

UTK Faculty Senate Meeting
Monday, February 12, 2024
3:05 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Minutes

I. Call to Order at 3:07 President Roessner presiding.

Not in attendance: R. Acharya, J. Atherholt, E. Bernard, J. Brantley, J. Brown, J. Chyz, C. Ferringno, N. Fomin, M. Griffin, S. Groenke, R. Habib, J. Han, M. Harris, J. Hathaway, A. Hu, L. Jewel, M. Jones, J. Jordan, L. Knox E. Lukosi, S. Mobley, T. Moir-McClean, K. Newkirk, C. Noble, J. Norrell, S. Rampold, L. Teston, J. Watkins, K. Waugh, J. Weisent, S. West, Z. Zhang

II. Approval of Minutes

- a. Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes, [November 20, 2023](#)
Motion to approve by Senator Fecteau, Second by Senator Hinton. Point of clarification: Senator Hristov agenda says November 2024, but we are voting on November 2023, vote passed.
- b. Approval of [Undergraduate Council Minutes](#), November, 28, 2023; [Summary Document](#) (J. Coble, Chair)
Update from J. Coble: We need to withdraw 1 proposal from CECS as this program will be moving. Friendly amendment by Senator Coble: 1) Withdraw the proposal "UG End Program - College of Emerging and Collaborative Studies - Global Development Minor" and 2) Change KORE 111, KORE 112, and KORE 230 to 4 credit hours each
Discussion: How do you find the actual course descriptions in Curriculog as when I looked at proposal files these seemed to be missing. It was requested for this information to be amended to the reports in our meeting? Response: Would senators want this information amended to reports for only high-impact courses? This could possibly be done but there were over 140 mid-impact courses so it would be more difficult.
Discussion: On page 268, the new CECS major – innovative transdisciplinary studies major – it is unclear what this major is, can you clarify? Response: This is the signature fully customizable degree promised to the Board of Trustees. This is a program where students can choose their own path, and they will be creating more stackable certificates for this degree. You will see proposals each semester for new certificates and courses from CECs. CECs courses are taught across campus with campus partners from every college.
Motion to approve from Senator Horton, Second from Senator Foote, no additional discussion, vote passed.
- c. Approval of [Graduate Council Minutes](#), November 30, 2023; [Summary Document](#) (P. Thompson, Chair)
Motion by Senator Alderman, Second by Senator Nowicki, no discussion, vote passed.

III. Announcements and Reports

a. President's Update (A. Roessner)

Welcome. Before I share what we have on tap for today, I want you to take 60 seconds to turn to the person beside you and share one thing that happened today that brought you joy or happiness. I engaged in an ice-breaker exercise like this last Thursday afternoon at our Faculty Chat, Connecting on Rocky Top: Climate, Communication, and Community, in partnership with the Division of Access and Engagement and Teaching and Learning Innovation. In partnering in this first in a series of events designed to address campus climate and to develop a healthier community, I was reminded that we ARE the climate, or as Executive Director for Access and Engagement Janelle Coleman noted, there is an I in climate. This is an important reminder for each of us about our role in developing a healthier campus climate. As we circle the campus looking for parking spaces, we are all tempted to engage in a culture of complaining, but I am convinced now more than ever we must work together to find and advocate for potential solutions on this campus and within our broader communities. With that in mind, I have invited several special guests to our session today, including Interim Vice Chancellor of Finance & Administration Allen Bolton, who will share updates around efforts to mitigate growing pains around unprecedented institutional growth; Vice Provost of Faculty Affairs Diane Kelly, who will share an update on the faculty handbook; Vice Provost for Student Success Amber Williams, who will share an update on the Honors Program; and Director for the Center for Care and Resilience Lisa Loar and Director of the Student Counseling Center Nicole Saylor, who will share updates related to student mental health care. We also will review the proposed calendar for executive council and full senate for the upcoming academic year.

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

Chancellor Plowman was unable to attend today due to her teaching schedule.

c. Provost's Report (J. Zomchick)

In the Provost's Office one of our main focuses is to being to build the class for fall 2024. We have admitted about 17,000 students. We are looking forward to our second release of admissions toward the end of February and looking to build a first-year class of 6,850-6,950. We are working to assess needs of the incoming class and our current students. We have hit an all-time high on retention this past fall. All Deans have been asked to give a three-year hiring plan based on growth projected for their colleges. We will be spending the next few weeks looking at college buttons that have been submitted.

