

Faculty Senate Meeting

November 12, 2020 at 3:11 pm.

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order at 3:11 pm via Zoom video conferencing. A video recording of the meeting can be viewed at: <https://youtu.be/LZ82CdFJZig>

Senators in Attendance: Charlene Simmons, Tammy Garland, Nominanda Barbosa, Jamie Harvey, Zibin Guo, Nicholas Boer, David Giles, Julia Cummiskey, Susan Thul, Natalie Owsley, Alexandra Zelin, Erika Schafer, Ethan Mills, Christopher Stuart, Jaclyn Michael, Joshua Hamblen, Cuilan (Lani) Gao, Phil Roundy, Spencer Usrey, Stephanie Gillison, Ignatius Fomunung, Ron Goulet, Liz Hathaway, Joanie Jackson, Barry Kamrath, Beth Crawford, Bernadette DePrez, Priscilla Simms-Robertson, Wes Smith, , Anne Swedberg, Jodi Caskey, Hill Craddock, Donald Reising, Irina Khmelko, Sarah Einstei, Eleni Panagiotou, Mengjun Xie.

Senators not in attendance: Marissa Colston, Brian Rogers.

Approval of the minutes:

Approval of the minutes of the October 15, 2020. There were no revisions nor objections, so the minutes were approved.

Administrative Reports:

Chancellor Steve Angle:

Was unable to attend the meeting but Dean Valerie Rutledge spoke on his behalf on an update for the search for a Vice Chancellor of Diversity. She provided the link to the position and the information related through the chat. The individual chosen for the position will be on the Chancellor's team focused on a lot of issues that relate to diversity and will be an administrative liaison for the Diversity Advisory Council or the Commission on the status of women and for the black faculty and staff association and will also have connections with multiple other areas on campus, including the Multicultural Center, the Women Gender Studies Area and so forth. She also added that everyone is encouraged to spread the words about the position and encourage people to apply. The position was just opened, and the review of candidates will not start for another couple of weeks, but it continues until right after the holidays. The process of selecting candidates will be very similar to what was conducted related to the search for the dean of Arts and Sciences. There will be a committee meeting to review all the applicants that have met the criteria. From those, the candidates for zoom meetings will be selected and from these those that are finalist. At that point, the names will be known, and the Chancellor hopes to be able to bring

the candidates to campus because he believes it is vital that all faculty, staff meet the individuals and to make sure our community partners have a chance to interact with them.

Provost Jerold Hale

Had four items to report:

- A. First, he wanted to give an update on Spring schedule. Face to face cases are about 25% of what is on the schedule; hybrid classes are about 20 % of what is on the schedule; online classes whether synchronous or asynchronous make about 54 % and finally, 1% of course offerings are in a Hyflex modality. Provost Hale wanted to emphasize (also discussed in the Q&A session cohosted with the senate president in the morning) to faculty senate and faculty in general was to pass along to members of their department that due to the uncertainty related to COVID-19 we all must be ready to pivot or shift class modality on relatively short notice. Given the current situation with the virus, with spikes in Hamilton County, Tennessee and most places across the nation it would be in the best interest of faculty members and students as well starting Spring semester with face to face format to be ready to pivot or shift modalities.
- B. Second, the commencements plan for next weekend is ongoing. We are convinced that we can do the event safely. We are following the social distancing that is possible on Chamberlain Field. We will be following the mask protocol and so forth. There will be five commencement ceremonies on afternoons of Wednesday, Thursday and Friday with the Wednesday ceremony being the one for graduate students. Then there will be one Saturday morning and one Saturday afternoon. The participation totals are as follow: the Wednesday ceremony has 28 graduate students; Thursday afternoon currently has 49 students registered; Friday afternoon has 65 students; Saturday morning has 147 student participants and Saturday afternoon 110. The total number of students to RSVP for any of the graduation ceremonies is 399.
- C. The third item Provost wanted to offer an update was that the strategic planning subcommittees are working hard preparing preliminary plans to pass along to integration committee. He reminded everyone that the integration committee for the strategic plan is a committee comprised of those that will take the work product from subcommittees and integrate them into a single cohesive document that we can then use as the basis for a series of listening sessions in the campus community in a larger Chattanooga community. He finished by thanking the subcommittees for the hard work they are being putting in especially with their busy times.
- D. Fourth and final item, he wanted to mention that the portal for student evaluations is open currently and it will stay open until December 1, 11:59 pm and students have been notified. If faculty want, please encourage student to take advantage and take this opportunity to provide feedback on courses. He wanted to remind faculty that the results

from these data will come back only to them. Faculty may choose to provide them to their departments, and it will be optional whether or not these data will be used as part of the EDO performance process for faculty. He assures to faculty that if anyone (administrator) desires to have access to these data, they would only have access to them on an aggregate form and not broken up by specific classes. There are some questions that the administrators would like to examine in an aggregate form but not at individual class level. Some of these questions would have to be with teaching modalities.

