UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE AT CHATTANOOGA
Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes

Date: October 15, 2026 | **Time:** 15:15 EDT | **Presiding:** Dr. Hannah Wakefield, Faculty Senate President-Elect

Approval of Prior Minutes

- President-Elect Hannah Wakefield presented the draft minutes from the September Faculty Senate meeting. A formal record correction was requested for an error in the transcript regarding Vice Provost Lauren Ingraham's title.
    - **Action:** Faculty Senate Secretary Edward Brudney committed to addressing the error in the minutes
    - **Action**: The minutes of the September meeting were approved, with the above described correction

New Business and Committee Reports

- President-Elect Wakefield reported that there was no formal new business pending, but that there would be updates in the November meeting
- President-Elect Wakefield also confirmed that there were no pending committee reports at this time, but again that there would be reports for the November meeting
- Finally, key administrators should also be present at the November meeting

Administrative Reports

Bylaws Scorecard Update

- Vice Provost Lauren Ingraham presented an administrative status report on department and college bylaws, on behalf of Interim Provost Matt Matthews.
    - **Approved:** Psychology bylaws have received final executive approval
    - **Under Legal Review:** Criminal Justice bylaws are currently under formal legal review with General Counsel
    - **Academic Affairs First Pass:** Initial administrative review is underway for handbooks across four academic units: Rollins College of Nursing, Department of Philosophy and Religion, School of Professional Studies, and the Department of Social, Cultural, and Justice Studies

    - **Office of the Provost Review:** Occupational Therapy (returned to the department for minor edits, approaching final completion) and Applied Learning and Leadership
- **Floor Q&A and Timelines:**
    - In response to inquiries regarding approval completion schedules, Vice Provost Ingraham clarified that while fixed dates are not assigned, Provost Matthews is eager to complete reviews and publish updated governance documents as expeditiously as possible.

Ombuds Caitlan Hendrickson

- Caitlan Hendrickson, newly appointed UTC Ombudsperson, delivered an introductory address detailing the operational scope, foundational standards, and service framework of the UTC Ombuds Office.

Background & Context

- Hendrickson noted today was Conflict Resolution Day. Hendrickson brings over 20 years of professional experience in conflict resolution, including 15+ years leading organizational ombuds offices in higher education systems. She holds a Master of Education in Human Relations, a Graduate Certificate in Educational Technology focused on adult learning, and is an EdD candidate in Educational Leadership (expected completion 2027).

Etymology & Role Definition

- Hendrickson explained that the term "ombuds" derives from Old Norse and Swedish roots meaning "an ear to the people" or an institutional representative. Citing the International Ombuds Association (IOA) and the American Bar Association (ABA), she defined the ombudsperson as an informal conflict barometer, early warning system, pressure valve, and neutral radar for organizational health.

Four Core Standards of Practice

- Hendrickson emphasized that her office is strictly governed by four international standards of practice:
    - **Confidentiality:** All communications are strictly off the record. Information is never disclosed without explicit visitor permission, except in rare instances involving imminent risk of serious harm.
    - **Informality:** The office does not participate in formal administrative, investigative, or disciplinary proceedings, nor does it constitute an office of formal legal notice for the university.
    - **Independence:** The office operates independently of standard administrative and reporting structures across the university system.
    - **Impartiality / Neutrality:** The Ombudsperson remains unbiased, advocates for fair processes rather than specific outcomes, and does not take sides. Visitor engagement is entirely voluntary.

Services & Operational Scope

- The office provides multi-tiered informal conflict engagement:
  - *Individual Level:* Confidential consultation, conflict coaching, option mapping, and policy navigation.
  - *Group / Team Level:* Facilitated dialogue, voluntary mediation, team alignment, and workplace climate support.
  - *Systemic Level:* Identifying de-identified recurring themes and institutional trends to inform administrative improvements without compromising individual confidentiality.
- Informal and formal services offered by the Ombuds include:
  - Confidential listening and conflict coaching
  - Receiving formal complaints and/or legal notice
  - Clarifying options, interests, and policy pathways
  - Conducting formal administrative investigations
  - Voluntary facilitation and shuttle mediation
  - Determining policy violations or sanctions
  - Elevating systemic patterns (de-identified)
  - Making official personnel or employment decisions

Questions:

- A faculty member inquired whether all employment classifications are eligible to utilize Ombuds services. Hendrickson confirmed that all full-time, part-time, and facilities staff are fully covered. Regarding student employees, Hendrickson committed to reviewing historical precedent and establishing clear institutional boundaries regarding the Ombuds' coverage scope.