Digital learning continues to build out services they are offering campus to strengthen existing online degree programs as well as to develop new programs. Their website gives a full array of resources digitallearning.utk.edu. We have seen about a 30% growth in student enrollments this spring over last, many more graduate students than undergraduate. Digital learning personnel are working with Department Heads and Deans to bring new online programs into development. Two programs had been working with Noodle Partners and are now moving into the Digital Learning Division. This will save a significant cost for campus. We should be a signing partner agreement with ASU within next few weeks. We had a request for qualified suppliers in late fall. ASU was chosen so we will enter that partnership soon. We should have a visit from ASU President [Michael M.] Crow soon to launch that partnership.

We are working on policy regarding intellectual property rights for faculty who develop online programs. We have a policy on intellectual policy rights for faculty, but it was created over 20 years ago, before online instruction had become so widespread. This updated policy will address intellectual property rights for faculty who put their courses online.

Question: In relationship to the details of the ASU partnership, will faculty get to see details of partnership before it is a done deal? Response: We have not shared that because it's under negotiation and a legal agreement with General Council. This document does not go into the area of faculty governance. We will come up with a consortia agreement with ASU in so that students who are registered here at UT in the online program can take courses with ASU and take advantage of their financial aid programs.

Question: Will ASU students be able to take TN distance education courses? Response: yes.

Question: With those courses students can take at ASU, what is the coordination with our current curriculum and requirements? Response: Any course anyone takes at ASU has to go through regular approval/ transfer process that they do now. There is absolutely no way we give away the rights of the faculty here. Everything students take must be approved by the faculty granting the degree. All degree requirements remain in effect for online students.

Question: ASU has a huge online program already with a number of courses similar to ours. Is this going to cannibalize our courses because students can take an asynchronous online course instead of one of ours? Response: The partnership focuses on students in online degree programs. If we have an online course offered here, we will encourage students to take that one. We will have advisors in this space. This is not for our residential courses. This is just for students in fully online degree programs.

Question: We are hearing something regarding single flat fee [Total Access] for books. Response (A. Williams): We understand this program will involve a flat fee each semester for books, but we don't know details of the program.

Question: All transfer courses would still go through curricular processes and that transfer approval processes would go through the programs offering the degrees. Where does VolCore fit within this? Response: I heard that there are 40 or so courses at ASU that have already been approved for transfer credit. We take a course, run it through the relevant department. The department will evaluate and determine if it meets the standards of the equivalent course here. Once approved, it goes on a list so each individual student doesn't need to get the course approved.

Question: How does this account for VolCore? If a course is approved as a transfer credit, does it go to the VolCore Committee then for consideration for VolCore credit? Response (B. Coldren): if it comes in as equivalent for a course that is VolCore then it could meet VolCore requirements.

Question: Certificates require an extra course. Can ASU students get a certificate from us? Can our students take a course at ASU that would require us to grant them a certificate? Response: This would be a curricular matter up to the faculty in that program. The faculty would need to determine if the ASU course met the requirements for the certificate.

IV. New Business

- a. [Update on Institutional Growth from Interim Vice Chancellor of Finance and Administration](#) (A. Bolton)

We had a capacity study done in 2021. Deloitte Consulting retained to do a study of what we needed to support enrollment growth projections. They identified and prioritized capital (physical and human) constraints to support “moderate” and “ambitious” growth. We are

growing at the projected pace in online enrollment. For traditional enrollment, we are growing at a faster pace than projected. The finance team is trying to rebuild the model Deloitte used so we can continue projections. Student persistence is exceeding 91%. The large freshman cohort in 2022 combined with increased persistence led to limiting fall 2023 cohort by approximately 300 students.

In the study, Dolittle identified immediate and emerging constraints. Immediate constraints include housing, parking, faculty, GAs, financial aid, and registrar support. I'll focus today's update on what we've been doing:

Housing: We have a 5-year lease on Lakemoor apartment complex on Alcoa Highway. 168 beds in Fall 2023 that will increase to 512 beds for Fall 2024. Eventually, we will transition this to graduate housing as undergrads moved back to campus.