A member of the senate had two questions for Provost Hale:

- A. She apparently understood that these aggregate data about the student evaluations would not be broken down by class but instead by instructor. Dr. Hale quickly confirmed that that is certainly not the intention.
- B. As requested by another faculty through her, she wanted to ask for an update in responses to demonstrations such as “black lives matter”, George Floyd death and some of the student’s demonstrations. She advanced that Provost Hale had said earlier he would be investing time this current semester to start discussions on campus and engage in conversations with students about diversity. She asked provost Hale to provide a plan on this matter for the upcoming semester.

Provost Hale could offer a response related to academic affairs. He recalled that in response to events that happened across the Nation, the Chancellor gave each of the Vice Chancellors a set of marching orders and things to try to accomplish as they related to academic affairs. A review of the curriculum was conducted, and the Deans provided to me a list of courses in their respective colleges or units that related either diversity and inclusion or to liberal social justice issues. Those have been provided to me and I am compiling a report. There is quite a lengthy list of courses and I think that for this coming semester, what I intend to do is to convene a committee comprised of faculty, staff and students to help me call down or pair down the courses. There are some courses for example where issues related to diversity and inclusion might come up very briefly but may not be the focal point of the course content. So, I want to do is to pair down the list of courses that we received which includes hundred of courses into one square that content is more central to the delivery of the course. We are going to begin to have some discussions whether we can construct a social justice minor and whether we can administer such a minor on campus. As far as what’s happening with the other Vice Chancellors and the charges they were given by the Chancellor, he confessed not to know where things stand at the time.

Tammy Garland to provost Hale: what advice do you give to the RTP committees and department heads for evaluating faculty since student evaluations are not likely to be used?

Provost Hale answer: I would hope that department heads will do it anyway because all the formative feedback that students can provide, do not come without pitfalls and shortfalls in a certain way. I hope the department heads will come up with a variety of

different metrics that can be used to do that. The promotion process currently requires peer evaluation for teaching for example. In all of the meetings, I have advised to faculty members to request that the department head to tries to ensure that they are done on a periodic basis and that they don't just wait until someone decides if they are going up for tenure and promotion. We could have people reviewing the course materials of their colleagues and offer feedback and use a variety of other tools that can be available as well. He concludes by saying that he thinks that the more metrics are available and used the better it is for a faculty. Consistency across a variety of metrics would provide a very compelling case for tenure and promotion.

Committee reports:

A. 9-monh Sick Leave Adhoc Committee report and resolution

This document propose contains the following items from the 9 Month Faculty Leave Ad Hoc Committee, charged by Faculty Senate with exploring medical leave policies for all full-time 9-month faculty at UTC:

1. A resolution put forth by the committee on Paid Medical Leave for 9-month faculty
3. A recommendation for a paid medical leave policy for 9-month faculty at UTC
4. A summative report of the peer, aspirational, regional, and other Tennessee Universities that have paid medical leave policies for their 9-month faculty.

Alex Zelin reported:

Number one is indicating where we stand. Number two the committee proposes and recommends that there is a paid medical leave policy and a parental leave policy and that they are separate. This was brought up by many members of the committee and although proposing separated paid medical leave policy and a parental leave policy, the guidance is to provide them under the umbrella of medical leave policy. We also want to point out that we are tasked to provide general overall recommendations, and these are based on reviewing numerous policies across the country. For this we want to thank members for their hard work and feedback.

The last paragraph was presented to the senate by the senate president in a power point. A motion was put forward by the committee for discussion of the resolution Motion was seconded by Erika Schafer.

Questions, thoughts and clarifications on the resolution:

A senate member asked, is there an accruing amount for the paid medical leave for full faculty? He also wanted to know whether there is a fixed amount of time or a rollover amount for faculty per year.

Stephanie Todd, one committee's member answered:

Our recommendation was for 2 separate policies, one that would address extended illness by the faculty member or a member of their immediate family and that would be for 16 weeks of paid leave (it covers one semester) and that coverage would apply to all 9-month faculty and it would not have to be accrued. It would be a benefit as an employee of the University.

There are similar policies at ETSU and MTSU that are a little bit shorter than 16 weeks but similar to what the Committee is proposing. The same would be for parental leave. So, at the childbirth, child placement or adoption faculty would have 16 weeks, or a semester of paid leave and it would apply to all 9-month faculty as a benefit when hired.

She wanted to emphasize that the committee did not draft specific language for a policy.

They only wanted to make a recommendation based on some of the policies that they saw at peer institutes.