Market Adjustments Update

- Faculty Senate Secretary Edward Brudney presented an update on last year's market adjustments and $1.5 million market funding pool on behalf of Assistant Vice Chancellor Laure Pou

Financial Summary Callout: Faculty Market Funding Pool

- **Original Legislative/Institutional Allocation:** $1,500,000 (Last Fiscal Year)
- **Market Adjustments Implemented:** September 1, 2025
- **Current Remaining Balance:** ~$300,000 *(Note: Historical pool tracking citations referencing $1.9M reflect cumulative market-adjustment tracking allocations on the floor).*
- **Targeted CAS Allocation:** $100,000+ (Rank & Salary Compression)
- **Targeted New Hire Transition Allocation:** $100,000 (Market Median Alignment)
- **Centralized Compensation Reserve:** Residual Unexpended Balance

Planned Allocation Breakdown for Remaining Funds

1. **College of Arts & Sciences (CAS) Compression ($100,000+):** Directed to address severe rank compression (including Lecturer to Senior Lecturer tiers and set code discrepancies) based on detailed analysis from CAS Dean Riggs Glasgow. As UTC's largest college, CAS experienced the highest degree of structural compression following initial threshold distributions.
2. **Transitioning New Hires ($100,000):** Allocated to adjust compensation for faculty hired during the market study transition window under previous market rates, bringing them closer to 90%, 95%, or 100% market median thresholds.
3. **Centralized Compensation Pool:** Residual unspent funds following these targeted adjustments will be transferred to a centralized pool reserved exclusively for ongoing faculty compensation needs.

Discussion and Questions

- **Unallocated Balance Rationale:** In response to floor inquiries regarding why ~$300,000 remained unspent from the initial pool, Vice Chancellor Brent Goldberg explained that initial distributions were calculated to bring eligible faculty up to minimum approved median thresholds. Attempting to raise those thresholds further without strict cap limits would have exhausted funds prematurely and introduced additional problems.
- **Promotion Transition Window Gap:** Faculty Senate Secretary Brudney highlighted the ongoing issue in which faculty promoted during the market study transition window were caught at lower percentage medians (e.g., 85% vs. 95% or 100%). Vice Chancellor Goldberg clarified that while the remaining $300,000 is primarily assigned to new hire transition gaps and CAS rank compression, administrative review of promotion-window gaps remains under evaluation. Assistant Vice Chancellor Laure Pou will attend the November Faculty Senate and can provide further updates/information.

Faculty Concerns

Mocs Books Total Access/First Day Program

- Chelleigh Holland and Vice Chancellor Goldberg provided an operational performance report and addressed faculty floor feedback regarding the Mocs Books Total Access program rollout.

Implementation Statistics

- **Orders Fulfilled:** 8,000+ total orders completed.
- **Participating Students:** Approximately 9,400 students.
- **Opt-Out Rate:** 649 total students opted out campus-wide.
- **Digital-Only Enrollees:** 207 students had purely digital adoptions.

- **Pricing Rate:** Flat fee of $22 per credit hour ($66 for a standard 3-credit course).

Operational Responses to Faculty Concerns

- **Faculty Training & Dedicated Support:** Acknowledging faculty requests for technical guidance, the bookstore announced virtual and in-person departmental training starting in early November (prior to Thanksgiving). The bookstore has appointed a dedicated Digital Communications and Digital Course Materials Manager to assist faculty with Canvas integration, publisher coordination, and student troubleshooting.
- **Composition Access Code Resolution:** Addressing reports of missing access codes (specifically ELI Review in English composition), Holland explained that five faculty members were assigned new course sections one week prior to classes without required course materials flagged in the system. The issue was resolved immediately upon notification.
- **Systemic Email Migration Impact:** Student communication breakdown was significantly compounded by the university's simultaneous system-wide email migration from **Gmail to Outlook** immediately prior to the semester start. This technical transition, combined with student delays in checking email accounts until two weeks into classes, led several students to miss the 30-day opt-out window.

Affordability & Governance Framework

- **Textbook Affordability Committee:** To prevent artificial cost inflation (e.g., unnecessary adoptions driven by flat-rate pricing), UTC is establishing a Textbook Affordability Committee co-led by Library Dean Gritton and faculty representatives. The committee will monitor adoption trends, keep per-credit costs stable at $22, and expand Open Educational Resources (OER).
- **Course Supply Exclusions & Art Kit Rationale:** Standard course supplies (lab goggles, nursing scrubs, custom kits) are excluded from flat-rate pricing. However, an explicit exception was grandfathered for **ART 1010** and **ART 1050** studio kits based on 10 to 20 years of historical course adoption data. Custom kit requests from other units were denied to preserve baseline program affordability.

Little Miss Mags

- Vice Chancellor Brent Goldberg and Dean Valerie Rutledge presented a report detailing the real estate, legal, and operational factors leading to the closure of the Little Miss Mags child care site.

Primary Closure Drivers of Little Miss Mag

- **Historical Partnership Backdrop:** Dean Rutledge provided historical context, noting that UTC's physical involvement at Brown Academy originated in the early

2000s under a former CFO who partnered with Hamilton County Schools to construct Brown Academy with dedicated early childhood space.

