

FACULTY SENATE
MINUTES

March 1, 2021, Zoom Meeting

Absent: Douglas Aaron, Samereh Abdoli*, David Ader, David Alley, Jeremy Chandler, Chris Cimino, Frank Cuevas, Lisa Driscoll, Neal Eash, Yuri Efremenko, Lt. Col. Tony Estep, Yanfei Gao, Matt Harris, Qiang He, Freida Herron, Anne Ho*, David Icové, Bernard Issa, Justin Jia, Karen Jones, Rebecca Kite, Brian Krumm, Luiz Lima, Madhu Madhukar, Vasileios Maroulas*, Viki Meloy, Mark Moon*, Gretchen Neisler, Stephen Paddison, Chris Parigger, Rachelle Scott, S. Aaron Smith, Kai Sun, Forbes Walker, Courtney Wright, Edward Yu, Zhili Zhang

*Alternates: Lisa Merritt for Samereh Abdoli, Andrew Steiner for Anne Ho, Jeneva Clark for Vasileios Maroulas, Mark Collins for Mark Moon

I. ESTABLISHMENT OF QUORUM (E. Bernard)

E. Bernard established that there was a quorum.

II. CALL TO ORDER

S. Spurgeon called the meeting to order at 3:31 p.m.

III. REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

Undergraduate Council Minutes (C. Kojima)

The Undergraduate Council minutes of February 2, 2021, were presented. C. Kojima summarized the minutes. The Academic Policy Committee has a number of voting items. One is to update the repeat policy to add the categories of the new grades from the mode changes during the pandemic. This change has almost no impact on faculty but is used for record keeping. Another is to add language about the single letter designation courses (R, I, S, C, etc.).

The Curriculum Committee approved a number of changes, which were then approved by the Undergraduate Council.

The General Education Committee has approved 79 courses in December and 64 in January for VolCore.

The UC has also approved these. The Senate now needs to vote on these as well. The Parliamentarian indicated we could approve these all at once and that they do not need a motion and second. The Senate voted 69 in favor, 0 no, and 6 to abstain.

Consent Agenda

Committee reports were included with the agenda.

S. Spurgeon said that committees will be reporting to the Senate in the future but for now, senators are asked to read the reports.

IV. ANNOUNCEMENTS

President's Report (S. Spurgeon)

The Senate is seeking a parliamentarian since E. Bernard will be stepping down. E. Bernard has

created a list of FAQs. Please let S. Spurgeon know if you or anyone you know is interested in this position. E. Bernard is willing to speak to anyone interested in the parliamentary position. He says the job is not particularly difficult; it just requires paying attention to the workings of the Senate.

S. Spurgeon has been in touch with the caucus chairs about upcoming elections. We don't have the numbers for each area yet due to unforeseen circumstances. He will keep the caucus chairs abreast of process towards the election.

UTK Chancellor's Report (D. Plowman)

The Chancellor gave an update on the BOT meeting. They approved the renaming of the two dorms (Orange and White) to Robinson and Geier. She did receive the letter from 27 Republican Senators against student athletes taking a knee during the national anthem. She recognized that people look at kneeling during the anthem in different ways. She respects veterans and free speech and does not plan to do anything to limit athlete's free speech.

The Strategic Visioning Process has 5 goals that will be addressed by Implementation Work Groups, prioritizing actions steps, identifying needed tasks, developing a timeline and budget, and proposing metrics for assessment. They will be working for a few months on this.

UT President Boyd presented a set of values for the system (Be One UT) which the Chancellor likes. We will see more of this in the future.

C. White asked about the Covid vaccine: "Is there a way faculty should have known about the vaccinations on campus?" All eligible campus members should have received an email. Many did not receive an email. She will check into that. Those who have been vaccinated at UT say the process was seamless. L. Driscoll shared links on how to sign up for the vaccine. The on-line calendar is the best way to sign up as groups are eligible.

<https://www.utk.edu/coronavirus/vaccine>

https://calendar.utk.edu/ut_employee_student_covid-19_vaccinations

Provost's Report (J. Zomchick)

Provost Zomchick said that for the Fall semester we are planning for a full residential experience for traditional students with classes at normal capacity. It may be a challenge to move students back to face to face. On-line and hybrid classes can still be offered but the modality should be determined by departmental and pedagogical priorities.