Another senate member wanted to be clear about the definition of immediate family as “**spouse**” on the resolution. The senate member wanted to know if spouse means that faculty has to be legally married in order to get benefit.

On the resolution,” faculty senate recommends the UTC to implement a paid medical leave policy for a 9-month faculty to protect them against loss of earning due to extended leave for personal or family (spouse, child or parent) illness, injury and or due to childbirth, child placement, or adoption”.

Stephanie Todd agreed that it should probably “partner” instead of spouse. She believed that the reason why it says spouse is because the committee was using the same language already in place for 12-month faculty but change probably should be made for the policy going forward.

The senate president noted that in the HR it is labeled as spouse, child or parent. But Stephanie thinks that it can be changed on the recommendation and the president agrees to make the change.

A member of the senate asked: Is there an estimate on the cost or how much would it cost to cover the 12-month faculty and staff.

The president Simmons answered: 9-month faculty at the UT campuses are the only state employees that have no access to any type of guaranteed paid leave, family and medical leave. Everyone else including 9-month faculty at the Tennessee, other LGITBI schools are accruing sick leave. Sick leave turns into family medical leave for whatever period you have accrued or put into the sick leave pool. So, It costs something. It was already somewhat covering the costs because there is an Adhoc system where some people are already getting 16 weeks, but some people aren't. So, the answer is yes there would be a cost, but my question would be, isn't it a good cost of doing business, it's a cost we cover on the vast majority of employees of the UT system in the State of Tennessee.

A member of the senate added to the president's comments as a support:

It adds to our competitiveness when you look at retention of faculty. If our system is not offering something like this and the other Universities are, is just one more variable that faculties will consider when they are looking at leaving or staying. So, I think that if UTC wants to compete in the market then they need to look at every edge that is possible.

Alex Zelin a member of the committee:

One of the committee members had pointed out that when all the Tennessee schools were all part of one system, they had this leave policy but when they separated MTSU and ETSU took the leave, but UT dropped it. Especially for women applying for new jobs, they are more likely to go for the schools that offer family leave policies. This can also apply to organizations in the workplace as well not just Universities. So, to remain competitive an echo is needed.

Beth Crawford: I think I understood that this policy in the resolution is not based on the accrual, and if I am not wrong you mentioned that the others are based on accrual. What's the reason for the difference especially because you were comparing it to the 12-month leave, which is based on accrual?

President Simmons answered: the resolution that the committee is putting forth does not give a specific solution. It simply says that there should be a paid medical leave policy. It does not specify if it's an accrued sick leave or whether it's a guaranteed amount of time and what the spread of time might be. That is the resolution. Then, the committee made two recommendations and their recommendations were essentially 16 weeks whether it's medical leave or parental leave. There are many other approaches and sometimes they are combined. So, for example they found that at TSU they get 16 weeks, but they are also accruing sick leave. However, when you accrue sick leave, you accrue it at essentially two weeks a year so you can quickly have more than 16 weeks. So, for some faculty that have been here a long time they might have an opportunity to have more than 16 weeks but for those that have been here for shorter amount of time like less than 8 years would not have that. This is something that will be decided by the system and they will decide whether is an accrued or a guaranteed time amount. What this resolution will do is to help push the system to move on sooner than later.

Stephanie Todd added that as committee, they intentionally wanted to keep things separated. They wanted the resolution not to have language about what they thought the policy should be because we knew that it would be determined at the system level. As the committee one of the reasons why we decided to go against the accrual policy is that it takes a long time for people to accrue enough leave particularly family leave. Also, a lot of times the accrue leave caps out at a certain amount, even when you have been here for 20 years. This happens with many of the universities we looked at, but I am not sure if it applies to ETSU and MTSU.

Charlene Simmons added that in the UT system employees that get sick leave can accrue endless supply of sick leave. Sick leave does not get paid out at retirement but if in a pension system it goes two years of service credit. So, there is a financial impact for 9-month faculty retiring on a

pension. They are losing money because they have not accrued significant amount of sick leave.

Stephanie Todd: one of the reasons why we did not look at a daily sick leave bank policy is because there are some universities that have daily sick leave bank policy but will require faculty to report every half day that they take off and it comes off their sick leave.

After questions and discussions, the resolution was then put up for a vote by senators: the motion to vote on the resolution with the proposed change (spouse to be changed to partner) passed: 31-0-7 (the 7 are people that either abstained or were not present when the vote was taken).

The senate president thanked the committee and said that will be forwarding the resolution to CAB (Composition Revisory Board) we will also share it with the University Faculty Council which is meeting next week so that other campuses are aware of the resolution and will make sure it gets to HR at our level and the system level.

B. Faculty Rating Administration Committee:

Charlene spoke on behalf of Amye Warren, Chair of the committee could not be present.

