

## **Exempt Staff Council**

May 15, 2024

Held via Zoom

Meeting Minutes

**Meeting Description:** Members of the Exempt Staff Council convened to begin the planning phases of establishing a staff-wide council, to include all UTC staff, exempt & non-exempt. This model currently serves as the foundation for faculty representation on UT campuses, including UTC, and this project being made available for staff has received growing attention from employees and members of campus and system leadership.

**Proposal & Bylaws:** Members of the council discussed what the new Staff Senate could look like, potentially mirroring the composition, functionality, and expectations held by the Faculty Senate in its current form. Rather than dividing representative groups between exempt & non-exempt employees, great value can be extracted from merging the two groups to form a representative body for all staff, to bring together any projects, concerns, and issues faced by members of staff.

It is acknowledged that the professional dynamics between exempt & non-exempt staff often include supervisor-supervisee working relationships, so intentional care will be sought to maintain employees' trust and value in their respective work units and the institution as a whole, while creating a representative body that can represent staff voices. As such, these efforts may include a non-exempt standing committee, to ensure professional integrity & the benefits brought along by anonymity when sharing thoughts & concerns from the perspective of a supervisee.

The aim for this group also involves expectations regarding top-down and bottom-up communication between staff and members of university administration. That is, similar to Faculty Senate meetings & committees, members of campus leadership will be expected to regularly attend and update attendees of full UTC Staff Senate meetings.

The chairs will begin drafting the bylaws, and this involves working with partners in the Office of Planning, Evaluation, and Institutional Research (OPEIR) to review peer-institutions who use similar models for staff representation, as well as UTC's sister campus, UT Health Science Center, who has recently moved toward this model as well.

The council has assigned members working groups to work on various elements ahead of implementation while the bylaws are drafted. These will include communication plans, research on peer-institutions, and more to be assigned in the coming months while bylaws are drafted. The bylaws will be put through a rigorous process of draft, review, and approval, involving the Exempt Staff Council, the Employee Relations Committee, members of respective areas of campus, UTC legal counsel, Finance & Administration leadership, and the Chancellor.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, July 17, 2024