

UTC Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes AY 2022-23

(attendance follows the notes)

Meeting date: March 23, 2023 (via Zoom)

Call to Order

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

President Boyd reminded attendees of the Faculty Senate discussion boards on Canvas and encouraged everyone to use them. The topics of these boards are Faculty Safety on Campus, Academic Honesty, Faculty Wellbeing, the Post-Covid Classroom, and Student Recruitment. People can post as themselves or anonymously.

President Boyd asked for approval of the minutes from the February 16, 2023 meeting. There were 29 approvals, 4 abstentions, and none opposed.

1. Unfinished Business

Ombudsperson Search Update

Vice Provost Shewanee Howard-Baptiste gave an update on the UTC Ombudsperson search. The search committee is meeting at the end of March to review applications from a strong pool of submissions. The tentative timeline is to identify candidates in early April and then recommend semi-finalists to the hiring manager and the Chancellor's office. The goal is to bring candidates to campus in the coming weeks.

Course Learning Evaluations

President Boyd outlined the University of Nebraska-Omaha's course evaluations model, IMPACT, that UTC is considering as administration looks to evaluate course evaluations. In this model, the process of evaluation is a two-part method: faculty self-report on high-impact practices they developed, and then students are asked to report which practices they observed or did not observe. Development of the model was supported by an NSF grant and has been proven to significantly reduce implicit bias in course learning evaluations. This was a model developed for science classes, and the UN-O team is expanding it to be applicable to all types of courses.

More information on the UN-Omaha model can be found on their website:

<https://www.unomaha.edu/academic-affairs/stem-trail-center/research/impact.php>

Vice Provost Lauren Ingraham reported that the team from UN-O will be on campus April 10 and 11th. On April 10 at 9:30, there will be a campus-wide presentation about the IMPACT model in the Signal Mountain room in the University Center, with time for questions. That

afternoon, the Walker Center is holding an event with the group for conversations and interactions with individual faculty. There will be other opportunities for instructors to meet the team and discuss this model, and more information will be sent in an email next week. The group is also interested in discussing potential research partnerships. Anyone interested should email Lauren Ingraham (lauren-ingraham@utc.edu) to learn more.

Sandra Affare asked what NSF pathway funded the UN-O grant. President Boyd said she would research the question and would get the information to Sandra.

2. New Business

Faculty EDO Ratings and Rankings

President Boyd discussed EDO ratings and rankings of instructors. Each year as part of the EDO process, faculty are ranked as meeting, exceeding, or not meeting expectations. At UTC, these are the only three rankings available. Other System campuses, such as UTK, use a five category ranking system (Far Exceeds, Exceeds, Meets, Falls Short, and Falls Far Short of Expectations).

For context, as a response to perceptions by the previous Board of Trustees that a very high proportion of faculty were exceeding expectations at System campuses, the Board voted to instate a system of Periodic Post-Tenure Review (page 30 in the faculty handbook) that is conducted every six years. This is a comprehensive performance review.

At the last UT Board of Trustees meeting in February, Boyd was part of a meeting with UT System President Randy Boyd and Board of Trustees President John Compton in which the group reviewed Periodic Post-Tenure Review, EDO ratings, and rankings of instructors. The Education, Research, and Service Committee shared system data in order to discern if there was a decline in the number of instructors who were not meeting expectations. That was not found to be the case.

See the EDO data [here](#) (pages 154-55).

Based on this presentation, President Boyd discussed how UTC instructor ratings of Exceed Expectations seemed low compared to many UT system campuses. It was suggested that the expectations on other campuses are too low, or that grade inflation is a factor, or that institutional culture is the reason. Boyd mentioned that there had been discussions in the past about expanding UTC's ranking of faculty in the EDO process.

Several attendees mentioned that in their departments, the understanding is that there were quotas or caps for how many instructors could receive these distinctions per year. A number often mentioned was 20%. Sybil Baker reported that in English, there is a practice that 20% of instructors are rated at exceeds expectations. Vice Provost Matt Matthews pointed out that in the Faculty Handbook, percentages or quotas for these ratings are not allowed in the determination of rankings of faculty.

Beth Crawford mentioned that an earlier discussion about expanding the rating system had been debated and ultimately voted down, due to a fear that less people would get merit rather than more. The data Boyd is presenting shows that this didn't happen at other campuses.

