

## UTK Faculty Senate Executive Council Meeting

Monday, October 02, 2023

3:05 pm – 5:00 pm

West Wing, 440 Haslam Business Building

### MINUTES

#### I. **Call to Order** at 3:05pm, President Roessner presiding

Attending: D. Alderman, M. Brannen, C. Clark, J. Coble, M. Collins, B. Cooper, O. Driskell, B. DuBois (virtual), M. Griffin, J. Haramule, M. Hinten, D. Kelly, R. Kite, B. Krumm, A. Langendorfer, J. Laughter, E. Lukosi, S. Madison, C. Noble, B. Ownley, E. Pemberton, A. Roessner, E. Schussler, M. Scoggins, A. Schoenbach, R. Spirko, A. Steiner, P. Thompson, M. Violanti, A. Williams, R. Zkrajsek, J. Zomchick

#### II. **Approval of Minutes**

##### a. [Faculty Senate Executive Council Minutes from September 11, 2023](#)

Motion to approve by Senator Collins – Second by Senator Alderman – Discussion: On page 8 in the discussion by B. Behn there are 2 questions listed with no answers. President Roessner will reach out regarding these 2 questions for clarification. Provost Zomchick responded that most ASU courses are asynchronous and any UTK student could take an ASU course and transfer it in. This consortia agreement would be made so students could use financial aid for these courses.

Motion by Senator Schussler to vote electronically once answers to these 2 questions are added – Second by Senator Crumb – unanimous approval.

#### III. **Announcements and Reports**

##### a. **President's Update** (A. Roessner)

President Roessner welcomed senators and guests to the meeting. Business on the agenda included an overview and demonstration of the new Curriculog system offered by University of Tennessee operations coordinator for curriculum and catalog, Jake Haramule; a discussion over policy around teaching evaluations guided by Assistant Director of Academic Assessment Elizabeth Pemberton; an update on online education from our Institutional Affairs Committee Co-Chairs Charlie Noble and Lisi Schoenbach; an update on [The 2023-2024 Annual Audit of College and Departmental Bylaws](#), the forthcoming NTTF Survey Regarding Service Expectations and an update on the tabled voting item on Faculty Handbook 5.6 from Faculty Affairs committee co-chairs Jud Laughter and Anne Langendorfer.

President Roessner offered gratitude to senators and invited guests who attended last Wednesday's Faculty Chat. Within that space, our invited guests Provost John Zomchick, Chief of Staff Matthew Scoggins, and Associate General Counsel Frank Lancaster listened to the lived experiences of University of Tennessee faculty and engaged in dialogue around questions posed by faculty. Based on that session, we will advocate through University Faculty Council (UFC)

for a legal defense fund to be utilized in the event that the attorney general ever decides not to defend faculty, staff, or students in a matter related to those laws.

President Roessner thanked committee chairs for the excellent work they are engaged in and offered them an opportunity to share brief two-minute updates of the work they are undertaking, if they so desire:

Senator Cooper from Teaching and Learning Council: They are working on course evaluations, working with TLI to develop teaching values or guiding principles to adopt around expectations or goals in the classroom. Look for surveys and information to be shared. The [draft document](#) was linked in the information items and feedback is welcome.

Senator Hinton from Awards & Professional Development Committee: They are in touch with people in the offices of the provost and student success who offer teaching and mentoring awards. Once awards are online the call for nominations will go out and the committee will be prepared to review.

Senator Griffin and Senator Fomin from Appeals Committee: There was one active appeal from last year. The committee submitted findings and recommendations in May to the Provost. After meeting, the Provost did not approve the recommendations of the committee. The committee believes there are wider issues around the process of APPR rankings that may need to be dealt with in a different venue.

A question was raised asking what the committee was recommending and suggesting that the question would be the degree of certainty in the *Faculty Handbook* regarding how the average ranking number is reached. There are provisions laid out specifically for the 3-year window but the *Faculty Handbook* is fuzzy in averaging out the number. Do we need to take another look at that section of the APPR rules and provisions to make sure they can't be abused based on the general concern that emerged from this particular case? It was recommended that this might be an area for the Faculty Affairs Committee to look into.

Senator Alderman from Faculty Communications Committee: They are making excellent progress in creating pipelines of communications between caucus chairs and senators in these caucuses and creating better pipelines between caucuses and deans. There is an interest in bringing more attention to unsung volunteer faculty who are doing important but unseen work on campus. They have been talking about enhancing the faculty brand, similar to the idea of the university brand but focused on raising awareness of the work of faculty

[Draft committee reports throughout the year can be read here.](#)

#### **IV. New Business**

##### **a. Curriculog (J. Haramule)**

Curriculog, an electronic routing system for curriculum changes, was introduced this year at UTK. J. Haramule provided a brief demonstration of the system. The login is at [registrar.utk.edu](http://registrar.utk.edu).

On the website, below the login, are resource links including the *Undergraduate and Graduate Curricular Submission Guide* that includes Curriculog instructions. They recommend consulting the guide when you have questions before reaching out.