P3 bonds sold and Phase 1 work has begun for two residence halls to total 1900 beds for Fall 2025. Phase 2 will be separate bond sale late in 2024 for the Lake Loudon/Volunteer site for another 1020 beds in Fall 2026

Parking: New executive director Tanara Teal-Tate to start in March 2024. We engaged an outside consulting firm to do an assessment of parking. Additional technology (wayfinding and space availability) being added this semester and through summer. Transitioning to zoned parking for students in Fall 2024. Creation of new parking inventory: leasing several hundred spaces in campus-adjacent lot with park & ride model, and the creation of surface lot in underused space on campus. Increased utilization of T-bus transit system. Ridership increased from 70k per month in September to 135k per month in November.

Instructional Personnel: Faculty at any rank and graduate teaching assistants. It's up to colleges to determine how instruction is provided for courses and by whom – but we know we need to add and retain more faculty and graduate students to meet increased instructional need. We added 156 new faculty from Fall 2022-2023 but unsure how many of these were net new vs replacing vacancies. We also have a 2-year plan to increase graduate student pay.

Space is an issue on campus, particularly classroom spaces. The nursing building is projected to open in fall 2025. Right now, nursing students are spread across campus. The new Haslam College of Business building is scheduled for fall 2027. The new Melrose student success building is scheduled for fall 2027 and will have some classroom space. Another possible help to this issue is to spread the load of classes more across the week so we are encouraging experimenting with scheduling courses for non-peak times.

Digital learning has leased space near the conference center for online learning. We are leasing about 1/3 of the Cherokee Mills office complex, and many groups offset due to business building project are there. We are also looking at possibly leasing more spaces to fit dining on the strip. We are looking for expansion of the Rec Center as we have reports that it's hard to get equipment. Looking to expand to 2nd location and possibly lease space near campus.

The P3 concept and where are we going with this concept. Residence halls, Neyland Entertainment District or hotel, Childcare, Parking, Innovation District (research park) – it is not for core academic facilities. For Childcare, we are hoping the RFI to go out in March.

Questions: Regarding a class that does not have an official room yet this semester. Are we taking room space into consideration. **Response:** Yes, we are taking room space into consideration with the capacity studies. We did have an issue with the winter event as some rooms had water leaks and had to have repairs. He recommends following up with Brian Coldren about this class.

Question: Will the hotels have large conference rooms? **Response:** Conference rooms were part of the RFP.

Question: When can you get us information on how many of those faculty positions were new, and how many are tenure track and non-tenure track. How much money will be devoted to hiring new faculty related to student growth? How much emphasis will there be on hiring faculty vs the Neyland Entertainment district? Response: Anything spent on the Entertainment District will be by a developer. I will get answers for the rest by the next meeting.

Question: At the GSS meeting, we had a question about KAT buses. It's more expensive to get a KAT bus pass than to park on campus. Can we partner with them to help students? Response: I didn't know this cost differential. We have been working with them to get them to use VolCard. This is important, especially as the trolley closes.

Question: Regarding the space issue, besides non-peak hours, are we looking at different class schedules like a Wed- Friday class instead of Monday/Wednesday/Friday? Response: Yes, there is a classroom scheduling taskforce the chancellor has put together. We see the drop off after a certain point in time. Some of the challenges are courses that are hard to fit into the schedule now.

b. [Honors Program Updates](#) (A. Williams, P. Akos, D. Kelly)

Work has been ongoing in last two years to reimagine honors program. There are four honors programs at the university level and 40+ at department level. Feedback from students was that this was confusing. In 2021, we did an internal review and then an external review. The external review recommended that there could be better links between campus level and departmental level honors programs. Dr. Akos was hired in 2022 as the Executive Director of AVP and University Honors. A committee was tasked to reimagine honors program. In past 6-8 months, the University Honors Faculty Fellows have been working to design a new honors curriculum. We imagine about 2,000 students in the honors program. Most department honors programs are focused on junior and senior year. The new plan is to focus on interdisciplinary learning in the Chancellors Honors curriculum in the freshman and sophomore years and then have students transition into the departmental honors programs.

We plan to hire three non-tenure track faculty to help with the core courses in the proposed program. Departmental faculty would help with the upper-level honors program. We wanted to create a model to host this program while involving faculty from around campus with the core group of faculty focused specifically on the honors curriculum. The focus of these core courses is problem solving so these faculty will have expertise in this area. We seek to hire these three faculty over next 5 years and they will be NTT faculty with their work split 75% teaching and 25% service.

Governance structure: The Honors Executive Director would be over the Honors Faculty. Honors Faculty will be made of core faculty and adjunct faculty. Core faculty include University Honors faculty and Honors Faculty Fellows from different academic program. Will also have university honors executive council. This council will be consulted by the director during decision making and will be made of faculty appointed by deans in academic programs. The executive director is not the same role as dean or department head in academic units.