The committee is proposing few changes to the way faculty rate the administrators. This is referring to the survey we do every year to rate our department heads, Deans, Provost, Chancellor etc. One of the changes proposed is to include all faculty. Currently adjuncts are not included in the survey but they would like to add them. They are also proposing two additions and change the wording to items that are in the core questions and these are questions used every year. The committee is also proposing adding another section with additional questions that are related to pandemic responses for this year and that could be revisited for next year if needed.

A motion was put forth by the committee for discussions related to the changes proposed. Motion was seconded by Tammy Garland.

Questions and discussions related to the proposed changes:

Don Reising wanted to know whether those proposed additions to the core questions were provided by the committee. The president Simmons noted that the document is available on the senate faculty web site. Below is an extract from the committee report as it reads:

“Our recommendations and the rationale are outlined below. Proposed Faculty Rating of Administration Survey Changes 1. All faculty (full and part-time) should be invited to complete the survey. The committee unanimously voted that adjunct as well as full-time faculty should have a voice in this process. Although contingent faculty may not have adequate information to judge all administrators’ performance in every area, they should be allowed to have input to the

extent possible. The OPEIR should report data in aggregated form as necessary to ensure confidentiality (e.g., protecting the identity of a single adjunct respondent in a department).

2. Two items should be added to the core group of items used for every level of administration, and one existing item should be revised. The committee discussed the extant items and reached a unanimous decision that there were three gaps in the current survey. The current core items are as follows: Please indicate the extent to which you agree with each rating item (response options include strongly disagree to strongly agree, not applicable, unable to judge) The (Administrator) provides effective leadership by: • Encouraging debate and open discussion of differing viewpoints. • Communicating decision-making processes with transparency. • Consistently displaying a high level of integrity in all interactions. • Exhibiting impartiality in evaluating the merit of faculty achievements. • Demonstrating sincere concern for faculty needs through actions. • Advocating for the interests of the department to administration. The climate in higher education is changing rapidly and requires quick responses due to a multitude of external influences. We propose that administrators should be evaluated on 1) their inclusion of faculty voices in their decisions about these changes and 2) their timely dissemination of information. Thus, we suggest adding two items: • Supporting shared governance. • Communicating information in a timely manner. In addition, we discussed the need for administrators to provide feedback to faculty on the status of any faculty questions or concerns. Although the current item, “Demonstrating sincere concern for faculty needs through actions” is relevant, we felt that it was both too specific (not every faculty need can be ACTED upon), and multipronged (does the concern need to be both sincere AND acted upon?). Sometimes the response to a faculty concern is simply to report information on the status of that issue in the chain of command, rather than action. Thus, we proposed the following revision: • Following up on faculty concerns.”

Christopher Stewart brought a concern about the value of the feedback of adjuncts which are usually only part time faculty members teaching as occasional courses and do not usually have a lot of knowledge on the work of administrators part of it because they do not participate in committee meetings. He was wondering how valuable the input is and if it might skew the evaluation that the administrators are looking at.

Don Reising added that maybe there are two possibilities with that: one, the current evaluation if I am not wrong, allows people to respond with no knowledge which means if faculty think they are not knowledgeable enough to answer, they can choose that as an option, they are not forced to answer it. Second, we could also consider if that is not acceptable, a separate evaluation that is geared more for adjunct faculty issues.

The senate president recalled what was submitted in the report by the committee: “the committee unanimously voted that adjunct as well as full-time faculty should have a voice in this process. A member of committee gave an additional clarification. There are places on the survey to check whether the faculty is part time or full time and then fill the adequate questions. We should be able to separate the responses from full time and part time faculty. Although contingent faculty

may not have adequate information to judge all administrators' performance in every area, they should be allowed to have input to the extent possible. The OPEIR should report data in aggregated form as necessary to ensure confidentiality (e.g., protecting the identity of a single adjunct respondent in a department)."

Based on the report, the senate President believes that OPEIR's plan is to separate out adjunct and full-time faculty responses. She also asked if anyone from OPEIR wanted to step up and clarify. Upon the request, a member added the following: there is a place for faculty to choose whether they are full time or adjunct. The ideal is to collect the responses and then separate the adjunct from full time faculty as necessary.

After questions and discussions, the proposed changes was then put up for a vote by senators: The motion passed: 32-0-6.

