too stupid to understand or too self-absorbed. In the four years Sompayrac held this position, she perceives that there is a campus culture that lacks transparency, is contemptuous of faculty, that is apathetic to misogyny and racism in departments, and is tolerant of bullying by senior faculty of junior faculty. Sompayrac is not prepared to handle these mental health issues of faculty.

David Steele thanked Dr. Sompayrac for her work in the Faculty Ombudsperson role. Sompayrac had a difficult job in creating a template for the position. The Chancellor and Provost are using this opportunity to take stock of the institutional approach to the Faculty Ombudsperson, and have sought outside advice from other institutions. They are currently analyzing best practices in higher ed ombudsperson work. They are trying to identify appropriate benchmarks for the campus to achieve, and other opportunities this position could explore. They seek clarity on how the position should be structured. As laid out in the bylaws the work to fill the position will be done in conversation with FS. The administration takes this position and the work seriously. There is not a finalized timeline for a search for a new Faculty Ombudsperson. Steele noted that some collaboration across the UT System is necessary for the review process prior to announcing a new search, and that the search will hopefully be launched this fall. It has not been finalized if the future position for the Faculty Ombudsperson should be a faculty member or not, along with other variables. The administration realizes that this is an imperative for the institution. While this position is vacant, Steele said that is at the discretion of the faculty but they could reach out to Vice Chancellor Lightfoot, to University Counsel Hamadi, or to Steele himself.

Many people thanked Dr. Sompayrac for her bravery in making these statements today and affirmed her perspective on and description of the problems that faculty face.

## **6. Unfinished Business**

a. The matter of student absences was left over from Spring 2022. Dean of Students Brett Fuchs says that many of these issues are addressed in the common Campus Syllabus. Fuchs sees two reasons to create a campus wide policy: for faculty it provides a way to stop complaints about arbitrary policy, and to set student expectations regarding class absences. A proposed draft leaves policy for individual classes up to the individual instructor. Fuchs reiterates that it is not the Dean of Students Office's intention to determine faculty absence policies. It is more about documentation about absences and setting student expectations. It would be a guiderail for both

students and instructors, wherein students get treated fairly and faculty are protected under the policy. Fuchs recommends tabling this for future discussion. Vice Provost Matthews noted that the campus syllabus invites Departments to come up with attendance guidelines in the absence of a broad policy. This could be done now under the rubric of the common Campus Syllabus.

b. President Boyd discussed a desire for developing a UTC policy on workload for faculty. Past President Garland reviewed the outcomes and trends of the Work/Life Balance Survey conducted in Spring 2022. She noted that 51% of respondents said they could balance teaching / research / and service, and 53 % could not. Only 27% reported that they could prioritize family and personal life. Increasing research and service obligations and expectations were noted, while there are not resources to deal with the situation. Covid made this situation worse. 57% felt that campus leadership doesn't promote an environment that allows for balance. Garland noted that this is not perceived as malicious on behalf of the administration. Faculty are tired and very frustrated. It was noted in the chat that faculty welfare is directly related to student satisfaction and retention when they are generally thought of as separate. Faculty can't be the best instructors and mentors when they are overburdened and exhausted. Dean of Students Brett Fuchs reminded the faculty about the EAP program that is available to assist in moments of crisis.

## 7. Faculty Concerns

No concerns were discussed. President Boyd encouraged faculty to contact their representative on Faculty Senate with future concerns and to stay informed.

## 8. Announcements

There will be a Town Hall with the Chancellor at 1 pm on Friday August 19. The first full faculty meeting is Monday September 26<sup>th</sup>, at 3:10 pm, on Zoom. More details will be announced.

## 9. Adjournment

Tammy Garland motioned to adjourn at 5:18 pm, and Susan Thul seconded.

Senator Name	Role	8-18		Senator Name	Role	8-18
Sara Knox	Beh Sci NTT	X		Dave Locander	BUS T/TT	X
David Croft	FA NTT			Nishani Vincent	BUS T/TT	X
Dominic Heinrici	HUM NTT	X		Ignatius Fomunung	EMCS T/TT	
Devori Kimbro	HUM NTT	X		Hamdy Ibrahim	EMCS T/TT	
Lucy Schultz	HUM NTT	X		Erkan Kaplanoglu	EMCS T/TT	X
David Debter	MS NTT			Mengjun Xie	EMCS T/TT	X
Hadley Holcomb	MS NTT	X		Beth Crawford	CHEPS T/TT	X
Todd Dockery	BUS NTT			Bernadette DePrez	CHEPS T/TT	



Alycia Franklin	BUS NTT	X		Brooke Epperson	CHEPS T/TT	X
Chang Phuong	EMCS NTT	X		Christopher Hansen	CHEPS T/TT	
Elicia Cruz	CHEPS NTT			Marissa McElrone	CHEPS T/TT	X
Matthew Grubbs	CHEPS NTT			Susan Thul	CHEPS T/TT	X
Rachel Nall	CHEPS NTT			Dunstan McNutt	Library	X
Sherah Basham	Beh Sci T/TT	X		Chantelle Swaren	Library	X
Emma McDonnell	Beh Sci T/TT	X		Cecelia Wigal (CECS)	At Large	X
Josh Ozymy	Beh Sci T/TT	X		Jack Zibluk (CAS)	At Large	X
Stephan Mandravelis	FA T/TT	X		Courtney Crittenden (CAS)	At Large	X
Lee Harris	FA T/TT			Yingfeng Wang (CECS)	At Large	X
Sybil Baker	HUM T/TT	X		Laura Tyndall (CHEPS)	At Large	X
Joseph Jordan	HUM T/TT			Darrell Walsh (CAS)	At Large	
Heather Palmer	HUM T/TT	X		Oren Whightsel (CAS)	At Large	X
Hannah Wakefield	HUM T/TT	X		Jodi Caskey (CAS))	At Large	
Fernando Alda	MS T/TT	X		Jennifer Boyd (CAS)	Exec Comm	X
Stephanie Devries	MS T/TT			Donald Riesing (CECS)	Exec Comm	X
Roger Nichols	MS T/TT	X		Tammy Garland (CAS)	Exec Comm	X
Han Park	MS T/TT	X		Marcus Mauldin (CAS)	Exec Comm	X
Dileep Dileepan	BUS T/TT	X		Jaclyn Michael (CAS)	Exec Comm	X