

FACULTY SENATE

MINUTES

April 5, 2021, Zoom Meeting

Absent: Douglas Aaron, Samereh Abdoli, Tom Berg, Ann Berry*, Chris Cimino, Frank Cuevas, Phillip Daves*, Neal Eash, Yuri Efremenko, Lt. Col. Tony Estep, Michael Gilchrist, Cheryl Greenacre, Kyung Han, Matt Harris, Jon Hathaway, Qiang He, Freida Herron, David Icove, William Jennings, Karen Jones, Rebecca Kite, Brian Krumm, Luiz Lima, Eric Lukosi, Madhu Madhukar, Vasileios Maroulas*, Mary McAlpin, Viki Meloy, Darryl Millis, Audris Mockus, Mark Moon, Stephen Paddison, Amber Roessner, Adam Taylor, Rossy Toledo*, Forbes Walker, Candace White, Courtney Wright, Edward Yu, Zhili Zhang

*Alternates: Lisa Washburn for Ann Berry, Mark Collins for Phillip Daves, Theodora Bourni for Vasileios Maroulas, Robert Sauveur for Rossy Toledo

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 3:32 p.m.

III. REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

Undergraduate Council Minutes (C. Kojima)

The Undergraduate Council minutes of February 23, 2021, were presented. C. Kojima highlighted the approval of 25 courses more into VolCore. The Curriculum Committee has discussed the CIS (Contemporary Issues and Solutions) graduation requirement. Only 26 courses have applied for this designation and none have been evaluated. They approved dismissing this requirement which will be up for a Senate vote at our next meeting. The Senate voted 66 to approve, 0 against, and 7 abstaining; the minutes were approved.

Graduate Council Minutes (A. Broemmel)

The Graduate Council minutes of February 18, 2021, were presented. A. Broemmel summarized that the Graduate Council approved curriculum changes. There needs to be a different way of approving curriculum changes in the future. The academic code of conduct office has handled grade appeals that may not be a result of academic misconduct concerns. The faculty member becomes the chair of that committee which is not always ideal. This is a state-wide issue and the council is looking for solutions. The Council voted on a waiver for students who cannot provide transcripts from all institutions previously attended. This has been changed in the *Graduate Handbook*. The Senate voted 70 to approve, 0 against and 4 abstaining; the minutes were approved.

Consent Agenda

Committee reports were included with the agenda.

IV. ANNOUNCEMENTS

President's Report (S. Spurgeon)

S. Spurgeon welcomed everyone to the next to last Senate meeting. If you are an alternate make sure you share in the chat who you are subbing for. The ballot for senate seats will be

finalized tomorrow. He extends his thanks to Brooke Killion for her work on this and for her organizational skills. He also thanks former president G. Skolits.

The Senate still needs a parliamentarian. Please share names of interested parties by April 30. Anyone interested in being president for the next year (starting July 1, 2021), please send a bio by April 30. If you are interested in being president-elect (starting July 1, 2022), please send a bio by April 30.

The administration has committed to more support for the Senate President's position. Interested parties should review the Senate by-laws for criteria for eligibility.

D. Patterson asked if it would be possible to send an announcement for the two positions to the entire faculty. It might generate a broader pool of candidates. President Spurgeon will follow up on this.

UTK Chancellor's Report (D. Plowman)

The Chancellor asked everyone to get vaccinated as soon as they can. On campus they are vaccinating 200/day at the clinic and at a mass event of 1,100 every week. They are hoping to add another mass event per week for a total of 3200 vaccinations per week. Later this afternoon there will be messages clarifying the on-campus plans for the Fall with some of the operational details. She thanks all faculty for their efforts in preparing for face-to-face and on-line courses. She is encouraging all staff to get vaccinated and they are planning to have staff back on campus on June 1. Some may continue to telecommute with approval from Deans and other administrators.

She clarified the salary increases. The proposal to be approved by the legislature is a 2% bonus for 6 months of this year for everyone who is not a contract employee from January 1–June 30, 2021. There is a 4% recurring money increase proposed for use as merit pay and for addressing market issues. Deans will be managing the 4% salary funds. She encouraged faculty to read Tennessee Today to be informed about Covid and diversity initiatives.

The Strategic Vision is at the stage of implementing the 5 major goals. This will be ongoing for the next several months.

There was a question about how to prepare for students who do not get vaccinated. The Chancellor said that if someone is not vaccinated that does not mean they don't have to come back to the office. UT will be following the CDC guidelines around mask usage. This will be an evolving situation. Will students be required to be vaccinated? They will not be required to do so but the risk will be for the unvaccinated more than for the vaccinated. There was a question about if virus variants are being monitored through pooled saliva testing. They are being watched and so far, there have not been cases of the Brazilian variants on campus.

Provost's Report (J. Zomchick)

The Provost began by discussing fall scheduling; 91% of classes are scheduled to be fully in person but the administration will continue to monitor the public health situation. There will be fully in-person and fully asynchronous classes but there can be exceptions to this as approved by deans and department heads.

The Provost and Chancellor will be offering the Senate presidents more assistance. They will increase the administrative support to 1FTE staff member and continue to support the graduate assistant at the rate of a 50% GA. The Senate president will receive a \$10,000 stipend and continue to receive course releases and operating expenses for the senate. This is an increase of \$45,000-\$50,000 for the Senate.

