

Many faculty in academia view shared governance with suspicion or cynicism. This page is to assure you that shared governance still exists at UT!; many faculty are working hard and using their expertise to inform the direction of the University. I will start with some philosophical reflections, and will add monthly updates to this page about topics Faculty Senate has been engaged with and opportunities for faculty engagement (you can scroll down to the most recent information as it is added).

### Philosophical musings on shared governance

At UTK, the Board of Trustees, Administration, Faculty, Staff, Graduate Students, and Undergraduate Students all have roles in advancing the mission of the University. Each brings their perspective and voice to inform institutional programs, policies, and practices.

Faculty Senate is the representational body for faculty. In our meetings, we dialogue directly with the Chancellor and Provost to exchange ideas and concerns specific to faculty and institutional welfare. We also have committees that work to identify topics of concern, advance understanding, and propose changes to how the institution functions.

We often think about shared governance victories as big, splashy policy changes or resolutions affirming a core principle, and, yeah, those are awesome. But shared governance is also about the small, everyday wins where we talk with others who aren't faculty, share our perspectives with each other, and then adjust our programs and policies because of those conversations.

Shared governance took a hit during COVID because it requires community dialogue to function. Faculty Senate is focusing this year on ways we can re-build a community so that faculty feel they belong, feel their voices are heard, feel their needs are met, and feel happy to work at UT. When the Chancellor and Provost hold their office hours, we encourage everyone to attend and share your ideas. E-mail them when you have concerns ([chancellor@utk.edu](mailto:chancellor@utk.edu); [provost@utk.edu](mailto:provost@utk.edu)). Unless they hear from faculty, decisions will not include our perspective.

### July 2022

The Faculty Senate Leadership Team (President Schussler, President-Elect Roessner, and Past President Ownley) worked with Faculty Senate Officers Spirko, Gimmel, Bernard, and Administrative Assistant Loretta Link through the summer to populate the committees, set priorities for 22-23, and begin planning for the Faculty Senate retreats on August 19 and 29.

The Leadership Team meets monthly with Chancellor Plowman and Provost Zomchick, and we talked extensively in the July meeting about the need to work together to define shared governance at UTK and build community. This meeting led to our plans to focus part of the August 19 retreat and all of the August 29 retreat on shared governance discussions.

The Leadership Team and Officers recognize the need to re-vamp communication with faculty and will be presenting a new communication plan for discussion at the August 19 retreat.

Recent news:

- Diane Kelly told us that the Provost's office is finalizing work on guidance for 9-month appointments in light of the addition of the January term. We await this announcement.
- We have been told to expect news about the institutional bullying policy this fall.
- We are encouraging the Provost to provide faculty with information about the institutional COVID policies so we know how to populate our syllabi. Our current understanding is that, institutionally, COVID is not being treated any differently than any other illness, so the same policies that were extended for an illness pre-pandemic would work for this fall. There will not be a COVID support form this year, but students will be able to submit an illness form and get guidance from a support team (this is voluntary). They are working on a dashboard for instructors based on this information. We will know more after our August meeting with the Chancellor and Provost. If you have questions you want us to ask them, please e-mail [senate@utk.edu](mailto:senate@utk.edu).

Issues we have our eyes on for this year:

- Potential re-structuring of the College of Arts and Sciences. Obviously this impacts a large group of faculty who only learned about these plans as the semester was ending in April. The Chancellor and Provost have been meeting with Arts and Sciences departments through the summer and our understanding is that options will be presented mid-fall. We have been very concerned about this very short time frame for a significant structural change, with most of the feedback period encompassing a time when faculty are not obligated to be working. We may be sending a faculty survey about this topic to collect campus-wide faculty perspective on this potential change. In the meantime, we will continue to push for more robust processes for faculty feedback. If you have ideas, please contact us.
- Mental health on campus broadly
- Space on campus for faculty displaced by the new Haslam Business Building
- Budget model - transparency of process
- Inflation, workload, salary
- Policies and practices to better support Non-tenure Track Faculty

### **UPDATE on potential re-structuring of the College of Arts and Sciences**

Chancellor Plowman and Provost Zomchick will be releasing their ideas for how the College could be re-structured around the end of August or beginning of September. An announcement of the structure will be made sometime in mid to late October. That means that there is about a month and a half for faculty to engage in the feedback process. Processes for this will include a Chancellor Town Hall slated for Sept. 7, Faculty Senate meeting on September 19, Provost and Chancellor Office Hours, Academic Department Visits, and Web feedback.