Question: Which departments will house the faculty who teach these honors problem solving courses? Response (D. Kelly): No department would host these unless a faculty member already appointed in a department were to teach one of these courses.

Question: Is there a service-learning requirement for honors students Response (P. Akos): Yes, the 101 course has a service-learning requirement.

Question: What was the motivation to move from offering courses with faculty from other departments to hiring your own unit of NTT faculty. Response (P. Akos): The core tenure track

faculty are still accessing honors students quite a bit in departmental honors programs. Having dedicated faculty will give a community dedicated to focusing on this program. We have to buy out time for faculty to teach these courses and not courses in their department. This group of three faculty will help with this need.

Question: Is there concern about hiring NTT into a unit that is not an academic department? It seems there will be a lack of faculty governance and support for this group. Are we creating a new department? Response (D. Kelly): There are several units that have NTT faculty but are not traditional departments. Examples from UTORI and Engineering fundamentals, so there are different models.

Question: It seems odd to not put research faculty in their core program if we are pushing honors students to do research, apply for fellowships, etc. Response (P.Akos): This is interdisciplinary so early on the NTT faculty can focus on the interdisciplinary work but the research heavy focus comes from the faculty in the departmental honors programs. Core faculty are teaching 6 of 18 hours. In the first semester, they want to have an honors engagement event so students in the first semester can learn about the departmental honors programs. Our goal is to create something that creates synergy between the 40+ academic honors programs across campus and complement what they are doing.

- c. Faculty Handbook Revisions (D. Kelly) – tabled and invited for March meeting.
- d. [Mental Health Updates](#) (L. Loar, N. Saylor)

In July 2022, they became an independent unit located in the student union. They work with students in distress to support them. This can be a day, week, month, semester, or during their entire time at UT. There has been an emergence of need for crisis care has really grown since pandemic. We didn't have a well-developed crisis response so capacity has been increased to help with students in crisis. Students used to come to them with 1-2 issues but now there are higher levels of students coming with mental health concerns and complex issues. Student services are seeing more students and working with them for a longer time. In this academic year they expect to work with about 1,700 students. There are higher levels of attempted suicide. They hospitalized about 180 students last year.

The plan is to create an Open Access Team to provide immediate support. Establishing a team available for walk-in crisis will help keep the rest of the schedule running to support needs of other students with needs but not at crisis level.

They have a workflow slide that shows students call and will have an initial screening that will help evaluate if they need crisis session or assigned to clinical team for appointment.

The expected outcomes of adding this team is to expand capacity to clinical teams; more efficient use of staff time; and research shows benefits such as less academic withdrawals and improved clinical outcomes when students receive the treatment they need.

Question: Students at Nashville campus are served remotely, will these services be offered remotely? Response: To the degree that we are able. In terms of the intake process, if it's not a big C crisis we can help via telehealth but if it is a big C crisis then they really need help from people on the ground.

Question: Are these for undergraduate and graduate students. Response: these are for all students. We have over 10 groups, 2 specific graduate groups.

- e. Proposed Meeting Dates for 2024-2025 AY: - topic tabled

- i. Executive Council: 09/09/24, 10/14, 11/04, 01/27/2025, 02/24, 03/24, 04/28
- ii. Faculty Senate: 09/16/2024, 10/21, 11/18, 01/13/2025 (if needed), 02/03, 03/03, 04/07, 05/05 + Reception

V. Information Items and Committee Reports

- a. Executive Council Minutes (unapproved), [January 29, 2024](#)
- b. [Teaching Evaluation Policy Update](#) from Institutional Effectiveness Team (H. Hartman, M. McFall II, E. Pemberton)
- c. [Senate Committees and Councils Summary Reports and Minutes](#)

VI. Adjournment meeting adjourned at 5:11pm

Appendix:

Mark Your Calendars:

- February 19, 2024, 3:00pm, 262A Student Union: Optional [Green Zone Training](#)

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Prospective Agenda Items For Future Senate Meetings This Spring:

March

Hazing Prevention (H. Flavin)

Future Meeting upon Determination of Undergraduate Council

Expedited Modality Review Process Potential Voting Item (J. Zomchick)

Future Meeting upon Determination of Faculty Affairs

Faculty Handbook 5.6 (J. Laughter and A. Langendorfer)