

## **UTC Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes AY 2022-23**

*(attendance follows the notes)*

Meeting date: January 19, 2023 (via Zoom)

### **Call to Order**

Welcome: the meeting was called to order by President Jennifer Boyd at 3:10 pm.

President Boyd asked for approval of the minutes from the November 17, 2022 meeting. Jack Zibluk moved and Darrell Walsh seconded. There were 31 approvals, 2 abstentions, none opposed.

### **1. Old Business**

President Jennifer Boyd discussed the recent history of the order of business for Faculty Senate meetings. She has been contacted by many faculty members in the previous semester who gave feedback about the order of business and desired a change. In the last Faculty Senate meeting of the Fall 2022 semester, members discussed moving administrative reports to the end of the meeting and starting meetings with unfinished and then new business. Boyd called for a vote on changing the order of Faculty Senate meetings so that old and new business would come before administrative reports. There were 37 approvals, 2 abstentions, one opposed.

### **2. New Business**

UTC Bookstore Manager Kellie Wright gave an update about the First Day Book Program. In this program, students pay a set fee to access their e-textbooks for the entire semester. This started in 2019 with an Introduction to Music class. The instructor wanted to make course materials more affordable. Wright reported that students are enthusiastic about this Program because there is one place to access all the course's digital content. They also like the simplified payment process, which is billed to their student account.

Wright noted some of the regulations of this Program for those instructors who would like to learn how they might participate. For example, all sections of a given course must participate and there are several approvals necessary. She also gave details about the Program from the student's perspective, including how they access the electronic materials through Canvas course site. Wright included in her presentation some statistics about how many courses participate in the Program and the monies saved by students by this initiative. The deadline for instructors to opt into the program is February 24 for the Summer 2023 term, and March 1 for the Fall 2023 term.

Lucy Schultz asked if the learning materials are only available during the semester the course is offered, and if they are downloadable to be saved. Wright explained that the access length of individual materials depends on the determination made in conversation between instructors and

publishers. If not a sequential course, the materials are generally available during the semester when the course is offered.

Jennifer Boyd asked about fees and course textbook access for sequential courses. Wright responded that in this situation, the materials fees are paid in the first semester and not in subsequent ones. For example, students in French 1010 pay the fee in the first semester and have access in subsequent classes, such as French 1012.

Dileep Dileepan asked about access when students drop a course, or fail a course, and reenroll in a subsequent semester. Wright responded that students are refunded within a certain time period in this case, just like lab fees. Otherwise the process is the same as if a student had purchased a book at the bookstore.

Jennifer Boyd asked what happens in the case of a student opting out of the Program, and how they access the course required materials. Wright said that students who opt out are usually doing so because they prefer printed books. She also mentioned that she assists students in all cases access the materials they need.

Dean of Students Brett Fuchs spoke to the attendees about academic honesty. There were some concerns about the cases of plagiarism and the use of AI expressed at the end of the Fall semester. Fuchs shared some statistics about violations of the university Honor Code from fall semesters from 2019 to 2022, including the types of violations (*the presentation slides are available on the Faculty Senate website*). During the beginning of the pandemic in Spring 2020 there was an uptick. There was another uptick after the Honor Code was updated in 2021. Overall, Fuchs says the numbers are on the rise. One reason is that faculty are reporting more, which has always been an expectation for instructors. Fuchs discussed the importance of this and efforts the Dean of Students Office takes to increase awareness amongst students about ethics and integrity.

Fuchs spoke about an AI writing tool called ChatGPT, which started service in late 2022. Fuchs noted that this technology will impact some instructors more than others. He showed examples of how one uses ChatGPT to produce writing. Fuchs provided links to published articles about AI technology and its impact on higher education. The university is working on providing new tools to detect the use of AI in writing assignments.

Fuchs discussed how instructors might determine if a student has used something like ChatGPT and the University Honor Code. He also noted that there is an increased number of cases of students paying other students, or a service, to produce writing for them. He mentioned some initiatives, current and future, that the Dean's office is taking to increase student awareness about ethics and integrity at UTC. They are incorporating information about AI in these efforts.

Jennifer Boyd asked if language about AI as a form of cheating and the UTC Honor Code will be inserted into the campus-wide Campus Syllabus. Fuchs replied that general language that would cover this already exists in the code (use of unauthorized assistance), and they are looking to be more specific about AI use in the future.

