



Empowering Voices, Fostering Success, Shaping Futures

Faculty Senate Meeting
Monday, September 16, 2024
3:05pm – 5:00pm
Cox Auditorium, 204A Alumni Memorial Building
Approved on 10.21.2024

I. Call to Order

Meeting called to order at 3:12 with a quorum. President Alderman presiding.

Not in attendance: R. Abedi, D. Ader, S. Benjamin, P. Byrnes, D. Cambie, K. Carver, J. Chyz, J. Collins, K. DeLong, O. Driskoll, C. Ferrigno, N. Fomin, K. Franck, J. Han, M. Harris, M. Held, A. Hu, B. Issa, V. Keppens, O. Kilic, S. Laursen, E. Lukosi, F. Martin, C. McAlvin, T. Moir-McClean, M. Misawa, T. Moeller, T. Norrell, G. Null, S. Rampold, S. Ray, S. Schaeffer, M. Scoggins, C. Sneed, L. Teston, M. Violanti, S. West, R. Zakrajsek, J. Zastoupil

II. Approval of Minutes

- a. Approval of Faculty Senate Minutes, [May 06, 2024](#). Motion by Senator Russell Second by Senator Cooper. Discussion: none. Vote: approved unanimously.
- b. Approval of Undergraduate Council [Minutes](#) + [Summary](#), 09/03/2024 (D. Coleman). Motion by Undergraduate Council. Second by Senator Shefner. Discussion: none Vote: approved by majority, 1 abstain.
- c. Approval of Graduate Council [Minutes](#), 09/05/2024 (S. Laursen). Motion by Graduate Council. Second by Senator Krum. Discussion: none. Vote: approved unanimously.

III. Announcements and Reports

- a. President's Report (D. Alderman)

As a practice, President Alderman begins meetings with gratitude. It sets a healthy, positive attitude and helps create an atmosphere of respect necessary for having hard discussions. Gratitude to Past President Roessner, President Elect Noble, Administrative partners, Committee Chairs, and Pamela Durban, our Administrative Coordinator. On the issue of Senate climate, Alderman suggests that all of us in this room are more than just employees--we are partners actively investing in the future of the University. We should be seen as partners, and not fall into an "us-versus-them" climate. We are allowed to ask tough questions, but we are doing so in a way that respects each other's dignity.

Next week is hazing prevention week. There is a hazing prevention certificate program next Thursday 1-3pm.

President Alderman outlined three major initiatives bring undertaken by the Senate in addition to the important usual shared governance tasks, reports, and decisions.

The first initiative focuses on “Lifting up the story of faculty achievements, impact, and experiences.” As part of this effort, the Senate is developing faculty excellence infographic – which hopefully can inspire future promotional and storytelling work by Faculty and Faculty Senate. The soon to be release infographics and others like it produced in the future can be a great resource for faculty and student recruitment, legislative and broader public outreach, and simply a pride point for hard working faculty.

The second initiative focuses on “Supporting faculty efforts in community engagement, outreach, and research translation.” As part of that effort, Senate is trying to create spaces to celebrate faculty outreach and preparing others to translate their work to wider public audiences. The invited presentation by Tyra Haag (later in the Senate meeting) about UT Faculty’s contributions to the *Conversation* and a planned faculty panel on “Writing for the Conversation” (Sept. 24) have been organized as part of that initiative.

The third initiative focuses on the Senate playing an active role in “Contributing to the UT Campus Healthy Climate/Culture Initiative.” This initiative responds directly to a detailed study conducted by Janelle Coleman (Div of Access and Engagement) and the mixed experiences of belonging and respect shoe found at work in academic units. As part of this effort, President Alderman has established a “Heart and Soul Award” that will be bestowed at the beginning of each senate meeting to a faculty member (senator or non-senator) who significantly creates a supportive, inclusive climate in their program, college, school, and workplace at UT. The Senate will collect nominations and curate stories of climate best practices throughout the year as part of the award.

At the Sept. 16 Senate meeting, Alderman announced and recognized (with certificates) the Inaugural Recipients of Heart and Soul Award – Elyssa Gould, Associate Professor and Head, UT Libraries; Joy Marie Doan, Assistant Professor of Practice, School of Information Sciences.

