

UTC Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes AY 2023-24

Meeting date: August 24, 2023, 3:10pm

Presiding: Faculty Senate President Donald Reising

Minutes: Faculty Senate Secretary Hannah Wakefield

(attendance follows the minutes)

1) Call to Order

Called to order by President Donald Reising at 3:10pm. Welcome and introductions; President Reising invited faculty concerns and comments. Encouraged full names in Zoom; only FS representatives may vote. President Reising explained proxy process: contact President Reising a week in advance to get a proxy approved, and the Senate will vote.

Voted for Sarah Farnsworth to serve as proxy for Jodi Caskey. Vote: 35 approvals, 0 abstentions, 0 opposed

2) Approval of Minutes

President Donald Reising asked for approval of the minutes of the April 20, 2023 meeting. Beth Crawford moved, and Steve Davenport seconded. Vote: 33 approvals, 0 abstentions, 0 opposed

3) Unfinished Business

a) Vacant Position Updates

i) Ombudsperson- Chief of Staff David Steele

(1) Chief of Staff David Steele reported that an offer for ombudsperson was extended partway through the summer but not accepted. The search committee was scattered at that time of year, but Dr. Shewanee Howard-Baptiste reconvened search committee this week. Many new candidates were added to pool over the summer; the search committee has a plan to go through these. Silver lining: campus visits will now take place during a time when faculty are present on campus. The Chancellor has authorized pursuit of an interim ombudsperson. They met this week with a nationally recognized firm that performs these searches. Tomorrow they will engage with another campus that may be able to provide interim coverage. Hope is to provide highly qualified ombud services within the next few weeks—not to prolong the search but to provide services more quickly.

ii) Vice Chancellor of Enrollment and Student Affairs– Chief of Staff David Steele

(1) Dr. Yancey Freeman, former Vice Chancellor of Enrollment Management and Student Affairs, was selected as chancellor of UT Martin; this was a quick process, as he was installed early this month. Stacie Grisham has been appointed by the Chancellor as interim. The unit has been working well together, as indicated by the smooth welcome week. Provost Hale appointed by the Chancellor to chair the search committee for this position; the expectation is that

this person will work closely with Academic Affairs. A micro-site will go live with position description and search committee along with preliminary timeline for the search. The hope is to have someone begin in this role by the first of the year, though this will depend on the rhythms of the search. The university has contracted with WittKeifer, a search firm that will work closely with the search committee and Chancellor. The search will follow the template of past searches: some semi-finalist Zoom interviews followed by 3-4 campus visits. Committee will provide input to Chancellor, who will make a decision (late November or December probably). Considered to be one of the most exciting searches in the country.

- (2) Chancellor Angle clarified that the title is Student Affairs (rather than Student Success)

iii) CECS Dean – Provost Hale

- (1) Announcement went out last academic year that Dr. Ahad Nasab has been appointed interim Dean of CECS. The Provost will meet with CECS faculty and staff to discuss a timeline for moving the search forward. One point of discussion is whether to begin the search immediately or to extend Dr. Nasab's interim appointment. Senators for CECS should prepare constituents for idea that they will be invited to participate in a meeting. The Provost asked for robust discussion and feedback and invited questions from Faculty Senate.
- (2) President Reising asked if last year's search committee will be the same or if a new committee will be convened. The Provost responded that we will be convening a new search committee and thanked the previous search committee. The new committee will be convened to relieve the labor of the prior search committee.
- (3) President Reising asked if a search committee chair has been appointed. Provost Hale confirmed that it will not be Dean Riggs-Gelasco but someone else.
- (4) President Reising encouraged Faculty Senate representatives to engage with this process.

iv) Sustainability Coordinator – Vice Chancellor Brent Goldberg

- (1) Vice Chancellor Goldberg explained that the job description in its current form is more about energy management and compliance than a well-rounded sustainability coordinator. They will change the position title to reflect this, and the position will be housed in facilities. Additionally, they will work on gathering input on campus for the creation of an additional, new sustainability position which will coordinate with faculty, create experiential learning opportunities, create community partnerships (e.g., partnering on the mayor's climate action plan). Vice Chancellor Goldberg desires representation from faculty on the search committee but would like to gather input from faculty first. May draft a description and then seek faculty input.
- (2) Dr. Lucy Schultz asked whether this position will be a faculty position, an internal search, or an open call for anyone? Vice Chancellor Goldberg responded that it will not be a faculty position since much of the role is engagement with community partners, workforce development, etc. This person will also engage with the facilities department and could coordinate for curriculum development.