Lucy Schultz asked if the Ethics and Integrity class syllabus is available for faculty to review, and it is. Fuchs responded that when they developed it previously it was presented to faculty. Also, when updates are made faculty will be informed and their feedback is desired about the course.

Several attendees mentioned that the Walker Center and the Studio in the Library are available to assist faculty to create assignments that would be more difficult to plagiarize.

### **3. Committee Reports**

Chair Jenn Stewart gave updates about the General Education Committee. The fourteen members certified 213 courses in six General Education categories. Stewart noted that in the future when there is a significant revision of General Education, more members need to be put on the certification committee. The work that Committee members recently performed was phenomenal and many attendees praised the work of those members, and the Chair.

Upcoming is re-certification for the 2014 General Education program. Stewart is working on a document that will help make the process easier for courses that just recently certified for the new General Education program. Once this process has been reviewed it will be shared with Department Heads so that the 2014 recertifications will happen quickly.

Rectifications need to be approved by the relevant College Dean by March 15. She will be sending more details with deadlines for faculty who need these details.

Jennifer Boyd reported on behalf of Chair Andrew LeDoan of the Faculty Grants Committee. This report provided details on the round of grants applied for, and granted, for Spring 2023. The Committee noted again that a number of proposals had errors in their proposed budget. Boyd expressed appreciation for the work that the Committee members perform and the Chair.

Jennifer Boyd reported on behalf of Chair Deborah Mullen of the Course Learning Evaluations Committee. The Committee will be sending surveys soon to Department Heads and the heads of RTP committees to learn how student course evaluations are being used across campus for faculty teaching during EDOs and reappointment reviews. There seems to be variability across campus. The Committee wanted to announce that for any class that the instructor is not able to access the evaluations because of a low response rate, OPEIR can provide them with the evaluations.

Courtney Crittenden asked how the Course Learning Evaluations Committee's survey are related to the surveys done by Faculty Senate in 2021-22 regarding the biases in student evaluations regarding instructors that are women and people of color. Jennifer Boyd replied that there is a body of literature about this topic that confirms bias in student evaluations. She said that the Faculty Senate survey data, along with the future survey reports from the Committee's work, is meant to discern how much weight is given to student course evaluations in comparison to other methods used to evaluate instruction.

Lauren Ingraham spoke about a presentation about course evaluations that that she, Chancellor Angle, and David Steele viewed while at a conference in October. Presented by people at the University of Nebraska-Omaha, the topic was about how that institution piloted a new evaluation system in order to reduce implicit student bias. Ingram hopes to report on this more at the next Faculty Senate meeting.

Jennifer Boyd reported on a recent University Faculty Council (a body comprised of members from all UT System schools) meeting. The UT System provided a series of legislative topics that they are monitoring, including abortion, divisive concepts and DEI, and the possible banning of the social media application TikTok on state-owned devices. In addition, the System is monitoring student enrollment across all campuses. There are also several areas of student success initiatives that were presented at that meeting.

#### **4. Administrative Reports**

Jennifer Boyd provided a report from Provost Hale regarding a new list of peers and aspirational peer institutions. Hale's report mentioned the process of determining these schools including campus characteristics and student numbers, research dollars, faculty breakdown (tenured and not tenured). The current list was derived from an initial list of 55 institutions, and this new listing will be the one the Board of Trustees will use to make comparisons with UTC.

Chris Cunningham asked if there is a set of aspirational peers for the Graduate School. Boyd said she was not sure and would look into the question, and that Joanne Romagni would probably know.

Provost Hale wanted to remind Senators to remind their constituents that Title IX training is mandatory, and the deadline for all instructors to complete this is January 31. The numbers on how many UTC staff complete this training are reported to the Board of Trustees, and a large number of employees had not yet completed the training. Some attendees mentioned having technical issues when working through this training, and everyone is encouraged to report that if it happens.

Vice Chancellor of Communications and Marketing Cassie Mathes spoke about the faculty role in recruitment and her office's work in developing brand management. This is an effort to articulate UTC's identity as an institution. Mathes presented the four key elements of this program: brand discovery, enhancing and expanding recruitment materials, creating a seamless digital experience, and developing a paid placement plan and improving earned media. The Office has hired an outside firm to help determine what the UTC brand is, and team members were on campus recently as part of this initiative. This firm spoke to one hundred people helped to identify opportunities and struggles and what makes UTC unique. Mathes stated that they are in the middle of this work and provided a full timeline (*the presentation slides are available on the Faculty Senate website*).

