

UTK Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes

Monday, October 16, 2023

Strong Hall, Room 101

Not in Attendance: R. Acharya, D. Alderman, J. Chyz, C. Ferrigno, N. Fomin, K. Franck, Y. Gao, M. Griffin, S. Groenke, H. Goeritz, J. Han, M. Harris, M. Held, A. Hu, B. Issa, B. Jeffries, R. Kite, L. Knox, B. Krumm, B. Long, L. Mahony, K. Martin, S. Mobley, T. Moir-McClean, M. Moon, J. Norrell, C. Norris, P. Palies, A. Palomino, S. Rampold, A. Schoenbach, M. Sharma, R. Spirko, K. Waugh, J. Weisent, R. Zakrajsek, Z. Zhang, M. Zhuravleva

I. **Call to Order** at 3:12pm B. Schussler, Past President of Faculty Senate, presiding

B. Schussler leading meeting in the absence of President Roessner and President-Elect Alderman who were attending an SEC ADLP workshop.

Quorum met

II. **Approval of Minutes**

a. **Approval of Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes**, [September 18, 2023](#)

Motion to approve minutes by Senator Gilchrist – Second by Senator Nowicki – Discussion: none – Motion passed unanimously.

***Information Item** to be delivered in advance of approval of UG/GC minutes:

Curricular Process Update (B. Coldren), [Faculty Senate – October 16, 2023 \(Cycle 1\)](#) agenda; [Faculty Senate and Curriculog Orientation](#) & [Faculty Senate: Quick Guide to Curriculog](#)

B. Schussler: The minutes look different for both Undergraduate Council and Graduate Council because the impact level had to be hand-coded due to a limitation in Curriculog. Curriculog is a new electronic routing system for the university. We had to hand-code impact level for the minutes.

B. Coldren, Assistant Vice Provost & Registrar: Curriculog is a new electronic routing system for the university. Please review detailed information item links about the Curriculog system. Discussion today is a review of advantages and limitations.

Curriculog is an online curricular management software system. In terms of the Council work, faculty still have access to all the minutes of Undergraduate Council and Graduate Council. Some of the advantages is that Curriculog provides widespread accesses and visibility so that, at any point in the process, proposed changes to the curriculum can be seen. It allows for some streamlined automation and helps all relevant parties follow all workflow/signoff steps and is reducing errors. Curriculog integrates with catalog software so revisions to a course/program are linked to the catalog and changes are published to the catalog directly, reducing human error in retyping information between systems. It provides enhanced ability to assess impact of the program. Anytime a course proposal is submitted, you must run

an impact report. The impact report looks for every program in the catalog that requires that course. It makes sure of the workflow routes through the colleges that are impacted. Program impact is harder to check but they get reviewed by registrar staff. Currently, programs are either required to include documentation that they have consulted with departments impacted or impacted departments are added to the approval routing workflow by registrar staff.

The platform is still new, and we are still learning. The process will be iterative as we continue to learn and understand its capabilities. One major con is that reports are not formatted well, particularly for printing, and are meant to be used online. Council minutes are not formatted well. The system does not include the ability to sort by high, medium, and low impact. These impact levels are determined by guidelines set forth by the curriculum committees and are important to our workflow. At the moment they are hand coding these for the minutes and reports. This is an area they hope to improve as we become more familiar with the system. If faculty need training and support, they should reach out to the Office of the Registrar directly for help. Staff are willing to meet one-on-one for training if needed.

B. Schussler: February is usually a heavy month for undergraduate council curriculum changes. We all need to be comfortable looking at the review process and using this system.

- b. **Approval of [Undergraduate Council Minutes](#)**, September 26, 2023; UG Council [Voting Summary](#) + [Annotated Minutes](#), September 26, 2023 (J. Coble, Chair)

Motion to approve minutes by Senator Violanti – Second by Senator Russell – discussion: none – Motion passed by majority.

- c. **Approval of Graduate Council Minutes, [September 7, 2023](#) & [September 28, 2023](#)**; GC Summary for [September 7, 2023](#) & [September 28, 2023](#) (P. Thompson, Chair)

Motion to approve by Senator Truster – Second by Senator Hart – Discussion: none – Motion passed unanimously.