Vice Chancellor Goldberg suggested that pay level will not be equivalent to a professor position and they will execute a full search, not merely an internal one.

- (3) President Donald Reising asked whether the position will have control over funding to implement sustainable practices on campus and whether the position will come with decision-making power. Vice Chancellor Goldberg suggested that the Green Fee structure would move to that position and be managed by the sustainability coordinator. Tom Ellis and Dr. Mustafa have been in the role of making decisions so far. Vice Chancellor Goldberg explained that they are in the process of reevaluating all fees and consolidating some fees as mandated by the Board of Trustees in the last Board of Trustees meeting.
- (4) President Donald Reising asked whether these changes are positive or not. Goldberg responded that the new fee structure will be helpful. A more structured approach is needed. We need to look at things like solar. We are one of the most efficient organizations in the city of Chattanooga, but there is always room for improvement. President Donald Reising responded that incorporation of micro-grid and solar is a good learning opportunity for students. Dr. Schultz suggested it would be a great honors course.
- (5) Dr. Cecelia Wigal said that the sustainability initiative can be tied in with the new Global Challenges Scholars Program. President Donald Reising affirmed and said that for this reason faculty input will be crucial. Dr. Lucy Schultz said that the Environmental Studies minor would also benefit from these innovations.

b) Course Learning Evaluations – Vice Provost Lauren Ingraham

- i) President Reising reminded us of the background to the course learning evaluation discussion: disgusting and disrespectful language made by students in CLEs. University of Nebraska- Omaha is piloting a new CLE system, and we are collaborating on a proposal to become a part of that grant.
- ii) Vice Provost Lauren Ingraham update: the U. Nebraska system asks faculty to check boxes, performing an inventory of high-impact and evidence-based practices used in a course, and then students evaluate by confirming that these practices were experienced in the course. Examples: solutions to homework assignments, practice exams, previous exams, etc. When students confirm these practices in this fashion, there is not a place to make comments like the ones we are seeking to address. U. Nebraska guest came to campus to demonstrate the model and explain its development. It has been validated for STEM and Behavioral and Social Sciences courses. This fall, faculty will have opportunity to opt into a pilot of the program. This won't replace the standard CLE, but it will provide an opportunity to see the kind of feedback it generates. In conversation with U. Nebraska about becoming co-PIs on NSF grant. The grant is due in January 2024.
- iii) Past President Jennifer Boyd commented that she is happy to continue collaboration on CLEs in her new role as Past President and expressed excitement about being involved in development process. Past President Boyd encouraged representatives to communicate about the CLE process with constituents. President Reising affirmed these comments.
- iv) Dr. Chandler Harriss asked if strengthening the peer teaching evaluation process would produce greater benefits. President Reising responded that this is something that the Walker Center offers and encourages sharing that information with

- constituents. Dr. Harriss clarified the question: There may be wide discrepancies among departments with regards to evaluations of teaching. Dr. Harriss suggested that universities in Southern California have innovated with a collaborative approach among faculty to improve classes. Dr. Harriss suggested that we should focus more on the front end of the process rather than the evaluative process.
- v) Dr. Sarah Einstein asked whether there is a policy to allow evaluations with those kinds of comments to be disaggregated from the numbers that are reported. President Reising added that inappropriate comments may not remain anonymous to the university. Dr. Einstein clarified that we need a policy that would discount those comments. Past President Boyd responded that you can request that those comments be removed from the record. She also shared the link to WCTL peer review description and responded to Dr. Harriss's comment that the University of Nebraska-Omaha process does address some of Dr. Harriss's concerns. Vice Provost Ingraham added that vile comments from students become a student conduct issue. Associate Dean of Students Brett Fuchs confirmed that his office has addressed these comments from this angle in cases of violations and even in cases where no policy was technically violated.
- c) **Kindness Initiative – Vice Provost Lauren Ingraham**
- i) Dr. Ingraham explained that this semester's Kindness Initiative aims to help alleviate faculty exhaustion through the setting of boundaries, etc. Dr. Cate Denial's strategies allow faculty to build rapport without becoming overextended. Dr. Ingraham presented feedback about events during Dr. Denial's visit. Majority of participants felt that the keynote and workshop benefited them. Majority of participants agreed that they felt confident implementing what they learned. Majority agreed that they left with concrete ideas to try with students. Dr. Denial suggested tweaking just one thing rather than starting over with pedagogical practice. Faculty should look for more information about the initiative coming from WCTL.
 - ii) President-Elect Jack Zibluk asked whether there are strategies for faculty interactions with colleagues and administrators rather than only faculty interactions with students? Dr. Ingraham responded affirmatively but suggested that they opted to begin the initiative with these initial cohorts and then expand from there.
 - iii) Dr. Victoria Bryan (Director of Walker Center) plugged Dr. Denial's book *A Pedagogy of Kindness* and *Substack Care in the Academy*. Forthcoming WCTL opportunities will focus on classroom presence, online course presence, etc. Walker Center happy to facilitate other opportunities related to the initiative. Dr. Bryan shared link to Dr. Denial's Substack.