Winter mini-term: We are planning to pilot a winter mini-term in January 2022 as a standalone semester. It is up to departments and faculty to offer classes. Faculty can opt for additional pay. The focus is on student success. This should not require a change to class meeting times until 2022-23.

Inclusive practices: There is a focus on offering students more inclusive experiences in the classroom. He recommends that each Academic Unit devote a meeting to inclusive teaching practices as part of a diversity action plan. The TLI and the Office of the Provost provide support to academic units.

Lecturer salaries: The UCW sent a request for minimum salary of \$60K for Non-Tenure Track Faculty. He reviewed the history of salary adjustments for NTTF. There is a retroactive salary increase starting now that brings minimum salaries to 40K for lecturers with an MA and 45K for those with terminal degrees. All salaries are tied to market norms and faculty salaries are benchmarked annually. Our averages will be in-line with peers and the region in most units.

All lecturers are eligible for additional adjustments during the next raise cycle. There is a 4% raise pool and Deans are encouraged to make additional adjustments. The NTTF task force is considering shortening the time to senior lecturer to 3 years instead of 5. NTTF will see a double payment in March that shows the raise since February.

A senator asked that if most students are not vaccinated by fall, can we be back in the classroom? The Provost said that the public health experts say we can go back. It is not certain if masks will be required, it depends on what the CDC says and what best practices are. How can we plan for social distancing? The Provost says we will continue to look at this. What about lab classroom capacities? They will be back to normal also. The Provost says we will continue to monitor the rapidly changing scenario.

Will students use the HOPE Scholarship for winter mini-term? Yes, because they can use whatever aid is available.

W. Jennings expressed his concern that distinguished lecturers will suffer from salary compression and the 4% salary pool may not solve this problem. The Provost said we need to see what the salary pool can accomplish. These funds are controlled by colleges and departments. The Provost promises that these will not be the last adjustments and the new budget model will change how colleges allocate funds.

T. Fridman said that new NTTF hires are not allowed to count previous experience in their salaries. What about workload? Many lecturers work more than 50 hours a week. The Provost responded that the data does not take in to account prior experience or workload. Every department is different and there is no one salary scale.

M. Black shared that a distinguished colleague in her department was demoralized when Student Success Center gathered information from students doing poorly in the class. This information was collated and shared among students and the department. The student complaints were taken as truth and TAs and the faculty member were unable to respond to these complaints and allegations. She asserted that this is a form of surveillance and needs to be explained. The process is an incursion into the relationship between faculty and students and into faculty prerogative. Problems with faculty should be dealt with in the department. Students should deal with faculty first.

A. Williams agrees with everything Dr. Black said. In this case it was not a normal pattern of feedback. Three students came with similar complaints and were counseled about how to talk to faculty. The students were frightened of the faculty and A. Williams then decided to speak to the department head. The intentions were good, not intended as a form of surveillance or control. This is not a practice, this was an out of the ordinary situation. The Provost said that when his office gets complaints from students or parents those concerns are referred to the college in question. He stated that no one wants to undermine faculty in any situation. M. Black

appreciates the responses. She is concerned that parents and students feel they have a customer service department that solves problems and this denies students the opportunity to learn to resolve conflict. Unfortunately, every time this happens, faculty are undermined.

UFC Report (D. Patterson)

D. Patterson reported that the UFC met last week. There will be a 4% faculty raise pool. The system is getting licenses for EMSI software, marketing analysis software. The TUFs workload survey is still being analyzed but the key findings are that teaching on-line is more time consuming than face-to-face instruction. All faculty are working more hours and spending more time on teaching. Faculty are working during summers more.

The sick leave survey closed last week and will be analyzed soon. He also shared a NYTimes article about a graduate student in Pharmacy who was censured and removed from her program because of her Instagram posts. She was then reinstated by her dean. This event may have had a deleterious effect on the reputation of all the UT campuses. President Boyd did not know about this issue until the February publication of the NYTimes article. Does the system have in place a procedure to react to these kinds of events? There is a policy that should alert all stake holders. No evidence of the System's reactions to this event was presented to the UFC, despite the intersection of race and free speech associated with the matter. As of February 24, 2021, the UT System website indicated there is an Office of Inclusion, Diversity, and Equity (<https://diversity.tennessee.edu>), but there is no one named as the responsible party. The UT System had no such entity listed on its organizational chart (<https://tennessee.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/SystemOrgChart.pdf>). The UFC was reminded that an Executive Director of Equity and Diversity (Ms. Delphina Howze) was announced in September 2020. It is unclear if Ms. Howze's office was engaged in addressing the UTHSC matter.

