



THE UNIVERSITY OF
TENNESSEE
KNOXVILLE

FACULTY SENATE: INFORMATION AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

WHAT IS FACULTY SENATE? The Faculty Senate (FS) is a volunteer organization made up of faculty leaders who advocate for the faculty. Members are elected by tenure-track and non-tenure-track faculty members in their caucuses. In these times, shared governance and academic freedom are more important than ever for all faculty members.

WHAT ARE THE DUTIES OF A FACULTY SENATOR? (Excerpted from the *Faculty Senate [Bylaws](#) Article II.D.*)

Each voting member of the Faculty Senate shall:

1. Represent the constituency and the broader interests of the faculty;
2. Attend and participate in Faculty Senate meetings (Mondays 3:30-5:00 pm) on a regular basis;
3. Participate actively in the appropriate caucus;
4. Communicate and interact regularly with constituents;
5. Maintain active membership on at least one Faculty Senate standing committee;
6. Serve on other committees and task forces as needed; and
7. Participate in Faculty Senate retreats, training, and information

WHAT HAVE FACULTY SENATE COMMITTEES ACCOMPLISHED? Senators serve on a Faculty Senate committee and have the opportunity to enact change on behalf of their fellow faculty members. Full descriptions of committees can be found [here](#). An overview of some of FS committee accomplishments are detailed below:

- The **Appeals Committee** has continued to adjudicate complaints filed by faculty with regards to violations of due process and fairness in tenure and promotion decisions, performance reviews, and violations of the University's policies and procedures.
- In the **Athletics Committee**, FS members meet with Athletics Department leadership and our Faculty Athletics Representative to discuss university and national issues that affect student athletes and athletics programs. Issues include Student Athlete well-being; Name, Image and Likeness (NIL); intercollegiate sports gambling; integrity, sportsmanship, and NCAA violations; diversity, equity and inclusion, and gender equity in intercollegiate sports. Through interactions with the national Coalition on Intercollegiate Athletics, we interact with the NCAA, and various national organizations to provide the faculty view on these issues and influence policy changes.
- Along with the FS as a whole, the **Diversity and Inclusion Committee** supported the university's efforts to raise awareness of diversity, equity, and inclusion through resolutions and Executive Board advocacy, which led to the restoration of the Office of Diversity and Engagement, with Tyvi Small as its first leader, as well as the creation of short films ("A Place at the Table" and STRIDE 2 "Faculty Meeting").
- In order to provide students, staff, and faculty in their third trimester, or new mothers wishing to nurse their baby the option to reserve an expectant/nursing mother space in their permitted parking lot, the **Benefits and Professional Development Committee** passed this [resolution](#).
- The **Teaching and Learning Council** receives nominations for faculty and counselors related to the Chancellor's Award program. Annually, they have assessed, conducted interviews with nominees, and selected finalists.
- The **University Systems Committee** has continuously worked in establishing strong relations with the system to ensure representation of UTK faculty interests within government relations and continued pressure to restore a voting UTK faculty member to the Board.
- The **Faculty Affairs Committee** works with campus administration to make sure faculty have a voice in changes to the UTK-UTIA Faculty Handbook. The committee also has a webpage with links to all college and department bylaws, working to make sure they are in compliance with the handbook. Here is the [link](#).

WHAT HAS THE FACULTY SENATE ACHIEVED? Below are some of the *many* achievements Faculty Senate has accomplished; as a Senator, you could be part of making changes like these in the future

- **Issues That Impact Our Work:** The FS has been actively engaged on a variety of issues that impact our work at the university, from guns on campus to academic freedom and post-tenure review. The “Issues of Interest” webpage serves as a timely resource for these topics ([link](#)).
- **Living Wage:** The FS has conducted a Living Wage Survey every five years, which has shown the extent to which full-time campus workers are eligible for various forms of public assistance. The studies have had a direct impact on helping to increase wages for the lowest paid workers on campus.
- **Outsourcing:** The FS conducted studies on the effort to outsource facilities workers and took a stand with the United Campus Workers and others against outsourcing.
- **Academic Freedom:** The FS has collaborated with the UTK Chapter of the AAUP to defend academic freedom.
- **Competitive Pay for Non-Tenure-Track Faculty Members:** The Budget and Planning committee conducted salary analyses that provided important information on the need for base Salary raises for full time Non-Tenure Track faculty.
- **Supporting Transitions in Campus Leadership:** Helped new Board, new system President, and new Chancellor understand the culture and concerns of faculty at the University.
- **Advocating with the Tennessee Legislature:** Supported through the FS Shared Governance Fund, the Faculty Senate has lobbied for a voting faculty representation on the UT Board of Trustees.
- **Faculty Fellows:** Initiated a system in which Faculty fellows with IT backgrounds were compensated to help other faculty to adjust to emergency online distance learning in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **Responding to Racism and Hate:** In response to racist expressions on campus in 2018, the FS worked with the SGA and the UT Campus Ministry to organize “United at the Rock.” A similar effort initiated “United at the Table,” a program that brings members of the campus community together for conversations about diversity and inclusion.
- **Communicating Our Expertise to the General Public:** Secured money to sponsor the OpEd project to amplify faculty voices in state and national media.
- **Connecting the East and West Campuses:** FS was instrumental in the initial steps of reunification of UTIA and UTK into an integrated university with a focus on our land grant mission. This process continues, and an engaged FS will continue to play an important role in shared governance as we build bridges and open doors to develop a cohesive and unified university with increased collaborative research, teaching, and outreach/Extension opportunities for faculty.
- **Working with Colleagues Across the State:** FS leadership is fully engaged in the state-wide Tennessee University Faculty Senates (TUFS) organization, which represents more than 10,000 faculty across Tennessee. TUFS routinely engages with university advocacy offices, such as UT Advocacy, to provide a faculty voice to lawmakers. As the State’s flagship university, our FS often provides leadership on issues that affect all public universities in Tennessee. In 2020, we completed a state-wide survey of faculty workload to highlight COVID-19 labor and uncompensated summer work.
- **Enhanced representation of UTK-UTIA FS in University Faculty Council (UFC):** FS interacts with the UFC to provide UTK faculty voice on issues that affect faculty across the system. Issues have often included policies and procedures related to tenure and promotion, as well as faculty benefits.
- **Responding to COVID-19:** The FS successfully adjusted to the COVID-19 setbacks by keeping the Senate running and active despite many members of campus being remote. FS leadership continues to advocate for responses to COVID-19 that are science-based and promote the safety and well-being of our campus community.
- **Creating an Inclusive Campus:** FS advocated for an Office of Diversity and Inclusion and continues to advocate for policies that supports UT’s strategic plan to champion diversity and inclusive excellence. We prioritized collaboration and instruction from Title IX.
- **Updating the Curriculum:** FS played an essential role in the creation of the VolCore curriculum and continues to be actively engaged in curricular approvals.
- **Termination of Tenured Faculty:** Responding to the case of Professor Anming Hu, the FS sought to advocate for his due process rights. Since the charges against him were dropped, the Senate advocated for his reinstatement. Additionally, the FS is working to provide better safeguards in the UTK-UTIA faculty Handbook to prevent something like this from happening again.
- **Campus-System Relations:** For more than two decades the FS advocated for distinguishing the UT System from the authority granted to the UTK Campus. As a result of these efforts, the UTK Chancellor has authority over UT Athletics, and the UT System administration recently moved their offices off-campus to the former TVA East Tower.