III. **Announcements and Reports**

- a. **President's Update**, (B. Schussler, Past President of Faculty Senate)

Today we will engage with Interim Vice Chancellor of Finance and Administration Allen Bolton, who will discuss how the university is addressing challenges related to growth; budgetary guardrails in this higher education landscape, and the implementation of recommendations related to the new budget allocation model;

Faculty Director in the Division of Student Success Sally B. Hunter and longtime Senator and Committee Chair Mark Collins will discuss the Volunteer Experience and the Volunteer Experience Faculty Fellow Initiative;

And Vice Provost of Academic Affairs Ozlem Kilic will give us a report on teaching evaluation and discuss aspects of policy that are being discussed in our Teaching and Learning Council.

President Roessner wanted to offer a word of gratitude to our senators and invited guests who attended our recent Faculty Chat on Divisive Concepts. Within that space, our invited guests Provost John Zomchick, Chief of Staff Matthew Scoggins, and Associate General Counsel Frank Lancaster listened to lived experiences of faculty and engaged in dialogue around questions posed by faculty. Based upon recommendations from that session, we will advocate through the University Faculty Council for a legal defense fund to be established in the - we hope unlikely - event that the attorney general ever decides not to defend faculty and staff in a matter related to the divisive concepts legislation.

Erin Hardin and the committee working on the next Quality Enhancement Plan have narrowed down their ideas to six possibilities and are asking for feedback via a survey at tiny.utk.edu/QEPTopics.

Please note Information item C with a link to provide feedback on institutional teaching principles that can guide many aspects of how we approach the practice of instruction at UT.

Information item G on the agenda was received last Thursday and is a 1-page summary of the new digital learning initiative that answers some of the questions we were asking at the last Senate meeting when we were discussing the change in modality approval process. We encourage you to read through this and send us questions that this may bring up, especially since it is likely we will be addressing that modality change question again in November after it has been considered by the Undergraduate and Graduate Councils.

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

There is a good feeling right now on campus and people are operating at a level that is amazing. She wants to use this time to lift us up for the work faculty do. There is a good spirit among students, faculty, staff. The Board of Trustees (BOT) meeting Friday was a celebration of the many good things going on at UT such as growth, retention rates, new buildings, dorms, research output, etc. All of the positive we are celebrating is happening because of the efforts of our faculty and staff. The Chancellor and others recently traveled to Germany to learn more about Volkswagen innovation research. Volkswagen is a partner at our research park where we have a new building being planned and another after that. Volkswagen was on tour at the research park and saw collaborative research with Eastman. Eastman developed a mission to tackle issues related to pollution created from plastic bottles, which they helped initially develop. Eastman is collaborating at the research park on a project to develop new car drink holders made from recycled plastic bottles.

The students are excited and input from graduate students indicates they want more opportunity for social interaction with fellow students and faculty. This is more than what we've heard from graduate students in the past and encourages us to think about how we can meet this need in our colleges. The minimum stipend for 9-month appointment graduate assistants has been raised but some say the rate is still too low to be competitive. Faculty are encouraged to talk with department heads about stipend adjustments that can be made at the department level.

Questions: none

c. Provost's Report (J. Zomchick)

We have extraordinary interest again from high school seniors wanting to come to UT. Compared to this time last year our in-state applications are running 40% greater and out of state 90% greater. We have very close to 20,000 applications already in October. About 6 years ago our total applications were 17,000 in May. This is a place people want to come to and they want to come here to study with our faculty.

Coffee and Conversations in the Student Union Wednesday morning 8-9am. Faculty Pub is Thursday at 4 in Circle Park. Please note this will be an outdoor event. Provost hosted events at <https://provost.utk.edu/events/>

Question: When we approved graduate council minutes from Sep 28, have we approved expedited change for graduate courses moving online? What is the process now for graduate courses moving online?

D. Thompson: Nothing has changed for now. This vote was to indicate that the Graduate Council is in support of making the proposed change when the Faculty Senate votes to approve the change.

B. Schussler: Before Faculty Senate will vote, we will need to see what comes from both Undergraduate Council and Graduate Council and reconcile any differences to present to Faculty Senate.

Question: Regarding the initiative to directly admit the top 10% of high school classes around the state, what about the high schools where those students would not have previously gained admission to UTK? If we do bring those students to campus in the fall, they are going to need a much different kind of support system. What efforts with student success and faculty are you offering given how many students may come underprepared?

A. Williams: We are in conversations about this issue. Last year we implemented a program for students from flagship schools where every student was required to be part of 1 of 4 programs, each having academic requirements. They are piloting this program to see how it works. These programs provide much more intentional support for scholars but will need resources to be scaled up. Student Success is looking to launch a wider committee that includes faculty to think about how they expand support. The goal is to be pro-active.