There was discussion of Tennessee Senate Bill (SB 0365)

(<https://wapp.capitol.tn.gov/apps/BillInfo/Default.aspx?BillNumber=SB0365>). This bill adds to the present law provisions relating to the process of hiring certain higher education officials. It extends the provision that "up to three finalists" may be recommended to include searches for "a chancellor of a university of Tennessee campus or institute". The discussion in the UFC centered around whether the identities of the possible three finalists would be disclosed to the campus community. One argued that disclosure of candidates would limit the number of high-quality candidates willing to have it be known they were seeking a position with the University of Tennessee. The articulated alternative view was non-disclosure of candidate information flies in the face of transparency and shared governance as since it allows search committees to only disclose for one finalist.

B. Lyons asked about the Martin Methodist acquisition and how that will change the composition of the UFC. Martin Methodist has been invited but that is all that has happened so far.

V. MINUTES OF THE FACULTY SENATE

The Faculty Senate meeting minutes of February 1, 2021, were presented for approval. B. Lyons moved for approval, seconded by R. Caldwell. The minutes were approved (75 in favor, 0 against, 1 abstaining).

VI. OLD BUSINESS

Resolution with GSS and GA Fees (M. McAlpin and A. Boyd)

M. McAlpin shared the updated resolution requesting that the university cover fees for graduate fees. She presented data on graduate students salaries and fees that are the source of the numbers in the resolution. It is not clear where the money to cover these fees will come from but if this is a priority, the money can be found. A. Boyd, president of the Graduate Student Senate presented the GSS perspective on the issue and the importance of bringing this to the attention of the upper administration. The GSS wants the support of the Faculty Senate as they work to change the situation. M. McAlpin moved to accept the resolution put forth regarding graduate student fees and B. Lyons seconded the motion.

J. Hathaway commented that paying fees is a common practice in most universities. Is the issue that they are too high or if students should be paying them at all? M. McAlpin stated that the fees have been going up when tuition cannot and stipends do not. Many universities cover fees for students. J. Zomchick said that increases in general fees go before the board for approval.

C. White asked why our fees are so high? The Chancellor clarified that some fees are actually differential tuition which graduate students must pay. The largest fees are student activity, health and library. P. Daves asked if this issue is resolved if departments disclose fees in offer letters? M. McAlpin said that many programs do let students know about fees but not all. B. Lyons stated that his department discloses fees and this has caused students to choose other programs with better offers. D. Thompson said that the sample offer letter includes a list of fees. The university is trying to find more ways to decrease the burden on graduate students. Most campuses charge some mandatory fees. UT is not alone in this. M. Collins shared that in Business Analytics the excessive fees and tuition is clearly on the website when they apply. J. Hay indicated that the issue is really the amount of the graduate stipend.

The Senate voted: 52 in favor, 11 against, 12 abstaining.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

Resolution to Extend Faculty Choice for the Use of TNVoice End-of-Course Student Survey (A. Langendorfer)

Tabled until April meeting.

Resolution on Hazard Pay for Facilities Services (H. Meadows)

This resolution is an advisory document and it has been made as inclusive as possible. This resolution is not meant to disparage the efforts made to keep campus safe during the pandemic.

T. Fridman moved to accept, second by A. Roessner. C. Greenacre stated that everyone at the Veterinary School (faculty, techs, assistants) are essential workers and have been working with the public throughout the pandemic. The Veterinary School should be included in this resolution. Several asked if the resolution should be more specific. The authors say that the resolution is for everyone who has had to be on campus over the last year.

The senate voted: 54 in favor, 4 against, 8 abstaining.

Faculty Affairs, UTK-UTIA Faculty Handbook Revisions (D. Kelly)
Tabled until April meeting.

Crediting Faculty for Open, Public Access to Research and Scholarship as Outreach Service in APPR (R. Caldwell)
Tabled until April meeting.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 5:17 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Millie Gimmel, Faculty Senate Secretary