I. Call to Order at 15:05 by A. Roessner

a. Reminder about voting duties according to Faculty Senate Bylaws Article II: All elected senators as well as 5 administrative members have voting rights. Alternates attending should vote only if they are attending on behalf of a senator.

b. Reminder about where to sit: Senators should sit in the center and stage right sections of the room with guests on stage left.

II. Approval of Minutes

a. Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes, May 1, 2023

i. Motion by Senator Sedges – Second by Senator Wang – no discussion – vote passed unanimously.

b. Approval of Undergraduate Council Minutes, Sept. 5, 2023; UG Council Voting Summary (J. Coble, Chair)

i. NOTE: When we vote to approve minutes that include voting summaries for Undergraduate and Graduate Council minutes, we are voting to approve all the votes contained within. It is the duty of Senators to read the minutes in advance of the vote.

ii. Motion from Senator Schussler – Second by Senator Alderman – no discussion – vote passed by majority with 1 no vote.

III. Announcements and Reports

a. President’s Update (A. Roessner)

i. The first faculty chat of semester is at 3pm Sep 27 in SU 362C. We will be engaging in a conversation and listening session around divisive concepts. TLI is offering a workshop on navigating divisive concepts on Sep 28, and Joe Miles is leading research on difficult dialogues in higher education.

ii. (summary of update) The University is on the rise in many ways including donor and state support, growth particularly in undergraduate and graduate student populations, retention efforts with the undergraduate student retention rate above 91 percent, and in research with news such as our recent finalist position for a major National Science Foundation grant. While we are on the rise, we are still facing challenges as we navigate dual pandemics (CoVid-19 and systematic racism) and transformations in higher education. It’s an opportunity to come together as partners in shared governance to address these challenges so that ALL VOLS rise together.
We have significant recent success to report including Chancellor and Provost mandated and Dean sponsored graduate stipend raises that came out of advocacy alongside the Graduate Student Senate (GSS) and other partners in shared governance like United Campus Workers (UCW). The Faculty Affairs Committee in partnership with the Provost’s Office has made significant changes to Chapter Four of the Faculty Handbook, which will substantively improve conditions for Non-Tenure Track (NTT) Faculty.

We have more work to do now including advocating for enhanced childcare resources on campus with the Benefits and Shared Governance committees as the University moves toward a potential Request For Information (RFI) process, continued advocacy for NTT faculty through additional changes in the Faculty Handbook such as the incorporation of departmental voting rights and revisions to the Non-Tenure Track Title Series.

We have important issues to address regarding our role in curricular oversight as we consider shifts to instructional modality and move closer to a potential partnership with ASU and regarding our advisory role as the system considers the expansion of access, equity, and engagement efforts that align with its land-grant mission amid a complicated legislative landscape.

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

She would like to lift up a few details that President Roessner didn’t share. We are really proud of our retention numbers 91%. We are now at a level with schools that have a more restrictive admissions standard. We have increased the 4-year graduation rate by 8 points. We have made investments in this area.

This is the 5th year we’ve been a “top producer” of student Fulbright awards. As a PhD research institution and a “top producer,” we are producing more than schools including Dartmouth, Cal Berkley, Purdue, Michigan, Florida, Georgia, etc. We are doing a tremendous job, and it has to do with the work of the faculty, the quality of students we have, and the investment in advising staff who can help students put together applications. We have accolades on the faculty side as well with 2 additional faculty members nominated to national academies in the past couple of years.

Our budget from 4 years ago to today is 200 million dollars. The budget is largely in 2 categories: tuition and state funds. Both have increased. Of the 200 million, slightly more than half is coming from increased revenue from tuition. We have grown our population of out of state students and we have continued to benefit from generous support from the state based on the funding formula and our work in areas such as

Our partnerships are strong. Our relationship with ORNL is stronger than it ever has been. We have a new Interim Director, David Sholl, at the Oak Ridge Innovation Institute. Similarly, our partnership with the City is good. We are working with them to address issues such as housing and the pedestrian bridge project. We are taking steps like purchasing land on the other side of the river and trying to tackle long-term problems like reducing cars on campus.