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

Chancellor Plowman welcomed Senators back and asked the Senate to join her in thanking President Alderman for a great meeting thus far. Part of the approach to shared governance is that in addition to appearing at these full Senate meetings, she is also meeting as a small group with the 3 members of the Senate Leadership Team, the Provost, and the UT Chief OF Staff. The seven of them put things on the table. Over the summer, the Chancellor and other upper admin leaders have traveled to many places, talking to alumni and donors. She noted UT’s excellent reputation. People are saying they are proud, and they can feel the momentum of what we are doing. They are talking about how many students want to go here, the awards our faculty are winning, etc.

We have a new Senior Vice Chancellor for Finance and Administration, Paul Brynes, who was previously from Emory University. The Chancellor is pleased that the person in charge of the administrative operations came from academics, which is the case with Senior Vice Chancellor Brynes. He understands the world of faculty. UT had Alan Bolton here as interim Senior Vice Chancellor of Finance and Administration for 19 months. Alan has left the job, but UT is hosting a reception for him on October 2nd.

When the Chancellor meets with the President of the UT System (Randy Boyd), she is

asked to provide her legislative requests. Her answer is that UT's highest priority is building a new Chemistry building. The Chancellor says she feels good about the chance of the Chemistry building being funded this year. The Chemistry Building would be the biggest project ever funded by the legislature.

The Chancellor indicates that the only thing holding UT back from "getting to the next level" is our capital projects. We have 10+ other buildings that are not yet in construction and we need these buildings. UT is looking at different ways to fund buildings without waiting years for the next state allocation. We have so many buildings that need replacement or updating. We have figured out how to build dorms with private developers and not rely upon state funds, so the building moves faster. UT is looking for other ways to improve research labs. UT leaders traveled to GA Tech recently to look at their Tech Square development as an example.

The Chancellor turned to the Morgan Wallen concert. Because it was scheduled for a Friday (Sept. 22), it will disrupt classes, parking, and building closures. The Chancellor apologized for the disruption and took responsibility for what was described as a serious management error in allowing the concert to be held on a Friday class date. UT places its academic mission first, and the Chancellor indicated that the university shouldn't be hosting such mega events on a weekday that brings 80,000 people here on campus. The Chancellor indicated that she and her team are learning from this and assured the Senate that there would be more faculty consultation and voice on this type of event planning in the future.

Question from Senator: Who profited from the concert?

Response from the Chancellor: Profits from the concert mainly go to the entertainer. Some proceeds from concessions will go to the university (in this case, the Athletics Department). The Chancellor indicates that UT really does not get much of a cut from this.

The Chancellor noted the many changes in the parking system initiated this fall. UT spent a year with a consultant who helped identify issues in how the university was distributing and selling parking permits. Previously, UT was not making distinctions in the price of parking permits based on where you park or priorities on who gets passes. UT Parking now emphasizes moving some student parking to the perimeter and shuttling them to the central campus. There are indications that it is working thus far. UT has leased the parking lot at the convention center/civic colosseum, and the shuttles are running frequently.

Comment from President Alderman: Alderman thanks the Chancellor for her openness to talk about the Morgan Wallen concert situation. Alderman noted that in the Chancellor's small group meeting with senate leadership, she expressed a willingness to have more faculty voice in planning these events.

Response from Chancellor: We have a set of guiding principles in shared governance, and think the Faculty Senate could provide some good input on the main considerations that should guide us in planning events.

c. Provost's Report (J. Zomchick)

Provost Zomchick starts with a gratitude exercise. He indicates that UT's statistics about enrollment in the newspaper and this success would not be possible without our faculty and staff. UT enrolled about 6,805 first-time college students. A total of 38,758 students are enrolled this fall, with 8,168 of them being graduate and professional students – almost a 10% increase from last year. Much of the graduate student growth is coming from online programs. In terms of student success, UT has many reasons to be proud. This year, the university's first-year retention rate was at 91.9% - up from 91.1% last year. UT's 6-year graduation rate went up from 73.5% to 73.9%. The 4-year graduation rate is up 3.7% from last year. This is not a metric used in many of the ratings, it is important to parents.

