

UTC Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes AY 2022-23

(attendance follows the notes)

Meeting date: April 20, 2023 (via Zoom)

Call to Order

Welcome: the meeting was called to order by Senate President Jennifer Boyd at 3:15 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. They will be available until the end of June.

President Boyd asked for approval of the minutes from the March 23, 2023 meeting. Darrell Walsh moved and Beth Crawford seconded. There were 25 approvals, 1 abstention, and none opposed.

1. Unfinished Business

Ombudsperson Search Update

Vice Provost Shewanee Howard-Baptiste gave an update on the UTC Ombudsperson search. They are in the process of conducting Zoom interviews. There is a very strong candidate pool. The next step is campus visits that will happen in early to mid-May. They will make sure faculty and staff are involved in the process to stay engaged and connect with candidates.

CECS Dean Search Update

Senate President Jennifer Boyd reported on the progress of the search on behalf of Search Chair and CAS Dean Pamela Riggs-Gelasco. There are three finalists who are visiting campus this week and in the next ten days. There are open forums scheduled with each finalist, and faculty are encouraged to attend.

More information on finalists and open forum times and locations can be found here:
<https://www.utc.edu/academic-affairs/executive-search/finalists-for-dean-of-college-of-engineering-and-computer-science>

Sustainability Coordinator Search Update

Senate President Jennifer Boyd gave an update on the hiring for this position. It was posted in Taleo in late February. The search committee is in place and they are reviewing the initial round of applications. Anthony McClellan, the ED of Facilities and Operations, is chairing this search.

There are no faculty on that search committee. They will be inviting at least three candidates to campus, and the goal is to hire someone this summer.

Vice Chancellor for Finance Brent Goldberg mentioned that this position as posted is not a traditional sustainability coordinator. The position is geared towards a lot of data analysis and reporting. UTC has some responsibility to report data to various institutions, which is one reason that the position is focused more on that compared to community-facing work. It is possible that another position will be created that will be more involved with working in the community and various entities on campus. This role would work on more programmatic initiatives in a way that hasn't happened on campus.

Lucy Schultz said she was glad that the position is being filled and that the position will be expanded. She mentioned a local consulting firm called WAP Sustainability that could be a possible partner in this work.

Echoing other comments, Chief of Staff David Steele mentioned that Lucy Schultz's recent presentation on the importance of sustainability for UTC's future to the Chancellor's Advisory Committee was impressive and well-received by the attendees.

Course Learning Evaluations

Senate President Jennifer Boyd reviewed past discussions Faculty Senate has had regarding a possible UTC pilot of the IMPACT model of student evaluations developed by the University of Nebraska-Omaha. 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. This model has been proven to significantly reduce implicit bias in course learning evaluations. It is also unique in that it assesses high impact practices used in the course, instead of assessing how students are personally affected by 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>

In terms of the question of how much this model has been assessed, the F-IMPACT part has been reviewed but not the S-IMPACT part (F=faculty; S=student). It is possible that there would be a voluntarily pilot program. This would allow UTC to participate in the assessment of the S-IMPACT model. Boyd mentioned some parameters that should be considered in a possible pilot, including that it is done in a manner that benefits faculty. For example, those who participate should remain anonymous in the data reporting.

Vice Provost Lauren Ingraham said that there was a lot of interest related to last week's visit from UN-O developers of the IMPACT model. There is an opportunity to continue conversations with Faculty Senate committees, such as the Learning Environment and Course Evaluations committees, on a possible Fall 2023 pilot. It is possible that instructors could complete a survey and volunteer to pilot the model if they'd like. If instructors are interested in voluntarily piloting this program, they should contact Faculty Senate President Jennifer Boyd (jennifer-boyd@utc.edu) or Vice Provost Lauren Ingraham (lauren-ingraham@utc.edu).

Jennifer Boyd mentioned several resources already available to faculty from the Walker Center to solicit feedback from students. The Center also offers peer review of teaching that faculty can request. Mary Marr discussed the midterm survey template available from the Walker Center, that instructors can add and adapt for their courses.

Brian O’Leary asked if data is currently available on bias in course learning evaluations with the current system. Jennifer Boyd replied that the UN-O project includes data relevant to this, and that there is a body of research that has demonstrated the roles of bias in student evaluations. Cindy Williamson mentioned that OPEIR has reports available to share.

Guest – Student Government President Delali Gadzekpo

SGA President Delali Gadzekpo reported on what SGA has accomplished this academic year. They focused on engagement to reprioritize relationships that were impacted by Covid. SGA heard that students would like more engagement between them, faculty, and campus resources to support events.

SGA organized the first Mocs Link event in the fall semester to facilitate networking between faculty and students. They also organized a special monthly student lunch with Chancellor Angle based on the success of the Mocs Link event.

Students are also concerned with parking on campus, and in particular a lack of space. SGA organized an event for students to donate their parking ticket fees to support Scrappy’s Cupboard.

Another issue that SGA is working on is drawing attention and support for students with ESAs. They are working with UT System officials, including UT System President Randy Boyd, on an initiative to create a dog park on campus. There are conversations happening now to move forward on this with UTC administration.

Student safety is another concern that SGA is working on. They collaborated with UTC administration to organize several campus safety walks during the day and evening to identify potential spaces for safety improvement.

Student course learning evaluations were also discussed at SGA meetings this year, mainly in terms of their function and impacts on campus. They are discussing how to increase student participation in evaluations and educate on how to maximize constructive feedback.

SGA partnered with a student organization to pilot a composting program in some of the residence halls this year.

This semester SGA launched a new subcommittee called the Council of Student Organizations to increase funding for and engagement in student organizations. Students have felt disconnected and there have been missed opportunities for communication and collaboration between student organizations.

SGA partnered with Student and Family Engagement this year to support and train students in creating engaging events.

Faculty are encouraged to reach out to Delali (zny276@mocs.utc.edu) with questions and/or to learn more about the work of SGA and student perspectives on campus issues. More information on SGA can be found here: <https://mocsyncorgs.utc.edu/organization/student-government-association>

2. New Business

SIM Center Restructuring

Vice Chancellor Joanne Romagni gave a quick update on the restructuring of the SIM Center. Romangi mentioned that a lot of information will be forthcoming to campus regarding this transition. The Center will continue to fund individual faculty and student research. They are trying to be more efficient in cross-disciplinary work. At the moment, changing the Center's name is being discussed. Another priority is to involve faculty from diverse areas across campus in research activities.

A question was asked about the continuation of CEACSE seed grants, and Romangi said that those would continue. There is discussion of a possible restructuring to make these grants more effective. Faculty are encouraged to reach out to Romagni with questions and suggestions (joanne-romagni@utc.edu).

3. Committee Reports

Undergraduate Academic Standards

Chair of the committee Burch Oglesby presented proposed changes to the sixty-hour rule for transfer students. Transfer students tend to complete 14 more hours compared to students who start at UTC as freshman. These hours tend to be electives just to meet the 60 hour rule. The proposed change is to require transfer students to complete 45 credit hours at an accredited 4-year institution. The SACS standard is 25% of a students' total courses, and the Committee thought this proposal was a good compromise. The proposal passed the Academic Standards Committee by a 9-0-0 vote. *Informational documents about the proposal are posted on the Faculty Senate website.*

Jessica Pierce asked if the sixty hours from UTC standard to receive Latin honors was part of this discussion. Matt Matthews said that it wasn't and seemed to think that the number of hours for honors could also be determined by UTC. Cecelia Wigal asked if this would impact the number of upper level hours required for some programs such as Engineering, and Oglesby replied it would not. Registrar Joel Wells mentioned that this does not change the student's eligibility for honors.

Charlene Simmons mentioned that this 60 hour rule has been the subject of a number of student petitions for a long time reviewed by the Student Petitions Committee. It happens that students fulfill all the requirements for their degree program and are then told they need to take courses to fulfill this rule. She described it as a final barrier that prevents many students from graduating.

President Boyd called for a vote on the proposal. There were 23 approvals, 1 abstention, and none opposed.

General Education

Chair of the committee Jenn Stewart informed attendees on a brief extension for course approvals for the new General Education program starting this fall. May 2nd is the new deadline in Curriculog. This was developed to prevent additional faculty work during the summer.

Questions can go to Jenn Stewart (jenn-stewart@utc.edu) until the end of the semester, or to Lauren Ingraham (lauren-ingraham@utc.edu).

Ad Hoc Faculty Well-Being and Work-Life Balance

Chair of the committee Dawn Ford reported on the work of this committee this year. Their charge was to develop recommendations to improve faculty well-being and work/life balance to be addressed by administration. They reviewed best practices and policies at other institutions, reviewed the Canvas discussion boards, and reached out to some campus committees.

The Committee developed a set of recommendations. The basic themes (*more details for each are provided in the Recommendations PDF listed on the Senate's website*) are:

- **Improve communication and recognition.** This includes improving communications to faculty and improve faculty recognition.
- **Improve work life for faculty.** This includes addressing faculty workload concerns, the summer work of 9-month faculty, and improving flexible work options. Clarify and adjust academic calendar and breaks, and address summer school teaching salaries.
- **Hiring, Evaluation, Promotion, and Retention Practices.** This includes ensuring equitable hiring practices of administrative positions and ensuring fair evaluation practices of teaching. Improve tenure and promotion practices and address hostile work environments.
- **Childcare, Parental Leave, and Sick Leave.** This includes making 12-week parental leave standard for all employees and creating a sick leave policy for 9-month employees. Develop and implement guaranteed, low-cost childcare options for instructors and students at all times of class sessions.

The Committee's next steps include incorporating input and presenting the recommendations to administration. Then they plan to follow up with the Senate next year on development, adoption, and implementation of plans, policies, and procedures for these recommendations.

Faculty Senate Updates

Faculty Senate President Jennifer Boyd announced this year's recipient of the Dr. Carolyn Thompson and Dr. Roger G. Brown Community Engagement award: Dr. Sarah Farnsley, an Associate Lecturer in BGE. Farnsley heads the NTT committee and serves the BGE department in many ways. Congratulations to Dr. Farnsley!

Boyd also recognized Tammy Garland's service to Faculty Senate the past three years, who will be rotating off the Senate Executive Committee.

The next Faculty Senate President is Donald Reising, and the next Faculty Senate President-Elect is Jack Zibluk. The official transition happens on July 1.

President Boyd gave an update on divisional elections for Faculty Senate. There is a need for representatives in CECS, CHEPS, and Associate Professor At-Large representatives. Contact Faculty Senate President Jennifer Boyd (jennifer-boyd@utc.edu) if you or someone you know would like to serve.

Everyone is encouraged to complete the survey for Faculty Senate committee participation. Right now the response rate is 39%, which is lower than at this time last year. That survey is available [here](#).

Boyd expressed appreciation to everyone who has served on the Senate this year—as Senators, Committee Chairs, and in serving on Committees. It is an important service to the university.

4. Administrative Reports

Chief of Staff David Steele

Steele mentioned the upcoming commencement ceremonies and said that faculty participation is essential. Because of construction in the Arena the ceremonies were split-up into several editions. Faculty are very much encouraged to attend these events and tickets are required. Faculty can RSVP with Jennifer Faires in the Provost's Office for tickets.

Steele reported on behalf of Chris Cunningham on the work of the Total Organizational Health Work Task Force. This work is done in conjunction with evaluating organizational health from a staff and faculty perspective. There will soon be information communicated to faculty on surveys already conducted. By early May a steering committee, led by Cunningham, will be convened to review the data and identify an initial set of targets. They would like to set up a basic dashboard that would convey this data to the university. In August, the Committee will convene a taskforce of faculty and campus influencers. The invitations to this committee will go out in late July or early August. Cunningham will update the Senate in the coming months.

5. Faculty Concerns

Computer Labs

A concern was raised about computer labs housed in academic buildings no longer having computers in them. IT Director Tony Parsley addressed this concern and said that it seems that computer labs are underused across campus. This is an opportunity to review computer use and to investigate what kinds of devices are utilized and how they are used, and possibly making shifts in this area. No changes to the current situation are imminently planned. They are also looking at increasing access to specialty programs and software for students both on and off-campus.

A concern about faculty ratings of administration was brought to Senate President Jennifer Boyd, who will pass it on to the Chair of Faculty Ratings of Administration committee, Bernadette DePrez.

Jack Zibluk thanked current Senate President Jennifer Boyd for her work with the Senate this year.

6. Announcements

Faculty are encouraged to attend commencement activities if they are able. Contact Jennifer Faires in the Provost's Office for tickets (jennifer-faires@utc.edu).

The revamp of the MyMocs portal is still in process. If faculty have suggestions for what they'd like to see in the main navigation areas of this portal they should complete the survey that is currently listed on the MyMocs main page. Questions about updates to MyMocsNet should be directed to Director of Enterprise Systems Jamie Walden (jamie-walden@utc.edu).

7. Adjournment

Beth Crawford motioned to adjourn at 5:10 pm, and Jack Zibluk seconded.

Senator Name	Role	4-20		Senator Name	Role	4-20
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	
Alycia Franklin	BUS NTT			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			Cecelia Wigal (CECS)	At Large	X
Josh Ozymy	Beh Sci T/TT			Jack Zibluk (CAS)	At Large	X
Stephen Mandravelis	FA T/TT	X		Courtney Crittenden (CAS)	At Large	X
Lee Harris	FA T/TT			Yingfeng Wang (CECS)	At Large	X
Sybil Baker	HUM T/TT	X		Laura Tyndall (CHEPS)	At Large	
Joseph Jordan	HUM T/TT			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			Jason Medeiros (CECS)	At Large	
Fernando Alda	MS T/TT			Jennifer Boyd (CAS)	Exec Comm	X
Stephanie Devries	MS T/TT			Donald Riesing (CECS)	Exec Comm	
Roger Nichols	MS T/TT			Tammy Garland (CAS)	Exec Comm	X
Han Park	MS T/TT			Marcus Mauldin (CAS)	Exec Comm	X
Dileep Dileepan	BUS T/TT			Jaclyn Michael (CAS)	Exec Comm	X