- **Environmental Remediation Requirements:** Over a three-year negotiation period (initiated **October 2, 2023**) to transfer property title from Siskin to the State/UTC, mandatory environmental testing revealed that a commercial dry cleaner had operated on the site approximately 90 years ago. Although non-hazardous to daily operations, State real estate mandates required proactive environmental capping beneath the facility—estimated between $250,000 and $500,000—with no institutional funding mechanism identified.
- **Deed and Air Rights Complexities:** The physical building structure lacked independent condominium deeds and was legally structured under "air rights" above the childcare space. State Attorney General and real estate officials rejected this title structure.
- **Shared Fire Protection Costs:** UTC was forced to expend substantial capital to repair a shared building fire protection system owned by upper-floor air-rights holders solely to maintain state daycare licensure.

Transition Logistics & Facility Operations

- **Phased Enrollment Management:** To prevent abrupt loss of care, UTC gradually reduced new enrollments over time.
- **Brown Academy Expansion:** Vice Chancellor Goldberg negotiated with Hamilton County Schools to secure two large upstairs classrooms at Brown Academy. Because these rooms are larger than downstairs spaces, they comply with state square-footage and child-to-staff ratio regulations for toddler and older age groups.
- **Displaced Child Tracking:** Of the 64 children enrolled at Little Miss Mag, 5 were withdrawn by parents, while 59 successfully transitioned to Battle Academy or Brown Academy (with Battle Academy's limited intake slots filled by immediate responders). Physical equipment transfer was scheduled for October 16–18, with full operations opening Monday, October 19.

Regulatory Placement Priorities & State Context

- Mandatory federal and state regulatory frameworks dictate UTC childcare placement priority:
  - **First Priority:** Veterans.
  - **Second Priority:** Hamilton County Schools and UTC Faculty/Staff.
  - **Third Priority:** General Community Members.
- **Communication Deficits & Regional Advocacy:**
  - Administrative leadership acknowledged faculty feedback regarding the lack of a formal campus-wide announcement (noting that only direct parent notices and a reactive statement to press inquiries were issued). Dean Rutledge cited State Senator Bo Watson's recent summit with United Way and "City 2.0" representatives regarding regional childcare shortages, framing local deficits within broader municipal infrastructure

challenges. Long term, if Hamilton County Schools vacates Brown Academy under its master facility plan, UTC intends to evaluate acquiring the entire facility to operate a dedicated campus childcare center.

Campus Parking Concerns & Policy Updates

- Vice Chancellor Brent Goldberg, Brett Fuchs, Chief Sean O'Brien, and David Seidel (via written submission) addressed license plate recognition technology, lot pricing, enforcement, and transit strategies.
    - License Plate Readers (LPR)
        - Vehicle-Mounted Mobile LPRs (Genetec System); non-violation scans purged daily (within 24 hours)
        - Citation scans retained 90 days for appeals.
    - Fixed Surveillance / LPR,~900 Campus Security Cameras (Genetec)
        - No Fixed LPRs or Flock cameras deployed on campus.
    - Vendor Contract Term: Integrated Genetec Ecosystem
        - Contract active through 2028
- In response to faculty questions about parking access (Reserved vs. General) and affordability and potential tiered parking plans, Vice Chancellor Goldberg relayed the following:
    - Lot 7 & Visitor Parking Rates: Flat Rate Visitor Access at $10.00/day
        - Adjusted from $6/day; lower administrative overhead than hourly tracking
    - Reserved vs. General Permits
        - Strict Lot Segregation Rule/Reserved permit holders prohibited from parking in General lots to protect general capacity.
        - The policy (enacted two years ago) prevents faculty and staff from driving vehicles between adjacent academic buildings (e.g., commuting from Fletcher Hall to Grote Hall), which consumes peak general parking capacity needed by daily commuters.
    - Tiered Parking Strategies,Location-Tiered (Under Active Study)
        - Salary-tiered parking rejected due to peer friction; location-tiered pending construction (~1.5 yrs).
        - Location-tiered pricing remains under evaluation pending completion of major campus construction projects (~1.5 years out).
        - To optimize campus transit, shuttle bus routes were compressed from **22 stops down to 7 core stops**, eliminating route overlap and reducing fleet deployment by one bus while improving loop frequency.

Faculty Concern Regarding Sample Recruitment in Sponsored Research Protocols

- President-Elect Wakefield presented a faculty concern from the Faculty Concerns Discussion Board regarding Office of Research and Sponsored Programs (ORSP) administrative procedures
    - **Inquiry Scope:** The submission requested clarification regarding ORSP handling procedures for research proposals that specifically recruit from

designated study demographics (e.g., minority populations, female research cohorts).
    - **Action:** Because ORSP representatives were unavailable to respond during the session, the item was formally escalated to the Executive Leadership Team for administrative review. An official response will be placed on the agenda for the November Faculty Senate meeting.

Announcements and Adjournment

- Following a call for final faculty floor concerns or institutional announcements, and hearing none, Presiding Officer Hannah Wakefield officially adjourned the meeting at 5:49 PM.