UT's strategic enrollment plan went until the 2023-2024 academic year. It is now time to develop a new plan to take the university from this year to 2030. The big question is how large do we want UT to be? This is complicated because of the university's new online/digital learning initiative that has a goal of reaching out to students across the state with some college credit but no degree. These students will count in our overall enrollment number. According to the Provost, below are some issues we need to consider as we develop this plan:

--What is the right ratio between graduate, undergraduate, and online students?

--What kinds of infrastructure do we need for building or renovating to achieve enrollment goals?

--How many more faculty do we need immediately, mid-term, and long-term to provide the education at the level we want?

--What are the financial implications of growth? Is there a time when projected growth costs us more and makes it difficult to meet our mission?

Provost Zomchick would like to explore using the strategic investment pool to provide incentives for some things UT may want to do. For example, does the university want to create incentives to help with second—and third-year retention rates? UT has excelled at first-year retention rates. Also, do we devote strategic investment pool funds to support faculty working in community engagement? Does UT provide support for onboarding more graduate students?

Significant effort was devoted to examining processes last year, and UT had task forces looking at curriculum processes, class scheduling, course evaluations, etc. UT should evaluate these reports and identify where we can make changes that benefit the institution and relieve some of the burden on faculty.

Provost Zomchick has asked Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs Veerle Keppens to examine retention processes for tenure-track faculty members. Board policy requires a formal vote and extensive review in the middle of the probationary period. Right now, we are requiring a vote each year for tenure-track faculty retention. The Vice Provost will work with the Senate Faculty Affairs committee to review and possibly revise this annual retention review.

Going back to enrollment and mission as a land-grant institution, the Provost would like to see UT continue to build BA programs for online learning. Right now, the university has 9 online programs and about 350 online undergraduate students. If UT wants to reach Tennesseans with some college credit but no degree or certificate, then we need more programs to offer.

Question from Senator: It's great that enrollment is up so high and I appreciate the things you have put in place to support students, especially first-gen. Can you speak to the number of tenure-line and lecturer faculty lines to help with this? In my department, our faculty hasn't grown.

Response from Provost: The Provost's Office has been working with the UT Deans to look at where the need is for tenure-line faculty. Last year UT had about 70 tenure-line searches. This year, UT has close to 100. During College budget presentations, Deans are asked to provide a snapshot of how they contribute to the increase in students. A lot of the undergraduate student increase over the last few years has been disproportionately in the Haslam College of Business. This year Haslam College of Business has nearly 9,000 undergraduate students, making it by far the largest college in the university. They have a more flexible instructional model – large classes sometimes. This model doesn't fit all the colleges. What we need from Deans is an analysis of where growth is necessary.

Question from Senator: I understand there have been a lot of searches, but how many new tenure-lines have been created?

Response from Provost: In this budget model, we have not been keeping track of those lines. In the old model, lines were given out by central administration because benefits were paid centrally (about 30% of salary). Now, it is all handled by the Colleges, so we no longer keep track of new lines. We can compare the number of tenure-line faculty over the last five years, and we'll do that and bring it to the Senate.

Question from Senator: PR (Periodic Post-tenure Performance Review) was instituted some years ago. The administration clearly responded that they would keep track of how much time is being spent on this process. Is there any chance this will change?

Response from the Provost: UT System administration has said it wishes to get through one cycle of PPPR. The first year was 2019. This year should be the last year of the 6-year cycle. The time is now to go to the UT System administration to request a review of this process. Each year, we provide central administration with data on how much time and projected costs this process takes. Our APPR process and EPPR processes are more than enough to satisfy everyone in how we evaluate faculty and staff.

IV. **New Business**

- a. Senate Service Resolutions for Rob Spirko, Ernest Bernard, and Amber Roessner (*Voting Item*) (D. Alderman, A. Roessner)

WHEREAS, Dr. Ernest Bernard, professor in the Department of Entomology and Plant Pathology, who has served with distinction during more than four decades of service to UTIA and the Department of Entomology and Plant Pathology, earning the National Association for Colleges and Teachers of Agriculture Award of Merit in 1999 and serving as a Fellow of the Society of Nematologists in 2006, and

WHEREAS, he served with distinction as Faculty Senate Parliamentarian from 2016-2024, as the ultimate Robert's Rules guru at all Faculty Senate sessions, and mobilizing that keen knowledge of parliamentary procedure to ensure that free and full dialogue and debate at Senate meetings

WHEREAS, he has been a steady source of advice and perspective in Faculty Senate Leadership Team meetings, and with the knowledge that he 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. Ernest Bernard for his exemplary service to the Senate and the University of Tennessee, and

BE IT RESOLVED THAT a copy of this resolution be presented to Dr. Ernest Bernard and that the Resolution become part of the minutes of the Senate meeting held on September 16, 2024.