Mathes described each of these elements in detail. She noted that surveys that are forthcoming to staff, students, and the local community about UTC's identity and perception in the community. She also spoke about specific ways that faculty can be involved in these retention efforts.

Vice Chancellor of Enrollment Management and Student Affairs Yancy Freeman gave an update about student recruitment and retention. Freeman noted that recruitment and retention is everyone's responsibility. He explained that potential students want to meet with, speak to, and interact with instructors in their areas of academic interest. Freeman also spoke about specific ways that faculty can be involved in these retention efforts. This could be greeting prospective students (seen in groups with yellow bags), inviting prospective students to events on campus, and speaking with tour guests when they are on campus. Individual meetings with prospective students are already happening at the Department level when student tours are on campus three times a week.

Jennifer Boyd asked about a focus group that is directly involved in this brand management work. Mathes reported that a group of 10-15 faculty met with the outside firm in December and that the experience was very positive. One feedback was that UTC's faculty are engaged who love to teach and this makes the UTC experience special.

Freeman also provided an update on student enrollment numbers for Spring 2023 in comparison to the last three years. At present, the numbers are down from last year (specifically 20 FTE). This is an essential number that is directly connected to funding campus activities. Some trends that Freeman noted was the FTE for undergraduate students is up 20, so we are in a good place there. The headcount is down 140 students, and we were down 170 students in the fall.

Emma McDonnell asked if we know how these trends compare with peer institutions or larger national trends in regional universities. Freeman reported that we have fared better than many regional institutions. He repeated a few times that recruitment and retention is everyone's responsibility.

Jennifer Boyd asked if we are expecting more first year enrollments in future semesters. Freeman confirmed this, said that we had the second largest freshman class this year. However there is a lot of work to be done. He predicts another enrollment increase in new students, and transfer students, next fall.

Vice Chancellor for Diversity and Engagement Stacey Lightfoot reported on a system-wide campus climate survey that will be launched in a few days. Everyone should have received an email on January 19 from UT System President Randy Boyd regarding this survey. Created by Gallop, the Free Speech and Viewpoint Survey will be available from January 23 until February 20. The purpose of this survey is to get feedback about free speech and diversity on campus. Lightfoot noted that the survey is anonymous and encouraged everyone to complete it. She also mentioned that each campus has a free speech and diversity of viewpoints webpage that promotes opportunities about upcoming speakers, workshops, and other activities. Everyone should feel free to peruse this website.

Jennifer Boyd asked if questions on this climate survey could be skipped if the respondent did not feel comfortable completing them. Lightfoot said she didn't know, and would try to get an answer soon.

Vice Provost Matt Matthews provided details on the new non-tenure track promotion application procedure. After discussions with Department Heads, it was apparent that the timeline was not feasible and now will be moved back. They want to make sure that faculty can submit their materials in a timeline that works for them. He said that anyone with questions should reach out to him by email.

Matthews reported on the numbers of faculty who have requested COVID-19 related one and two year tenure clock extensions. Just over 100 faculty were given extensions under these policies (*the presentation slides are available on the Faculty Senate website*).

Matthews discussed the new Grade Appeals policy, that was announced to faculty and students in December 20, 2022. He provided the numbers of students who appealed their grades in this process, and the outcome of their requests. Fourteen students submitted thirteen appeals. The process for Spring 2023 will launch in March, and any suggestions about the new process are encouraged to contact Matthews.

Devori Kimbro reported feedback from faculty that they like the new streamlined process. A concern is that the timeline overlapped with breaks and the desire to have a break from grading responsibilities after grades are turned in. Is it possible to go to an earlier semester start in August in order to not have a short turn around in December? Matthews said that this question would need to go to the Committee and that it would require action from Faculty Senate.

Jennifer Boyd provided a report from Dean Pam Riggs Gelasco on the CECS Dean search. A search firm has been hired called Parker Executive. There will be more updates to come as the work progresses. Several CECS instructors in the chat mentioned that faculty would like assurance that they will be included in the search process.

## **5. Faculty Concerns**

Hannah Wakefield expressed appreciation for the Faculty Senate discussion boards. She mentioned an instructor who posted a concern about very abusive comments on student evaluations. She and other faculty have reported that they have received similar comments and wanted to mention this issue. Wakefield mentioned that she learned that in the case of an extraordinary abusive comment, the student's identity was able to be revealed and the Dean of Students Office was able to have a discussion with that student. This happens when a comment is deemed to have been a violation of the Honor Code.

Fuchs confirmed this and said that depending on the comment, it might be a conversation with the student to bring perspective and diffuse the issue.

