

Gary Skolits

Candidate for 2018-2019 Faculty Senate President-Elect

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STATEMENT

I am committed to working towards greater faculty engagement, influence, and change regarding the key [“issues of faculty interest”](#); free speech and academic freedom, post-tenure review, outsourcing, diversity and inclusion, and campus safety. Recent legislation and system policy initiatives have maintained a prolonged series of external efforts that essentially disenfranchises faculty and students from UT Board decision making, subjects faculty to ever more burdensome and time-consuming regulation (external mandates to post-tenure review), defunds Diversity and Inclusion functions, diminishes general education, and seeks to eliminate our local community workforce. The Faculty Senate, in collaboration with others, will continue to challenge or change initiatives that do not advance the work of our faculty and our institution. As Faculty Senate President, I would work towards countering negative and at times confrontational attitudes towards our faculty and institution, regardless of the source. I will seek to promote strong partnerships, funding growth, and greater external support for a university that is an economic engine of this state and to some extent the nation. I will support Senate efforts to consistently and enthusiastically remind all stakeholders that each and every year we educate thousands of students from Tennessee and beyond who become productive citizens and leaders in business, industry, education, the non-profit service sector and the arts in Tennessee, the nation, and the world. We expand the boundaries of knowledge and its application, serve communities in need, and create works of art, music, literature, and drama etc. that all contribute to our collective economic wellbeing and civic culture, and these accomplishments should be celebrated and included in policy discussions. To accomplish this, I believe that we will need to further nurture our faculty base of support, collaborate strategically wherever possible, and continually refine and share our message and commitments to internal and external audiences. While acknowledging and respecting the roles and responsibilities of state government as well as system and campus leadership, faculty will need to hold themselves and others accountable for achieving true shared governance, transparency, academic freedom, diversity (where Vol truly means all), growth, and excellence in service to the UT mission and the citizens of this great State.

BIOGRAPHY

Gary Skolits serves as a tenured associated professor of Evaluation, Statistics, and Measurement (ESM) at the University of Tennessee (Department of Educational Psychology), where he coordinates the ESM PhD program. He recently completed 10 years of service as the executive director of the University of Tennessee’s Institute for Assessment and Evaluation where he directed over 150 evaluation studies for community, state, regional, and national projects (bringing in approximately \$4 million in external funding to the University). Skolits has

34 years of higher education service in Tennessee, including 17 years at an East Tennessee regional community college where he served as a Dean of Planning, Research, and Assessment. Skolits spent many days and evenings in Nashville working with the Tennessee Higher Education Commission (on performance funding and program evaluation) and the Tennessee Board of Regents (on statewide regional strategic planning, system and unit report card “metrics”, instructional cost study, etc.). Prior to his work in Tennessee public higher education, Skolits was a corporate financial systems analyst (North American Philips Consumer Electronics), a community/regional planner (Tennessee Valley Authority), and a city management executive (Miami-Dade, Florida). Skolits is the proud father of a daughter and a son who both graduated from the University of Tennessee.