



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**TENNESSEE**  
KNOXVILLE

**FACULTY SENATE MEETING**  
**MONDAY, MAY 3, 2021**  
**3:30 PM VIA ZOOM**

<https://tennessee.zoom.us/j/91683509982>

**AGENDA**

Shawn Spurgeon, President  
Millie Gimmel, Secretary Ernest Bernard, Parliamentarian  
Robert Spirko, Communications Officer

**ESTABLISHMENT OF QUORUM** (E. Bernard)

**NOT IN ATTENDANCE:** Aaron, Douglas; Benjamin, Stefanie; Cimino, Chris; Cuevas, Frank; Neisler, Gretchen; Olsson, Tore; Paddison, Stephen; Parigger, Chris; Schaeffer, Sean; Sorensen, Soren; Taylor, Adam; Williams, James; Yu, Edward. There were no alternates attending.

**CALL TO ORDER at 15:33**

**REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES**

Approval of Minutes

Undergraduate Council Minutes – [April 13, 2021](#)

Test Optional Pilot Program (F. D'Aloisio)

Discussion: C. Kojima reviewed the undergraduate council minutes. The council passed a number of proposals. There was a special meeting about having a test optional policy (ACT and SAT) for new applicants. F. D'Aloisio discussed the pilot program for the test optional program. This will be a five-year program. Many institutions have moved to this test optional form of admissions, in part because of the pandemic and in part because it has been hard for students to take the test this year. For the 2021-22 school year 30% of students who applied did not take a national test and 28% of those accepted admission. This has led to an increased number of minority students and students from a diversity of backgrounds. UT will need to monitor the success of these students throughout their degree program and assess if test optional admission benefits everyone. With a five-year pilot there will be enough good data to see if this is a viable program.

M. Black asked about dropping the contemporary issues and solutions item from gen ed. C. Kojima explained that this came from the curriculum committee since it is separate from VolCore. There were some proposals for this category but they were never evaluated. This may be resuscitated in the future but the category of gen ed will not be ready for fall 2022. Senator Black expressed that there was never leadership on the committee and to drop this because of lack of faculty participation is disturbing.

The actions of the minutes were approved: 71 In favor, 2 Against and 10 abstaining.

Graduate Council Minutes – [March 25, 2021](#)

Discussion: Senator Broemmel reviewed that there was only one voting item and it was on improving the procedures on grade appeals.

The actions of the minutes were approved: 75 In favor; 1 against; 10 abstaining

Consent Agenda – Committee Reports ([click here](#))

Discussion: President Spurgeon encourages everyone to read the committee reports to understand what has been happening this year. A lot of important work has happened, even in the face of the double pandemic.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

President's Report (S. Spurgeon)

The president thanks everyone for their work. The summer will mark the transition of the leadership team. There has been a delay in the election process but ballots should go out in the next day or so. After new senators are elected all senators will receive a survey about the kinds of committee work that are available. Senator Spurgeon appreciates the support and feedback from the senate. He thanks Brooke Killion and Sharonne Winston for all their work behind the scenes. The year would have been impossible without them. He thanks Gary Skolits for his support, institutional knowledge and wisdom. He thanks the committee chairs for their extra effort to make their committees work and thrive. He thanks the caucus chairs for their flexibility and patience. He thanks the administration for their support and efforts and willingness to

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communicate.

#### UTK Chancellor's Report (D. Plowman)

The Chancellor also expressed her appreciation for the President and Past President for their dedication and efforts in communicating with the administration. She shared that VC/VP Cross has decided to retire. This is a big change. There will be an interim UTIA VC/VP while there is a national search in the fall. She would like to meet with representatives from the Senate to discuss the needs of the whole campus during this transition. The fourth campus advisory board meeting happened last week. They approved the budget and tuition. They recommended no tuition increase for another year. In regard to the HERF (Higher Ed Relief Fund), UTK initially received \$19 million, half of which had to be spent on students and half on institutional funds. This money came with strict instructions. The student money was to be spent on low-income students and the money went to them directly. UTK then received an additional \$29 million split between students and the institution. This money covered Covid testing, retraining faculty, etc. It could not be used to recover lost revenue. They are anticipating another payment of \$51 million. These funds cannot be used to hire faculty but may come with fewer constraints on how they are used. She hopes to spend more on student programming and support and some may be spent on recovering lost revenues. Hopefully some can be used on academic recovery for students.

