

Date: October 17th 2024

Location: Derthick Hall 101 and via Zoom

Chair: President Jack Zibluk

1. Call to Order and Attendance

- **Chair's Opening Statement:**

The meeting was called to order by President Jack Zibluk.

- **Attendance Process:**

The Chair requested everyone in attendance, both in person and online, to register via the QR code system to confirm their presence.

2. Approval of Previous Minutes

- **Minutes Review:**

President Zibluk asked if all members had reviewed the previous meeting's minutes and requested any amendments or additions.

- **Online Comments:**

The Chair paused for additional comments or objections from online attendees. Seeing none, a motion was made to approve the minutes by acclamation.

- **Outcome:**

Minutes were approved with no objections.

3. Unfinished Business

- **Sick Leave Policy for Nine-Month Faculty**

Speaker: Matt Matthews, Representative from UFC

- **Introduction and Policy Background:**

Matthews provided a comprehensive review of the current sick leave policy, noting that it excludes nine-month faculty and is only applied to 12-month faculty. The policy review was requested by the University Faculty Council (UFC) in response to requests from faculty across various campuses to reevaluate this exclusion.

- **Proposed Options:**

- **Option 1:** Amend the policy to include nine-month faculty. This would require nine-month faculty to engage with HR's sick leave system, including the requirement to record and seek approval for sick leave

through their direct supervisors, typically department heads or school chairs.

- **Option 2:** Maintain the current policy, excluding nine-month faculty from sick leave benefits.

- **Potential Cultural and Procedural Changes:**

- Matthews highlighted that this policy change could impact department cultures, particularly regarding faculty's start and end dates each semester. If nine-month faculty were included, they might be required to report leave for specific departmental events and meetings.
- Matthews noted that each campus would need to develop clear guidelines for requesting modified duty assignments, which currently lack a standardized process across all campuses.

- **Timing and Implementation Concerns:**

- Matthews stressed that this policy change would not be immediate, with any transition anticipated to start no earlier than July 1, 2025. This delay aligns with the planned January launch of the Dash HR system, a university-wide employee management platform that would streamline leave requests and approvals.

- **Q&A Highlights:**

- **Summer Teaching:** When asked if teaching a single class over the summer would qualify faculty for leave accrual, Matthews clarified that only full-time summer appointments would qualify for leave accrual.
- **Leave Reporting Clarification:** Matthews responded to a question regarding which events would necessitate a leave request, specifying that any scheduled duties that are part of a faculty's teaching or administrative responsibilities would require reporting.

- **Campus-Specific Procedures:**

- Matthews explained that each campus might develop unique procedures for implementing this system-level policy. Campus-specific guidelines would likely detail how faculty can submit leave requests and seek approvals.

- **Canvas Site and Further Discussion:**
 - The policy discussion document is available on the Canvas forum, where faculty can submit concerns or questions. Matthews will continue gathering feedback in similar sessions across other campuses before presenting final recommendations.

4. New Business

- **President-Elect's Report**

Speaker: Sarah Einstein (on behalf of Beth Crawford)

- **Overview of TUFs Meeting:**

Einstein shared updates from the Tennessee University Faculty Senate (TUFs) meeting held on October 5, where representatives from all UT campuses and locally governed institutions (LGIs) convened.
- **Key Topics:**
 - **Post-Tenure Review:** Upcoming discussions are anticipated statewide, though UT already has this process in place.
 - **Infrastructure Funding:** The legislature will address funding for both aging and new buildings across the state.
 - **Unified Higher Education Report:** A proposal to produce a comprehensive, statewide report on higher education in Tennessee was discussed, aiming for collaboration across institutions.
 - **Student Research Showcase:** Members discussed the potential for an annual event in Nashville to showcase student research and learning, possibly in collaboration with campus mentors.
- **Motion Passed:**
 - TUFs passed a motion to modify its meeting schedule to include one in-person meeting and three virtual meetings annually, ensuring greater accessibility for all members.
- **Q&A:**

Einstein requested that additional questions for Beth Crawford be held until she returns to the next month's Senate meeting.

