

Opening Remarks, Faculty Senate Retreat, August 24, 2018
President Misty G. Anderson

Welcome to the annual Faculty Senate retreat and thank you for stepping up to serve your colleagues at this crucial time. Past President Beauvais Lyons stood here last year and talked to you about the importance of the service gene, which clearly, you all have. To that I would add that you all also present the closely related “give a damn” gene, and I encourage you to keep that gene flipped on this year. We have important work before us. That includes our role as those who object to the objectionable, who remind the institution that we produce public, not private goods, and who are the voice for the faculty in challenging times. Shared governance matters now more than ever if we are to maintain a strong university and withstand external pressures. With that in mind, I’m also about to ask you to do something new: help tell the story of what we’re for, not just what we take stands against. It’s the story of this campus, of higher education, and of what we can accomplish together.

Before I say another word, I’d be remiss if I didn’t thank Beauvais for his incredible, fearless leadership. I and many others would swear the man didn’t sleep last year. He was the model of vigilance, self-sacrifice, and engagement, working hard to represent the faculty’s interests around outsourcing, neo-Nazis on campus, and post-tenure review. Here are just some of his accomplishments from fruition last year. I especially highlight for you that Bylaws Survey, a herculean effort undertaken by Beauvais and our incredible RA, Brooke Killion, that will ensure greater fairness and consistency across departments as we address potential challenges to tenure. I had to update this slide—as of yesterday--and we’re thrilled to report that we moved from only 32% to 86% of departments in full compliance with the Faculty Handbook. It’s a perfect example of how shared governance benefits the whole institution. United at the Rock, his brainchild and labor of love, was one of the defining, *positive* public events of last year, and Play It oUT is now part of STRIDE training. He also started, many years ago, the Shared Governance Fund, which we are going to tap AND, I hope, replenish to do some great things this year. Beauvais, I hope for simpler times. I’ll tell you all right now that I need more sleep than Beauvais does, but I’ll do my best, my friend, mindful of your example and of Bonnie Ownley’s, always looking out for your colleagues’ interests and trying to find a way forward. Please join me in thanking our colleague, Beauvais Lyons.

We'll be introducing our speakers throughout the day, but now, I want to introduce you to your colleagues who have stepped up to lead as officers and chairs. Before I get rolling, thank you Chancellor Tim Cross from UTIA, who gave up a bus ride with a bunch of beef producers to be here the morning. And to our wonderful administrative assistant Sharonne Winston, who provides not just organizational help but institutional memory.

In addition to things mentioned earlier, we're coming off a year in which we saw the dismissal of a new Chancellor, the departure of a new Vice Chancellor for Research, and the arrival of a new Provost. The new Board of Trustees, as reconstituted by the UT FOCUS Act, voted completely new bylaws at its orientation meeting in August and is currently composed of 8 people, with the governor and the President of the System no longer serving; the governor can make recess appointments of up to 4 more, but they would all have to be confirmed by the House and Senate next January. In May, this senate censured what it saw as particular failures of transparency, civility, and regard for campus autonomy on the part of the System President and called for a conversation about the role, size, and location of the System office. The fact that our System office occupies the same building as our Campus administration, that the average member of the public tends to conflate UT with UTK, and that as the flagship, we have many administrators who have parallel titles to System VPs, makes the arrangement confusing. We did some research, followed up on that conversation and, based on the reply, will leave it to the new Board to consider whether to pursue any of the structural issues we raised.

So, if you are feeling a little anxious or exhausted, either by the memory of last year or by this list, take a moment, take a deep breath, and remember to be kind to yourself. We've all been through a lot. Also, take heart that in their first meeting in Nashville the trustees themselves called for more transparency, greater public access, and the importance of more honest and open debate. New Board chair John Compton said "we have to elevate the campuses to elevate the system." I think we can get an amen from this room. Making good on those calls will be an important first test, now that the voting faculty member on the board has been removed by state law. We have yet to get word of the "local board," where we will have an elected representative. Know that I'll be working to lift up this campus, the heart of which is its faculty. This senate will be throwing a small

reception at McClung Museum on Sept. 7 for our new Board (2 are coming, maybe more) so we can get to know each other. RSVP coming. How, you ask, are we doing such a thing? The Shared Governance Fund—link on the senate website, counts as a Big Orange Family contribution!

In fact, John Lombardi, past president of the University of Florida and LSU and former Chancellor of U Mass, describes universities as a core made up of the faculty “guilds” and an administrative shell to protect it. I’m proud to be part of the core of this university, and I look forward to a year of working with administrators to protect and encourage the health of this faculty to keep the whole campus strong. I’m happy to report that Interim Chancellor Davis has, at the request of the Senate, added more faculty representatives from the senate to the Vice Chancellor searches for (Research and Communications) going forward this fall, and I look forward to working with him in future searches to make sure faculty are well-represented.