4) **New Business**

- a) **Confirm Vice President Jaclyn Michael**
 - i) Vote to confirm Jaclyn Michael as Faculty Senate Vice President and chair of Handbook Committee. Vote: 33 yes, 0 opposed, 3 abstentions
- b) **Confirm Faculty Handbook Committee: Jaclyn Michael (chair; REL/CAS), Wolday Abrhra (EMT/CECS), Barry Kamrath (EDUC/CHEPS), Nishani Vincent (ACCT/RCOB), Carolyn Runyon (LIB), Julia Cummiskey (HIST/CAS), Thomas Huber (PSYC/CAS), Provost Designee (ex officio)**
 - i) Vote: 36 approved, 0 opposed, 2 abstention

c) Bylaw and Handbook Updates

- i) President Reising: Faculty Senate Executive Committee proposes adding language regarding President-Elect and Past President release time. In the past, the Faculty Senate President served for two years; the new model is that the Faculty Senate president serves one year, and the Past President is involved heavily in first semester of new administration and the President-Elect is involved heavily in the second semester (facilitating transitions between administrations). The proposal is to allot a semester of reassignment time to the president-elect and a semester of reassignment time to the past president.
- ii) Past President Jennifer Boyd said that we would need to get this approved by administration, so we could pass it on as a recommendation. President Donald Reising responded that the Chancellor was agreeable to this when we broached the subject last year.
- iii) President Donald Reising invited discussion from faculty. No discussion.
- iv) Handbook updates:
 - (1) President Reising informed the Senate that the handbook committee will begin by addressing incorrect information and broken links related to the Grade Appeals process.

d) Secretary: Dr. Hannah Wakefield; Parliamentarian: Dr. Ron Goulet

- i) Vote to confirm these roles: 36 approve, 0 opposed, 1 abstention
- ii) Past President Jennifer Boyd commented that the Faculty Senate Secretary also receives well-deserved release time.

e) Canvas Full Faculty Membership – Dr. Donald Reising

- i) President Donald Reising asked senators to identify new faculty additions to departments using the new spreadsheet in Canvas. Mary Marr suggested that Faculty Records and Walker Center can help with this. These offices share a spreadsheet for new faculty orientation. The Faculty Senate Executive Committee may speak with Victoria Bryan, Mary Marr, and Charlene in Faculty Records. Faculty Senators will send reminders about this process to the senators. Updates may be sent to President Donald Reising or Secretary Hannah Wakefield

f) Open Faculty Senate Seats – Dr. Donald Reising

- i) President Donald Reising presented open elections for At-Large representatives.
- ii) Faculty Senate Secretary Hannah Wakefield added that we have open positions for FARC and UFC as well.

g) Total Organizational Health (TOH) Initiative – Dr. Chris Cunningham

- i) *Dr. Cunningham's presentation slides are posted on the Faculty Senate website for the August 24, 2023 meeting, as is a list of all TOH-related assessments.*
- ii) Dr. Cunningham asked whether listeners would recommend UTC as a place to work to a close friend or family member who is seeking employment. This question appears on all surveys. Dr. Cunningham shares highlights (perhaps “lowlights”) from recent TOH-relevant staff and faculty surveys (2021-2022 years). UTC numbers for employee experience score are low; in 2022 the scores were in the negative. College and University Teaching Environment survey- Strengths: work is meaningful and aligns with values, strong perceived access to various supports to develop high-quality teaching, higher levels of belonging, positive relationships, and support for quality teaching with DH and colleagues than across the institution. Challenges: about