J. Zomchick: There is a deadline to apply for the guaranteed admission program. Complete applications are due by Nov 15 and, because they must include an ACT score on the application, we will have a better idea of how many students and what the needs may be. This will give us some time before submission of the 2024-25 budget so they should have a better understanding of the types of student success supports they need to stand up.

Question: Often faculty are not in the communication loop with student success work but are also involved in student success. Policies that would give faculty support to do this work are things like smaller class sizes and to include faculty in communications with students so they are aware of issues. Are there any programs that you are

thinking of putting into place to increase faculty awareness of efforts they can make to support students better? Are you thinking about strategies that can be enacted in the classroom?

J. Zomchick: We have a Council of Deans meeting Thursday where VP Alldredge will be talking to the Deans about growth and planning for growth. We do a lot of communication with Deans through this group, and we need to make it clear to them that we want this information communicated down through department heads to faculty and the rest of the organization. There is a new faculty advisory board for student success with 2 senate representatives. There is also a separate meeting with Associate Deans focused on student success. We do need to do a better job of sharing information from these efforts more broadly to faculty.

Question: How will our campus accommodate more students in terms of classrooms when we are struggling now to find classrooms that will accommodate our class sizes?

B. Coldren: There are several things that can help with this. We need to spread our classes out across the entire timetable and move out of the prime-time spots. Finding classrooms the right size is an issue in those prime-time spots. Along with the degree audit system, we are looking at a planning system where students can project out the courses they plan to take in future semesters. This type of system will provide additional information to departments for class planning. Additionally, the sooner the Office of the Registrar know about changes in how courses are being delivered the more they can help you find an appropriate space on campus for that course. It was noted that we need to ensure that students are able to move across campus with limited time and get to classes on time as we do this classroom planning work. The new planning tool will be introduced to Deans at the Thursday Council of Deans meeting.

IV. **New Business**

a. **Updates on Institutional Growth, Budgetary Guardrails, and BAM Year Two** (A. Bolton)

A. Bolton shared a chart comparing UTK with WVU. He looked at 10 years of UTK financial data and noted that we have had annual increases in net position each year. He assured us that we are not in danger of facing the issues they are having at this point.

The first comparison is of our budget model. WVU is using an incremental budget, the type we moved away from. The RCM model we use is much more complex but more transparent. The RCM budget model gives us more insight into what is going on financially. We will grow in our sophistication of understanding this information as we continue using this model.

WVU has had declining enrollments and is down 10% since 2015. UTK is up 30.4% since 2015. We track that well with enrollment management.

Despite politics, we receive strong funding from the state. We have an outcomes-based funding formula that includes peer and self achievement on credit hours accumulation, degree completion, and research expenditures. WV has no higher

education funding formula. In 2014 we got \$266.2M from the state and in 2024 we got \$447.8M. In the same time, funding in WV dropped, in 2014 they got \$130.8M and in 2024 they got \$116.5M.

Our revenue breakdown is roughly: 34% in tuition and fees, 25% state funding, 20% research (direct and indirect dollars), aux 16%, other 5%. The balance of in-state and out-of-state students is important for a diversified revenue portfolio.

The final comparison is about state population growth. Population in TN has grown 8.9% since 2010 but WV has had a loss of 3.2% in the same time. We are in a good situation but we have people paying close attention to financials to ensure we do not face the same situation WVU is facing.

Question: Thank you for this presentation. This has been the most clarity we have been offered about the financial state of our university. You said something at the end about the balance of in-state and out-of-state students and we have moved very quickly from being a large majority in-state to more of an even mix.

A. Bolton: The guaranteed admission makes sure we are providing an education to all qualified in-state students. The financials of out-of-state students are helpful in a high-growth environment. Our percentages have changed and they are nearing 50/50. He is not advocating for increasing beyond where we are, just noted that it is good to have a mix of in-state and out-of-state from a financial standpoint.

A. Bolton: Turning to the Budget Allocation Model (BAM), in wrapping up our first year, all colleges out performed FY 23 budget. All the colleges added to reserves from FY23 to FY24, including colleges that were in subvention (university support) at the start of the budget. There was a need to fund the new Melrose Student Success Center from capital reserves, and they were able to secure remaining funding for that project. The legislature did not fund the new chemistry building in last year's budget; they did give funds to move forward with design and planning for that building. This will save approximately a year in the process if the building is funded in next year's budget as it enables the planning process to begin now.