Our base funding went up this year because of our performance on a number of metrics. These metrics will be changing and Chris Cimino is involved in their creation. B. Lyons agreed that we should make these metrics available to the senate so that everyone can see how state dollars are awarded. This would be a good item for the fall retreat.

There will be five commencement services in Neyland Stadium.

M. Black asked about the Global Tech programs, what they are and how positions were appointed. The Chancellor did not know about this. The Provost says that this is an initiative under Vice Provost Gretchen Neisler and he will make sure the senate is provided with clear information about the program.

#### Provost's Report (J. Zomchick)

The Provost thanked the senate for their efforts this year and their commitment to students, research and shared governance. Looking forward to the fall semester, as of tomorrow the undergraduate confirmation site will close. 5600 first time students are expected, up from 5512 from last year. Senators asked about health and safety concerns for fall. It is not clear if there will be a mask requirement in the fall. Masks will not be forbidden but we don't know if UT will have an indoor mask mandate. J. Hay asked about if it is possible to have students in labs wear masks. General Counsel has said that they cannot require students working in the lab to be vaccinated, cannot ask them if they have been vaccinated or give differential activities based on vaccine status. For labs working with the public this will make labs impossible to run. The Provost said he has heard that we cannot deny service based on vaccine status. For those with national grants, the granting agencies need to know the situation and respond with guidance. J. Westerhold asked if the state doesn't have a mask mandate but the CDC says masks should be worn indoors, can faculty put required mask usage on their syllabus. The Provost will look into this and report back. Can we ask students to volunteer their vaccination status?

A senator asked if the vaccine will ever be required. Since the vaccine is an emergency vaccine it cannot be required in the State. Now that vaccination has become politicized, it is hard to know whether it will ever be required.

#### UFC Report (D. Patterson)

D. Patterson shared that President Boyd was not in attendance for the second consecutive meeting. A number of employees in Memphis were RIFed. UT Southern will be the tenure home of the Martin Methodist faculty. The on-line program is piloting courses and has engaged a company to review these. S. Patterson reported that the visitor policy has been changed and should be reviewed by those who may have visitors on campus. 80% of 9-month faculty supported a sick leave policy. There was support for leave available immediately upon employment. The response rate from UTK 9-month faculty was low. The UTK 10.6% response rate was much lower than other campuses. The resolution on the Presidential search process has been approved by all campuses except the Health Science Center. It will be edited and sent to the BOT after their next meeting. M. Black asked if we know how the new UT campus was named. D. Patterson believes this was based on a focus group of individuals from the area.

### MINUTES OF THE FACULTY SENATE

Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes, [April 5, 2021](#) (for vote)

B. Lyons asked for a small correction.

The senate voted 76 to approve; 0 against; 4 abstaining.

The minutes were approved as corrected.

### OLD BUSINESS

Resolution on NTT Diversity Issues ([click here](#))

Discussion: J. Anderson reviewed the resolution on inclusive hiring of NTT faculty.

M. McAlpin asked about the clause on requesting exemptions. She says this has never come up. Budget cuts have eliminated the possibility of national searches in some departments so until there is stability in hiring, this may be an impossible task. M. Stanley responded that this resolution is just one of many places where we need to address some of these systemic issues. The Provost clarified that any budget cuts do not come from his office. No college budgets were cut but there were no increases. Dean Lee clarified that there were additional funds for the large incoming class that are not recurring. By raising base salaries there is less money available for hires in the fall. Provost Zomchick says that the increased salaries were added to the base budgets. Minor changes were made to the resolution to increase inclusivity.

The senate voted 70 to approve the resolution; 2 against; and 11 abstaining.

The resolution passed.

### NEW BUSINESS

Faculty Senate President-Elect Election



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Brian Ambroziak Statement and Bio ([click here](#))

Elisabeth Schussler Statement and Bio ([click here](#))

Candidates introduced themselves.

Faculty Senate President Election

Louis Gross Statement and Bio ([click here](#))

L. Gross introduced himself.

The results of the votes will be released a later date.

**ADJOURNMENT at 17:05**

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