WHEREAS, Dr. Robert Spirko, Senior Lecturer in the Department of English, disability studies specialist, former Chancellor's Commission on Disability Co-Chair, and active member of United Campus Workers, who advocates for the rights of faculty, staff, and students,

WHEREAS, he served with distinction as Faculty Senate Communications Officer from 2015-2024, providing technical support at all Faculty Senate sessions, managing the Faculty Senate website, offering guidance on official Faculty Senate messages, leading Faculty Senate orientation sessions, and

WHEREAS, he has been a steady source of advice and perspective in Faculty Senate Leadership Team meetings, advocating for non-tenure track faculty needs, bringing his unerring sense of right and wrong and social justice to our conversations, with the knowledge that he 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. Robert Spirko for his exemplary service to the Senate and the University of Tennessee, and

BE IT RESOLVED THAT a copy of this resolution be presented to Dr. Robert Spirko and that the Resolution become part of the minutes of the Senate meeting held on September 16, 2024.

WHEREAS, Dr. Amber Roessner, Professor of Journalism and Cultural Historian of Media, recipient of national teaching and research awards from academic associations like the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, is a highly accomplished scholar-educator and a tireless advocate for inclusion, mentorship, and outreach in the Academy, and

WHEREAS, she has served with distinction as President of the Faculty Senate for the 2023-2024 academic year, demonstrating exceptional skills in communicating, listening, and building collaborations between the Faculty Senate and the University Administration, and being unmatched in making herself accessible to Senators, Committee Chairs, and all Faculty, and

WHEREAS, she facilitated meaningful campus dialogue around divisive concepts, academic freedom, campus climate, and the rights of Non-Tenure Track Faculty, and gathered and mobilized important data on Faculty concerns and needs, and modeled a transparent and compassionate leadership style that was unflinching in working to protect the well-being of those around her, and

WHEREAS, she represented the University of Tennessee with distinction on the Tennessee University Faculty Senates, the University Faculty Council, and the National Council for Faculty Senates as an officer, and she advanced productive Senate relationships with Chancellor Donde Plowman and Provost John Zomchick, never shying away from difficult discussions and pushing for shared governance, and

WHEREAS, she has been a continuous force for positive change 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. Amber Roessner 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. Amber Roessner and that the Resolution become part of the minutes of the Senate meeting held on September 16, 2024.

Motion to pass all 3 resolutions by Senator Hristov. Seconded by Senator Scheffner.
Discussion: none. Vote: passed unanimously.

b. [UTK Substantive Change Policy](#) (*Information Item*) (H. Hartman)
[Link to slides.](#)

The Substantive Change Policy is not new. UT has had a policy for some time. As the university heads to reaccreditation (SACSCOC), we are addressing some substantive changes that were not reported properly and thus thought it was time to refresh the campus and its major stakeholders on these policies.

UT has a review every 10 years. Between these review periods, the university is required to report to SACSCOC any substantial changes made to programs. We adopted the SACSCOC policy as the best compliance course for substantive program changes. A substantive change can include offering new programs, closing existing programs, teaching in a new location (i.e. teaching classes off main campus like nursing teaching at Cherokee Farms), adding an online delivery mode or changing from online to in-person delivery mode. These types of changes require either notification or approval.

If a program is 25-49% new, then notification is required. If the program is more than 50% new, then one must seek approval before offering the program. For approval, a prospectus is submitted no less than 6 months before the expected review of the prospectus. So, to begin a new program in fall 2025, the prospectus must be submitted to SACSCOC in January 2025.

