

## **Report on meeting of the Tennessee University Faculty Senates (TUFS)**

Attended by Bonnie Ownley (TUFS Past President), Misty Anderson (TUFS President), and Shawn Spurgeon (UTK/UTIA Faculty Senate President); September 18-20, 2020 via Zoom

Tennessee University Senates (TUFS) is an independent consortium of faculty senate presidents and one elected campus representative from each of the 10 public universities across Tennessee. TUFS is the vehicle for communicating information about shared governance and a variety of other important issues at our institutions.

As part of the TUFS meeting, members participated in a meeting with the newly established National Council of Faculty Senates (NCFS), which was formed in Austin, Texas on October 27th 2018 by 41 shared governance leaders from universities across the U.S. The mission of NCFS is to advocate for faculty senates and to unite members to support and strengthen shared, effective, and influential faculty governance on American university and college campuses. The NCFS is divided into regional groups and Dr. Sandi Smith-Andrews, the president-elect of TUFS and professor at TTU, will be the chair of the multi-state southeast region.

At both meetings, we discussed the institutional response to Covid-19, which covered a wide range of topics, including shared governance practices during development of plans to return to campus. The importance of communication and transparency was stressed. Concerns were raised about mental health issues of faculty, staff and administrators stemming from exhaustion and isolation.

The NCFS keynote speakers were Dr. Sirry Alang (Lehigh University) and Hans-Joerg Tiede (American Association of University Professors). Dr. Alang gave a powerful presentation on racial inequities in the academy and urged all to look inward at our own actions and inactions, because that is what we can control. Hans-Joerg Tiede shared and compared results of past AAUP shared governance surveys and discussed a new survey that he is developing to address current shared governance practices and university response to Covid-19. Similar surveys are being developed by NCFS and TUFS to share information among university faculty senates to find best practices and solutions to challenges that we are all facing. In addition, TUFS will be launching an initiative to push expanded broadband access for rural and underserved communities. TUFS will meet virtually on December 5, 2020.