It is unbelievable how well we are doing in research. We are participating in fewer but much larger projects. We are finalists in 3 out of 40 of the Regional Innovation Engines development awards funded by the National Science Foundation and the CHIPS and Science Act of 2022. The awards are aimed at developing more geographic areas of innovation in the country. With 500 applicants in the
first round, being co-PI’s on 3 of the 40 selected to move forward is a significant achievement. If we are awarded, we would be given $1 million in funding to develop a statewide transportation mobility strategy to compete for $160 million.

We are facing a couple of challenges. We know parking was a mess this fall. There had a plan but it wasn’t executed or the execution failed. Some of the issue was the construction on the parking lot around Andy Holt tower that should have finished prior to fall semester. Another plan was to increase parking on the perimeter of campus by 500 spaces and encourage those students to use campus busses but students did not use these spaces. Administration is exploring interventions to deploy in January for spring semester and further ideas to put in place for fall 2024.

Another area of concern is addressing capital needs on campus. Approval processes take too long, and we are struggling to continue replacing our old buildings by getting a state allocation every 5 years. We have multiple buildings that need to be torn down and rebuilt. We need to think about ways to reduce the need for the capital projects or streamline the process. We have a few dorms in partnerships with local developers and the city, and we need to think about creative approaches such as this to address other capital needs on campus.

President Boyd has asked campus Chancellors to begin conversations about the work we are doing to increase the access students and faculty have to the university. Words like diversity have been weaponized and the divisive concepts bill is impacting us. We have a lot of work to do to make the staff, faculty, and students look like the demographics of the state, and we are charged to tackle this disparity.

The Chancellor is beginning to have conversations with constituents about the idea of changing the name of the Division of Diversity and Engagement. Part of the idea is to widen the conversation around diversity to include things like socioeconomic status. For example, we have flagship schools set up to allow students to come free of tuition fees but we don’t have many students coming from there – what are the opportunities we might have to increase interest from these students. This work will be an ongoing conversation on campus.

Another priority we have will be to develop online learning with a focus of reaching the 900,000+ adults in Tennessee who have some college credit but no degree. Another priority will be to launch an online focus to reach the 900,000+ adults around age 30 who have some college credit but no degree. Overall, our trajectory is positive. We should be thinking about how we can keep it moving. We need to focus on what are the barriers we need to remove to go good to great.

i. **Question:** What is the timeline for name changes? **Chancellor:** President Boyd wants each campus to approach this in the way that works best. She estimates late November.

ii. **Follow up Question:** This person is raising a concern about a colleague with a state grant that is part of the Grow Your Own program aimed at recruiting students into education to address K-12 teacher shortage. The funding awarded to this proposal is being held up by the legislature because of diversity language in the proposal. The question focuses on whether there is official language that can be used to discuss the language shift at the university to address the funding hold up. **Chancellor:** Agrees that administration should be able to help with language and recommends including General Council in the discussion.

iii. **Question/Suggestion:** What do we know about our relationship with 1890 Land-Grant institutions around the southeast and the country. We should explore What undergraduate programs they offer that we might have matching continuing graduate programs so we
might partner with them for recruitment. Chancellor: This is a good idea we should pursue, could be a good source of graduate students. This is the type of thinking and suggestions we would like.

iv. Additional questions and comments were asked to be sent via survey until 30 minutes after the meeting to be shared for future follow-up.

b. Provost’s Report (J. Zomchick)

The Provost’s remarks focus on our efforts toward developing online learning. The “Why” behind these efforts is related to our mission as a land-grant institution to expand access to the education resources of the university to the entire population as a way to better the lives of the people of Tennessee. We have traditionally served the traditional college-age population but we know from the 2020 Census that there are somewhere over 900,000 Tennessee residents with some college credit but no degree. Our intention is to offer them an opportunity to continue their educational journeys and better their lives by offering online degree programs.