We urge all faculty to express their opinions about this re-structuring. It is a potentially significant change for many faculty and will have cascading impacts on many units.

Faculty Senate is considering a survey of faculty on this issue and a special "caffeine and community" faculty discussion. Stay tuned for more information.

### **UPDATE on Covid-19 policies for the fall**

Institutional guidance for this Fall is for faculty to treat COVID-19 as any other illness that may disrupt a student's ability to attend class or complete work. There are no expectations of special accommodations beyond what a faculty member would give to any student illness. Your syllabus should guide your policies; the Provost's Office has provided guidance on statements you can include in your syllabus on the campus syllabus page: <https://teaching.utk.edu/the-syllabus/>

The Student Health Center provides guidance on COVID and other illnesses (including monkeypox). There is no COVID support form this year, but there is a general Illness support form students should fill out to receive guidance from community health staff. From this website students can also link to specific guidance and support for COVID.

<https://studenthealth.utk.edu/CommunityHealth/>

Nominate someone for an Honorary Degree from UT! Nominations due Sunday, August 21.

<https://chancellor.utk.edu/honorary-degrees/>

### **August 2022**

The Senate Leadership spent much of August preparing for our two retreats.

Our August 19 retreat on zoom presented details about our leadership team foci for this year (Community and Communication) as well as information on how to be a faculty senator, communication strategies, parliamentary procedure, and shared governance. We asked participants to engage in discussions in small groups to share ideas and take a survey on our focal topics for the year.

At our second retreat, we reported on the results from the first retreat and invited administrators and student leaders to join us in small group discussions about shared governance.

The [2022 retreat results](#) indicated that Senators want us to focus on 6 main topics this year: budget model transparency, pay and inflation, diversity efforts, CAS restructuring, divisive concepts, and non-tenure track issues.

The [shared governance discussion](#) indicated that participants wanted to talk more across the academic hierarchy about a shared mission to help focus our efforts, build understanding of our

unique perspectives, help faculty engage in shared governance more, and clarify institutional processes and how data and feedback are used on campus.

Besides the retreats, we have been working to advocate for faculty voice in the conversations about CAS restructuring, offering suggestions to the Chancellor and Provost to modify the proposed timeline, meet with all the departments in CAS before announcing suggested changes, explain more about why this is needed, and deploy a survey to gather faculty perspectives.

To inform our own advocacy, we are gathering CAS faculty feedback via a survey about the restructuring plans.

As we look forward to September, we know our committees are off to a running start, and we look forward to our first Executive Council meeting September 12, featuring more time for discussion of critical issues.

Our first Faculty Senate meeting is Monday, September 19, 3:30 pm, on zoom. All are welcome. See the tab on the website with the agenda.

### [CAS Reorganization survey results](#)

## **September 2022**

On September 19, the Chancellor and Provost announced several restructuring changes, including the creation of three new Colleges and a new Divisional structure for the College of Arts and Sciences. So instead of providing feedback on potential structures this fall, we are now shifting gears to providing feedback on the enactment of these potential changes. Note that the creation of the new Colleges still has to be approved by the Board of Trustees, and the Divisional Dean structure is a two-year pilot.

Creating successful new units relies on the input of faculty across the institution and we urge all faculty to participate in opportunities to meet with the Chancellor and Provost (Office hours, coffee and conversations, structured feedback session) and contribute their thoughts, ideas, etc. The starting point of all shared governance is voice, so make sure yours is heard.

Beyond restructuring, we are working with Undergraduate Council to make our curriculum approval processes more robust and participatory, remembering that curriculum is one of the few places where faculty direct institutional priorities. Our power in curricular decisions is critically important, yet this can be forgotten as we engage in the multiple other priorities in our professional lives. At a time when the new budget model incentivizes units to retain students in their own College's courses, we need to be aware of how these shifts impact other units on

campus, and have processes in place to engage in conversation about the needs of units and students. Curriculum and instruction are the soul of the educational mission of institutions, and as such they demand our attention, our voice, and our engagement.