- 1 out of 3 respondents reported experiencing offensive behavior, discrimination, isolation, or harassment; weaker sense of relationships and belongingness beyond department level; work-life balance a source of stress and factor for faculty considering leaving institution. COACHE survey- only sixteen departments had enough respondents to generate reports. Dr. Cunningham has visited some departments and is happy to visit other departments. Strengths: high quality colleagues, general satisfaction with UTC (esp. for NTT; lowest for T faculty), high percentage would choose to work at UTC; challenges: low compensation, too much service demand, lack of diversity, satisfaction in departments not as high for minority faculty in some departments (in some cases this was female faculty, in some male faculty, in some racial/ethnic minorities). Fastest way for TOH initiative to have input is to come to speak at departments. COACHE survey 2022: Dr. Cunningham stressed that the survey reflects a desire to understand what is happening with administration.
- iii) Dr. Cunningham’s explanation of TOH: evidence-based and best practice methods for gathering and translating data regarding employee engagement and well-being into action steps to positively influence the TOH of the institution. Includes ALL employees. Has been working with faculty task force since May, sifting through information and beginning recommendations that will be floating through Faculty Senate and other faculty groups. The goal is to implement and evaluate TOH-related action. President Randy Boyd is supportive of this work, and the Executive Leadership Team has demonstrated enthusiasm and support. Dr. Cunningham addressed potential faculty cynicism: “if you were ever going to give this a chance, now’s the time.” Presented faculty task force roster of members who will push recommendations forward into implementation. What is TOH? Three parts: worker health + organizational health = total organizational health
 - iv) Dr. Cunningham presented pathway to becoming an Employer of Choice: Five essentials for workplace mental health and well-being: Opportunity for Growth, Protection from harm, Connection and Community, Work-Life Harmony, Mattering at Work; Centered on Worker Voice and Equity
 - v) IGLOO Model- Multi-level intervention: Individual, group, leadership, organizational, and overarching context strategies
 - vi) Dr. Cunningham summarized the TOH evaluations coming up. Dr. Cunningham asked for representatives to respond and to encourage faculty to respond.
 - vii) Set up conversation about workload policy by stressing its importance and the intention to act quickly on putting a policy in place.
 - viii) For questions: chris-cunningham@utc.edu
 - ix) President Donald Reising explained that Faculty Senate is a venue for coming up with meaningful recommendations to present to administration.
- h) WCTL Simple Syllabus – Dr. Victoria Bryan**
- i) Dr. Bryan had to leave; will be placed on next agenda. There will a demonstration of the Simple Syllabus scheduled for October 4.

5) Committee Reports

a) Committee on Committees – Dr. Donald Reising

- i) Vote to confirm the committee assignments and chairs for AY 23-24. Vote: 36 approval, 0 opposed, 1 abstention

ii) President Donald Reising thanked committee chairs for their service and thanked those serving on committees.

b) UFC – Dr. Donald Reising

i) President Reising explained what University Faculty Council is: made up of Faculty Senate presidents from the UT system and one faculty member from each faculty body. Faculty Senate is currently seeking nominations for a representative. Nominations are due September 1.

ii) President Reising reported on the June UFC meeting, which was focused on the DEI bill and divisive concepts. President Reising invited Chancellor Angle to address this at more length. President Donald Reising has spoken with Vice Chancellor Stacy Lightfoot and knows of things in motion but will allow Vice Chancellor Lightfoot to speak to this. President Reising reported on the August meeting. There was discussion of improving UT Promise: a desire to increase household income requirement and stipend. In addition, there was discussion regarding removing THEC-level approval from capital projects and academic programs. Administration is looking at enhancements to HOPE scholarships to support non-traditional students and seeking faculty input regarding how to improve. President Donald Reising invited faculty input on this. 1 in 3 college-eligible students leave the state; they are exploring why this is.

c) TUFS – President-Elect Jack Zibluk

i) TUFS is Tennessee University Faculty Senate. Two representatives from every state university, meets twice a year.

ii) Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion bill (SB817/HB1376) has been passed.

