

UTC Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes November 16, 2023

Presiding: Faculty Senate President Donald Reising

Minutes: Faculty Senate Secretary Hannah Wakefield

(attendance follows the minutes)

1) Call to Order

- a) 3:10pm Don Reising calls to order
- b) Approval of proxies: Dr. Natalie Owsley serving as proxy for Dr. Bernadette DePrez, and Dr. Amber Roache serving as proxy for Dr. Sarah Treat

2) Approval of the Minutes from the October 19, 2023 meeting

- a) Dr. Beth Crawford moves, and Dr. John Harbison seconds: 97% approval and 3% abstention

3) Unfinished Business

a) Ombudsperson Status Update- Vice Chancellor Bryan Johnson

Vice Chancellor Johnson invited Vice Provost Shewanee Howard-Baptiste to provide an update as chair of the search committee. The search committee has a strong candidate pool, and the committee will convene in the next week to review candidates and determine who will be slated for a campus interview in January. Zoom interviews are planned for December, and successful candidates will be invited to visit in early spring.

b) Administrative Report- Vice Chancellor for Finance and Administration Brent Goldberg

i) Budget Input Sessions:

Vice Chancellor Goldberg reported that they just completed eight budget input sessions on campus. Six were open to everyone, one was open to facilities staff, and one was open to athletics. A survey was released today via email in order to get as much input as possible on budget priorities. At the end of November, they will share results of the survey and a report on the budget input sessions. Themes from faculty so far: fixed summer funding, reducing parking costs for faculty and staff, compensation, investing in high-growth academic programs, investing in a recurring budget for recruiting students, online fee spending flexibility, childcare availability and cost, travel budgets for faculty. THEC has released a recommendation for budget formula, and we do stand to gain some revenue from the formula. No information yet about tuition or salary and benefit numbers. This information will be released at the end of January.

ii) Archaeological Dig Results:

The site between Collins and Palmetto has been designated as the location of the new Health Sciences building. Results from the archaeological survey are expected from UTK sometime between mid and late December.

iii) Sustainability Coordinator:

The existing position within facilities has been reclassified as an Energy Compliance Coordinator/Specialist position. The new goal is to create an actual sustainability coordinator position, utilizing operational savings in Finance and Administration to pay for the position. The plan is to establish a committee (including interested faculty,

Facilities staff, and Student Affairs staff) to obtain input regarding the position description.

4) New Business

a) IRAD Opportunities Beyond CEACSE- Dr. Donald Reising

i) President Reising reported on an ongoing conversation he has begun with Vice Chancellor of Research Joanne Romagni and Deputy Vice Chancellor of Research Reinhold Mann about creating internal research and development funding (IRAD) beyond CEACSE grant funding, which requires a computational element to apply. President Reising requested representatives to engage their constituents and get feedback on the kinds of work that need funding, if any.

ii) **Graduate Research Assistants:** President Reising reported on a need to create mechanisms to maintain graduate research assistant positions before and between grant awards. The burden of supporting GRAs tends to fall on the faculty advisor/principal investigator. President Reising requested representatives to engage their constituents and secure feedback on whether this is also an issue for them.

b) Faculty Departures- Dr. Donald Reising

President Reising addressed a perception that many faculty have left for other institutions in recent years. President Reising asked Assistant Vice Chancellor Laure Pou to supply numbers of faculty departures from each college for the last six years (2018 to 2023) as well as the numbers of new faculty hires. The data does not differentiate between tenure-track and non-tenure track faculty, nor does it include the *rates* of faculty departures. President Reising invited Laure Pou to address this. Pou clarified that the data she sent represented non-tenure track and tenure track faculty. General consensus is that healthy turnover is 10% or less. This year UTC had a turnover rate of 16% (including faculty and staff). Pou suggested that the rate has been higher since COVID, and the higher rate also might reflect a more competitive job market. Dr. Jack Zibluk asked how the data compare with the numbers at peer institutions or other institutions in the system. Laure Pou said that we do not have these numbers currently but can get them. She also said that faculty turnover could be correlated to a voluntary retirement incentive program that took effect in 2020. President Reising plans to work with her to continue to pursue questions related to faculty departure.

5) Committee Reports

a) UFC Meeting, November 15- President Donald Reising

i) President Reising reported on items that UT System President Boyd addressed during the University Faculty Council meeting. One item was a large spike in undergraduate applications being submitted across the UT system. At UTC, the number was about 30% higher than normal, though this figure is actually one of the smallest increases across the system. President Boyd speculated that this could have to do with UT Promise and other initiatives to make higher education more accessible in the state of Tennessee.

ii) Access and engagement efforts: President Boyd clarified that this initiative does not reflect a shift in our commitment to diversity but rather a repositioning and rebranding effort in response to state legislation related to diversity, equity, and inclusion. UTC and other campuses in the UT system have a plan that they will share with faculty.