There is only approximately 3 months of the year not included in budget season. This is a breakdown of the budget season. November to December is when institutional service units do budget work so information can get to the academic colleges in December. December to January is when academic colleges prepare budgets. February to March is when the Allocation Review Committee interrogate the support unit budgets. In April to May the budget is completed and the BOT votes on the budget in June

The former Budget and Finance Committee gave a good summary report last spring. A number of recommendations from that report are being incorporated this year including providing better data and guidance to those preparing budgets. Some information is not known as the budgeting process is working to include things like final enrollment counts (tuition funds), and state funding levels. While not everything is known at the time, they are providing as much information to guide this work as possible.

There were recommendations about closer coordination between support units and the provost's team so that Colleges can be better informed on needs of institutional support units. We will be hearing more about this as the budget rolls out this year.

Moving to institutional growth, we have recently approved 2 residence halls that will be a public-private partnership (P3). We should have 1,900 new beds ready for fall of 2025. These buildings and debt do not end up on our balance sheet, and it includes a 40-year ground lease that we will give to our non-profit partner. After 40 years, the ownership of the property returns to UT. This is the first P3 in the state of TN, and other schools have already expressed interest in following our lead.

We are updating the institutional capacity study from a few years ago. The consultant at that time gave us the formula so we can update the study with our own team. This will inform us about needs in terms of faculty and teaching space needed to support growth in the student population.

We are searching for a new executive director for parking and transit and should have someone by January or February. We are currently working with a parking consultant through December to update parking processes. The outcome should be recommendations for changes in the way parking is handled on campus. For example, right now all commuter students with a C sticker can park in any C lot on campus but a recommendation could be to set up C parking zones that students are assigned to.

Question: Regarding parking and the new residence halls, how much parking will we need for 1,900 new beds?

A. Bolton: We will need to scale parking for students. The parking formula for students is different than for faculty and staff. We can't answer this yet because we haven't done analysis with the consultant but likely policy changes for student parking are needed.

Question: Right now, each dorm cost different amounts so some students strive to stay at a specific dorm because it is cheaper. It's good that the new dorms will provide additional beds but will they be creating class issues by having all the newer dorms with amenities priced higher so more available to wealthier students?

A. Bolton: Pricing has been a consideration in planning. The new halls will have a range of prices and will be priced in the same way the newer campus resident halls are priced and all will be under market rates for housing off campus. We are hoping that moving on these projects will help us to be able to accelerate the renovation or demolition of some of the older dorms.

Please email additional questions to gbolton1@utk.edu

b. **Volunteer Experience** (S. Hunter and M. Collins)

The volunteer experience comes out of strategic goal 1, and is sharing about the work of Volunteer Experience Faculty Fellows.

It was a journey to choose a framework. The executive council launched November 2020 and the strengths advisory council launched in 2021.

They selected the [PERMA model of well-being](#): positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning, accomplishments. The model is not about making students happy but about giving them a foundation and creating a common language.

Vol Success Teams support students and tend to a student's well-being in curricular and co-curricular spaces. Vol Success Teams to support students include faculty, academic advisor, academic/honors coach, one-stop counselor, and peer/faculty mentor.

The 2023 volunteer experience faculty fellows have members from all 9 colleges with undergraduate students. They spent a lot of time thinking about the PERMA model.

To learn more about PERMA, there is an asynchronous certification available on the TLI website with 6 modules that you can use to learn more. There is also a [Thrive Summit](#) on November 15 for faculty and staff from 11:30-3 in the student union

Question: A lot of us did the certification in the spring 2023 through the TLI portal. Why is this certification offered there instead of through k@te and why doesn't this certification show on your k@te transcript?

F. McGaskey: This was not a certification when it was initially designed. It might be good for us to consider the possibility of getting this into k@te.

c. **Teaching Evaluation Policy** (H. Hartman, M. McFall, E. Pemberton)

Teaching evaluations are run out of the Office of Institutional Effectiveness.

