



**UTK Faculty Senate Executive Council**  
**Monday, February 20, 2023, 3:30 pm**  
**Student Union Room 377A**

**MINUTES**

- I. Call to Order at 15:32  
Attending: K. Baker, E. Bernard, A. Bolton, J. Chyz, C. Clark, J. Coble, T. Freeberg, T. Fridman, J. Heminway, N. Hristov, J. Laughter, E. Lukosi, B. Lyons, S. Madison, B. Ownley, A. Puckett, M. Scoggins, A. Roessner, A. Schoenbach, E. Schussler, R. Spirko, A. Steiner, D. Thompson, P. Thompson (for L. Meschke), L. Whitnah, and J. Zomchick.
  
- II. Approval of Minutes
  - a. Faculty Senate Executive Council Meeting Minutes [January 30, 2023](#)  
Motion to approve: Lyons; Second: Whitnah  
Discussion: There was no discussion  
In favor: 15; Against: 0; Minutes were approved
  
- III. Announcements (E. Schussler)
  - a. The leadership is compiling the climate survey results and will compare them to prior surveys. We will present the results at the March Faculty Senate meeting. Please let the president know if you plan to bring any issues to the senate this year so that she can plan accordingly. A small group will be working with the Leadership Team to look at reorganizing committees and this will come before the Executive Council at our next meeting for consideration as part of the By-Law changes. Undergraduate Council and Graduate Council minutes will be coming and are lengthy. They will be sent out early so everyone has time to look at them. In the UGC there is something related to the Civics Institute and another unit (Tombras) has removed the foreign language requirement from their programs. Someone from the Baker center will be at the senate meeting in anticipation of questions around the Civics Center courses.
  
- IV. New Business
  - a. Nominations and elections (A. Roessner)  
Roessner reminded the body that the position of President-Elect is open. This person attends meetings with the leadership team, meets with administrators, attends all senate and EC meetings, runs the Spring senate elections. As compensation the President Elect receives one course release per semester and \$10,000 at the end of the presidential term. It takes about 50% of one's time. The Recording Secretary position is also open. This person attends all senate and EC meetings and

takes the minutes of the meetings. They then share the minutes with the Senate President with whom they edit the minutes for distribution. There is an opening for University Faculty Council (UFC) representative. This person serves as a representative of UTK on the council with all UT systems senate presidents and representatives once a month, usually virtually in the late afternoon on Wednesdays.

We need a representative on the Coalition on Intercollegiate Athletics (COIA). There is one meeting a year. They focus on NCAA issues, Name Image and Likeness, sports gambling, medical issues and other issues related to athletics. They interact with legislators and other interested parties. This year they meet April 21 in Washington DC, in person or on line. Contact Bonnie Ownley if you are interested. They will be meeting with federal representatives to see about getting legislation passed.

Caucus chairs should encourage caucus members to think seriously about participating in the senate. This is important and worthwhile service.

b. Updates (E. Schussler, with others)

9-month workload and J term

Provost Zomchick spoke with the Deans about when faculty are expected to be back in January. There were 5 weeks between commencement and the start of January classes. He suggested a policy of faculty not doing service until the week before classes begin (after the MLK) holiday. Deans were divided on this. Dean Lee felt faculty needed to be available for searches. The provost suggested getting service done in the fall semester. It was asked if the Provost's office could approve searches by May 1 and then the process could begin in August. The provost agreed to this. The survey (15% response rate) of students on winter mini term showed that most students were using it to make progress toward degree or get back on track. The purpose of the mini-term was to help with student success and this does seem to be what is happening. Most students fulfilled a requirement with their mini-term course. Enrollment is increasing. He would like to work with faculty to see how to integrate this permanently into the calendar.

Lyons asked about the applications for graduate awards. In some departments, this has to happen by the end of January. Could this be made later? Dean Thompson said that departments have asked that fellowship offers be made as early as possible. Departments do not have to wait until Jan to have deadlines for application. Thus, these decisions could be made before winter break. If we push fellowship offers to later, many departments would be unhappy. Is there a way to speed up the decision process at the graduate college level? Dean Thompson said that there are independent evaluators who need the time to do their job well.

There was a question about research time (3 months of summer salary from grants). The clear delineation of 13 weeks of non-pay needs to be clarified for those holding grants so that they can be paid. Zomchick thought this had been worked out with the office of research. The policies can be changed to accommodate the new calendar. He will go back to Deb Crawford and revisit this issue. Communication needs to be improved down through the colleges. He shared the following priorities: 1) We need to make sure arts and sciences is on board with the new calendar and 2) We need to be sure that the guidance on grant administration filters down to the colleges.

One senator shared that packing more into the end of the fall semester is problematic. Would it be possible to compensate faculty labor during the January term for those who must work during this time (searches)?

### **Process issues survey response**

The president reminded the body of the survey where faculty shared what processes get in the way of doing their job.

Scoggins will work on Concur and the K@te trainings. He shared that the process issues are important and there is a plan to work on them in the upper administration. They are working on replacing iMedris and creating a new conflict of interest process.

With Concur and travel: Concur is going away and will be replaced with another system. Other organizations do not have the same problems with Concur that we do, perhaps because too many people are using the system at UT. It might be better if faculty had other people to manage travel for them but this is complicated. They are looking at ways to improve travel policy and positive change is coming. Travel is a system policy not a campus policy. Even though the old travel system worked, we are obliged to use Concur by the UT system.

