



FACULTY SENATE

**UTK Faculty Senate Meeting
Monday, March 6, 2023, 3:30 pm**

MINUTES

I. Call to Order 15:34

Not in attendance: S. Abdoli, R. Acharya, S. Benjamin, R. Blakeman, J. Chyz, S. Collins-Elliott, Y. Efremenko, C. Ferrigno, K. Franck, T. Freeberg, M. Harris, D. Icove, X. Li, M. Madhukar, V. Maroulas, K. Martin, M. McAlpin, S. Mobley, K. Morgan, M. Romano, J. Shefner, M. Stanley, A. Steiner, K. Sun, T. Truster, N. Vines.

II. Approval of Minutes

a. Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes [February 6, 2023](#)

Motion to accept: Fridman; Second: Issa

Discussion: There was no discussion

The minutes were approved. 68 in favor, 0 against

b. Graduate Council [Minutes](#) February 16, 2023; and Graduate Council [Items of Interest](#) (L. Meschke)

Discussion: Is the moving of genomic sciences from Arts and Sciences to the Bredesen Center a change of concern? Meschke indicated it was not and not an issue for the Graduate Council to weigh in on.

The minutes were approved. 69 in favor, 1 opposed

c. Undergraduate Council [Minutes](#) February 14, 2023 and [Summary](#) (K. Baker)

Discussion: There was a question about the denial of Africana Studies by THEC. Baker had no additional information. THEC seems to have rejected it because there were not 10 students in the program. Once they have the right number of students it will be reconsidered.

Baker indicated that on page 344 the Certificate of Global Sustainable Development should be struck. This will be in the next minutes since this was a formatting issue.

There was a question about Herbert College bringing a proposal that was previously rejected for lack of information. This was a proposal about college credit for 4H portfolios and it was rejected by the Undergraduate Council for lack of clarity. It came back as an informational item with approval from the Provost (it is not included in these minutes). The faculty evaluating this have not been identified, the rubric for grading has not been developed and high school students will get credit for a course. A press release was sent over a year ago announcing this and this never went through our regular protocols. Can the Provost approve a course? Yes, he can but this is not

normal procedure. There was concern expressed about this. The new leadership at UTIA will need to discuss this and the Agriculture caucus is meeting with him this week. The press release happened under a different administration.

Is there any concern about the Provost approving courses rather than going through the normal channels outlined by the bylaws? This course was presented as being similar AP courses but further discussion needs to happen.

The minutes were approved. 68 in favor, 1 against

III. Reports

a. UTK [Reports](#) (D. Plowman, J. Zomchick, C. Clark)

Discussion: Associate Provost Driscoll was in attendance to answer questions. Is there any way we can get some assurances that we will have upper administration in attendance at Faculty Senate meetings? The AP will relay that concern. The psychology department is concerned with a bill in the senate, HB-0571, which is about higher education and DEI training. Many outside grants require DEI training. What will the university do to work on this? This law will impact the department's ability to do their work. The administration is sharing all the relevant information on accreditation. They are trying to respond to this and support accreditation. It's hard to know which legislation is of greatest concern.

A senator asked about the Grow Your Own initiative. What are we doing to advocate for a workplace that is actually welcoming to teachers? The environment is so bad for teachers that no one wants to pursue that career. AP Driscoll will follow up on that.

How do we read the data on awards and expenditures on the distributed report? Expenditures seem to be flat in comparison to awards. AP Driscoll will ask about this. It would be good to have this information by college. What is the amount of expenditures in relation to the entire budget? What are these data slides supposed to communicate? Just sharing numbers is not terribly meaningful. Data needs to be contextualized and explained. AP replied that in general, this information is shared just to show what is going on.

The climate survey results show concern about compensation. How will the administration address these concerns? Driscoll will report back on this later.

There was a process concern about travel policies that in some departments are more restrictive in terms of departure flights even when it is cheaper to fly from other cities. There is a group actively looking at travel issues and Driscoll will bring back information on that. Travel is a system policy not a campus policy and they are working on it.

We were told the Provost's office would provide information on the oversight of BAM, support units and who is meeting to discuss budgets. The support unit budgets are sent to the Allocation Review Committee which has a senator on it and the Provost makes decisions. The colleges are represented by Deans who are then helped by the Provost to make budget decisions based on the strategic vision. There were faculty in attendance in the budget meetings but there were not faculty representatives at the meeting.