C. General Ed. Committee report:

Lauren Ingraham reported: as reported at the beginning of this semester in one of senate faculty meetings we were trying to be official about getting serious this academic year in looking at some designs adjustments we could make to elevate oportunities for students in issues of diversity, equity and inclusion as they to progress throught the general education program. We set up a subcommittee to start looking at that and then we got started early in the semester. With the Chancellor's State of University he mentioned a really thorough, comprehensive overview of and reexamination of our general education program as a top priority. Then our discussion shifted a little bit and we realized we need a little more than a seven person subcommittee. We need a lot of different voices and perspectives in this conversation. So, the provost and I got together and we consulted with Talia Well she is our General Ed. Committee Chair and we are taking about a new committee that we are calling the Reimagining General Ed. Committee to take a completely thorough top to bottom reexamination of what we offer in general education and how we can make it much more meaningful series of learning experiences for the students. So you can see we already have an overlap with the strategic planning sessions that are hapenning. Today, we sent out initial invitations to serve in this committee therefore I cannot tell you right now who is going to be in the committee because we have not heard yet from everybody. I can share with you the constituencies that we are hoping to stay represented on the committee itself. We've got faculty from every college at the University and at different ranks including non tenure track faculty, students, the General Education Committee itself, Faculty Senate representation, the office of Equity and Inclusion represented, our professional advisors which are very important as frontline workers when it comes to reporting back how students interpret our general education program, the University Registrar's Office, OPEIR is also represented. One of the things we want to be really mindful of is the SACSCOC guidelines regarding general education and making sure that we have a really accessible general education program. We are also including representation from student affairs. One thing that as the sub Committeee has been talking about is how important it is for students to feel like they belong to a learning community to make their learning experience quite meaningfull.

We've had some responses from people that have invited today, we are very enthusiastic, they are very eager to serve on this Committee. Those that have responded, have committed at least through the next academic year.

Questions related:

A faculty member: the Provost mentioned that hundred of classes were submitted and that they would tackle diversity, inclusion issues. Is there any way that the students would know which classes these are if they wanted to take a class that focuses on those issues? She was wondering if such classes could be designated as like diversity and inclusion classes the same way an experiential learning class is.

Lauren Ingraham agreed that an attribute like suggested above could be added to these courses and it would show up on in the same way that you can now see for example Visual and Performing Arts as a category. She finished by saying that she thinks that is something that can be worked out.

New Business:

President Simmons recalled that last meeting there were some questions and faculty concerns related to bookstore (textbook orders) and she reached out to them and today there is representative from bookstore that will be talking about issues related to textbook and answer any questions.

Kelly from the bookstore report:

Book order due date. One of the questions that we have been getting for year is why book orders are so early?

Textbook due dates are set 2 to 3 weeks prior to student's registering for the upcoming term. This is done to provide the bookstore enough time to process and get those orders confirmed into the system. We process nearly 2,200 book orders for Spring and 2,400 for the Fall semesters. This will allow the students to view the book information when they begin the registration or pre-registration process. This is important to put as in compliance with HEOA -Higher Education Opportunity Act 2008. The HEOA was implemented to ensure that students have access to affordable course materials by reducing their cost. In order to provide students with the most affordable materials, HEOA recommends that all parties which include faculty, students, administrators, bookstore, distributors and publishers work together to identify the opportunities where we can decrease the cost of textbooks for our students for the required and recommended and supplemental materials while supporting the academic freedom of faculty members to select quality course materials for their students.

HEOA requires that institutions that receive federal financial assistance which are students with Financial AID to provide textbook information that being the ISBN and the retail price that the student will pay prior to the pre-registration and registration process.

Currently, students can locate the book information for their course during the registration process by clicking on the course title and then over on the left-hand side theirs is a bookstore

link and then another UTC bookstore link. By doing those steps that takes them to the bookstore web site where they can enter the course information that will allow them to view any of the book information that has been submitted to the bookstore.

In the HEOA textbook provision, it also states that institutional programs and the information regarding these programs must be provided to students. These programs provide students with the most affordable format options. Renting and purchasing of used books and used book rentals is still the most cost-effective option for students. For this Fall semester, we rented nearly 10,000 books and without a book adoption on the upcoming semester we won't be able to keep those books if they are being reused on our campus. And in the time of pandemic it is very difficult to get used books.

When we looked at the different format options and affordability, another option that we have through the bookstore is the BNED Courseware which is a high quality and fully customizable. There are currently 55 courses that are available through the BNED, it's priced at 25 dollars per course and for students that want to have a print companion the cost is an additional 15 dollars. For institutional cost-saving strategies, a current program that we have in place is our first day program which is an inclusive access model where the E-text charges is placed on the student's account and the course materials are delivered to the student's course in Canvas. For the upcoming Spring 21 term there are currently 27 courses with approximately 120 sections that will provide course materials to nearly 5000 students in the Spring and the materials that are typically in this inclusive access program or interactive components within the e-text some examples are engage with Mindtap, Mcgraw Hill with Connect and the Pearson's with My Lab.

Book orders submitted prior to student registration provides our students with the greatest opportunity to determine if they can afford to purchase the required materials that are necessary for them to be successful. About 52 percent of students don't buy textbook due to the cost. Early book orders provide students with the best opportunity to be prepared on the first day of classes.