Brief History of Teaching Evaluations at UTK:

- 1987 – CTEP Chancellor's Teaching Evaluation Project (CTEP) was the first attempt to centralize evaluations.
- 1994 – A task force was created because faculty wanted better feedback, students wanted better information about courses, and administration wanted better information for the promotion & tenure process
- 1998 – A new taskforce was created and adopted a new name for the course evaluation platform, Student Assessment of Instruction System (SAIS).
- 2011 – SAIS moves from paper to online evaluations
- 2015 – The survey was reviewed and the number of questions reduced to shorten the survey. They created TN Voice that then moved to the Anthology platform in 2016. The survey was reduced to 8 core questions, 2 open ended questions, 2 questions about effort and expected grade, and 2 demographic questions. This new survey was called TN Voice.
- 2016 – TN Voice moved to Anthology platform. Before 2016 there was TN101, a website that displayed overall results on what students rated professors.
- NOW – TN Voice moving from Anthology to HelioCampus. Nothing is changing about the timeline for student evaluations from a faculty perspective. The platform is changing, and they are in the process of migrating now.

- Over time, we increased support for smaller classes to complete evaluations, changing the minimum number of responses from 5 to 3 and this will remain in the new platform.
- Prior to 2016, the TN101 website displayed overall results on what students rated professors and department heads only received quantitative data. Now they receive all the data, including qualitative, from assessments.

The RFP process to migrate to HelioCampus happened last fall. The contract with Anthology has now ended. The Office of Institutional Effectiveness has all the raw data and can help faculty who did not download PDFs of evaluations from Anthology. If you need to request course evaluations, they will need the semester and course number to help create the reports from the data. Please be patient as they are simultaneously working with the new system.

There have been some issues in the transfer to HelioCampus. If you have any questions or issues please report it. They piloted the system in Summer 2023, and it will be fully implemented for Fall 2023 evaluations. Information about training and to report an issue can be found at <https://ie.utk.edu/heliocampus-rollout/>

Question: Who has access to qualitative comments now? There was a study in 2021 that was a systematic review of how to use student evaluations for teaching. The study recommended that qualitative comments not be used to evaluate teaching effectiveness. Who in the process of selecting the software is paying attention to research like this? Answer: Access to qualitative comments has not changed since 2016. Question regarding research was not addressed before moving on.

Question: Regarding availability of older reports, we may have received some conflicting information about the future availability of these things. We thought after some period of inaccessibility that we would then have the ability to download on their own.

E. Pemberton: We do have all of the raw data from Anthology. We are working with a group using PowerBI to develop a way for the older data to be accessible to faculty and administrators.

H. Hartman: There may have been confusion as multiple messages were sent, and they were trying to specifically reach faculty going up for tenure and promotion to ensure they had the documents needed for that process.

Question/Comment: This senator taught during the summer pilot and tried to give feedback at that time. During the evaluation period, the system was not allowing students to access evaluations. Access took so long it frequently timed out so the response rate from their students dropped significantly from previous semesters. Additionally, the order of the questions is changed when you look at the data so faculty must be careful when transcribing data to ensure they are copying the right information.

E Pemberton: We discovered the question order issue during the summer and have requested that HelioCampus change the order of questions in the report to match the

order questions are asked to Students. They will also explore using PowerBI to develop custom reports that might address the issue.

A Senator suggested that we table discussion, read information in the slides, and send questions in advance of the November meeting. A motion to accept this proposal was made by Senator Cooper – Seconded by Senator Crumb – motion passes.

V. Information Items and Committee Reports

- a. Executive Council Minutes (approved), [September 11, 2023](#)
- b. Executive Council Minutes (unapproved), [October 02, 2023](#)
- c. Curricular Process Update & Resources (B. Coldren), [Faculty Senate – October 16, 2023 \(Cycle 1\)](#) agenda; [Faculty Senate and Curriculog Orientation](#) & [Faculty Senate: Quick Guide to Curriculog](#)
- d. Undergraduate Council Minutes, [September 26, 2023](#); UG Council Voting Summary, [September 26, 2023](#) + [Annotated Minutes](#)
- e. Graduate Council Minutes, [September 7, 2023](#) & [September 28, 2023](#); GC Summary for [September 7, 2023](#) & [September 28, 2023](#) (see [Baker School Program Modifications](#) for reference)
- f. [Guiding Principles and Aspirations for Teaching](#) (B. Schussler)
- g. [Senate Committees and Councils Summary Reports and Minutes](#)
- h. [Senate Goals & Priorities Survey Executive Summary, Committee Goals](#)
- i. [Faculty Resources](#) for [Emergency Preparedness in Classrooms](#)

VI. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned 5:03 by senators waiving name tags in approval.

Appendix: Prospective Agenda Items For Future Senate Meetings This Fall **November**

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

Future Meeting upon Determination of Faculty Affairs

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