

Dear Colleagues,

I'm currently obligated with responsibilities concerning our future leadership. I'm grateful to incoming President Gary Skolits for running the meeting in my absence.

This year has made me even more mindful of the importance of the ways shared governance strengthens and improves our land-grant university at a time when its role is so urgent. This past weekend's meeting of TUFSS, the Tennessee University Faculty Senates, also underscored its importance, though by contrast. I discovered we are one of the few Senates where the President does not have a post on a major leadership council within the university though, like many others presidents, I meet regularly with the Provost and Chancellor. The UTK Senate President sat on the Council of Deans until Bob Holub abolished that practice 10 years ago, and in Budget hearings until those were also abandoned. By comparison,

- at UT Martin, the Senate President sits on the Chancellor's cabinet, the Council of Deans, and is listed as a member of the Chancellor's cabinet on the website;
- at UT Health Science Center, the Senate President sits on the monthly meeting of Chancellors and Deans and the quarterly Council of Deans, Vice Chancellors, and the Chancellor;
- at ETSU, the Senate President (with the Senate Vice President and the Past President) sit on Academic Council and the Dean's Council;
- at the University of Memphis, the Senate President sits on the weekly President's Council;
- at Tennessee Tech, the Senate President attends the Dean's Council, sits as a member of the President's Cabinet, and on the Budget Advisory Committee;
- at Austin Peay, the Senate President sits on the President's Council;
- at MTSU, the Senate President sits on the President's cabinet and the Student Success team weekly, the Dean's cabinet, the Deans and Directors meetings, and the Council of department chairs, as well as monthly meetings with the Provost and a 0/0 teaching load. Their Senate also has a full-time staff person and a large, full-time dedicated meeting space.

The Faculty's elected leader needs to be included as matters are being discussed and responses formulated in key leadership meetings, just as we include administrative leaders in our Executive and full meetings. We will make better decisions with this meaningful and timely input. We can restore and build trust through those conversations. And we can achieve what The Association of Governing Boards defines as the best model of shared governance, which is not equal votes, or consultation, or rules of engagement, but a system for **aligning priorities** for the **welfare of the institution** through **open communication** in a culture of **shared responsibility**. The faculty are the long-term stewards of this institution, especially in an age of administrative turnover. UT needs our voices in the conversation, so I call on Interim Chancellor Davis and Provost Manderscheid to put the Senate President on one or more of such councils as a way to realize formal, regular, and meaningful shared governance on our campus.