We have had a price match program on our campus for many years which has been very helpful to our students. We price match to Amazon and BN.com and it excludes third-party resellers and /or marketplace sellers (i.e. other sellers on Amazon or peer-to-peer pricing).

So, as of this week, the bookstore is still missing 369 book orders. Due to the pandemic, we are continuing to experience the reduced working capacities with the publishers as well as experiencing longer shipping times freight companies. Many publishers have also reduced the amount of their inventory available and they have moved to a print on demand schedule models. If you take the pandemic out of the situation just with it being the time of year with the holiday season approaching, we will see that publishers are going to continue to close which will increase the amount of time for orders to be processed and shipped to us.

She concluded by reminding those that have not yet submitted orders to please go ahead and do it to make sure that we have what is required for our students.

A senate member brought a concern about book order and the due date to submit orders:

She said that she totally understands and appreciated the importance of having the book information available for student's registration. However, what she was hearing from faculty this year is that the frustration is that the deadline to submit book orders comes before the schedule is finalized and so faculty get emails for not having submitted orders for courses that are first not in Faculty Enlight, or second we haven't actually gotten the final say on what classes faculties are teaching. She wanted to know if there is a way to reconcile that with the scheduling process.

Kelly answered that she does understand the frustration expressed by the faculty member and others and that she has spoken to the executive leadership and was told that department heads can share that information with faculty but with your concern, I am more than happy to go back to the leadership team and express that concern again. She pointed that If you know you are teaching a section, but you don't know the section CRN you can still manually input that course. However, we would have to go back and fix it.

To add to the concerns expressed above, another faculty added to them specially when it concerns the departments with many adjuncts teaching courses. Many times, books are due, but no faculty has been assigned to the course and we are forced to select a book for an adjunct that may have developed the course with a different book. This can also apply when hiring a new faculty. For example, if a faculty was hired in late or later Spring, we don't know what book they would like to choose. And yet we are being forced to kind of chose them. Another point I would like to ask about is that first day access so I know that students are able to opt out for First Day Access but I also know that a lot of students that would sign up for classes and I would have my textbook on reserve in the library and many students use the textbook on reserve in the library as a way to take the course without having to pay costly textbooks. With the COVID, people cannot go to the library and put hands on the same book and that I understand. But by using and kind of almost mandating First Day Access is that putting any of our students that still can't afford necessary textbooks at risk? Because while is cheaper than buying a print copy if everyone were required to have this First Day Access, but they can't afford it, what does that mean?

Kelly answered that most of the First Day Access is required with the interactive where is requiring an access code. The thing with the First Day Pricing is that the pricing per the Department of Education has to be below or at the market value with means that what it retails for in the bookstore or in the e-text charge on the student account is going to be the same price or less of what the publisher is selling it for.

The same faculty member goes back to say that she understands that, but her question is if we are now requiring students to have all of these online access codes how that puts them at a disadvantage rather than being able to go to the library and be able to check out the books on reserve from faculty.

Kelly agrees that the First Day Access is not a one size fits all that is why is only in 27 classes. At this point there are only two courses for the Fall semester that were e book driven and those courses were only for opt out. A good thing of the program is that students have a one-week window where the student can opt out of that charge.

Another member had a question related to bookstore orders and she wanted to speak on behalf of a colleague that was not able to ask the question at the time: In two classes that this colleague has had there has been a book that is required for the courses. Students were not able to buy the book for whatever reason from the bookstore, so they went to the library to check the book out. However, they were not allowed to check the book and were told that it was because the book was listed as a required book for their course. She wanted to get a better understanding on what's happening and apparently it has happened to my colleague for two different semesters for two

Kelly replied by saying she was not aware of anything like that and that she does not understand the library's policy on that, but she would inquire and get back to the faculty member.

President Simmons wanted to take time and make everyone aware that major changes to the Honor Code took place in January. The idea is to share these changes with the faculty. So, on the senate webpage there is a handout, and this will be going out to the faculty either later tonight or tomorrow. The handout is a two-page summary of the Honor Code and particularly how we can deal with honor code violation because there is where those changes come. So, if a faculty believes that a student has violated the honor code, there are two options:

Honor Code Update: 2 options for resolving an honor code violation:

- Request a formal hearing through the office of student conduct.
- Resolution agreement (Waiver) - which must be signed by student and files with office of student conduct.

For the second option, the faculty must enter into a resolution agreement also known as a waiver. The student must agree to it, must physically sign it and then it must be turned into the office of student conduct. The details can be found in the handout and even more detailed in the honor code which there is a link to that in the handout. I think this is a little bit of a change to some of the practice that is been going on here whether it was a right practice or wrong practice. For a long time, faculty were resolving these issues on their own, not reporting them, not having official waiver signed which could be a potential violation of student's due process. Therefore, we need to pursue one these two options for an honor code violation.