Jennifer Boyd expressed her response to the faculty's post about abusive student comments and stated that no faculty should be subjected to such comments. This was raised in a recent meeting

between the Faculty Senate Executive Committee and Chancellor Angle and Provost Hale, who were receptive to the idea of coming up with a new system for student evaluations. We hope to make some real changes in that area because it is related to faculty well-being.

Dean of the Library Theresa Liedtka requested that faculty please consider attending a SACSCOC Roadshow to prepare for our SACSCOC visit and learn more about our QEP. Dates and times found here: <https://www.utc.edu/sacscoc/qep>. Liedtka mentioned they are doing a Campus Kick-Off to include faculty, staff, and students on 2/14/2023 at 2:00 pm in the Chattanooga Room.

## 6. Announcements

Jennifer Boyd discussed the Full Faculty Canvas discussion boards, and encouraged instructors to comment with or without attribution. She hopes the comments can inform the Senate’s work this semester.

The WCTL is hosting a new book club on faculty burnout that will be hosted by Victoria Bryan, Jennifer Boyd, and Tammy Garland. Anyone interested in participating should email the Walker Center for more details.

Jennifer Boyd identified some ongoing administrative discussions she is engaging in across campus. These include the use of student evaluations, campus safety, the schedule of fees for summer term students. We will pick these up in the February meeting.

The next Faculty Senate meeting is Thursday February 16, and the next Full Faculty meeting is February 28.

Today via email the Executive Director of the DRC, Michelle Rigler, notified instructors about a limited adjustment to the modified attendance policy for students who many require adjustments to attendance.

## Adjournment

Sandra Affare motioned to adjourn at 5:09 pm, and Darrell Walsh seconded.

Senator Name	Role	1-19		Senator Name	Role	1-19
Sara Knox	Beh Sci NTT	X		Dave Locander	BUS T/TT	X
David Croft	FA NTT			Nishani Vincent	BUS T/TT	X
Dominic Heinrici	HUM NTT			Ignatius Fomunung	EMCS T/TT	

Devori Kimbro	HUM NTT	X		Hamdy Ibrahim	EMCS T/TT	X
Lucy Schultz	HUM NTT	X		Erkan Kaplanoglu	EMCS T/TT	X
David Debter	MS NTT			Mengjun Xie	EMCS T/TT	X
Hadley Holcomb	MS NTT			Beth Crawford	CHEPS T/TT	X
Todd Dockery	BUS NTT			Bernadette DePrez	CHEPS T/TT	X
Alycia Franklin	BUS NTT	X		Brooke Epperson	CHEPS T/TT	X
Chang Phuong	EMCS NTT			Christopher Hansen	CHEPS T/TT	
Elicia Cruz	CHEPS NTT			Marissa McElrone	CHEPS T/TT	X
Matthew Grubbs	CHEPS NTT			Susan Thul	CHEPS T/TT	X
Rachel Nall	CHEPS NTT			Dunstan McNutt	Library	X
Sherah Basham	Beh Sci T/TT	X		Chantelle Swaren	Library	X
Emma McDonnell	Beh Sci T/TT	X		Cecelia Wigal (CECS)	At Large	X
Josh Ozymy	Beh Sci T/TT	X		Jack Zibluk (CAS)	At Large	X
Stephen Mandravelis	FA T/TT	X		Courtney Crittenden (CAS)	At Large	X
Lee Harris	FA T/TT	X		Yingfeng Wang (CECS)	At Large	X
Sybil Baker	HUM T/TT			Laura Tyndall (CHEPS)	At Large	X
Joseph Jordan	HUM T/TT	X		Darrell Walsh (CAS)	At Large	X
Heather Palmer	HUM T/TT			Oren Whightsel (CAS)	At Large	
Hannah Wakefield	HUM T/TT	X		Jodi Caskey (CAS)	At Large	X
Sandra Affare (CECS)	At Large	X		Jason Medeiros (CECS)	At Large	
Fernando Alda	MS T/TT			Jennifer Boyd (CAS)	Exec Comm	X
Stephanie Devries	MS T/TT	X		Donald Riesing (CECS)	Exec Comm	
Roger Nichols	MS T/TT	X		Tammy Garland (CAS)	Exec Comm	X
Han Park	MS T/TT	X		Marcus Mauldin (CAS)	Exec Comm	X
Dileep Dileepan	BUS T/TT	X		Jaclyn Michael (CAS)	Exec Comm	X