## **October 2022**

Four months into my term, I find myself reflecting often on bigger issues that underlie the smaller, numerous issues we hear about from faculty. My personal working model is that there are 4 big issues causing strain across UT:

1. Barriers to effective campus communication - leading to a perception of a lack of transparency. Sub-issue: the lack of communication between faculty and support units leading to misunderstanding and confusion about -literally- how things work at UT
2. Increases in student numbers not mirrored by increased number of faculty and campus space (classroom, office, etc); adding new buildings to increase capacity without space to house displaced faculty
3. Overload of new online forms and processes overwhelming the time (and sanity) of faculty and office staff; lack of coordination and consideration about the multiplicative effects of these changes
4. The pace of campus change announcements (re-structuring, potential ASU partnership, grant submission deadlines, etc); exacerbated by lack of communication and lack of time (see above) to understand and process change

Working on addressing these issues is critical to faculty well-being, but also daunting in scope and scale. As we talk with the Chancellor and Provost about them, we recognize that solutions are not easy and we all need to work together to find solutions as we can.

One initiative we have started is to gather faculty perceptions about process barriers to identify and hopefully make changes. Look for a feedback form soon from your caucus chair.

Other quick hits for the month:

1. We are working with TLI on ways to promote and develop teaching excellence. We hope to report more about that in the coming months.
2. We have ordered more "Vol Means All" pins to distribute!
3. RJ Hinde, soon to be Interim Executive Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, has messaged CAS faculty about process and timeline for creating new subdivisions within the College.
4. Marianne Wannamaker, John Scheb, and Bill Lyons will visit Faculty Senate in November to tell us more about the Institute for American Civics and the two new courses they have created.

5. We have an extensive set of Handbook changes regarding NTT faculty on the docket for our November meeting. We cannot thank the NTT Issues committee, Vice Provost Kelly, and the OGC enough for their work on these potential changes.

6. Our budget and planning committee is continuing conversations about how to engage faculty more with the BAM.

7. Our diversity and inclusion committee is talking with administrators about how we promote and communicate DEI efforts on campus.

Happy Halloween weekend, everyone.

### **November 2022**

November has been an exceptionally busy month, and like you, we are looking forward to some relaxation over the holiday break. Presidential updates will pause until the end of February unless there is critical news to disseminate.

Faculty Senate and the Undergraduate and Graduate Councils continue to discuss processes for the approval of new curricula that have financial (e.g., the removal of MFLL requirements) or perceived political implications (Institute for American Civics). Our hope is to put into place procedures for documenting discussions about these concerns so that faculty can verify and review these discussions and then focus on the educational value of the curricula.

We are thrilled to see significant changes to Chapter 4 of the Faculty Handbook moving forward to the Provost's Office for review. This chapter guides NTTF procedures; anyone interested in NTTF issues should view the November 21 Senate minutes and provide feedback to Mark Stanley and Anne Langendorfer.

A major focus of the Senate this year has been to provide data to the Chancellor and Provost supporting faculty concerns. We asked faculty for feedback about process barriers on campus and have passed those forward to be addressed. We compiled data on how faculty lines, clerical / secretarial support, and other types of positions have changed over 10 years of student growth. The decline in secretarial / clerical support and increase in NTT and adjunct faculty over time should lead to a campus conversation about where UT should invest in personnel as our student numbers grow.

We stand with residents of Dunford, Greve, and Henson Halls who will be displaced by the new Business Building, with little information about short- or long-term planning for replacement space. We encourage faculty to demand more conversations about space and infrastructure, with a reminder that space is a cultural reflection of value. We all need the type of space that

demonstrates institutional valuing of the research, teaching, and service we provide to the University.

Our first Faculty Chat session was attended by 30 enthusiastic faculty members who brainstormed the broader, ultimate causes of the many challenges we are facing. Ideas that emerged were:

- Faculty not being included in decisions and discussions regarding the many changes ongoing at the University
  - Lack of trust in the faculty
  - Adding new systems and processes without planning and support for faculty
- Campus feeling like a set of parts instead of a cohesive system, leading to duplication of effort, poor communication, not knowing how to respond to changes like enrollment growth
- Not enough support for the mental and fiscal needs of the campus community
- Disagreements about the central values and mission of the University

We are intending to hold more Faculty Chats in the spring and welcome ideas for future discussion topics.

A reminder that spring is Faculty Senate election season. We will be accepting self-nominations for Faculty Senators, Faculty Senate President-Elect, and several other critical positions. Think about whether you want to be an advocate for faculty at UT!

## **February 2023**

The Senate executive committee and caucus chairs met for a mini-retreat just before the start of the spring semester, and we identified the following information needs, action items, and follow-ups as our priorities this spring:

### Information needs / connections

1. Introduce VC F&A (Bolton) – update on BAM and space
2. Introduce VP Alldredge - Enrollment management report (after April 1)
3. Invite Bruce Behn for update on ASU partnership?