For Fall 2021, the enrollment looks promising, likely an increase in numbers of the freshman class but much is still dependent on the pandemic.

B. Lyons thanked the Provost for the additional support for the Senate. He asked if there could be more emphasis on synchronous on-line courses, especially in oral communication and professional behavior, since this will likely be commonplace in the future. Having only asynchronous modalities eliminates the real-life experience of on-line synchronous communication. Faculty should discuss this with their department heads. The Provost said that individuals with health concerns should go through OED to schedule on-line classes. Choices for delivery modalities should be pedagogically sound. The administration is erring toward a fully residential experience in the fall and will then reconsider this later. On-line synchronous courses should be used as an enhancement to face-to-face teaching. The Chancellor said we should keep upgrading classroom space to make this more effective for hybrid teaching modalities.

There was a question if the university can commit to CDC guidelines as opposed to only following state guidelines. The Provost says that the university will follow the CDC guidelines as they have all along.

UFC Report (D. Patterson)

D. Patterson thanked the administrators for the increased support to the senate. The March 17 UFC meeting was not attended by President Boyd. The Vice President was there. The Martin Methodist acquisition is underway. They are doing tenure transfer for the faculty and there will be a SACS accreditation visit soon.

There is a move to normalize Banner across the System since every campus has a slightly different platform.

The BOT will meet face to face in June.

The Senate resolution asking for the protocol for choosing the system president to be amended has been passed by UTC and Martin Methodist. The Health Sciences Center has chosen not to take this up. It will likely be voted on in the next meeting.

The salary survey results are still preliminary. The UTK faculty support extended medical leave.

Across all the state universities there are different usages of the titles President and Chancellor and there is a move to standardize usage. At this point it has not gotten much attention.

D. Patterson invites senators to send him questions they might have for Drs. Stacey Patterson and Joan Bienvenue. His email is dpat2@utk.edu.

V. MINUTES OF THE FACULTY SENATE

The Faculty Senate meeting minutes of March 1, 2021, were presented for approval. There was a mistake in the attendance that has been corrected. B. Lyons moved for approval, seconded by A. Broemmel. The minutes were approved (71 in favor, 0 against, 2 abstaining).

VI. OLD BUSINESS

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

A. Langendorfer shared the resolution and reviewed the situations that prompted it and the requests being made. This current use of TNVoice favors White males who speak standard English. Marginalized and minority groups are not well served by the evaluations and the pandemic has exacerbated the problem. The resolution asks for the extension of the choice to use TNVoice in evaluations for Spring, Summer and Fall 2020 and all of 2021.

B. Lyons commented that the *Handbook* uses self-evaluation, student evaluation and peer reviews to evaluate teaching. How is this being considered in the resolution? Peer review teaching requires a lot of work and is very valuable. It should be prioritized at all levels.

D. Kelly spoke with other vice provosts and deans in making the decision to do away with the choice to use student evaluations. She agrees that these evaluations can be problematic but it is the only way for students to provide feedback on courses. This can be useful feedback for faculty. A. Langendorfer shares the desire to collect student feedback but not to use them to evaluate faculty teaching.

The faculty voted 60 in favor of the resolution, 9 against, and 4 abstaining; the resolution passed.

Faculty Affairs, UTK-UTIA Faculty Handbook Revisions (D. Kelly)

The Vice Provost, D. Kelly, reviewed the changes that will make the *Faculty Handbook* in compliance with board policy. Most were around issues concerning the delay of the enhanced and final tenure reviews because of the pandemic. B. Lyons added that these changes were discussed by the Faculty Affairs committee in February. This is the first reading of these changes but we can choose to suspend the first reading so we can vote today.

S. Spurgeon asked if there were any objections to suspending the rules of first reading. There were none.

J. Hay asked if the new language for extensions is only about the pandemic, not for family leave. D. Kelly clarified this is the difference between suspension and extension of the tenure clock. The faculty voted 62 in favor, 0 against, and 4 abstaining to accept the revisions to the *Handbook*. The revisions to the *Handbook* were accepted.

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

R. Caldwell reviewed the white paper sent out with the agenda. The university is missing opportunities to make our research and scholarship available to the public. Faculty could be incentivized to make their work available in open access by counting this as service in the APPR. Open access publishing is becoming more important at all levels. It is possible to archive openly

even if the research is not in an OA publication. Open archiving requires an additional step by the faculty member and should be incentivized and incorporated into departmental by-laws. The Senate may also want to consider making documents available in OA. Caldwell's presentation will be made available to the Senate. Senators are encouraged to join the Library Committee.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

2021-2022 Faculty Senate/Faculty Senate Executive Council Calendar (S. Spurgeon)

The retreat will be held via zoom. The retreat schedule/format can be adapted by the new President.

J. Hay moved to approve and A. Langendorfer seconded.

A senator asked if meetings will be on line. Right now, the fall meetings are planned for on-line then possibly in person in the Spring. M. Collins said that we should do what students are doing. If they are face-to-face, we should be also. A. Langendorfer said that on-line meetings have been better attended, especially by parents and individuals with disabilities who can participate more on-line. Others agreed with Langendorfer. Collins retracted his earlier comment.

The Senate voted 57 in favor, 0 against, and 2 abstaining; the calendar was approved.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 5:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Millie Gimmel, Faculty Senate Secretary