- **Administrative Reports**

- **Provost's Report**

Speaker: Provost Hale

- **Dean Search Update:**

Provost Hale announced the launch of a new search for the Dean of the College of Engineering and Computer Science, headed by Dean Linda Frost with assistance from Parker Executive Search. The goal is to complete the search by February 2025.

- **Academic Calendar Revisions:**

- **Proposed Changes:** Transition from a 17-week to a 16-week semester, starting in Spring 2026. Summer terms would remain 13 weeks, while fall and spring semesters would be shortened.

- **Key Adjustments:** The fall semester would begin on the fourth Monday in August, and the spring semester would start after the Martin Luther King holiday.

- **Anticipated Benefits:** Improved student recruitment, enhanced support for transfer students, and extended flexibility for nine-month faculty between semesters.

- **Bridge Period in 2026:**

- A one-time adjustment in Spring 2026, pushing the start date by one week to align with new calendar requirements.

- Classes would be extended to 55 and 85-minute blocks to meet instructional hour requirements for the shortened semesters.

- **Next Steps:**

- Seeking faculty feedback on these proposed calendar changes through discussions with department heads, deans, and the Faculty Senate before a final decision.

- **Strategic Plan Update**

Speaker: Vicki Farnsworth

- **Community and Faculty Feedback:**

Farnsworth reported ongoing discussions with community advisory boards and faculty subcommittees to refine UTC's strategic plan and

ensure alignment with the broader B1 UT framework. Input from stakeholders emphasized a need for a balanced focus on workforce development and academic values.

- **Timeline and Approval Process:**

- An open campus survey in November will invite broader feedback, followed by presentations at budget forums. Final approval by the UTC Advisory Board is expected in January, with a UT Board vote anticipated in February 2025.

- **Vice Chancellor for Advancement Search**

Speaker: Mark Orton

- **Search Committee Progress:** The committee received over 30 applications and plans to shortlist candidates by early November. The aim is to conduct interviews and extend an offer by January.

- **Budget Planning and Voluntary Retirement Incentive Plan (VRIP)**

Speaker: Brent Goldberg

- **VRIP Eligibility and Incentive Details:**

- Faculty and staff with 15+ years of service and retirement eligibility can participate in the VRIP, receiving a payout of 50% of their salary.
- Questions about eligibility and benefits should be directed to Human Resources, which will provide guidance once the board finalizes the VRIP plan.

- **Budget Planning Sessions:**

- Three input sessions in November will allow faculty and staff to voice budget priorities. Strategic reallocation will be prioritized, focusing on compensation, enrollment growth, and research expansion to align with UTC's growth goals.

5. Faculty Concerns

- **Mocs Give Day Solicitation:**

A concern was raised about faculty being solicited for donations by supervisors or senior staff, potentially creating discomfort. The Chancellor will address this issue with campaign organizers and deans to prevent similar situations in the future.

6. Announcements

- **President's Resignation Announcement:**

President Zibluk announced his decision to step down due to progressive hearing loss impacting their ability to fulfill duties effectively. The Executive Committee expressed appreciation for their service, and President Elect Beth Crawford will step in as acting President.

7. Adjournment

- A motion to adjourn was made, seconded, and approved unanimously. The meeting adjourned with a reminder of the next meeting's date.

Attendance:

Tony Parsley

Max Jordon

Tiffany Mitchell

Ziwei Ma

Holly Berkowitz

Chad Littleton

Barry Kamrath

Harry Van Buren

Shewanee Howard-Baptiste

April Wilson

Steve Davenport

Md Shahedul Amin

Chandler Harriss

Amir Alakaam

Hamdy Ibrahim

Monica Miles

Darrell Walsh

Michael BONNAL

Susan Thul for Sarah Treat

khalid tantawi

Jenny Hogg

Cherry Guinn

Delight Yokley

Gaye Jeffers

Feng Guo

Marisa Colston

Brett Fuchs

Christina Policastro

David Locander

Callie Adams

Mark Bradley-Shoup

John Harbison

Tammy Garland

Susan Eckelmannn

Yu Liang

Rebecca Shortridge

Trevor Elliott

Jessica Taylor

Rachel Fleming from 3:39

Albert Salatka

Brooke Epperson

Matthew Evans

Thomas Huber

Ignatius Fomunung

Josh Parks

Mark F. Kozak