### Action items

4. Chapter 4 (NTT) handbook
5. Concerns about J term and 9 month workload
6. Infrastructure concerns due to growth - office space, classrooms, parking, housing, mental health support, staff support, faculty lines. Should there be a task force to work on / communicate and coordinate these things?

7. Institutional “staffing” – what is our vision for staff: faculty ratio, faculty: student ration, grad student: faculty ratio, percent NTT / TT, percent part-time?
9. Fair salaries for above academic staff – how do we attract the best on campus? Salary analyses / living wage analyses. Can we help with pay raise recommendations / priorities? Work with GSS (Graduate Student Senate)?
10. Task force for student mental health - joint with SGA (Student Government Association), GSS?

#### Follow-ups

10. Update on LGBTQ resolution
11. Tisha report on campus communication processes
12. Re-structuring updates
13. Process survey responses

At the retreat, we also focused on how to make Senate a more effective shared governance body. We talked a lot about what spaces / meetings / groups we need to be in to advance shared governance at UT (and advocating to be in those spaces), and how to engage more with broader groups of administrators who can provide us information and work with us on our faculty priorities. We talked a bit about the fact that our committee structure needs to be updated – we need an infrastructure committee, for example. Look for By-Law changes related to that this spring. We agreed that we need to continue conversations about our caucuses and communication. Finally, you will note that we are doing written reports in advance of the meeting, this will allow us to go directly to Q&A and get to business more quickly.

#### Executive Council meeting

At our first Executive Council meeting of 2023, we had productive conversations about the need to work together on faculty concerns at this time when faculty are feeling left behind. We presented our spring 2023 priorities and talked about how we can work with administration on these issues to try to avoid the need for resolutions. To that end, we discussed a draft resolution on the confusion related to J-term and nine-month faculty work time, and are going to work with campus units to clarify the issues without a resolution. We also were updated on the progress of our Chapter 4 changes. It may be April before we vote on these changes again, but the goal is still to move these to the Board for approval in June. Because the 2023 priorities we identified at the retreat are quite broad and not fully achievable in one semester, we are going to go through a process of breaking the topics down into achievable near-term goals and then work together to prioritize the ones to address this spring. We will work on that in the meeting Monday.

If you missed the campus master planning reveal, you should check out the recording of the meeting: <https://masterplan.utk.edu/>

These changes will transform campus, but they will take time and there will be growing pains – as we all know, the campus does not have enough room to easily house displaced units when new buildings are constructed. Speaking of, hopefully everyone saw that Haslam Business



School is moving out of some of their offices in Stokley to be able to offer the space to some of the folks from the Greve/Henson/Dunford spaces. Chancellor Plowman also mentioned starting programming for a new Arts and Humanities Building, sorely needed and long-promised.

Our goal this spring is to build bridges, work together, find solutions (though imperfect) to some, but not all of our problems, and to hopefully reaffirm faith in shared governance.

## **March 2023**

The Senate agenda in the Spring is focused on finishing items we started in the Fall and addressing the priorities we identified at the last meeting. We will have a busy agenda in April and May.

Senator input at the February meeting resulted in the following items of focus for the spring: BAM budget model, clarifying the 9-month calendar, reducing workload, increasing pay for NTTF and staff, and increasing numbers of faculty (see the “prioritization results” document in the information items). Many of these priorities (compensation, workload, hiring) are now managed by the Deans and unit-level leaders, and we are finding that our current Senate structure is not set up to advocate to the Deans (we do not sit on the Council of Deans). We are considering changes to our committee structure that may include more foci on caucuses. These would be brought as part of the proposed By-Law changes at the next meeting. **Regardless of whether we change the committee structure, we need to work to leverage the caucuses more in advocacy to the Deans.**

The Budget and Planning Committee is working on the new salary analyses and plans to bring those to Senate at the April meeting, as well as a budget report and discussion with Interim Vice Chancellor Bolton about the budget model.

The Chapter 4 changes regarding NTT policies has received feedback from the Deans and now moves to the Office of the General Counsel and Provost Office. We are still on target to see this again before the end of the year (in advance of it moving to the June Board of Trustees meeting), but as of yet we do not know what changes have been made. The NTT Issues committee is also working on a new title series to present to Senate perhaps this spring.

We continue to advocate for reducing process issues that increase our workload, and received updates on those changes at the last Executive Council meeting. Please see those minutes for those details.

Provost Zomchick is working with Deans to consider whether there should be a policy of faculty not being expected to engage in service work until a week before classes start in January; however, exceptions may need to be made for faculty searches and graduate admissions. We are awaiting guidance on that.