(1) Title VI and IX exempt.

(2) Places limitations on the use of state funds around external organizations that require the endorsement or promotion of a divisive concept

iii) Divisive concepts law: bans divisive concepts in higher ed; defines divisive concepts like last year's bill banning critical race theory and white privilege concepts from K-12 schools; requires biennial survey assessing diversity of thought; also passed the Board of Trustees in recent years; no mechanism for addressing complaints about divisive concepts at universities; most universities adopting wait-and-see posture

iv) Enrollment cliff: faculty senators encouraged to engage with administrators to plan strategies to address this.

v) Chief of Staff David Steele offered to comment from the Legislative Affairs side: system's government relations team is best in the country; they are the reason why academic freedom was referenced and preserved in divisive concepts legislation and the reason why we don't have to change things in our classrooms.

vi) Chief of Staff David Steele said that with respect to the enrollment cliff, the pipeline is expected to be level; in other words, there is no enrollment cliff in Tennessee

6) Administrative Reports

a) Chancellor Angle

i) Thanked faculty senators and expressed optimism about working with the Faculty Senate executive committee. The Chancellor reported the largest enrollment of freshmen ever this fall and recognized the impact on departments, but shared that there have been miniscule issues in handling these numbers. He thanked Dr.

Cunningham and expressed active support for the Total Organizational Health initiative. Regarding divisive concepts: academic freedom is now protected in statute, and administrators see no change in instruction. While instructors need to be teaching pertinent material, critical race theory is currently being taught and is needed in some of our courses. State of University address will take place Friday, September 15, at noon in the UC auditorium. The address will be live-streamed and archived on the website. The Chancellor will take the opportunity to look at the changing future relative to technology. The Chancellor commented that faculty will enjoy interactions with Bryan Johnson and recognized him as a positive addition to team.

b) Provost Hale

- i)** Thanked Dr. Cunningham for setting up Total Organizational Health discussion and the conversation about the need for a workload policy. We had a workload policy dating back to 2018—standard teaching load of 12 hours per semester. The policy was taken out of the handbook by faculty senate. Some faculty are being assigned six courses per semester; this is antithetical to faculty workload balance and TOH. Documents (posted on the Faculty Senate website) are the last two attempts to develop a workload policy. These documents had been shared with FS last fall. UTK policy: for faculty who are only teaching, they should have a 12 hour workload, with accommodations possible. Provost Hale invited representatives to share workload policies with constituents and invite feedback, especially feedback about the UTK policy. Faculty may provide feedback to Provost Hale through the FS Executive Committee or through department heads as well as through TOH task force members. Provost Hale intends to resolve workload policy this semester for implementation before Fall 2024 or before Spring 2024. Provost Hale shared that the UTK policy mirrors almost identically the workload policies at other universities where he has worked.
- ii)** Clarification of confusion regarding ownership of course materials and intellectual property rights: In all instances except for a very narrow set of circumstances, course materials faculty develop are the intellectual property of the faculty member and may not be shared. The exception is if the university contracted with you to develop this material. Provost Hale would like to distribute this policy to department heads and deans. This policy does not mean that the university may not access Canvas course shells and materials since they must remain open for a period of time for the purposes of grade disputes, etc.
- iii)** Reminder of new schedule for EDO process with new evaluation period aligning with the calendar year. All evaluating parties will have a draft of the new system in September. We have overlapping evaluation cycles this one year because of a Board of Trustees policy.
- iv)** Provost Hale shared a RTP calendar change: his office plans to move to a system where faculty members may submit materials for promotion and tenure in the spring with external reviews in summer and early fall and the whole process being resolved by the end of the calendar year. This is good for the timing of department head work and for external reviewer letters.
- v)** Modification of grade change guidelines: there has been an increase in late grade changes requested outside of the existing timeline. The new process: grade changes

may be requested after grades are finalized and up to the submission of grades in the following term.

