

The Faculty Voice

Faculty Senate Newsletter

March 2012

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This newsletter is provided to you as a means of keeping you connected to the activities of the UT Knoxville Faculty Senate, your representative body for the Knoxville campuses. The intent of this newsletter is to keep all faculty members informed about current issues before the Faculty Senate and to motivate all faculty to get involved. Questions regarding and suggestions for this newsletter may be directed to the Information Officer of the Faculty Senate, Stefanie Ohnesorg, at ohnesorg@utk.edu.

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 - **Make Your Voice Be Heard! Provide Input via the Senators from YOUR Unit!**
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1. Mark your Calendars: Spring 2012 Mic/Nite on March 7, 2012

Spring 2012 Mic/Nite will take place Wednesday, March 7, 2012, from 5:30 – 9:30 pm at "The Relix Variety Theatre" (1208 N. Central Avenue). There will be 13 faculty presentations and more information on the event is available at <http://provost.utk.edu/mic-nite/>. For more information on Mic/Nite please contact Beauvais Lyons at blyons@utk.edu.

2. Freedom of Speech Protection

In several court decisions, including the Garcetti ruling, the courts have ruled that freedom of speech is limited to in-class speech and not to speech critical of the university OUTSIDE the classroom. The Faculty Affairs Committee brought this up to the Office of General Counsel and was told that they will NOT consider or support any change to the Faculty Handbook that grants additional free speech rights. Therefore, the Faculty Affairs Committee has decided to have this issue addressed through TUFs (Tennessee University Faculty Senates; <https://umdrive.memphis.edu/g-tufs/pub/>), and TUFs is currently working on a resolution that deals with this issue. The Faculty Senate will make sure to keep the campus informed on any developments related to this important issue, and it is hoped that a negotiated change in wording can be discussed at the April Faculty Senate Executive Council meeting and at the May Faculty Senate meeting. Any comments should be addressed to Phillip Daves, Chair of the Faculty Senate's Faculty Affairs Committee (pdaves@utk.edu). A document outlining the Freedom of Speech provisions at selected peer and aspirant institutions is included as pages 7-8 in the minutes for the February 20, 2012, Faculty Senate Executive Council meeting (<http://senate.utk.edu/files/2011/09/Exec.-Minutes-February-2012.pdf>).

3. The Governor's Budget Proposal

At the February 20, 2012, Faculty Senate Executive Council meeting, Chancellor Cheek distributed a handout with highlights from the Governor's budget proposal. This handout is included as page 6 in the minutes for the February 20, 2012, Faculty Senate Executive Council meeting (<http://senate.utk.edu/files/2011/09/Exec.-Minutes-February-2012.pdf>).

In his presentation, Chancellor Cheek pointed out that he was pleased with the increased allocation in the budget for salaries, but he also mentioned that even more should be done and that he will try to get authority for the campus to add to the proposed increases. Cheek said that he wants to ensure that the campus can hire at market value, and that he would like to focus in particular on closing the wage gap for full professors. Currently, full professors are furthest away from the mean, and Cheek pointed out that improvements in this area could be reached by implementing some kind of post-tenure review. Cheek also pointed out that we have made some progress with regard to closing the salary gap this year: When compared to our peer institutions, this year associate professors (on average) moved \$5,000 closer to the mean; full professors (on average) moved \$8,000 closer to the mean.

In addition, the campus was allocated almost \$4 million extra in the Governor's budget proposal because of the new outcomes based formula. If that formula had been totally implemented, UTK would have received a \$6 million increase. UTK received \$94,000,000 for Strong Hall, and UTK will pay 20% of the debt service on that building. Cheek further mentioned that the student support (evidenced in their agreeing to pay a building fee) convinced the Governor of the need to invest in renovation and restoration, and that the Governor's budget also included \$3 million for other buildings. Some of the other buildings needing renovation and restoration are Walters Life Sciences, Melrose, Hoskins Library, and Nursing. There is already a specific plan to have major renovation done this summer in HSS.