We have not heard any further news about the potential ASU / online education partnership.

The three new Colleges proposed by UT were approved at the last Board of Trustees meeting and move next to approval by THEC. If approved, we will certainly have a new College of Music caucus in Faculty Senate and likely representatives from the School of Public Policy and College of Emerging and Collaborative Studies. We included the Agenda for the Board of Trustees subcommittee that presented the plans for those three new units as an Information Item so you can see their structures and proposed budgets. The College of Arts and Sciences restructuring process is about to propose the College office structure and advertise for the new Divisional Deans positions before spring break. For those of you in CAS, feedback and participation in this process will be critical.

Out of the Faculty Affairs office, please consider attending the listening session on March 27, 3:30 - 5:30 in the space on the 3rd floor of Hodges Library that will become the new "Faculty Lounge." The designers will be hearing your ideas about what to include in this space. We also invite you to attend the "Unraveling Faculty Burnout" book discussion on March 21, 12-1:30, hosted by Amber Roessner and Beth Schussler. Contact Vice Provost Kelly about either of those events.

## **April 2023**

We have been working hard on elections this past month and are happy to report that we received enough faculty nominations to cover our open Senate seats - ballots are being compiled and you should be seeing a link to elect (or re-elect) new Senators for your caucus soon. Please encourage everyone you know to vote! At the May 1 meeting we will be voting for President-Elect, Recording Secretary, UFC, and COIA.

The NTT Issues Committee recently met with Vice Provost Kelly to track the progress of the Faculty Handbook changes to Chapter 4. The Office of the General Counsel has reviewed them and we are hoping to get those turned around for the May Senate meeting before sending them forward to the Board of Trustees. There are three other NTT changes that the committee will take up in Fall 2023 (all of which have support from the Provost's Office): a new title series for Lecturers, a faculty development leave policy for NTT faculty, and changes to NTT promotion processes.

Following a discussion in the last Executive Council, the Faculty Senate Leadership Team and Faculty Affairs Chair Laughter met with Vice Provost Kelly about proposed changes to the Promotion and Tenure Calendar. The Provost's Office needs more time to review dossiers due to the number they will be handling this year. One way to give them this time was to reduce the response time faculty have for a dissent (currently 14 days), which Executive Council was reluctant to do. We met with Vice Provost Kelly to better understand the calendar, and understand that a consensus change has been made. We appreciate the opportunity to have our voices heard in this important matter.

We continue our efforts to enhance shared governance at UTK as we learn more about how it currently functions. This spring we are proposing a new committee structure that we believe

positions Senate better in terms of communication and advocacy. We proposed new committees for faculty communication (represented by the caucus chairs), shared governance (linking us to the Student and Staff senates and councils), and Institutional Affairs and Infrastructure (giving us flexibility to respond to emerging issues). We have explicitly added ex-officios from units within the Chancellor's and Provost's Offices to enhance communication with these groups. We are also going to request that those units create advisory boards of faculty to better connect faculty perspectives to the work these offices are doing.

To advance these efforts, we have been invited to present at the Council of Deans meeting on Friday, April 21. At that meeting, we will be brainstorming and discussing ways to better coordinate budget discussions in Colleges, enhance communication within units, and foster faculty wellbeing, including how to address compensation, administrative burdens, and equity for NTT faculty, among other things.

We hope you see the promise of these changes to shared governance structures and how they can lay the groundwork for better communication and, we hope, increase trust that we truly are working toward the same goals more often than we think.

## **May 2023**

Since our last meeting, the Faculty Senate Budget and Planning Committee and Executive Council gathered to review the institutional budget overview, as per the budget model procedures. Based on our review, we provided several recommendations to Interim Vice Chancellor Bolton, including providing more context to facilitate our review (especially for units with large changes in variance from last budget year), breaking some of the support units into smaller units due to their size (and thus opacity in internal budget allocation), reviewing services that support units provide to revenue-generating units, providing information on reserves and use of reserves, clarifying tuition generation from support units (totaling 54 million), and providing a presentation to the Executive Council on the budget documents.

President-Elect Roessner and President Schussler visited the Council of Deans to present Senate perspectives about strengthening shared governance by building more connections between faculty and Deans, who now make many decisions in light of the new budget model. They gave examples and invited conversations about some of the challenges we are encountering because of these institutional shifts. They presented the question of support for professional development leave for NTT, and gave examples of how the initiative might work and its purpose. We will follow up with the Provost about next steps.

