

# Faculty Senate

## Monthly Updates & Highlights

### **Dear University of Tennessee-Knoxville Faculty,**

We want you to be in the know about what's happening in this site of shared governance on Rocky Top, so as you settle into this new academic year, please check out this summary of our first full Faculty Senate meeting on September 18.

After the Faculty Senate President shared her [update](#), Chancellor Donde Plowman and Provost John Zomchick were on hand to offer their updates, to address challenges, such as parking, and to share insights about emerging opportunities, particularly around efforts to develop online learning.

"We know parking was a mess this fall," Plowman acknowledged, noting that the administration is exploring interventions to deploy in January for spring semester and considering further ideas to put in place for fall 2024.

Many of the Chancellor's remarks focused around themes from the recent [Chancellors Flagship Address](#), while the Provost concentrated his primary attention toward addressing questions and concerns related to the recent expansion of Online Learning and Academic Programs (OLAP) and the University's potential partnership with ASU.

These remarks provided the contextual backdrop for the Provost's request for feedback on a [Proposal from the Provost's Office](#) for an expedited process to create online modalities for existing degree programs. After a robust dialogue with Faculty Senators, a motion carried by majority vote to move this draft to Undergraduate and Graduate Council for proposal review, feedback and vote. After moving through these councils, the proposal would return to the full Senate for a vote.

### **[Baker School Program Modifications](#)**

Dean of Howard H. Baker Jr. School of Public Policy and Public Affairs Marianne Wanamaker shared information about two program modification proposals, which may come to Faculty Senate for an electronic vote in early October after the program modification proposals have been routed through their respective curriculum committees under normal procedures. Wanamaker requested and was approved for an e-vote accommodation this summer by the Faculty Senate leadership team due to the timing of the University Board of Trustee's meeting on October 13, which is three days prior to the Faculty Senate's October 16 meeting, with the intention of avoiding a delay in program modifications until March 2024 that might result in potentially confusing communications during the Fall 2024 recruiting cycle.

### **Faculty Senate Service Resolutions**

We value the importance of leadership in shared governance on Rocky Top, and with that in mind, we recognized three impactful leaders within Faculty Senate and on this University of Tennessee campus through service commendation resolutions--past Secretary Millie Gimmel [fall 2020-spring 2023]; Past President Bonnie Ownley [fall 2022 until spring 2023]; and former President Beth Schussler [fall 2022 until spring 2023] each of whom served Senate with distinction in their roles.

### **Faculty Input Requested for QEP**

[Professor Erin Hardin](#), Chair of the Steering Committee for the [Quality Enhancement Plan](#) (QEP), shared information about the QEP process that occurs every 10 years as a part of the reaffirmations for accreditation with SACSCOC. The reaffirmation process is primarily backward looking, assessing how goals were met, but the QEP lets us look forward, Hardin noted, asking our university to identify the one thing we could do to improve student success.

A steering committee of more than 30 people will work to identify a topic that engages the campus by December. They plan to use the strategic vision, institutional data, and stakeholder input to identify the topic. Faculty should receive messages seeking input and asking to provide class opportunities for student input. Input on the QEP can be provided at [tiny.utk.edu/QEPIdeas](https://tiny.utk.edu/QEPIdeas)

Faculty Senate leadership offered Hardin an opportunity to seek additional input about the QEP at the second Faculty Chat later this semester.

### **Faculty Chat on Divisive Concepts**

Faculty Senate leadership wants to extend an invitation to you for the first Faculty Chat of the semester at 3 p.m. September 27 in Student Union Room 362C. This chat will feature an open listening session designed to foster a collaborative and open dialogue to address divisive concepts, the evolving Tennessee state legislative landscape, and implications for faculty and classroom instruction within our academic community. Our goal is to create an inclusive space for faculty members to share their lived experiences,

insights, and concerns related to these issues and to share faculty questions, perspectives, and needs with the Provost's Office.

We would like to invite you to actively participate in this listening session to share your thoughts and experiences, ask questions, and join others in generating a space that can encourage other attendees to express themselves. Our intention is to create an environment that facilitates the exchange of diverse viewpoints and lived experiences. Your presence and engagement would be so helpful in shaping the direction of our collective dialogue on these significant matters. [RSVP Here!](#)

Please let us know if you have any questions, concerns, or would like more information about this first Faculty Chat. If you cannot make it, please consider sharing your lived experience through this [confidential Google Form](#); please consider attending the TLI's workshop [Navigating Divisive Concepts in the College Classroom](#) at 1 p.m. Sept. 28. via zoom; and please consider learning more about and contributing to research around [difficult dialogues in the classroom here](#).

Feel free to reach out to your Faculty Senate leadership team with any questions or concerns in advance of our next full Senate meeting on Oct. 16, at [faculty senate@utk.edu](mailto:faculty senate@utk.edu). Our job is to be your voice, and we are here to listen. In the meantime, thanks always, for being good partners in shared governance.

Sincerely,

Your Faculty Senate Leadership Team:  
Amber Roessner, Faculty Senate President  
Derek Alderman, Faculty Senate President-Elect  
Beth Schussler, Faculty Senate Past President