President Simmons asked that Bret Fuchs which was attending the meeting confirm or add anything she may have missed. Bret Fuchs confirms that President was correct on her explanations and sharing of the information. He adds that most faculty were doing many of these things already, some were doing it informally. And he wanted to strive that faculty do not change the grade.

Unfinished Business

COVID-19 Absence Statement for Spring 2021

Senate president Charlene Simmons shared and spoke on the COVID Absence Statement for Spring 2021 which was put for discussions on the October meeting. The draft had been up. She admitted having gotten a little bit of feedback from emails. One suggestion was to revise the categories to match them with the class modality, essentially to revise the labels I had originally used to match the ones being used in the schedule. The version I put online said for example face to face. I will update that to say face to face and hybrid. I also had used the word “online” but I will change it to internet just like it says on the schedule and I had spelled hyflex differently than we’re spelling it and so I will change the spelling.

As you can see, we tried to present three different statements because there are differences between face to face, internet and hyflex, so there are subtle changes. Obviously, the internet version didn’t need to include a section about attending class in person. Then we tried to provide in both first person and third person so that faculty can find the one that fits their schedule. This is all found on the senate web page.

Questions, comments or concerns:

A senate member said she believes that Dr. Hale mentioned this on the weekly Q & A meetings, but she wanted to know what happens when students who signed up to signed up for face to face hybrid classes but then decide that they are just going to watch whatever recorded or join online rather than being face to face even if they are in rotation and that COVID -19 statement addresses that.

President Simmons answer to the question above: If you look at the face to face and blended hybrid version, the first paragraph includes a very important sentence at the end. The sentence read: students that are cleared to be on campus and attend class are required to attend face to face class sessions. This was not included in the prior statement but essentially is closing the loop and it means that if student sign up for face to face hybrid, you’ve been cleared by the self-check up to come on to campus and you are not in quarantine or isolation then you must attend class. In here is when the regular attendance policy can kick in.

After questions and discussions, the statement was then put up for a vote by senators and seconded by Ethan Mills.

COVID-19 Absence Statement for Spring 2021 has passed with: 29-0-11.

The statement will be distributed to faculty by email either tonight or tomorrow.

Faculty Concerns:

Don Reising brought a concern related to promotion and tenure and the appeals process.

Currently and according to the faculty handbook, in order to initiate an appeal with the FARC, it requires that the faculty member who was denied promotion and tenure to go through the FARC and it's been put forward as a possible change to the handbook I guess that appeal be automatic instead of having the faculty requiring to do the appeal process. The main reason is that some of the faculty were in that situation fear retaliation or backlash that may come with it.

President Simmons agreed to forward the concern expressed above to the handbook committee for consideration. Matt Mathews suggested that this be also recommended for reappointment.

Another member (Ethan Mills) also brought a concern to the senate that he has heard from few faculties but also staff about the administrative closure. So, the 9-month faculty get an extended winter break but 12-month faculty, staff that are expected to report to campus over winter break have not got any official extension on their break, and so I think some people are wondering if even though that is set by the system they can't get extended administrative holiday. Maybe offices do not necessarily have to be physically open and in that way more 12-month faculty and staff could work from home. This is a safety issue, specially for those that might be travelling or seeing more people than usual over the holidays. It might be a good way to keep the spread of Covid-19 on campus under control.

President Simmons took note on the concern expressed above. She mentioned that the Chancellor is not present in the meeting to respond. For what she knew, the Chancellor has answered this in many other venues and has said that he did ask the president and that it is not feasible to extend the holiday. However, he has asked each Vice Chancellor, to work with their divisions to look at work from home agreements and how we can keep business continuity but minimize the number of people on campus.

Provost Hale believes that President Simmons pretty much summarized the Chancellor's statements about the issue quite well. He added that he has been in consultation with the Deans and the only thing that they still have outstanding before something else comes out to faculty and Academic Affairs is trying to figure out if there will be a schedule by which academic buildings will be closed and be opened only to swipe access in a period of time when all of the students, except the ones staying in the residence halls over the holiday will be gone. At the time we will have a better idea of exactly what the proper time frame is to do that.

With the regard to the safety issues and safety issues extends beyond just spreading of COVID-19 including having a very limited number of people in very large buildings. Therefore, we need to consider both on campus safety and Covid safety at the same time. The Provost then directed to the faculty who brought the concern and assured that he may report to the colleagues that brought the concern to him that they may expect something soon for approved home arrangements.

