

**UTC Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes  
February 19, 2026- Hunter Hall 405, 3:30pm**

*Faculty Senate President Beth Crawford, presiding  
Minutes prepared by Faculty Senate Secretary Hannah Wakefield*

*Attendance follows the minutes.*

The meeting was called to order, and senators were instructed to record their attendance by scanning a QR code and completing a brief survey. The Senate reviewed the minutes from the January meeting. With no concerns or revisions raised, the minutes were adopted and placed on file.

**No unfinished business or new business.**

**Committee Reports**

**Faculty Rating of Administration Committee:**

- Proposed changes to the faculty rating of administration had been posted online for discussion. Due to unresolved suggestions and word choice recommendations from faculty, the Senate decided to return the proposal to the committee for "friendly amendments" before conducting an electronic vote.

**Faculty Handbook Committee (Al Salatka):**

- The committee sent proposed changes to the Office of the General Counsel, and committee chair Al Salatka met with General Counsel to review proposed changes. Key changes involve honor court procedures requested by the Office of Student Conduct. Yusef will provide the committee with any changes driven by state law or changes recommended by the Office of the General Counsel. The committee expects to have clear voting options ready for the March meeting.

**Faculty Senate Executive Committee (Beth Crawford):**

- Bylaws Revisions: The Executive Committee presented a "cleanup" of the bylaws to correct errors.
  - Senator Language: Revisions clarify that there are multiple types of senators (tenure track, non-tenure track at-large, and divisional). It was also made clear that non-tenure track faculty participate in standard divisional elections.
  - Voting Divisions: The Honors College was removed as a voting division because no faculty report directly to it, while the College of Nursing was added as its own division.
  - Vote: The Senate voted unanimously (28 yes, 0 no, 0 abstentions) to approve these revisions.

**Administrative Reports**

**Budget Update (Vice Chancellor Goldberg):**

- The Governor's budget, released February 2nd, included \$16.2 million in formula funding for higher education, significantly lower than the \$73.8 million recommended by THEC.
- The proposed salary pool is 1.5%, which is lower than inflation and most previous years.
- UTC received \$1.8 million in total new funding. While this is low, UTC fared better than many other institutions in the productivity formula.
- Capital Projects: No new capital outlay was requested, but UTC received \$8.75 million for electrical distribution and chiller upgrades to address aging infrastructure.

- The university is working toward a goal of 15,000 students by 2030, which would require adding approximately 45 to 50 new faculty lines to maintain the current 1-to-17 student-to-faculty ratio.

**Provost's Report (Provost Hale):**

- **Merit Pay:** Department heads are expected to develop collaborative rubrics for evaluating faculty. These rubrics should be shared with the dean and the department. Department heads and departments should think broadly about the kinds of work encompassed by research, teaching/advising, and service categories. The Provost expressed that EDO goal-setting need not be tied to rubrics for raises.
- **Commencement:** Graduate and undergraduate ceremonies will now be combined into single ceremonies. The ceremony date/time slots will rotate annually among the colleges.
- **Ombuds Services:** Dr. Slaughter has left UTC. The administration is currently discussing how to provide ongoing services and will keep the faculty informed.
- **Legislative Updates:**
  - **HB 0291/SB 1077 (American Civics):** This bill has been postponed.
  - **HB 1822/SB 1828 (History Instruction):** Caption form only. Anticipated content would allow American history faculty to provide instruction on the positive impacts of religion on American history.
  - **HB 1833/SB 2079 (THEC Changes):** This bill is expected to pass and will shift the funding formula to prioritize four-year graduation rates over six-year rates.
  - **HB 2194/SB 2259 (Tenure/Misconduct):** This bill is likely to move forward. It affirms tenure but requires separate processes for granting tenure and terminating faculty for misconduct. It may truncate the due process for termination by removing faculty committee deliberations in favor of hearings with the chief academic officer or the chancellor or president of the public institution.
  - **SB 1838/HB 2581 (Prohibiting Tenure):** A bill that would have prohibited granting tenure after July 2026 was withdrawn by its sponsor following statewide advocacy.
  - A question was raised about whether we are expecting a legislative update this year, and the Provost answered that an update is expected.
  - A question was also raised about a lack of communication about the departure of the ombudsperson. The Provost was unable to speak to the question at that time.

**Public Health Update:** Dr. Elizabeth O'Brien alerted the Senate to measles outbreaks at university campuses in the region. Faculty were encouraged to verify their vaccination status or have a titer drawn. The UTC website disseminating information about measles can be found here:

<https://www.utc.edu/enrollment-management-and-student-affairs/university-health-services/measles>

**UTC Bookstore:** Beginning in Fall 2026, UTC will transition to the "First Day Complete" program.

- Undergraduate students will pay a flat rate of \$22 per credit hour for all required course materials, including print and digital.
- Students have the option to opt out of the program entirely for a given semester and may opt in at a later time if they choose.
- Faculty retain complete freedom regarding the materials they choose to adopt.
- Q&A
  - A question was raised about whether students would be notified if the program does not benefit them. Students do receive such communication.
  - Faculty can adopt previous editions of texts as long as they are still in print.
  - If the First Day program cannot provide access to a text that faculty seek to adopt, they will notify faculty. Often, Barnes and Noble will work with a custom publisher to get access to the text.

- A question was raised about whether there are inflationary caps on the rate per credit hour. If there are significant shifts in book ordering behavior, the price may be reevaluated, though the intention is to keep the price the same or reduce it.
- Barnes and Noble has the capacity to create custom course packets of reading.
- Currently 378 sections of UTC courses use First Day Complete.

**Student Success Programs:** Updates were provided on the UT Promise Scholarship. The program is now housed at individual institutions rather than at the system level. Students are now permitted to choose their own mentors—a requirement of the program—and faculty are encouraged to join the mentor pool.

### **Faculty Concerns**

- A concern was raised regarding missing January Health Savings Account (HSA) deductions. Impacted faculty were advised to contact the HR benefits specialist.

### **Announcements**

- **Elections:** Nominations for Faculty Senate President-elect close tomorrow. Divisional elections are also underway with a nomination deadline of March 1st. Elections should be completed by March 15<sup>th</sup>. At-large elections will begin after that point.
- **Full Faculty Meeting:** Scheduled for Tuesday, February 24th at 3:30 PM in Derthick101.
- **March Meeting:** The next Senate meeting is moved to March 26th to avoid a conflict with Spring Break.

### **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned following a motion and a second.

## ATTENDANCE

Jennifer  
Greg Millican  
Al Salatka  
Jenn Stewart  
edward brudney  
Max Jordon  
Carolyn Runyon  
Sarah Einstein  
Hannah Wakefield  
Francesca Leasi  
Caitlin Crews-Stowe  
Sami Dakhliya  
Christi Wann  
Barry Kamrath  
Holly Berkowitz  
Hyeyoon Jung  
Perry Ward  
Shahnewaz Karim Sakib  
Chelleigh Holland  
Yingfeng Wang  
Sarah Treat  
Brooke Epperson  
Lauren Gilbert  
Jessica Hackathorne  
Mike Breakey  
Tina Benkiser  
Angel Collier  
Steven D. Shelton  
Irina Khmelko  
Matthew Evans  
Monica Miles  
Pratibha Deepak  
James Guilfoyle  
Feng Guo  
Sara Lum  
Deborah McAllister