

# UTC Full Faculty Meeting Minutes

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Presiding: Faculty Senate President Beth Crawford

Minutes prepared by Faculty Senate Secretary Hannah Wakefield

## Call to Order & Approval of Minutes

President Beth Crawford officially called the full faculty meeting to order. Following the call to order, the approval process for the minutes from the February meeting was addressed:

- A call was made for any corrections or comments regarding the minutes.
- No comments or corrections were received from attendees, either in the room or in the online chat.
- The February meeting minutes were subsequently approved for the university archives.

## Administrative Reports

### Chancellor Lori Bruce

Chancellor Bruce began her report by thanking the campus community for their warm welcome. She acknowledged the eventful start to the semester, which included historic flooding, media attention on Greek life, and an active shooter alert, all within the first week of the term. She then provided key updates on university performance and strategic goals.

### Key Enrollment & Demographic Statistics

Metric	Statistic
<b>Total Enrollment</b>	Over 12,000 students for the first time in university history
<b>Overall Growth</b>	2.5%
<b>Freshmen Class</b>	Slightly down from last year, but second largest class in 139 years
<b>Transfer Student Growth</b>	up 4-5%
<b>New Graduate Student Growth</b>	up 38%
<b>Retention Rate Increase</b>	up 1.5%
<b>Students from Tennessee</b>	86% of the student body
<b>Students from Chattanooga area</b>	29% of the student body
<b>Top 2 Out-of-State Sources</b>	1. Georgia 2. Alabama

## Strategic Goals

The Chancellor outlined two primary strategic goals for the university:

- **Enrollment Growth:** The university aims to reach an enrollment of **15,000 students by 2030**. This growth will be strategic, focusing on increasing the number of dual enrollment, transfer, and graduate students. This approach is designed to manage the impact on physical infrastructure (e.g., parking, housing) while still addressing the need for increased instructional resources.
- **Research Status:** The university has a goal of attaining **Carnegie R2 status**. She announced that UTC achieved **\$18.6 million in externally funded research** last year, sourced from 88 unique Principal Investigators (PIs).

Following her report, a faculty member raised a question regarding the need for a significant, inflation-adjusted salary increase for faculty and staff. The **Chancellor** provided a two-part response:

1. A UT system-level compensation study is currently underway. This study will compare UTC salaries with those at designated peer institutions.
2. She explained the challenge of state funding for raises. The university often receives only partial funding from the state legislature and is required to find matching funds from its internal budget. This financial reality is a key reason why strategic enrollment growth is a high priority, as it generates the revenue needed to fund these matches.

## Provost Jerold Hale

Provost Hale thanked those who helped with Operation Move-In, CECS faculty who helped with tenure upon initial appointment packages over the summer, and Faculty Senate representatives participating in shared governance

The Provost presented five key updates for the faculty.

1. **Telecommuting Policy Review:** The university's telecommuting policy is under review. Current discussions are focused on establishing best practices, such as implementing built-in review dates for arrangements, requiring work phone forwarding, and ensuring that all essential job functions can be performed remotely.
2. **Spring 2026 Scheduling:** Due to ongoing construction delays, all academic departments must schedule **10% of their classes at 8 a.m.** and **15% of their classes at 4:30 p.m. or later**. He also announced that a student survey on course modality preferences will be distributed soon.
3. **Vice Provost Search:** The university is actively searching for a Vice Provost whose portfolio will concentrate on faculty affairs. The position requires candidates to be a tenured professor, and the university is close to scheduling finalist interviews.
4. **EDOs and Merit Pay:** Michelle Deardorff and Rebecca Shortridge will lead training for department heads on evaluations and merit distinctions. Someone from the system will also be helping with training for supervisors. The Provost clarified that there are **no**

**quotas** for "exceeds expectations" ratings on Employee Development Outcomes (EDOs). He highlighted the checks-and-balances system in place, which includes opportunities for faculty to respond to their evaluations and subsequent reviews by both the Dean's and Provost's offices to ensure fairness.

5. **Campus AI Policy:** A new campus-wide AI policy has been implemented with two critical requirements for faculty: syllabi must now explicitly state the class AI policy (categorized as either unrestricted, mixed use, or prohibited), and AI detection tools *cannot* be the sole evidence used to substantiate a case of academic dishonesty. He directed faculty to the Walker Center for Teaching and Learning website for resources and sample syllabus language.