In this context, we have talked about the ASU partnership a lot but would like to reframe what we are doing in the online arena. Working under the leadership of Bruce Behn, we have been building capacity to support this work on campus. We began this years ago under VP Hinde who stood up our Academic Programs and Online division to help faculty with shifting the modality of courses and now have expanded to Online Learning and Academic Programs (OLAP). We have continued this work by bringing additional BA programs online. This fall we added 3 new programs to the existing 4 including BA’s in Business Administration, Information Sciences, and Child and Family Studies. They are currently in discussions with Deans to explore interest in bringing additional programs online.

Simultaneously, we have been working with the College of Arts and Sciences to put more Vol Core courses online in an asynchronous format. This way, access to the online BA programs is not restricted to those who have earned an Associate’s degree.

Additional resources have included hiring staff in OLAP, and building additional resources such as the Studio in the Kingston Pike building that opened last year. They are working with Finance Officers and Deans to develop a budget model.

ASU figures in this in one important way – they have been working in this arena in the last 15 years in a very successful way. They have higher persistence and graduation rates. We have been turning to ASU for advice on how to build up our infrastructure here so we can avoid mistakes others have made as they move into the online ed arena. We also are working toward a consortia agreement to allow UTK students to take courses at ASU while maintaining financial aid with UT and vice versa.

OLAP now reports to Bruce Behn but continues to do the same work as before the organizational change. The digital division they are standing up is to support colleges and departments who are interested and willing to join in this particular initiative that we find to be in line with our strategic mission and land grant mission. They are here to assist with expanding your offerings out to all those individuals across Tennessee who are ready to pursue education. This is an evolutionary process and the digital learning division is working to scale up so we can offer more programs to more people in the state of Tennessee.

i. Question: The Sociology Department began an online applied MA program (a non-academic track). Does this kind of program fit the kind of direction we are thinking
about. **Provost:** We have been emphasizing the undergraduate track but we have been also simultaneously thinking of graduate opportunities.

ii. **Follow-up Question:** The program is still under development but there is some thought that it would be a hybrid program with some face-to-face components. Would there be support for a hybrid program such as this? **Provost:** There are some existing hybrid programs that require some face-to-face component. This likely will work better for graduate programs. Many of the undergraduate students with some college credits they are targeting are in the 30-year-old range and would have difficulty traveling due to restraints such as family and work. The administration feels strongly that we need some synchronous and asynchronous fully online opportunities to help meet scheduling needs.

iii. **Question:** Can we learn more about the guaranteed admission for Tennessee students with a 4.0 approved by the Board of Trustees (BOT). We know of several students who were not admitted with 4.0 due to SAT scores. How will this new policy impact the student population. **Provost:** The policy passed guarantees admission for TN students who achieve 1 of 2 conditions: graduating top 10 in your high school class or having a 4.0 GPA. Martin, Chattanooga, and Southern have different standards for guaranteed admissions: 3.2 GPA or a 23 ACT score. The impact is difficult to predict, but we have some sophisticated modelers in enrollment management. We think we’ll be able to meet and not exceed our enrollment targets with this new change. The guaranteed admission for in-state students is another effort to fulfill our land-grant mission. The deadline to submit applications to be admitted under guarantee is November 1, and we will know more about in-state application numbers after that date.

iv. **Question:** What sort of financial incentives do you anticipate for moving courses online. **Provost:** Under new budget model, colleges will benefit in that more money will come back to the colleges for the increased enrollment. We want to provide grants for faculty who wish to put current face-to-face classes online and provide support in the process with resources such as OLAP. We understand it is a process to move instruction online. As the most successful public institution in the online learning space, we are looking to ASU for help in avoiding mistakes by other institutions.

v. **Question:** What are the metrics we might use for success. Are graduation rates and persistence rates enough. For each person who says they have a great asynchronous class there are 3 people who have a horrendous experience. Quality control is hugely important. What about students who finish an asynchronous course in a day when our standards say the degrees are equal and for on-campus students, a credit hour has a standard of approximate time of work. **Provost:** We have a lot of information and resources about how to deliver high quality education in the online modality. It seems quality is the responsibility of the faculty in the department. As faculty, we are responsible for ensuring that we meet our obligation to deliver high quality instruction. Faculty within the discipline can judge better than people outside the discipline. We need to ensure that the online education is every bit as rigorous and of quality as our face-to-face experience. Even on campus, we can’t enforce the time students spend working outside of class, we can only control the time spent in class.

vi. Additional questions and comments were asked to be sent via survey until 30 minutes after the meeting to be shared for future follow-up.