- iii) Israeli-Palestinian conflict: President Boyd addressed the conflict and its impacts on campus, asking for feedback about what was happening in relation to the conflict on UT campuses. It seemed that President Boyd did not intend to make a university-level statement about the conflict but felt it was more appropriate to delegate conversations to the individual campuses. President Reising invited Dr. Jaclyn Michael to speak to this given her area of academic specialization. Dr. Michael voiced agreement with the idea of UTC hosting a community conversation related to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Dr. Sarah Einstein expressed that she has been pleased by the lack of campus focus on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and has not encountered difficulty within the university during this period. In special interest groups for Jewish faculty members it has been reported that these sorts of university interventions tend to lead to greater strife. In light of the fact that our students are not overly engaged with the topic, she suggested not taking a public stance.
- iv) President Reising reported that President Boyd revisited the question from the last UFC meeting related to a hypothetical situation where the state may choose not to defend faculty members facing charges related to divisive concepts. President Boyd said there's nothing stopping or preventing faculty from creating a general fund for legal defense of such faculty. The university can facilitate it, but they can't initiate it.
- v) Integration of professional development into the academic calendar: This idea was discussed at the system level, but it appears to be a non-starter since nine-month faculty would then be required to work during the summer or during breaks, and that was too problematic. They don't plan to pursue it further.
- vi) UTC System Updates: Student experience survey- 14% student response, highest response among all campuses from UTC. Thirty new programs across the UT system are being proposed.
- vii) Additional information and updates:
 - (1) They discussed a summit on Academic Affairs and students focused on access and engagement.
 - (2) They also talked about a meeting of the National Association of Public and Land Grant Universities (APLU). Main topics were AI and higher education, student success, research ethics, and the value of higher education.
 - (3) Relaunch of search to fill position of Vice President for Research, Outreach, and Economic Growth. Dr. Maha Krishnamurthy will continue to serve as interim in the position.
 - (4) A common undergraduate application across campuses: UTK has already adopted this application, and administration is going to put this application in place across the system.
 - (5) COACHE survey is coming out again soon.
- b) **Handbook Committee- Dr. Jaclyn Michael**
 - i) Dr. Michael expressed appreciation for faculty who have provided feedback on Chapter 3 (related to reappointment, tenure, and promotion) of the Faculty Handbook via Canvas. While all feedback is welcome, they expect that feedback from those who have been through the tenure process recently will be particularly valuable. The goal is to gather preliminary information in order to host a larger, on-campus informational session. Link to Canvas discussions: https://utchattanooga.instructure.com/courses/1777/discussion_topics

6) Administrative Reports

a) Chancellor Steven Angle

- i) **Access and Engagement Report:** Has been revised and resubmitted (as of today). The final draft will be distributed to the campus.
- ii) **Innovation Funds:** There will be a call for cutting-edge, innovative ideas related to research, teaching, and university operations. Administration is considering how funds would be distributed.
- iii) **Blue and Gold Preview Day and Recruiting:** The Chancellor thanked all those who participated in the preview day. The event saw 800 attendees and every college was represented. The Chancellor heard great feedback from prospective students and families. Interim Vice Chancellor Stacie Grisham has reported that freshman applications are up about 15% for UTC for this coming fall semester. Admits are up 39% compared to the same day last year.
- iv) **Israeli-Palestinian Conflict:** After a request from a Palestinian member of the UTC community, Chancellor Angle had a conversation with Dean Riggs-Gelasco about having a public conversation related to the issues involved. The hope is that faculty scholars could provide perspective on the conflict.

b) Provost Jerry Hale (presented by Vice Provost Matt Matthews)

- i) **College of Engineering and Computer Science Dean Search:** The Provost engaged the CECS leadership and population in conversation about the possibility of extending Interim Dean Ahad Nasab's appointment through the 2024-25 academic year. The Provost is currently in conversations with Dean Nasab because the heads of the college expressed unanimous support.
- ii) **Vice Chancellor of Enrollment Management and Student Affairs Search:** There is a website for this search, and it has a timeline. They've conducted initial Zoom interviews. In mid- to late November, the committee will be reaching out to finalists about a campus visit. The search is on schedule. Chancellor Angle added that there was an outstanding pool of candidates, and four candidates will be coming to campus the week after Thanksgiving (one candidate each day from Tuesday-Friday). There will be a campus open forum from 1:30-2:30.
- iii) **Library Dean Search:** WittKieffer has been retained as the search firm. There has been a listening session with library faculty and staff. The committee has been working on a leadership profile. The search will continue through December or January.
- iv) **Workload Policy:** Last of the college workload policies was submitted by the academic deans last week. The policies vary widely across the university. The Provost will be sharing them after the Provost reviews them.
- v) **Academic Calendar Changes Update:** The Provost's office has received reports of a false rumor that decisions have already been made about changes to the academic calendar. No changes have been made. The committee has one more listening session and then will make recommendations and provide some models to the Executive Leadership Team later this month. ELT will make the decision. A meeting is scheduled for the Monday after Thanksgiving to go over the recommendations.

c) Vice Provost Matt Matthews

- i) **Non-Tenure-Track Promotion:** Vice Provost Matt Matthews reminded faculty of the recent history of the non-tenure-track promotion process. In compliance with the 2022 revision of the Faculty Handbook, the university put into place a process for non-tenure-track promotion. While last year's implementation of the process ran a little behind schedule, seventeen faculty were promoted as a result of that process. Town halls earlier this academic year suggested that the process worked for the faculty members who went through it. For the upcoming NTT promotion cycle, applications will open on December 1. The application will be accessible through the support page, which is published on the Faculty Senate website in Vice Provost Matthews's slides. Academic Affairs will also send an email that will include a link to the support page. The "Submit Request" button on the support page takes you to the form. Faculty applications will be due by February 1st of 2024. Faculty should be notified by May 1st as long as the process remains on schedule. Vice Provost Matthews instructed faculty to send questions via email for any clarification.