A faculty member asked if the new merit pay process would include a "look back" at performance from previous years when allocating merit pay. The Provost stated that he did not yet know the answer but acknowledged the feedback.

## **Vice Chancellor Brent Goldberg**

### **Construction Project Updates**

- **Brock Hall:** Delayed, but it is expected to be open for the fall semester.
- **540 Macaulay:** Delayed, which will require a mid-semester classroom shift during the spring term.
- **Nursing Building:** Substantially delayed. Construction will result in the loss of 150-200 parking spaces in the gravel lot across from CSAS, starting in October or November.
- **University Center:** This project is on schedule.
- **Fletcher Project:** This project is currently on track.

### **Merit Pay for Staff**

Human Resources is developing training for staff and supervisors on the new merit-based compensation system. The Vice Chancellor emphasized a core principle of the plan: all employees who meet expectations will receive a pay increase. He used an example of a potential 3% salary pool having a 1% floor and a 6% ceiling to illustrate how all employees who meet expectations will receive a pay increase, while high-performing employees could be rewarded with larger raises.

### **Active Violence Training**

Coordination with external partners for emergency response went really well during the "swatting" incident on August 21<sup>st</sup>. The university received feedback indicating a need for more training for faculty. In response, mandatory, in-person active violence training will be implemented for all faculty and staff. Planning is currently underway to determine the logistics and scheduling for these sessions.

## Vice Provost Lauren Ingraham

Vice Provost Ingram gave a presentation on the IMPACT course learning evaluation pilot program.

- **Primary Goal:** The program's main purpose is to reduce the implicit bias often found in traditional student course evaluations.
- **Methodology:** The evaluation uses a two-step process:
  1. Faculty first log in and identify the specific teaching practices they use in their course.
  2. Students later report on which of those pre-identified practices they recall observing in the class.
- **Participation:** The pilot is completely **opt-in**, and participating faculty retain full control over their own results. They can choose whether or not to share the feedback with their department head or RTP committee. Currently, faculty teaching general education courses in STEM and behavioral and social science fields are invited to participate.

## Ombuds Anovia Slaughter

Dr. Slaughter described the Ombuds Office's role as a confidential, neutral, and informal resource available to all employees. The office provides confidential consultation, educational outreach and workshops, mediation and facilitation, and informal problem-solving. Ombuds Slaughter then shared trends she has observed from her interactions with faculty.

- **Key Faculty Concerns**
  - The RTP and EDO processes.
  - Issues related to pay, compensation, and workload expectations.
  - A desire for greater transparency and trust within their departments.
- **Positive Faculty Insights**
  - Faculty consistently express a deep commitment to their students and their success.
  - There is a strong desire among faculty for psychologically safe and respectful work environments where they can perform at their best.

## New Business

### Introduction of New Faculty

Deans introduced the new faculty members who have joined UTC.

### New FARC Representatives

Two new representatives for the Faculty Administrative Relations Committee (FARC) were announced:

- **Michelle Deardorff**, College of Arts and Sciences
- **Chapel Cowden**, Library

## Faculty Concerns

Faculty were reminded that there is a faculty concern discussion board on the Full Faculty page in Canvas. Concerns may be posted anonymously there.

A faculty member raised a concern regarding the EDO rating system for faculty, making two key points:

1. UTC had the lowest percentage of "exceptional" ratings across the five UT system campuses, which may be due to a long-standing cultural perception that a quota exists for this rating.
2. UTC uses a 4-point rating scale, whereas UT Knoxville uses a 5-point scale that includes two different levels of exceptional ratings. This structural difference may contribute to the discrepancy in outcomes.

Following the discussion, it was announced that the Handbook Committee will take on this issue for further consideration.

## Announcements

Several final announcements were made:

- **Homecoming:** Homecoming week is scheduled for the last week of October, with the homecoming football game taking place on November 1st.
- **Leadership Changes:** The Chancellor announced two significant leadership transitions:
  - **Chief Information Officer (CIO):** The Vice Chancellor/CIO position will not be refilled. The associated salary savings will be reinvested to fund other IT staff roles. Tony Parsley will serve as the technical lead, reporting to Vice Chancellor Goldberg.
  - **Advancement:** Vice Chancellor Kim White has retired. Andrew Sheehy from UT Knoxville will serve as the interim Vice Chancellor for the division while the university conducts a search for her replacement.

## Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned.