

UTC Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes
March 21, 2024, at 3:10 pm
Presiding: President-Elect John Zibluk
Minutes: Secretary Hannah Wakefield

(Attendance follows the meetings)

1. Call to Order

Dr. Jack Zibluk called the meeting to order at 3:10pm.

2. Approval of the Minutes from the February 15, 2024 meeting

- a. Approved 29-0-0

3. Unfinished Business

a. Faculty Departures – Dr. Jack Zibluk

- i. President-Elect Zibluk shared that UTC’s rate of faculty departures is slightly higher than the national average of turnover. He reached out to Assistant Vice Chancellor Laure Pou to learn about what the university does to track departing faculty. The Chancellor is also very interested in this issue because we'd like to be able to address issues as they arise.
- ii. Laure Pou shared that they are working on a summary document that will outline the process for faculty and staff, who are essentially treated the same way. There is an optional in-person interview, but an exit survey is also distributed to all employees upon their separation. The survey provides contact information if they'd like to share more about their employment experience. This process has been in place for a number of years now. Unfortunately rates of participation in the exit survey are not high, but they have revised the survey recently, and there is a plan in place for trying to bolster that process to hopefully increase participation. Part of that effort was in relationship to the Total Organizational Health initiative that Dr. Cunningham is leading as well as some other feedback from employees. The information is largely kept internal to the human resources team, which checks the data on a monthly basis for trends and reaches out to administrators to share information and try to identify any interventions or next steps to address any issues.

4. New Business

a. Associate Vice Chancellor for Public Safety and Chief of Police—Mr. Brett Fuchs

Associate Dean Brett Fuchs shared that they have finished the initial phase of interviews for this position. There were initially 22 applicants, and they initially narrowed down that pool to about 13, and then narrowed it again to 4 finalists after interviews. These finalists have received invitations to campus visits.

Sessions with the candidates will include open campus forums and opportunities for all of campus to engage with the candidates. These will occur April 2, 3, 4, and 5 in person.

5. Committee Reports

a. Handbook Committee – Dr. Jaclyn Michael

Dr. Michael presented two different motions for a vote on behalf of the Handbook Committee. The first was related to Faculty Senate bylaws regarding processes of the Gen. Ed committee. The brief history of the motion is that Academic Affairs approached the Handbook Committee and suggested that the process of transferring students appealing for General Education credit would be made easier for students if those appeals could go through an advisor instead of coming from the students themselves. This motion was approved by the General Committee in January of this year. The motion passed, 33-0-0. The second motion was in relation to sections of Chapter 3 of the Faculty Handbook that speak to possible suspensions and extensions of the probationary period for tenure-track faculty members. The committee is proposing to add some language that was developed by University Counsel that explains the differences between an extension and a suspension. Under an extension, the work a faculty member is doing even during the extension period still continues to count for the requirements for tenure and evaluation. During a suspension, the work a faculty may be doing does not count toward tenure requirements. This proposal originated with a suggestion received on Canvas discussion boards in the fall. The committee is also proposing to include parental leave as a specific example of why someone might want to request suspension. The motion passed. 27 approve-6 abstain-0 no votes

b. Budget & Economic Status Committee – Dr. Michaël Bonnal

Dr. Bonnal presented recommendations from the committee. The committee met about 3-4 times during the fall semester and a couple of times this semester. The committee voted unanimously to approve the following recommendations:

- i. To be provided with faculty salary data in order to conduct analysis, particularly related to potential wage gaps. They would like to received this data annually. So far, they have requested data (from HR, Academic Affairs, the Finance office) but have not received this data. UTC has contracted with an external audit firm in the past, and this firm could conduct analysis for the committee in such cases. Assistant Vice Chancellor Laure Pou shared that external firm Segal is currently working with data and performing a market analysis, equity analysis, and compression analysis. This data should be available in May.
- ii. To increase the visibility of parental leave policies and benefits on the HR website. UTC's parental leave policy is more robust than any other peer institutions except for one.
- iii. To clarify the relationship between parental leave and modified duties.
- iv. To clarify language of "market-merit" increases to cost-of-living language to better reflect the way that the increases are calculated and implemented.
- v. To develop a system to recognize the Exceeds Expectation rating such as one-time bonuses, research stipends, or reimbursements for campus and community services.
- vi. To publish the salary adjustment that faculty receive when they are promoted. This would be beneficial for recruitment and retention.
- vii. To create a single webpage on the Academic Affairs website related to faculty salary information.

viii. To reinstate the Budget and Economic Status Committee's representation on UPRAC (University Planning and Resources Advisory Council).