7) Faculty Concerns

a) **Trans Student Information in Email System- Dr. Hannah Wakefield**

Dr. Wakefield shared a concern that a faculty member brought to her that the email system is outing trans students. When faculty input student ID numbers in Outlook, the original name appears rather than the preferred name. There is also a concern that students have not been able to change their information in Microsoft Teams. Dr. Wakefield has been in contact with Vice Chancellor Vicki Farnsworth's office, and that office is working on the issue. Vicki Farnsworth responded that there is a system in place for this, but it is a two-step process, and students should be sure to complete both steps. With upcoming changes in the SIS system, the process can be completely redesigned. Guidelines for updating preferred name: <https://myutcportal.utc.edu/pages/how-to-update-your-personal-information>

b) **Publication of UTC IDs**

President Reising shared a concern that the publication of UTC ID numbers online (they are public domain) may lead to vulnerabilities in our system. We use our ID numbers to log into systems that hold FERPA information and PII. Dr. Reising has been in conversation with Vice Chancellor Vicki Farnsworth about this concern.

c) **Building-Specific Training for Active Shooter Situations- Dr. Hannah Wakefield**

Dr. Wakefield expressed a concern about building-specific training for active shooter situations. Lupton in particular has interior walls that are glass, and faculty feel unsafe teaching in them. She brought up the concern at the November 2022 Senate meeting, and there has been no new information distributed to faculty up to this point. Associate Dean of Students Brett Fuchs responded that there will be a walk-through of interior spaces next semester, and he will reach out to President Reising to ensure that there is Faculty Senate representation and representation from departments in these buildings. He provided a [link to UTC's active shooter response guidelines](#). Chancellor Angle responded that the UTC Police department has done active shooter training in specific buildings when requested. Dr. Riggs-Gelasco and Dean of Students Jim Hicks responded in the chat that they want to arrange for some building-specific guidance for Lupton.

d) **Student Fliers Related to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict– Dr. Jaclyn Michael**

Dr. Michael spoke in support of UTC hosting a community conversation about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, especially in light of some concerns and questions she has

heard from students. She also shared a concern that students' fliers posted a week ago were removed by the police department and requested information about any policy or process related to this. She reminded the Faculty Senate that in November of last year she had mentioned antisemitic fliers that were posted on campus. Associate Dean of Students Brett Fuchs responded that Dr. Michael should send names of students who have experienced these issues. His office had reached out to Jewish and Islamic student groups, but no one had reported concerns at that time. Brett said that the posters had been posted in unauthorized areas for posting. The antisemitic posters from last year were not posted on UTC property but surrounding property, which made the issue complicated. Dr. Reising responded that there is a policy for posters on campus and affirmed that posters are supposed to go in designated places according to policy.

e) Archaeological Scan Background- Dr. Hannah Wakefield

Dr. Wakefield followed up on Vice Chancellor Brent Goldberg's report to clarify that the site of the archaeological scan formerly held an orphanage for African American children in Chattanooga. She hopes that the university will work to tell the story of the building's history for the sake of the community regardless of scan results.

8) Announcements

- a) Faculty Rating of Administration survey is open until Wednesday, November 29, at 11:59pm.
- b) Full Faculty Meeting: Tuesday, February 13, 3pm

9) Adjournment:

- a) Dr. Jessica Taylor moves, Dr. John Harbison seconds. Meeting adjourned 4:49pm.

ATTENDANCE

Last Name	11/16/23
Abrha	
Baker	X
Bathi	X
Boyd	
Bradley-Shoup	
Caskey	X
Crawford	X
Davenport	X
DePrez	by proxy (Owsley)
Einstein	X
Epperson	X

Evans	X
Fleming	X
Franklin	X
Goulet	
Grubb	
Guinn	X
Harbison	X
Harris	X
Harriss	
Hogg	X
Holcomb	
Huber	X
Ibrahim	X
Jeffers	X
Kamrath	
Kaplanoglu	X
Kozak	X
Laing	
Legg	X
Littleton	X
Ma	X
Manning-Berg	
McAllister	X
McDaniel	X
McDonnell	X
McElrone	
McNutt	X
Medeiros	X
Michael	X
Montgomery	X
Park	X
Parks	X
Purkey	

Reising	X
Strickland	X
Strickler	X
Taylor	X
Treat	by proxy (Roache)
Usman	X
Van Buren	X
Vincent	X
Wakefield	X
Walsh	X
Xie	
Zibluk	X