- vi) THEC has been studying and has proposed changes to program modality definitions, updating modalities to match the delivery of programs since COVID-19. Department heads and deans have a copy of this. Please submit feedback for new definitions to department heads. UTC has been asked to provide feedback by September 15.
 - vii) NTT faculty concerns will be addressed in collaboration with the leadership of the Faculty Senate NTT committee. There will be a town hall meeting with Vice Provost Matt Matthews.
 - viii) Provost Hale alerted faculty to upcoming COACHE survey in Spring of 2024; the survey will open in February. Please encourage colleagues to participate.
 - ix) President Donald Reising reiterated the need to engage constituents on the workload policy.
- c) **Executive Vice Chancellor and Chief Strategy Officer Bryan Johnson**
- i) Expressed excitement for engaging in the strategic plan and listening deeply to representatives. Invited meetings with faculty and expressed commitment to meaningful learning experience for students. Excited for talented faculty and staff as well as the resources in Chattanooga. Likes to challenge the status quo and move with sense of urgency. Bryan-johnson01@utc.edu
 - ii) President Donald Reising encouraged representatives to meet with Bryan Johnson

7) Faculty Concerns

- a) **West Virginia University-** President Donald Reising notified faculty of recent West Virginia University cuts to programs and people to cover debt. A *Chronicle of Higher Education* article explains that WVU anticipated growth that did not manifest. Faculty should engage in conversations about strategic plan given this news; Jenn Stewart pointed to the fact that these decisions were made by an external body, and the concern is the power that external bodies had in these decisions. Lynn Purkey commented that they gutted world languages. President Donald Reising spoke to experience in History courses.
- b) **Leadership Appointments-** President Reising shared a faculty concern submitted about the lack of diversity in leadership roles and lack of equitable processes for appointing leaders (like Associate Department heads) within colleges. There is a need for better guidance to ensure that policies that exist at the university level for leadership appointments are carried out at the college and department level as well.

8) Announcements

- a) **Full Faculty Meetings**
 - i) Monday, September 18, at 3:00pm
 - ii) Tuesday, February 13, at 3:00pm
- b) **Open elections:**

University Faculty Council

Eligible: full-time, tenured faculty

Deadline: Sept. 1

Contact: Hannah Wakefield, hannah-wakefield@utc.edu

Faculty Administrative Relations Committee (2)

Eligible: Associate Professor/Lecturer rank or higher

Deadline: Sept. 8

Contact Hannah Wakefield, hannah-wakefield@utc.edu

At-Large Faculty Senate Representatives (3)

Eligible: Associate Professor rank (2)

Full Professor rank (1)

Deadline: Sept. 1

Contact: Hannah Wakefield, hannah-wakefield@utc.edu

Faculty Senate Division Representatives

Eligible: members of Behavioral Sciences T/TT, Math and Sciences T/TT,

College of Engineering and Computer Science T/TT, College of Health,

Education and Professional Studies NTT, Humanities NTT, Fine Arts NTT

Deadline: Sept. 1

Contact: [current division representatives](#)

9) Adjournment

a) Motion: Beth Crawford, Second: Cecilia Wigal; President Reising adjourns meeting at 5:49

b) Next Faculty Senate meeting: September 21, 3:10pm

Contact President Donald Reising with agenda items for next month

Attendance:

Abrha	Wolday	
Baker	Sybil	X
Boyd	Jennifer	X
Caskey	Jodi	X by proxy
Crawford	Beth	X
Davenport	Stephan	X
DePrez	Bernadette	X
Einstein	Saran	X
Epperson	Brooke	X
Fleming	Rachel	X
Franklin	Alycia	X
Goulet	Ron	X
Grubb	Matthew	X
Guinn	Cherry	X

Harbison	John	X
Harris	Lee	X
Hogg	Jennifer	X
Holcomb	Hadley	X
Huber	Thomas	X
Ibrahim	Hamby	
Jeffers	Gaye	X
Kaplanoglu	Erkan	X
Kozek	Mark	X
Littleton	Chad	X
Ma	Ziwei	X
Manning-Berg	Ashely	
McDonnell	Emma	X
McElrone	Marissa	X
McNutt	Dunstan	X
Michael	Jaclyn	X
Montgomery	Callie	X
Park	Han	X
Parks	Josh	X
Purkey	Lyn	X
Reising	Don	X
Strickland	Bryan	
Strickler	Jeremy	X
Taylor	Jessica	X
Treat	Sarah	X
Van Buren	Harry	X
Vincent	Nishani	X
Wakefield	Hannah	X
Walsh	Darrell	X
Xie	Mengjun	X
Zibluk	Jack	X