**II. New Business**
a. Senate Service Resolutions for Millie Gimmel, Bonnie Ownley, and Beth Schussler (A. Roessner)

i. Service Resolution for Beth Schussler

WHEREAS, Dr. Elisabeth Schussler, Professor of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, recipient of the UT Alumni Outstanding Teaching Award, the James R. and Neil W. Cunningham Teaching Award, and the Chancellor’s Excellence in Teaching Award, is a highly respected colleague and is dedicated to the education and mentoring of students, and

WHEREAS, she has served with distinction as President of the Faculty Senate for one term, providing strong and compassionate leadership to ensure the effectiveness of the Faculty Senate in shared governance, and persistently voicing the concerns and questions brought forward by the faculty to be addressed by the Administration, and

WHEREAS, she continued to advocate for faculty amid changes to University structure and concerns surrounding the University’s rapid student body growth, gathering data on faculty concerns and conveying these concerns to the Administration for their consideration, and

WHEREAS, she relentlessly sought to advance Senate relationships with Chancellor Donde Plowman and Provost John Zomchick, providing a bridge for Senate understanding of Administrative actions and the Chancellor and Provost’s understandings of faculty concerns, and

WHEREAS, she has been a continuous force for improvement at UT through her interactions with faculty, staff, students, alumni, board of trustees’ members, and administrators,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the University of Tennessee Knoxville Faculty Senate expresses its sincere appreciation to Dr. Elisabeth Schussler for her exemplary service to the Senate and the University of Tennessee, and

BE IT RESOLVED THAT a copy of this resolution be presented to Dr. Elisabeth Schussler and that the Resolution become part of the minutes of the Senate meeting held on September 18, 2023.

ii. Service Resolution for Bonnie Ownley

WHEREAS, Dr. Bonnie Ownley, Professor of Entomology and Plant Pathology, American Phytopathological Society Fellow, recipient of the 2018 Notable UT Woman Award, is a highly respected colleague and is renowned for her work on soilborne plant pathogens, and

WHEREAS, she served with distinction as the Faculty Senate President for one term and has served as Past President for two terms, providing strong leadership to ensure the effectiveness of the Faculty Senate in shared governance, and persistently voicing the concerns and questions brought forward by the faculty to be addressed by the Administration, and

WHEREAS, she has been a continuous force for improvement at UT through her
interactions with faculty, staff, students, alumni, board of trustees’ members, and administrators,

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT** the University of Tennessee Knoxville Faculty Senate expresses its sincere appreciation to Dr. Bonnie Ownley for her exemplary service to the Senate and the University of Tennessee, and

**BE IT RESOLVED THAT** a copy of this resolution be presented to Dr. Bonnie Ownley and that the Resolution become part of the minutes of the Senate meeting held on September 18, 2023.

iii. **Service Resolution for Millie Gimmel**

**WHEREAS,** Dr. Millie Gimmel, Associate Professor of Spanish in the World Languages and Cultures department, winner of the Alumni Association Outstanding Teacher Award, College of Arts and Sciences Faculty Advising Service Award, and the Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Advising, and

**WHEREAS,** she served with distinction as Recording Secretary of Faculty Senate for three years, providing a summary of all discussions in Executive Council and Faculty Senate sessions to be recorded into the institutional record, and unfailingly making sense of conversations and boiling them down to the heart of the issues in ways few others could do, and

**WHEREAS,** she has been a steady source of advice and perspective in Faculty Senate Leadership Team meetings, bringing her unerring sense of right and wrong and social justice to our conversations, with the knowledge that she made our group function better as a result, and

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT** the University of Tennessee Knoxville Faculty Senate expresses its sincere appreciation to Dr. Millie Gimmel for her exemplary service to the Senate and the University of Tennessee, and

**BE IT RESOLVED THAT** a copy of this resolution be presented to Dr. Millie Gimmel and that the Resolution become part of the minutes of the Senate meeting held on September 18, 2023.