Dr. Zibluk suggested that the Senate endorse the committees report. Dr. Sarah Einstein moved accordingly, and Rachel Fleming seconded. The Senate voted to endorse the report with 31 yeas, 0 nays, and 1 abstention.

c. Undergraduate Curriculum Committee – Dr. Lane Wilkinson

- i. Dr. Wilkinson reminded the faculty that the default workflow for proposals only includes the college that originates a proposal if a department or a college has a new program that includes courses from another college on campus. Curriculog doesn't really allow for automation of this part of the process, so if your college is generating a program that includes other colleges please let them know early in the process so they're not surprised right at the last minute.
- ii. There has been an uptick in certificate programs on this campus, and while certificate programs do serve a valuable purpose, certificate programs are not eligible for financial aid. The out-of-pocket expense and cost to students should be a factor when proposing certificates.
- iii. Dr. Wilkinson presented the committee's proposal that if a course has not been taught in at least 10 years, the registrar be allowed to remove the course from the catalog without the need for going through the entire curriculum or course deactivation process. The registrar would still contact departments and talk to them about the removal.
- iv. Dr. Wilkinson also presented a proposal to adjust the curriculum workflow timeline such that all fall curriculum proposals should be approved by the relevant departments by September 15th, and all fall curriculum proposals must be approved by the relevant college curriculum committees by October 15th.
- v. Rachel Fleming moved to endorse the proposals from the undergraduate curriculum committee, and there was a second. The motion was approved with 25 yeas, 1 no, and 7 abstentions.

d. University Faculty Council Meeting– Dr. Jack Zibluk

Dr. Zibluk presented President Don Reising's report in his absence. The report can be found from 1:29:30 to 1:36:27 in the meeting recording.

e. Tennessee University Faculty Senate – Dr. Jack Zibluk

Dr. Zibluk presented the report from the most recent TUFS meeting. The report can be found from 1:36:30 to 1:38:55 of the meeting recording.

f. Course Learning Evaluations Committee – Dr. Jack Zibluk

Dr. Jack Zibluk presented a report from the Course Learning Evaluations Committee. The report can be found from 1:39:12 to 1:40:15 of the meeting recording.

6. Administrative Reports

a. Provost Hale

- i. Provost Hale discussed reframing the conversation around the R2 Carnegie designation. He explained that there is a misconception that somehow we can choose or not choose to be a doctoral professional campus or an R2 or an R1 institution. Rather, Carnegie designates these

categories for universities, and the designations have to do with the amount of external research dollars that come in and research expenditures and also the number of research-related doctoral degrees that are granted. Faculty raised concerns about this status related to whether or not the university has the resources to maintain this status.

- ii. Provost Hale shared that the last of the library Dean candidates that was here for a campus interview left yesterday. The campus community has received an e-mail with the link to see the candidate presentations and the open forums and to provide feedback. The Provost requested that the faculty provide such feedback. He also thanked the members of the search committee and the library faculty.
- iii. Academic Affairs will be conducting an inventory of high impact instructional practices that faculty are engaged in. High impact practices include ten different sorts of instructional practices such as internships, learning communities, first-year seminars, etc. The hope is to complete this inventory by early fall. A team application was submitted to AACU's new HIP Institute.
- iv. Teaching Workload Policy- Provost Hale has received additional updated data on the number of CRNs, the number of faculty credit hours, and the number of student credit hours generated by each individual faculty member by college. He plans to take a closer look at that data to continue the investigation into current teaching workload practices.
- v. Academic Affairs is going to be providing significantly more support for faculty travel and professional development opportunities and will also be trying to provide similar support for staff professional development opportunities within the Academic Affairs division. Online course monies will now be used to supplement department and college allotments for travel. There will be some strings attached to these funds. One requirement is that travel must involve an element that improves online pedagogy. Even if sessions relate to on-ground or face-to-face pedagogy, as long as faculty can apply such information to online pedagogy then they may be eligible for these funds. Funds will be non-recurring; this is a finite pool of money. This initiative is an effort to respond to an awareness that faculty travel budgets have not increased alongside rising inflation related to faculty travel.

b. Vice Chancellor for Finance and Administration Brent Goldberg

Vice Chancellor Goldberg presented a budget update, reminding faculty of the budget process, sharing themes from budget input sessions, and providing information on budget items already in process and scenarios for the FY 25 budget. The Vice Chancellor's report can be found from 2:01:28 to 2:12:27 in the meeting recording.

7. Faculty Concerns

a. Final exams being administered during the official exam window- Dr. Hannah Wakefield

Dr. Wakefield shared a faculty concern she received. The concern is that some faculty have been holding final exams outside of the designated final exam

period. This practice can put students at a disadvantage because in-class windows of time are not adequate for comprehensive finals, and this practice can also impinge upon other faculty members' instruction because students are studying for finals at a time when they should still be working to master course content. Provost Hale has provided research into peer institutions' policies, and the Handbook Committee plans to take up this issue.

8. Announcements

- a. Faculty Senate Representatives should be holding divisional elections to replace representatives rolling off of Senate at the end of this year. Faculty should contact hannah-wakefield@utc.edu with questions about this.
- b. Faculty should send nominations for the President-Elect position.
- c. Nominations are open for the Dr. Carolyn Thompson and Dr. Roger G. Brown Community Engagement Award. Please send these to Dr. Jennifer Boyd.
- d. UTC Spring Research and Arts Conference
- e. Full Faculty Meetings
 - i. Tuesday, September 17, 2024, at 3:00 pm

9. Adjournment

Sarah Treat moved; Jeremy Strickler seconded; Meeting adjourned at 5:02pm

ATTENDANCE