There was some confusion about access but all faculty have access to Curriculog with netID login. (*note from Recording Secretary – I tested this and was able to log in using netID despite never accessing the system before*)

On the main dashboard is a *Proposals* button. This is where you will start a new proposal by pulling in a course and then working on the fields in the form that need to be revised. When their office reviews a proposal, they turn on tracking so the changes can be seen.

Haramule demonstrated how a proposal will move through the Faculty Senate and then back to their office using an example from Undergraduate Council (UG Council). From the *Agenda* tab he selected the agenda from UG Council September 25, 2023. The agenda has all the course proposals linked. He demonstrated how a revised course proposal moves from the originator to their office for review and then, when approved, to the UG Council, and then, when approved there to the Faculty Senate. Once the Senate votes, the proposal is updated and moves back to an administrator for final review. The system allows tracking of the full approval process, making it clear where a course is in the process.

Question: Are there still specific cut off times during the year to submit courses? Yes, they are still following the cycles to get things into the catalog in time for registration.

Question: Can all faculty log in and see what's in the pipeline? Yes, any faculty can see committee agendas and courses in the works; you do not have to be a committee member. Not all faculty can originate proposals as approval for this comes from Associate Deans.

Question: Is there going to be a point at which notifications are streamlined? Faculty using the system are getting a lot of long notifications for tasks that they do not need to respond to. The default setting is daily notifications, but it can be changed to be less frequent. Haramule suggested setting up an email rule to file these notifications to a mailbox. He indicated that several of these notifications are asking for decisions that are made by committee vote at the meeting rather than an individual in the system. For example, all UG Council members get notified but the system only needs to be updated once after the committee vote. They are finding that the majority of notifications are not meaningful right now and acknowledge that notifications are becoming a pain point for many people. He recommended logging in and using the filter under advanced search to filter to needed tasks.

Question: Why is this system better than what we were doing previously as it seems to make the process harder? Previously, most of this was done via email conversation, making it very difficult to track all the approvals for each course proposed. We are still learning but it will be more efficient in the long run. They have discovered several limitations to the system and are trying not to adjust ourselves to these limits but, rather, to try to develop solutions. For example, initially there were not enough fields to include the impact of the course so the team developed a piece on the back end to support this so that the reports for UG Council include groupings of courses by high, medium, and low impact.

Question: What happens if disagreement occurs on the impact level of a proposed course change? Every course and program form has a field to add impact in the administration section of the form.

Question: To clarify, the issue last year was the impact of a requirement being dropped, not a course. The dropped requirement led to an impact on other units. Will it be possible to glean impact data for dropped requirements? Before Curriculog, it was a judgement call to see that impact – you could not check for this impact across departments. With the system, if we find that impact affects a different unit, we can add custom routing so that the other College is part of the approval process. The impact report looks for instances of that course in the catalog but we should remember that it is a human who actually makes the selection of low, medium, or high impact.

Question: Faculty are told we have a 14-day preview period for course proposals but this system is complex. There is concern about the move to this system from a shared governance perspective. Will faculty log in and review course proposals? How will they know when the review period is and when does that happen in these new processes? Is it possible to recommend times faculty need to login and review? The curriculum committees prepare agendas 4 weeks in advance so the proposals grouped on these agendas are available to review then. Prior to Curriculog, proposals were available on the provost website and did not require faculty to log in to review.

It was suggested that it might be appropriate to have registrar come do a more complete demonstration as they are unsure how many faculty have used Curriculog yet. There is some confusion about how a proposal moves to the next level as some approvals are just an opinion but others move proposals to the next stage. For example, Senators on UG Council provide opinions with their individual approvals but the UG Council Chair can move the proposal to the next step by indicating approval after the committee vote.

Question: How will departments generate a report of all curriculum changes for discussion? Curriculog can generate PDF files.

Before the UG Council meets in October we will ask them how the system is working and if they have any concerns to share.

#### **b. Teaching Evaluation Policy (E. Pemberton)**

E. Pemberton has coordinated course evaluations for 15 years on campus. They are transitioning to a new site to post course evaluations and it seemed like a good time to check in on course evaluations with the senate as it has been some time since policies have been reviewed and senate technically has a degree of administrative control over this process. She suggested that Teaching and Learning Council consider creating an annual course evaluations overview report to share with the senate.

Beyond the new site, they are interested in doing more with the data from course evaluations. They are working on getting data formatted to use in PowerBI for analysis and comparisons. They aim to have this in place by the end of the academic year so data can be more easily explored.

Question: Has the choice of a new system been made? Yes, they piloted course evaluations this summer and had issues. There are a variety of ways to collect the data, and they have not found a vendor that can report all the data in the ways we want to look at it. This is why they are working to pull data in PowerBI.

Question: Does this new system have a way to look at a course over time instead of just an instructor over time? The system does not, but there is additional interest in this on campus.

Question: Does the new system address issues of team teaching? The way information is pulled from Banner causes some issues because you can't just assume that every course with more than 1 instructor is set up (for example, team taught vs lecture/lab). However, they think they have figured out how to address this issue.