Joe Pierce, Associate Dean of Students, spoke about the student basic needs survey. Basic needs like food security, financial security, a bus to west TN for holidays, and financial consultation are

already being addressed. The capacity of the Big Orange Pantry is growing. Off-campus and graduate students receive a lot of the services. In partnership with Temple University the Dean of Students office is implementing a student needs survey to see where they need to focus their efforts next. He would be happy to come back after the survey to share results as it would be good to have faculty involvement at that point. At this point they need faculty to help spread awareness about the survey. It should be in all students' email and the survey (<https://tiny.utk/needsurvey>) is available until March 31. It is a 15-minute survey. Please encourage students to fill it out.

Discussion: Could there be more work-study programs? That will be addressed in the survey. For international and graduate students, the graduate school and the CGE should be involved in this process. Are post docs included in this survey? What about household items? International students need support in finding basic furnishings. There is a Free Store on campus where household items are donated and given away. Why isn't this information shared with graduate students? Awareness is an issue and they are working on creating a central hub for information.

b. Faculty Senate [Report](#) (E. Schussler)

Discussion: Chapter 4 of the bylaws (NTTF) has been considered by Deans and it is on the way to the Office of the General Counsel next. It will go back to the Deans before it comes back to the Senate. This should be back to the Senate in April or May and then to the Board of Trustees in June.

IV. New Business

a. Nominations and Elections for [open positions](#) (A. Roessner)

Discussion: Roessner reviewed the open positions and process for election. Senate plays a vital part in shared governance and is the most important service faculty can do. She asked Senators to engage their colleagues and promote the importance of this work. The positions of President-Elect, Recording Secretary, UFC Representative, and COIA representative are open. Gimmel indicated that the role of Recording Secretary is a fulfilling one and is not a burdensome service position. March 10 is the deadline for Senator nominations. Leadership positions have the deadline of March 31.

b. UG and Graduate Council Request Regarding Approval [Process Pilot](#) (K. Baker; L. Meschke)

Last year there was a reconfiguration of the Undergraduate (UG) and Graduate Council (GC) meetings and this made it difficult to get their minutes to the Faculty Senate Executive Council in time for approval. We instituted a pilot year to test by-passing Executive Council and sending minutes straight to Senate. We have been sending minutes to the Senate earlier to provide more time to review the minutes carefully. Schussler suggests that we continue in this fashion. Meschke added that college curriculum committees are also involved in the process of reviewing the minutes and spoke in favor of the continuation.

Schussler moved that we make this process (bypassing the FSEC) permanent. Second by Collins.

Discussion: Do we have evidence that the Executive Council caught problems in the past? Was their oversight necessary? Did they miss important issues in the past? The EC has not provided any more feedback or caught more concerns than Senate has done. Issues on the horizon will still be brought to and discussed by the EC as needed. Senate Leadership attends the Councils.

59 In favor; 3 Against. The motion passed.

c. Climate survey [results](#) (E. Schussler; J. Shipley)

Schussler went through the survey results: There was a slight bias in the survey toward full time respondents. It paralleled the 2019 survey but was not an exact match. Jordan Shipley did the analysis. Schussler reviewed the main issues in the linked document that arose around climate.

470 of about 3,200 responded to surveys sent to full and part time staff. This is generally a good sample, and seemed to capture a sample similar to institutional profile, but there are some response biases as there can be in all samples.

What follow-up will there be? We will ask for a response from the Chancellor and Provost. They had not seen it before this agenda was sent out and it will be brought to their attention.

What is the overlap between those who responded in 2019 and those who responded in 2023. This is unknown since the survey is anonymous.

Are NTTF underrepresented? Are they less likely to respond? The data is still being analyzed for response bias.

We need to focus on the concerns that came up and remember that not everyone on campus feels the same way about things. Responses differed across campus and different groups. Not everyone has the same experience and we should keep that in mind.

V. Old Business

None (Salary analyses will be coming in April Senate meeting)
The April meeting will focus on budget and planning.

VI. Information Items

- a. Executive Council Minutes [January 30, 2023](#) and [February 20, 2023](#)
- b. Faculty Senate Committees and Councils [Summary Reports](#)
- c. [Prioritization results](#) from the last Faculty Senate meeting
- d. [How-to sheet](#) for communications and marketing
- e. Board of Trustees Education, Research, and Service Committee [agenda](#) with information about the three new Colleges.

VII. Adjournment at 17:06.

Respectfully submitted by Millie Gimmel

Upcoming topics (the April meeting could be long, heads-up):

- Chapter 4 Handbook (NTT faculty)
- Possible NTT title series
- Living wage resolution
- Salary analyses (B&P committee)
- Budget report (B&P committee and Bolton)
- By-Law changes (including potential new committee structure)
- Elections (President-Elect, UFC, COIA, Recording Secretary)
- Faculty Affairs policy changes