Compliance training complaints will be addressed. Scoggins is looking into possible changes.

Provost Zomchick wondered where to address emerging problems. Elements has long had complaints. They are launching Interfolio and we'll see how that works. The complaint about Elements is that it is too labor intensive but Elements does take direct feed from Cayuse and Banner. This doesn't work for all faculty but it does work for many. The output from Elements needs to be addressed, especially for departments that request other kinds of output. They will look at Elements and Interfolio and listen to feedback.

The issue of assessment needs to be addressed. The Office of Institutional Effectiveness will look into how to relieve some of the burden of assessment from faculty. It's a question of having enough staff to work out the logistics of these issues.

The staff-to-faculty ratio: This varies by college. It's not clear what kind of staff support would free faculty to do what they are hired to do. Removing Concur, having an Elements report that doesn't need to be revised, should help. Elements is a database of faculty production and activities. A collection of CVs doesn't provide this kind of data. He is in support of making processes easy for faculty.

VP Kelley did a listening tour about Promotion and Tenure and did a survey. They are looking to redesign the process and bring some of the work back into her office. They have been looking at faculty handbook policies and identifying parts that need to be corrected.

A senator suggested that removing PPPR would certainly help ease the burden.

Elements has strange categories that don't fit most faculty work, especially teaching and service work. Just streamlining the list options to make it reflect with faculty actually do would help make Elements more user friendly.

Another asked if the body is aware that Elsevier, a data analytics company, acquired Interfolio. Has anyone looked at the ramifications of this? No, no one has looked at this.

NTTF do not use Elements but it would be nice to have that data available to NTTF.

It would be good if Elements had a way to register continuous work on a project.

VP Bolton will work on parking. It's clear that everyone is concerned about parking. They will be implementing a ceiling on freshmen who can bring a car to campus. There are perimeter lots not fully utilized now. They are looking on reassigning those and running better shuttle lots and perhaps using a variable price scale. They are looking at buying property for surface lots. A new garage site has been selected and it should be operational in 2-2.5 years. They are looking at ways to lease structured parking a mile or so away, especially for non-commuter students. There should be some positive impact this fall.

c. Budget model discussion (A. Bolton)

What is currently going on in the FY 24 budget? All units have turned in their requests and support units are working on theirs. Bolton's office is working on refining those budgets. They are not anticipating raising tuition this year. In March they will consider possible changes for the coming years. There are ways to better align the budget with strategic priorities. They will look at internal charges and transfers and try to untangle that a bit.

d. Undergraduate and Graduate Council "pilot" discussion (E. Schussler, with others)

The calendars of the councils make it such that their minutes don't get approved in time to make our EC agenda; this sets back their schedules. This year we have streamlined this process by not having their minutes approved by the Executive Council before they go to Senate for approval so that the minutes are approved more rapidly. Minutes are now sent out much earlier in the hopes that issues are flagged. This is really just a timing problem. Can we reschedule meetings? The last Graduate Council meeting was recent and those minutes have not been approved for senate perusal. The issue is the number of meetings. There is currently an extra cycle in play. Dean Thompson feels that having more opportunities to get curricular changes through is better. We need a shift in culture to get departments to get the changes in earlier, especially for the Undergraduate catalog. Proposals are all available a month ahead of time before they even go to committees, so everyone has the opportunity to review them many times.

Most in the room were fine with making this (i.e. Sending UGC and GC minutes directly to the full senate) a permanent change. As long as there are mechanisms to set aside issues that need further consideration, this is fine. We can change the calendar later as needed. We will need to step up our efforts to communicate to faculty that curricular proposals are available for review. Right now, a list of changes is sent out every Monday. Curriculog is on the horizon which will make this easier.

Schussler made a motion to keep the pilot program and bring this to the faculty on March 6  
Second by Spirko

Discussion: These curriculum changes are not ever discussed by general faculty. They need access to and reminders of these changes as well. Who is responsible for disseminating this information? The UGC will be discussing the curriculum process.

In favor: 13; Opposed: 0

e. [Prioritization results](#) (E. Schussler)

BAM, the 9-month calendar, reducing workload, increasing pay for NTTF and staff, and increasing number of hires were all issues that came as spring priorities for Senate. These issues

are managed by Deans and the senate does not sit on the council of deans and we don't know what guidance they are given on these issues.

Zomchick answered that we are in the middle of a paradigm shift. We are in year one of the budget model. Some colleges propose to add faculty and some don't and prefer to put resources into salaries to address compression. Not all colleges grow at the same rate. There is not a of discussion or guidance in how deans should look into hiring and salaries since each college is different. College caucuses should be playing a larger role now since the deans have more control over how resources ae allotted. The provost is looking at recommending a new minimum salary for teaching faculty and they are looking at ways to rename teaching faculty. We have 20% more students over the last 5 years and we have maintained the same student/faculty ratio. Caucuses should have a bigger role in budget proposals. Having enough faculty at all levels is important. The central administration will set institutional standards, salary minimums and priorities but the deans will be in charge of the revenues and the discussions need to happen at the college level. Compression will need to be addressed. It would be good for the administration to present a plan on how they hope to address wage issues.

Online initiatives additional questions (E. Schussler)

Please send ideas to Schussler on this issue

- V. Old Business
  - a. None
  
- VI. Information Items
  - a. [How-to sheet](#) for communications and marketing
  
- VII. Adjournment at 17:13

Respectfully submitted by Millie Gimmel