iv. **Motion by Senator Langendorfer to pass all 3 resolutions – Second by Senator Staples – passed unanimously.**

b. **Baker School Program Modifications** (M. Wanamaker and J. Scheb)

i. **Roessner:** The request for electronic vote on 2 degree modification proposals must be approved by Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC), BOT, and Faculty Senate after they have passed all other approvals. The October BOT meeting occurs prior to the Senate meeting and the electronic vote will avoid postponing until March. This was discussed in the September 11 Faculty Executive meeting and brought here for additional questions and context

ii. **M. Wanamaker:** The Baker School is one of 3 new academic units established in the spring BOT meeting. They are building new degree programs by heavily revising existing
programs and moving them into the Baker School. The undergrad degree planned for next fall is currently in Haslam and is being overhauled and updated to meet current needs. To effectively start this program in fall 2024 they need to recruit students and a delay in this vote would mean recruiting students to register with the Haslam College of Business as a Public Administration major, only to be transferred to Baker when starting the program.

iii. Today’s discussion is not a voting item. The degree modifications will go through review in Undergraduate and Graduate council this month. If passed, a request for electronic vote would come in the first week of October.

c. Request for feedback on Proposal from the Provost's Office for an expedited process to create online modalities for existing degree programs (J. Zomchick)

i. Roessner: In late July the Provost requested feedback from Senate Leadership. The faculty have a role in the curriculum review process. The process is overseen by Curriculum Committees, including those of the Undergraduate and Graduate Councils, whose charge is to ensure the quality of curriculum at the university.

ii. Provost: This is connected to the assumption that a faculty member who teaches a face-to-face course can move that course online at will. We are asking, if we have established a curriculum that consists of majority face-to-face courses then what do we need to do to minimize the time and process to move that face-to-face program online if there is no change to the curricular requirements. If the curricular requirements that were approved by Council and Senate are the same as the requirements for an online program, then we are suggesting that the approval and support from the faculty of the department offering the program is sufficient to move it through an administrative process. We fully support any curricular change going through the full review process but we are posing that this is a modality change, not a curricular change. For THEC and SACSCOC a modality shift does not go through same review as curricular shift.

iii. Question: With regard to Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSDOC), what process are in place to ensure quality of online programs to meet accreditation standards? Each department has to attest to the fact that they are assessing their programs and the same rules apply for online or in-person classes. What processes or standards are in place for quality assurance? Provost: We have several successful online programs and he trusts faculty in the units as being most interested that what they are teaching students meets our standards.

iv. Question: The draft doesn’t have included any requirements for programs having some number of courses online before being considered. Provost: Some programs may need to continue developing online courses in the program as the initial courses are being taught, and we will work with programs to develop online content. For example, there is a program in cybersecurity in Haslam where students have started but courses later in the program are still being developed.

v. Question: While all for an expedited process, there are concerns that departments have the toolkits to assess the rigor of the programs. Most of us were trained in face-to-face instruction and don’t have the experience for distance education. This senator recently taught an online section of a course and found it to be a completely different experience than teaching the course face-to-face. Quality safeguards are not because faculty would take shortcuts but because we may not know the best approach to teaching online.
Provost: We are not suggesting that the online and in-person classes be identical or that there isn’t significant work involved in shifting the modality of a class. We are concerned primarily with the learning outcomes and if they are the same, even if the approach to getting them might vary. If the learning outcomes change then it’s substantive and should be going through the curricular review process. OLAP staff are meant to support faculty making these changes with knowledge about online teaching pedagogy. We have a new studio in the Kingston pike building that was stood up to help faculty to develop these elements. We have 15 instructional designers to help faculty who want to make these changes. Online has a different audience and different challenges but hopefully the same learning outcomes.

vi. Question: This policy modification is being proposed in the midst of conversations with ASU. Let’s say a department votes to develop an online degree program and we don’t have to through a curricular process because we aren’t modifying the learning outcomes. Will this program be overseen by ASU or by EdPlus? To what degree do they advertise or determine the teaching schedule? Provost: EdPlus is there for technical help. It’s there for technical help. The department owns the decision about who is teaching the course.