Donald Reising shared that in his department, faculty are given examples of what kind of work can result in the exceeds expectations ranking. In his opinion the real problem is that faculty get ranked as exceeding expectations and don't get anything for it other than a mention in the EDO. It seems like a lot of work for very little incentive. He also expressed that administration overlooks this.

Susan Thul mentioned that the School of Nursing is currently developing their own set of ranking guidelines. She asked if the ranking data is differentiated by Assistant and Associate level professors, for example. President Boyd said that it would be interesting to see how the rankings break down and would look into this.

Hannah Wakefield asked if other UT campus tie the exceeds expectations ranking to merit based pay increases. Vice Provost Matt Matthews said that in order to answer that we'd have to ask administration at other campuses. President Boyd will check with the Faculty Senate presidents at other UT campuses.

Donald Reising mentioned that this issue had been raised at TUFS (Tenn. Universities Faculty Senate), and at another campus (perhaps MTSU or TTU) only institute merit-based pay raises rather than across the board raises.

Hope Klug mentioned that UTC had done a merit-based pay increase based on an exceeds expectations rating for a few years in a row on their EDOs. Vice Provost Matt Matthews reported that this happened in CAS in FY 2017.

President Boyd closed the discussion by restating that she wanted to bring this to the Senate's attention, and that this issue could be taken up in the future.

3. Committee Reports

Athletics Committee

Gretchen Potts, Committee Chair of the Athletics Committee, discussed changes the committee wants to make to their bylaws. The goal is to keep the charge of the committee to be more in line with the expectations set by the NCAA, which has changed in recent years. Some of the major changes include: recommending changes to the Chancellor based on student-athlete well-being and academic disciplinary rules, and increasing the number of students on the Committee from 2 to 3, with one designated as a student-athlete.

These changes were voted on by the Committee (all approved 7-0) and reviewed by University Counsel Yousef Hamadeh, and are available on the Faculty Senate website (under Agendas and Meeting Minutes).

President Boyd called for a Senate vote to approve these bylaw changes: 28 approved, 3 abstentions, and none opposed.

Faculty Senate Updates

Faculty Senate President Jennifer Boyd discussed recent Faculty Senate activities. Boyd was invited to present on what the Faculty Senate does to the Student Government Association. Included in this presentation was what the Senate is working on currently, including campus safety, legislation that may impact the classroom, the new General Education certification, recruitment and marketing, course learning evaluations, and the Senate's faculty wellbeing initiatives. Boyd learned that some of the discussions at SGA include the use of AI in classes. Boyd invited the SGA President Delali Gadzekpo to attend the April Faculty Senate meeting to identify and discuss opportunities for collaboration.

President Boyd gave an update on the Senate Divisional elections which are happening currently. There are vacancies in several divisions for tenure and non-tenure-track representation. Math and Sciences and Engineering are areas that need some candidates. At-large elections will follow the completion of divisional elections. Adjunct elections occur at the beginning of the academic year.

Also coming up are elections for Senate President-elect. There are two candidates who have accepted their nominations, and more information is coming soon on the process including candidate statements and the actual vote.

4. Administrative Reports

New EDO Calendar

Vice Provost Matt Matthews has been meeting with Departments to review proposed changes to the EDO process (and welcomes future invitations to do so). Matthews outlined major changes to the evaluation calendar (*this information is also available on the Faculty Senate website*):

- At this time, faculty are setting objectives on the current calendar that is to officially conclude in Spring 2024.
- At the same time, in December / January 2023-24, we will move to a calendar-year based evaluation process. Faculty will be setting objectives in December 2023 for this new cycle (for calendar year 2024).
- This means there will be a slight overlap in the two cycles in Spring 2024.

Some of the next steps in this process:

- Summer 2023: work with Department Heads and Deans on the new timeline
- August 2023: present draft timeline to Faculty Senate and solicit feedback
- November 2023: finalize the timeline and launch workflow

There is flexibility in the window of setting objectives and being evaluated during the overlap between the two cycles. This is something that will be worked out by Deans and Department Heads.

Beth Crawford said that she appreciates this change, since it would align staff and faculty evaluation calendars. Crawford asked about the process that instructors are doing right now: are we setting objectives from now to this December, or for the year ahead? Matthews said that in these proposed changes, instructors will be evaluated twice in the same period. Right now, instructors are setting objectives through April 2024, and with the implementation of the new calendar, there will be overlap in the objectives and their evaluation.

