

Meeting Agenda
October 18, 2023 – Video Conference
<https://tennessee.zoom.us/j/8659743843>
3:00 pm (CST)/4:00 pm (EST)

UT Faculty Council Voting Members (Quorum, 5 voting members)

UTHSC Paul (PJ) Koltnow (Faculty Senate President) pkoltnow@uthsc.edu
Shelley White-Mean (Campus Representative) swhiteme@uthsc.edu

UTK Amber Roessner (Faculty Senate President) aroessne@utk.edu
Bob DuBois (Campus Representative) drbob@utk.edu

UTM Dan McDonough (Faculty Senate President) dmcdonou@utm.edu
Sean Walker (Campus Representative) swalke47@utm.edu

UTC Don Reising (Faculty Senate President) donald-reising@utc.edu
TBD (Campus Representative)

UT Southern Michael Cathey (Faculty Senate President) rcathey3@utsouthern.edu
Albert Killen (Campus Representative) akillen@utsouthern.edu

Faculty Appointee to Education, Research, and Service Committee (Ex-Officio voting)

UTM Sean Walker (Board of Trustees ERS Committee faculty appointee)

UT Faculty Council Ex- Officio Non-voting Members

UT Randy Boyd (President)
Bernie Savarese (Acting Vice President, Academic Affairs & Student Success)

Order of Business

1. Welcome and Introductions
2. President Boyd
3. Approve Minutes - Please see attached.
4. System Updates
 - a. Dr. Savarese
 - b. Dr. Etzkorn

UT Systemwide Topics/Questions for President Boyd

UTK asked the question about advocacy for a system-level clarification related to the Divisive Concepts legislation and a legal defense fund to be used in the event that the State Attorney General ever determines that he would not represent faculty or staff in a case related to this legislation.

Minutes

President Boyd

- BOT Update
 - Record enrollment across the UT System
 - Primarily from retention
 - Update on Public/Private partnership to address housing at UT Knoxville
 - Applications are up across the campuses
 - UT Promise is expanding
 - Student Debt
 - Around 50% of undergraduate students graduating have debt
 - Amount of debt for those with debt is trending down
- Provided answers to previously submitted questions
 - Question: Can UT establish a legal defense fund for faculty in case they are being sued based on the divisive concepts legislation?
 - Boyd: UT System is a state entity and can't create a fund to defend against any lawsuit from the State of TN.
 - Question: Divisive Concepts, and its ability to impact UT (or other higher education institutions) clarification was requested
 - Boyd: We need to acknowledge that the definition in TN is not the same as in other states. UT has worked hard and well with our legislature to structure the bill
 - Carve Outs:
 - Accreditation
 - Academic Freedom
 - Free Speech
 - No impact on the classroom
 - Additional Question: Is there an opportunity for UT faculty to work through the UT Foundation to raise monies towards a defense fund?
 - Boyd: I will need to check on this
- K-12 and the impact of current/upcoming legislation
 - Boyd: The State of TN is not defunding K-12; in fact, the opposite.
 - There has been a committee formed to look at if the monies received from the federal government is worth the "strings attached"... specifically a concern from some in the legislature on federal oversight/control for receiving those funds.
 - Boyd: One of the Grand Challenges for UT is to help improve K-12 education and UT is committed to that!
- Question: Status of the UTHSC resolution related to increased flexibility of the tenure clock
 - Discussion surrounding what was included in the resolution, what was already being covered by UT, what UFC has recommended, and appropriate next steps occurred.

Dr. Savarese deferred to Dr. Galicia

Dr. Galicia

- Academic Calendar Alignment update
 - 4 undergraduate campuses have representatives working to discuss the process of switching to a uniform calendar across UT
 - Discussion about the need for as much flexibility as possible
 - Dr. Galicia noted that this would mainly focus on start/end dates of the terms.

- Phase 2 (next AY) will have faculty representation (among other representation)
 - If a change is made, would not occur until Fall 26 or Fall 27.
- Department Head/Chair survey update
 - Focused on what resources/tools department heads/chairs need to be successful
- Student Experience Survey
 - Administered through October
 - Results will be shared
- Academic Program Updates/THEC Changes
 - Over 30 Academic Program changes/modifications/updates in the pipeline
 - Gave an update on those furthest in the pipeline
 - THEC changes
 - Increased flexibility for institutions around programs and modifications
 - Changes to the post approval/productivity monitoring process
 - Changes to Off-Campus site/centers
 - Question: If a department changes their name, does this go to THEC?
 - Dr. Galicia: only for notification, not approval

Dr. Savarese

- BOT Update
 - Discussion around the Huron Consulting Group including what they have done and what will be done in the coming months
- Update on changes to the Vol Access Collaborative
 - Changes are focused on improving the process
- UT Provosts and Dr. Savarese are in Nashville (10/19) for a meeting on THEC
- Government Relations is working with Dr. Savarese to look out how we can partner to improve the lottery scholarship

Dr. Walker

- Provided an update, as Faculty Representative to ERS, to the group.
 - Noted a focus on PPPR and explained next steps for continuing the discussion with the BOT.