4. "One Stop Shop" for Students

The campus is repurposing the ground level of Hodges Library to offer expedited and technologically advanced student services dealing with transactions and money. Services to be included are registration, financial aid and bursar's office. At the "One Stop Shop" for students, there will be counselors trained on services currently performed across campus. Establishing a "One Stop Shop" for students will elevate service levels, and it will reduce lines and waiting times for student services.

5. Partner Benefits

The Benefits and Professional Development Committee passed a resolution asking for benefit support for LGBT partners and heterosexual couples who chose not to marry. This resolution is posted at http://senate.utk.edu/files/2011/09/2-LGBT-benefit-equality-resolution-2_16.pdf, and it will be discussed at the April meeting of the Faculty Senate Executive Council.

In order to document what kind of partner benefits are offered by our peer institutions, the Benefits and Professional Development Committee collected data from publicly accessible websites of peer institutions and compiled these data in a spreadsheet. This survey documents that there is a wide range of different types of benefits offered by these institutions.

Most of our peers support at least some of them and others support most of them. Of the 33 types of benefits identified, support among the top 26 Universities ranged from no support found on 2 campuses (William and Mary and Texas A&M) to 25 benefits supported on two separate campuses (UC-B and Wisconsin). This spreadsheet assesses the status quo across the country and it would be unrealistic to expect that all benefits identified in this survey could be implemented at once on our campus. It also needs to be noted that current state law prevents

the campus from adopting some of these benefits but that some of the benefits listed could be implemented without a change of current state law. Input and suggestions should be addressed to Adam Taylor, Chair of the Faculty Senate's Benefits and Professional Development Committee (AdamTaylor@utk.edu). The spreadsheet comparing partner benefits at peer institutions is included as pages 10-12 in the minutes for the February 20, 2012, Faculty Senate Executive Council meeting (<http://senate.utk.edu/files/2011/09/Exec.-Minutes-February-2012.pdf>).

6. Faculty Senate Updates

The UT Knoxville Faculty Senate is the representative body through which the faculty participates in University affairs and shared governance. Through committees and a democratically elected legislative body, it promulgates policies and regulations regarding the general educational objectives of UT Knoxville. **It is, therefore, important that all faculty members stay 'connected' with the Faculty Senate by staying informed and by providing input and comments via the Senators who represent them in the Faculty Senate.**

Please note that the Faculty Senate website (<http://senate.utk.edu/>) has been reorganized. Please make sure to familiarize yourself with the new layout so that you will know where to find all current and past Faculty Senate documents and reports.

The **calendar for all 2011-12 meetings of the Faculty Senate and the Faculty Senate Executive Council** are posted here: <http://senate.utk.edu/calendar/>.

Important Resources on the Faculty Senate Website:

a. Links to Minutes, Agendas, Reports etc. for 2011-12

Main Page: <http://senate.utk.edu/current-session/archives-2011-2012/>

Please make sure to scroll down to the bottom of this page in order to see the updates for all areas.

Please check frequently for updates regarding the work of Faculty Senate because new items will be added as they become available!

Archived Senate Reports, Minutes & Publications are organized by academic year and can be found here: <http://senate.utk.edu/archives/>

b. Links to the **Agenda for the March 5, 2012, Faculty Senate Meeting**

(<http://senate.utk.edu/files/2011/09/FSAgenda-3-5-12.pdf>), and to the

Faculty Senate President's Report for March 2012

(<http://senate.utk.edu/files/2011/09/1-Faculty-Senate-President-Report-3-5-12.pdf>).

IMPORTANT! Make Your Voice Be Heard!!

The List of all 2011-12 Senators (incl. contact info) is posted here:

<http://senate.utk.edu/files/2011/07/Membership-2012-2014-with-email-addresses5.pdf>

All 2011-12 Senate Committee Assignments are posted here:

<http://senate.utk.edu/files/2011/07/Committees-2011-201213.pdf>

The List of all 2011-12 Faculty Senate Caucus Leaders is posted here:

<http://senate.utk.edu/files/2011/07/Faculty-Senate-Caucus-Leaders-2011-2012.pdf>

Contact information for the 2011-12 Faculty Senate President, Vince Anfara, and for all other Faculty Senate Officers in 2011-12 is posted here: <http://senate.utk.edu/senate-officers-2011-2012/>