The leadership team has been discussing matters related to salary advocacy. We mentioned at the last meeting that we are entering discussions with the Provost's Office about a joint salary analysis effort to guide institutional recommendations. That meeting has been scheduled. The time to advocate for salary increases is in the Fall when the Deans put their budgets together, therefore, we are recommending we push for a resolution on salaries in the fall, guided by our

recent salary analysis, and led by what we hope will be the new Communication Committee made up of caucus chairs.

## **Faculty Senate Year-end report**

The leadership team started and is ending the year with a focus on building community through more effective and transparent communication across the institution, and fostering understanding through conversation. In particular, we started the year with a special retreat in which we brought together administrators from various units to talk about shared governance with faculty. We ended the year with an overhaul of our committee structure, to intentionally build connections with important units across campus. Throughout, our focus has been to strengthen shared governance not just by maintaining good relationships with our Provost and Chancellor, but remembering that shared governance is also connecting with many others across our campus to work together to educate students and improve the workplace.

Procedurally, we resurrected the mini-minutes to send summaries of our Senate activities to all faculty. We asked for reports from faculty members sitting on critical institutional committees not affiliated with Senate. We flipped Senate reports by asking for written information in advance so we could spend more time discussing topics with the Provost. We forged new relationships with the Graduate Student Senate and Student Government Association, and toward the end of the year, reached out to staff units and created a new shared governance committee that will formalize these collaborative meetings. We collected data on process issues impacting faculty, 10-year trends in faculty and staff on campus, and repeated the 2019 faculty climate survey. We are building a Senate procedures manual to make our transitions from one leadership team to the next more seamless. We held a mid-year retreat that brought committee chairs and caucus chairs together to plan for the spring based on what we learned in the fall. It was at this meeting that we discussed changing our committee structure and expanding how we engage with shared governance on campus. We identified gaps in our current structures (e.g. infrastructure and communication with Deans) and brainstormed solutions.

We tried to stay ahead of issues all year (not always successfully), anticipating potential concerns and working behind the scenes to provide perspective and advice. We worked hard to understand the scope of the proposed college re-structuring plan and stepped in to gather data to lend Arts and Sciences faculty voice to the conversation and help us understand their perspectives. We fostered meetings with Vice Chancellors about concerns over DEI efforts. We encountered and worked to create a new understanding of curriculum approval responsibility and who should discuss curriculum changes impacting other units at the institution. We supported concerns about the unexpected loss of academic space to the new Haslam building and pointed to it as an example of the need to improve communication and transparency on campus. We have continually poked for information on the new institutional online initiatives. We kept abreast of legislative concerns and made sure we understood the scope of any potential bills that might pass and impact UT.

Our committees did excellent work this year, bringing forward issues, policy changes and resolutions. We supported a LGBTQ+ resolution and a living wage resolution, and are working toward a childcare resolution now. We also worked to gather information to prevent resolutions, such as our ongoing J-term discussions. We made numerous changes to the Faculty Handbook, including closing the loop (we hope) on a three-year process to update and revise Chapter 4 of the Handbook on NTT Faculty policies. These are part of a broader focus to work toward more equity for NTT faculty who are such a critical part of our institution, including advocating for increased compensation and opportunities such as professional development leave for this group. Faculty Affairs led the Departmental By-laws audit again. Budget and planning conducted their annual salary analysis and led the review of the institutional budget with subsequent feedback about it from a faculty perspective. Teaching and Learning worked with President Schussler and TLI on identifying institutional teaching values.

As Faculty Senate President, I had the privilege to see and get to know UT in ways not possible in many other roles. Besides Senate meetings and those with the Chancellor and Provost, the President attends Leadership Councils on campus, Alumni Board, Chancellor's Associates, as well as interfacing with Faculty Senate groups across the system and the state. You see presentations on UT programs and units that many other faculty do not get to see. I told the Alumni Board that I wished every faculty member could meet with them, attend their events and see the institution through their eyes. And overall I have said, "faculty don't know about this. Faculty don't have this information" more times than I can count. Figuring out how to foster open communication and transparent processes on this campus is the key to improving shared governance, addressing faculty well-being, and strengthening the decisions about how the institution will move forward into the future. And we are all a part of that process – not just those of us who get to meet with the Chancellor; in our everyday interactions with our campus colleagues, we build understanding of diverse perspectives. Our efforts this year have worked to foster those interactions, and we hope to continue those efforts next year.