How can Faculty Senators help? Keep UT informed by reporting substantive changes. Failure to report substantive changes can result in loss of institutional accreditation. Procedures to ensure compliance: Ashley Browning will monitor Curriculog/Modern Campus and attend the meetings of both the Undergraduate and Graduate Curriculum Committees. She will use a checklist to help determine the type of change and communication required. If a change requires SACSCOC and THEC approval, please don't wait for THEC to get the process started.

c. [The Conversation](#) – UTK's Involvement (*Presentation*) (T. Haag)

Office of Communications and Marketing includes Creative Communications, Digital Communication, Marketing, Media and Internal Relations, PR and News Bureau, Research Marketing and Communications, Special Events, and Video.

One tool is a partnership with *The Conversation*. They are a non-profit, independent news organization focused on faculty research. Nine focus areas are arts and culture, economy, education, environment and energy, ethics and religion, health, politics and society, and science and technology. Why *The Conversation*? It's about democratizing knowledge for

the public good. We help them do that by connecting their editorial team with our faculty experts. We became members in 2020.

The Conversation helps with additional media coverage. Our faculty research has had placements in CBS News, CNN, NBC News, PBS, Bloomberg, Scientific American, IFL Science, Fast Company, Fortune, Popular Science, Astronomy Magazine, Seattle Post-Intelligencer, St. Louis Post Dispatch, Connecticut Post, Houston Chronicle, US News and World Report, etc.

These faculty articles are also promoted on the UT News page, and some are shared in Tennessee Today or social media posts. Some colleges elevate articles via their channels (newsletters, websites, social media). We reach out to the faculty author, the College communicator, the Dean, and the Provost's office. Colleges get quarterly and annual reports.

Erica Estep and Jennifer Johnson have office hours on Tuesdays from 10:30-11 and are happy to talk to faculty about contributing to *The Conversation*. Faculty can also email at eeestep@utk.edu or jjohn522@utk.edu. In these office hours they will walk through the standard article and research brief article formats for *The Conversation*. There is also a new segment, 'Curious Kids' where kids ask questions that researchers can respond to.

Please email questions about writing for *The Conversation* to Tyra E. Haag tyra.haag@tennessee.edu

d. Upcoming Senate programs for *The Conversation* (D. Alderman)

The Faculty Senate is developing a few programmatic ideas related to *The Conversation* as part of its initiative to highlight and support faculty efforts in outreach, public-facing storytelling, and translating research and teaching to wider audiences.

The Senate has recently agreement with Knox News Sentinel editor (Joel Christopher) to re-publish *Conversation* pieces written by UTK faculty. This is meant to give the local and regional communities a better idea of the excellent work of the UT Faculty, and it is an extension of the land-grant mission.

On Sept. 24, 3:30 p.m., in SU 262 B/C, the Senate will host a faculty panel discussion on "Writing for the Conversation: Opportunities, Challenges, and Tips." The panel will feature faculty authors from several different Colleges and fields of study and is open to all faculty and graduate students.

In the Spring semester of 2025 (January 30), the Senate will partner with the Office of Communication and Marketing and the Chancellor to host a campus-wide reception honoring UTK Contributors to the *Conversation*

Question: Sept 24 – will this be hybrid? We will consider.

V. Information Items

- a. [Robert's Rules Primer](#) (H. Sedges)
- b. Updates on [Graduate Student Stipend Increases](#) (D. Thompson, O. Driskill)
- c. [2024 Annual Report](#), 5th Year Anniversary Report (Office of Ombuds Services)

- d. New CAS Initiative: Community of Scholars for Advancing Teaching Excellence ([CATE](#)), (B. Schussler)
- e. [EACC Proposal](#) (D. Coleman, to be presented at October's Executive Council meeting)
- f. [Senate Committees and Councils Summary Reports and Minutes Summaries](#)
- g. [Faculty Senate Intranet Hub](#) is up and running (and under construction!)

VI. Adjournment of Formal Meeting

(Administrative Partners are welcome to leave at this time)

Motion to adjourn meeting by Senator Brannen. Second by Senator Cooper. Vote: unanimous.

- a. What campus entities or partners should we invite to answer questions?

Mark Your Calendars

- *The Conversation: Opportunities, Challenges, and Tips* – September 24th, 3:30-5:30pm, Student Union, 262 B/C

Upcoming Senate Meetings:

Faculty Senate: 09/16/2024 (Alumni Memorial Building Auditorium)

10/21. 11/18. 1/13/2025 (if needed), 02/03, 03/03, 04/07, 05/05 + Reception