Hill Craddock needed an advice related to a concern from a junior colleague which is in the tenure track. According to Hill Craddock, the faculty has expressed to be terrified of honor court. He said that he advised the faculty not to be terrified, the faculty would win the case. This case was about cheating, the faculty had caught student teaching in the class but chosed not to press charges because they were worried about retaliation from the system. This in turn would impact their chances for tenure and promotion. Dr. Craddock wanted to know how to respond to that concern.

President Simmons spoke on her own experience about Honor Court. She explains that Honor Court hearing are closed by nature because of FERPA so nobody in her department knows that she took 20 students to honor court in one semester. Therefore, RTP committees do not know whether faculty have ever gone to honor court before or not. She added that sometimes you win sometimes you lose. It is easier to prove plagiarism than cheating. However, it never stops me from continuing taking people to honor court. She added that it is a confidential process. It is not reported to the department heads or RTP committees, other than the few faculties that might be in the hearing which are bound by confidentiality.

A senate member added that as a department head for five years, he was never aware of who had a honor court case or who didn't unless somebody came and told him about it. He also said that he never worried about it or ever thought about it when it came a promotion, or he was not aware of any RTP committee ever worrying themselves about it.

Another faculty member spoke on the issue and said that she was aware of colleagues who have had bad experiences, but she thinks it comes less from formal retaliation from departments but more from students creating an environment of harassment rather by escalating things to the department. Students disclose things that maybe we would not disclose. The faculty thinks that the definitions on the new policy that we were talking about are going to be really helpful.

Dr. Craddock added that the concern was from the fact that this faculty was worried that after the hearing, they would write something about evaluation of instruction that would hurt the faculty and apparently it had already happened.

Tammy Garland added that she thinks that things on student evaluation that aren't true on regular days, but it does not have to be an honor court violation. She thinks that department heads and administrators do have enough intelligence to realize this. She also says that she has been on honor court and she thinks that these policies will help specially to help those serving on the honor court committee to understand better as to what their obligations are and what really isn't an honor court violation. She thinks that sometimes people serving on the committee don't understand what a violation is. She concludes by advising Dr Craddock to tell the junior faculty that there is no reason to be afraid.

A question (from Dr. Osborne) was posted in the chat, it reads: what's the best way to respond to students who are enrolled in synchronous internet-based courses and are sorry they cannot come to class because they must go to work?

Matt Mathews, Vice Provost answered: If a student needs to be in a class for next semester, the student should be directed to an adviser to work that out. He clarified that if students want to sign up for an internet synchronous course but cannot come to class because of work then they should not sign up for the course in the first place. The amount of time that a faculty chooses to engage with a student that is already enrolled in a course and brings up this concern is up to the faculty. This would apply to synchronous courses whether is online or face to face classes. That should be something that students need to accept responsibility for. However, he said he was aware of employers that can change work schedule which can create a problem or be conflicting with the student's school schedule. As a faculty, it is up to the faculty to choose to accommodate the student, but it is not the faculty's responsibility to adapt the class to meet the student's work schedule.

When asked to chip in, Provost Hale assured that his answer would not be different from the Vice Provost's answer. He strived that if it was all face to face classes, we would not be having this conversation. Overall, the purpose of the synchronous online class is for the student to know when the class is meeting. Therefore, if a student cannot attend the class and or meet requirements then student should not sign up for it and should instead sign for something else.

Announcements:

The senate President spoke, we as the senate belong to the Tennessee University Faculty Senates. Tammy Garland and I represent UTC at **TUFTS** and at our last meeting we talked about creating a workload survey and I was on the subcommittee that has been working with MTSU and with some other members of TUFTS to create the survey. The survey be launching next Thursday, and an email will come from me. It is being launched at all public four-year institutions. It is being sent to all faculty including full and part time or adjunct faculty. The purpose of the workload is really two main goals. One is to collect data about how much work is done in a normal summer and how much of that work is uncompensated. The second goal is to look at how much the pandemic has changed our workload both in the summer and fall and how faculty has made adjustments. So, the survey is going to ask things like how many hours did faculty spend on things such as teaching, research, service etc. Because there are administrators who are faculty members, it will also include administration. We are getting a variety of types of faculty across a variety of campuses and it will include things like clinicals because we have some other faculty with clinical work. If the category does not apply, then just put a zero on it. The data is anonymous, and we will be reporting out the data, but UTC will receive a report that will include data from UTC faculty and then compares it with the overall for the entire State.

TUFTS think that this will be useful information for senates and faculty to use within their institution. So, for example within the system to provide to the UT board what it is that faculty do and what they do in the summer. The report will be also submitted to the legislators.

President Charlene finished by encouraging all faculty to fill out the survey.

Adjournment:

At approximately 4:55 pm Don Reising put a motion forward for adjournment. The call was seconded by Hill Craddock.

The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully,

Nominanda Barbosa, Senate Secretary 20/21