We’ve got a lot to talk about, from tenure to Gen Ed, and I’m grateful to all who joined in for this conversation. You have a draft of a stage in the life of the Post-Promotion Performance Review document that reflects new Board policy. It is in process and still being finalized for the campuses, due October 15 in preparation for the Nov. Board of Trustees meeting. I’m also going to leave it to Vice-President for Government Relations and Advocacy and long-time friend to this body, Anthony Haynes to talk about the wild and wooly news from Nashville. As Gilda Radner’s character Roseanne Roseannadanna used to say on SNL, “it’s always something.” The top note of that news, though, which we need to confront, was reflected in Pew polling from the last 2 years that shows 61% Americans feel higher education is headed in the wrong direction. While high tuition tops the list of complaints, half of all polled think, simultaneously, that we’re too concerned about protecting students from views they might find offensive AND that we are bringing our political views into the classroom too much. [shrug]

We won’t be able to fix all of that, but we may be able to make some headway. I’ll be leading a Senate Communications Task force and, with the help of colleagues across the campus and campus communicators, we are going to get the word out that faculty members support the economy of this state by educating its citizens, creating knowledge, and welcoming students of all walks of life to build a more

hopeful future. The university is not as an abstraction; it's our collective lives, dedicated to the project of higher education. Our goals, refined by the task force, are 1) to change the story about our campus and 2) to bust myths about who faculty are and what we do. Faculty have been under assault for years, demonized, devalued, and scapegoated by those who would rather not have an educated citizenry. But we can't just say that and expect it to work. Unfortunately, as George Lakoff's work shows us, most people don't make decisions based on data or facts. Instead, they make them based on the metaphors that reinforce their value frames, and only have recourse to facts after the fact. When campaigns or people object to something, they give more air time to the opposing frame. We need a better frame, one that works for us, one that highlights what faculty do in language that appeals to traditional opponents and skeptics. So I suggest we focus on three value frame concepts: hospitality, hard work, and hope for the future.

To start this conversation, we'll be launching a series of video PSAs that show professors in a positive, engaging, and sometimes playful light. These will be a straight-to-social media venture, and we have students and colleagues in CCI who will help track the success of our messages and tweak them as necessary. The first of these, Tennessee: Home, featuring Carol Mayo Jenkins, Mark Dean, Ben Lee, Judy Cornett, and Bill Hardwig, all from Tennessee, focuses on our long-term connections to and investment in the state. It is being workshopped by a Marketing class (go Experience Learning!) and is in active planning; we will start shooting it in September. Based on your advice from the poll, we will next make A Place at the Table, emphasizing the collaborative relationship between professors and students and the importance of open debate to a healthy democracy. It will also have Neyland Stadium in the backdrop. Elevator Pitch was also very popular on the Qualtrics poll, so we will try to shoot several hand-held episodes of that this fall. Internally, we're also in dialogue with the Provost's Office and ORE to bring back (though probably in a new form) something like the now-defunct Quest Scholar of the Week. We're playing with the idea of "Rockstar of the Month."

Next, we'll participate in the OpEd Project, sponsored by the office of the Chancellor. You can read more about them on line, but their motto is "whoever tells the story writes history." The project began as an effort to get more women on op-ed pages and has since expanded its remit to higher education and non-

profits. They're coming here at the end of September for a 2-day intensive seminar, and we have filled every one of the 24 seats available with colleagues from across this campus, priority for senators, natch. We'll work on writing op-eds that reach general audiences, and everyone in the seminar is committed to writing at least one op-ed this year. They'll work with us on how to explain academic work in public and how to use media opportunities well. The starting script they ask participants to complete is: My name is _____. I work on _____ and it matters because _____. It's harder than you think, I invite you to consider how you would fill in these blanks, how you would describe what you work on and why it matters to neighbors, parents, friends. Karen Dunlap is renovating the Experts Guide and working up a short (1 hour) media training sessions, and we'll be reporting out about the big lessons we learn. We'll also be working with the KNS and other outlets to get these pieces published. As the OpEd folks like to say, you've got 2 choices: you can tell your story or you can get told. I know which one I'm choosing and I hope you'll join me.

And third, but probably not final, we're going to begin some positive, organized outreach to the legislature as citizens of the state. David Keffer will tell you a bit more about that effort, which will begin after the midterm elections in November and lead up to a day trip to Nashville with student/faculty pairs, matched to the student's home district, who thank representatives for supporting UTK. Again, how can we do this? A bus, and the Shared Governance Fund (don't worry, it'll be a nice bus). In the meantime, I encourage you all to be engaged citizens this election season. I cannot overstate how important these midterms are, for higher ed and for the nation. The governor's race, representatives for District 18 (M. Daniel v. G. McKay) and 12 (E. Smith v. G. Johnson) are all in play.

The Senate will continue to do all the work we've always done, making sure that handbooks are in good order, and considering, advising, and recommending policies that shape our lives and the university. I'll occasionally contact all faculty to highlight events of campus-wide interest, like the upcoming September 12 town hall on the new PPR/PTR process. In the Spring, we are working toward a United at the Rock 2.0 event with the SGA, CMC, and a host of other groups, focused on Remembering who we are; Serving the Community; and Celebrating our Diversity. We're also instituting a little Faculty Serving Faculty campaign. On your tables, you'll see a short survey, prepared by Gary Skolits, asking you to think of at least one low or no cost, small thing that could make your life better. Our

Caucus Chairs can use this campaign to gather concerns and ideas from their constituents. (Intro: all) Feel free to poke at that idea throughout the day. The other side has a #UTellOurStory survey that we'll use in the afternoon SO DON'T TURN IT OVER!! Just kidding. If you're the type who likes to see the questions in advance, go ahead, turn it over. I don't care. BUT, I do ask that you hold your doodling until the next break as we hear from Interim Chancellor Wayne Davis and 2 key members of his leadership team and old friends around here, Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs JZ and Vice Chancellor for Finance and Administration. I'm going to hang out up here to help moderate the Q&A after, but it is now my distinct pleasure to welcome up to the podium Wayne Davis, our Interim Chancellor.