Question: Will we get a report back for independent studies? No, reports are set up for a minimum of 5 attendees in a course. They need to explore other ways to get student evaluations for independent studies and research.

Question: There was a notification that faculty needed to download reports from the old system by September 30, what happens if we missed the deadline? The Office of [Institutional Effectiveness](#) has all the data from 2016 to present. We will not have access to Campus Labs Anthology after October 15. Their office will be working to make sure the back data can be accessed. If any faculty members needs this data after October 15 they should reach out to the Office of Institutional Effectiveness for assistance.

TF faculty have already entered the annual review process but NTT have not yet and may want to be told now to download reports while we still have access to Campus Labs Anthology.

Reporting on the new site does not seem to be an improvement over what we had from Campus Labs Anthology.

Next steps. E. Pemberton plans to come to the October Senate meeting where she will share policy examples from peer institutions that have guidance for how teaching evaluations should be used. We will discuss policies and potential inclusion in the *Faculty Handbook*.

**c. Online Education Update from Institutional Affairs & Infrastructure Committee (C. Noble and L. Schoenbach)**

This is a new version of a prior committee and thus they discussed the committee charge. They see the committee as a conduit of information trying to connect with the campus community, campus leaders, etc. They want to be able to reach out to key players who are ex-officio on the committee. They have a pro-active, positive mission to cofacilitate cooperation on campus. They saw a lot of issues, concerns, curiosity about the implications of movement to online learning for faculty, students, etc. They invited Bruce Behn and Joshua Steele from the UTK Digital Learning group to talk to committee. [The draft committee report can be read here.](#)

The committee wanted to express faculty concerns and opinions, primarily that they are eager to know more about this but would like a vision statement or plan to consider. They were receptive to that request. They are working on a website that will go live this week to provide additional

information to faculty. Additionally, discussion generated the idea for a monthly newsletter from their office to provide more timely updates.

In responses to questions and concerns, they confirmed multiple times that faculty would retain control over curriculum. There are a lot of issues yet to be resolved with ASU partnership so, perhaps, this is why some of the information is hazy and not all questions can be answered. They stressed that there would be a lot of potential for departments to support online students but nobody would be forced to do anything. While we have talked a lot about the ASU relationship, the access mission of online learning is larger than just this relationship.

- d. **The 2023-2024 Annual Audit of College and Departmental Bylaws & forthcoming NTTF Survey Regarding Service Expectations** (J. Laughter and A. Langendorfer)

The annual bylaws audit is looking for 2 things: mentoring and multiple disciplinary collaborative research teams.

The Faculty Affairs Committee is exploring issues around NTT faculty service: protection of their service and appropriate attention/recognition of service. They are interested in getting feedback from faculty with a survey and possibly distributing through the mini minutes or through the communications committee. It was recommended that having clear questions is important and, if we have specific questions, we could filter them to caucus chairs to get input from constituents. There was discussion that other committees may need to survey faculty, and we should package questions together so we don't inundate faculty with surveys. The group working on teaching policies needs input so perhaps these committee can work together to create a single survey.

## V. Old Business

- a. ***Faculty Handbook 5.6 Update on Tabled Non-Voting Item*** (J. Laughter and A. Langendorfer)

Between last executive and full senate meeting, we had request to pull back for more conversation. They discovered a longer standing related issue and have invited the Ombuds person to come to the October committee meeting.

VP Kelly provided more context. Last year they tabled work on Chapter 5 to focus on Chapter 4. She met with General Council regarding the text that is suggested to be revised. Based on this discussion, she believes the intent behind the line is important to keep but that the wording needs to be edited as it is misleading. She went on to clarify that the language "with or without notice" should not be there as their office always gives notice before termination. She further explained that "upon payment of the remaining salary due during the appointment" has benefited faculty in some situations. As an example, she discussed a situation where a faculty member developed a medical issue and could not continue teaching and was able to resign but still receive salary based on the contract.

VP Kelly suggests we reword the sentence rather than remove it so that the purpose is clear and does not sound like faculty are being terminated without cause. It is important to keep this

sentence as it does give the university the ability to address issues that can arise with a professor in the classroom.

## **VI. Information Items and Committee Reports**

- a. Unapproved [Faculty Senate Minutes from September 18, 2023](#)
- b. [Senate Goals & Priorities Survey](#), [Committee Goals](#) & Draft [Committee Reports](#)
- c. [Guiding principles and aspirations for teaching at UTK](#)

## **VII. Adjournment**

Motion from Senator Cooper – Second from Senator Schussler –  
meeting adjourned at 4:45pm

### **Appendix: Prospective Agenda Items for Future Senate Meetings This Fall**

Oct. 16

Curriculum (J. Haramule)

Volunteer Experience (S. Hunter and M. Collins)

Teaching Evaluations & Policy (E. Pemberton)

### **Future Meeting upon Determination of Faculty Affairs**

*Faculty Handbook* 5.6 [Voting Item](#) (J. Laughter and A. Langendorfer)