vii. Question: Currently Vol Core proposals require syllabus. How do we ensure there isn’t a change in the learning outcomes between current Vol Core courses and online versions? Provost: It will be the responsibility of the instructor with support of instructional design to ensure that the digital translation maintains the learning outcomes that were proposed and approved for the course. Just like we offer a number of sections of Vol Core courses taught by different faculty. In these sections, approaches in the classroom might be different, but faculty all agree to the learning outcomes.

viii. Question: Online teaching involves advising at all hours of the day. We need support for advising and the advising helps you know your audience which is critical for delivering instruction well. Will EdPlus help with advising? Provost: We will have advisors who are trained to respond and help an adult population. We will be rolling a new CRM next summer. The purpose is to coordinate communication, advising, coaching, etc. so all student information will be in one place.

ix. Question: Is this initiative only for undergraduate courses? In the draft, Step 4 should be amended to include graduate curriculum committee. I would like to see the full deliberation of both the undergraduate and graduate committees on the proposal since it is their responsibility being addressed in this proposal. Provost: This proposal is taking a degree program and not changing anything in the degree program but changing the modality. He believes those who are best able to assess if a course is appropriate to move online is the faculty teaching it.

x. Question: What kind of considerations have been made in terms of determining who is going to teach and will teaching these courses fall to adjunct faculty? Many ASU faculty teach as adjunct with a low salary. Are we in danger of creating a lower class of faculty? Provost: Decisions about who is teaching will be made by departments just like they determine who teaches which courses now.

xi. Question: In BAM there would be tuition dollars coming to a department from online enrollment but do online students pay less in credit for tuition. Is there revenue sharing with EdPlus? Provost: Tuition is the same but online students don’t have additional fees.
Out-of-state online students are charged the in-state rate plus an additional fee. There will be revenue sharing with digital learning to support their staff.

xii. Motion by Senator Schussler to move this draft to Undergraduate and Graduate Council to review proposal, suggest changes, and vote. After moving through councils, it would return to the full Senate. Second from Senator Staples – vote – no discussion – motion carries by majority vote.

d. Request for feedback on Quality Enhancement Plan (E. Hardin)

i. The Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) occurs every 10 years and is 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. It asks us to identify the one thing we could do to improve student success.

A steering committee of over 30 people has been formed with representation across campus. They will work to identify a topic engaging the campus by December. In spring they will work to articulate specific outcomes and make a plan to implement the QEP. 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

ii. Roessner: We would like to schedule a faculty chat once the short list is identified.

iii. Question: Thanks for bringing to the attention to the full faculty. Faculty at UT do not have an online space where they can post questions or have discussions. People are left out of these conversations. As we are in the midst of thinking through these online transformations, could we have a robust online conversation space for faculty? Not having a faculty email listserv or some way for faculty to talk to each other is an issue and would incentivize people to participate in this conversation.

e. Motion to approve B. Schussler (Past President) to preside over the October 16, 2023 Faculty Senate Meeting

i. Motion by Senator Langendorfer moved – Second by Senator Cooper – no discussion – motion passed unanimously.

III. Information Items and Committee Reports – Please review information items and reports linked here.

a. Graduate Council Minutes, September 7, 2023
   Items of Interest September 7, 2023 (P. Thompson, Chair)

b. Unapproved Faculty Senate Executive Council Minutes, September 11, 2023.

c. Senate Committees and Councils Summary Reports and Minutes

d. Senate Goals & Priorities Survey Executive Summary, Committee Goals

e. Vol Core & Distance Education (J. Steele)

IV. Adjournment
a. Motion to adjourn at TIME (5:01p) from Senator Schussler – Second from Senator Krumm – passed unanimously.

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

**October**
Curriculog (J. Haramule)
Volunteer Experience (S. Hunter and M. Collins)
Parking & Budgetary Guardrails (A. Bolton)

**Future Meeting upon Determination of Faculty Affairs**
Faculty Handbook 5.6 [Voting Item](#) (J. Laughter and A. Langendorfer)