Matthews said that we already have a system in which faculty are able to adjust their objectives, as late as September and October, after submitting them and prior to department head evaluation. The overlap time in the two calendars will also allow instructors to set new objectives based on how things are going.

SACSCOC Campus Visit Recap

Theresa Liedtka (Dean of the Library and SACSCOC Reaffirmation Coordinator), and Cindy Williamson (SACSCOC Liaison) gave an update on the recent SACSCOC review committee visit on March 6-9. Williamson said that the visit was a huge success and thanked many people across campus for their input and participation that helped to make it a success. The UTC reaffirmation team received feedback from the committee visit on the QEP Moc's First Year program, which was expected. They are making plans to respond to the recommendations quickly. The official SACSCOC report will come soon, and then the UTC team's response is due in August.

Theresa Liedtka mentioned that a new QEP committee is convening, and that the QEP Director position is live on UTC's HR site and is accepting applications.

President Boyd asked if departments will be asked to make changes to their assessment as a result of this process. Williamson said that changes are not required across the University, and that some programs will need to be more specific and detailed about how their findings lead to improvements in student learning. Communications about these expectations will be sent to the entire university.

UTC Spring Research and Arts Conference

URaCE Program Administrator Caitlin Kelley shared that the Conference will be held on April 12, and it is now a one-day event with three major sessions of poster and oral presentations, panels, and performances. There is a new initiative called the "Class Visit Program" for students and faculty to engage with the Conference and learn about research. Registration for this concludes on April 7. More information on that program is [here](#).

This year, around 265 presentations were submitted, which was an increase from last year. Around 657 people are scheduled to present in diverse formats. At this time 100 people students and faculty are registered for the Class Visit initiative. More information is available at the Conference [website](#) (the full agenda will be posted around April 5).

President Boyd asked about a Fall conference, and Kelley mentioned that this conference does happen virtually and is focused on research conducted in the summer. It is also a virtual conference to allow for wide participation.

5. Faculty Concerns

Dawn Ford asked about if a campus-wide Faculty awards event or dinner would happen this Spring (which was a pre-covid tradition). President Boyd reported that there is a Faculty Senate committee that works with Academic Affairs regarding faculty awards. Vice Provost Matt Matthews said that Academic Affairs is waiting for information on faculty awards. Provost Jerry Hale mentioned in the chat that an event will be held, and that there is some discussion about whether that event will be in the Spring or in the Fall.

Lucy Schultz asked for more follow up on the Campus Director of Sustainability position, which she had asked about in a previous Senate meeting. In light of recent events including the ICPP report that included dire projections about the state of global warming, along with the city of Chattanooga releasing their Climate Action Plan, it seems appropriate for UTC to have a Director of Sustainability. Along with this position, it seems appropriate for UTC to develop its own sustainability goals to keep up with local and international developments. Schultz invited others who are interested in these issues to work with her on a formal resolution, and they can contact her at lucy-schultz@utc.edu. President Boyd agreed that these issues are crucial and said she'd draft a resolution for Senate to consider.

Lucy Schultz continued to express that she heard the position has a low salary and that it would be difficult to fill a position like this with low pay. She'd like to see UTC take sustainability seriously and allocate adequate funding so that this position could function as a campus leader.

Donald Reising asked what relationship this position has with Facilities and Boyd confirmed that it falls under Facilities. He expressed a concern that, based on his previous experience with Facilities, this position may not be fully supported by that unit. He supports some consideration of the unit this Director position is housed in, and the pay for the position. President Boyd will bring this up in the Senate's next Executive Committee meeting in early April.

6. Announcements

The next, and last, Faculty Senate meeting of this year is Thursday April 20th.

7. Adjournment

Tammy Garland motioned to adjourn at 4:38 pm, and Susan Thul seconded.

Senator Name	Role	3-23		Senator Name	Role	3-23
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	X		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	
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	
Sherah Basham	Beh Sci T/TT	X		Chantelle Swaren	Library	X
Emma McDonnell	Beh Sci T/TT			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	
Lee Harris	FA T/TT			Yingfeng Wang (CECS)	At Large	X
Sybil Baker	HUM T/TT	X		Laura Tyndall (CHEPS)	At Large	X
Joseph Jordan	HUM T/TT			Darrell Walsh (CAS)	At Large	
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	X		Jennifer Boyd (CAS)	Exec Comm	X
Stephanie Devries	MS T/TT			Donald Riesing (CECS)	Exec Comm	X
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