

Meeting 124 Agenda
March 18, 2020; Videoconference
4 pm (ET) / 3 pm (CT)

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

- UTHSC Peg Hartig (Faculty Senate President) x
Martin Donaldson (Campus Representative) x
- UTK Misty Anderson (representing Faculty Senate) x
Bruce MacLennan (Campus Representative) x
- UTM Philip Smartt (Faculty Senate President) x
Chris Caldwell (Campus Representative) x
- UTC Jamie Harvey (Faculty Senate President) x
Beth Crawford (Campus Representative) x

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

- UTM Jeff Rogers (Board of Trustees ERS Committee faculty appointee)x

UT Faculty Council Ex-Officio Non-voting Members

- UT Randy Boyd (Interim President, UT) x
Linda C. Martin (Vice President, Academic Affairs & Student Success) x

Faculty Council Guests

- UT Jorge Pérez (Associate Vice President, AA&SS) x
UT Stacey Patterson (VP Research, Outreach & Economic Development)x

Call to Order Chris Caldwell, Chair

ORDER OF BUSINESS

1. Questions of, and update from, President Boyd (via zoom)

Randy Boyd began the meeting by reading a statement that he will be making. He thanked the faculty for all of their efforts to make this work. He was very encouraging about the ways we will be able to rebound after all of this. We will all pull together and make the university even better. State budget has been frozen and will be flat. Enjoyed the Town Hall meetings. Will do something similar every semester for each campus, though in a more spread out process.

Phillip brought up questions about Summer activities...governor's school, summer camps, etc. Drop dead dates to make decisions. What is the forward view? Randy stated that we will delay decisions as long as possible while following the CDC guidelines.

Jamie mentioned Faculty Q&A meetings tomorrow at UTC and asked if there were any updates

she needed to provide. Linda said she will send us the link to System FAQ site. They are working on things that affect faculty as well as students: course evaluations, tenure clocks, EDOs, etc. If other questions come up, we should send to Linda.

Bruce asked about Fall enrollment effects. Randy mentioned that every university in the same situation. We will fight to ensure losses don't happen. Let's find ways for the recruiting and admissions teams to help make this work. We have to continue to recruit and support students.

Peg mentioned that having taught online for many years, perhaps now is a good time to consider putting more Fall courses for online now and having them ready to offer.

Stacey Patterson provided a research report – Oak Ridge Institute proposal is being worked on right now. One land grant university in partnership with research laboratory will be granted. We are working on that proposal, which will be built to include lots of people (\$20 million). System team working hard to evaluation the innovation and collaboration grants. Think we are still on track to make announcements on April 6.

2. Approve previous minutes (Chris)

Minutes approved with corrections.

3. COVID-19

Linda reported on the system initiatives about the board policy for tenure clock delays. Last year, when we were working on board policy, we had two changes being discussed about being able to stop a pause of the tenure clock and move forward without penalty and come up for tenure as usual. The other discussion was about being able to request a delay. The language at the time was about a significant issue that might affect the tenure clock. We have a real situation now with the COVID 19 issue. The language we are currently reviewing is the previously worded language and would allow us to move forward with board policy. Faculty would be able to ask for an extension up to December 2020 related to Covid 19. We are trying to build the board policy to act in the best interest of faculty and their scholarly activity. If all are good with it, it will go forward for special meeting. Then they will develop language for Chancellors to use to reassure faculty.

Misty is sitting in for Gary and working on a special vote for the UTK faculty senate. She asked if language related to amnesty and sunseting might help to alleviate the current situation while keeping existing policies in place.

Linda also said that if specific things are adversely affecting faculty, please let her know and they will work through them. System is currently working through a number of items, such as student evaluations, and how they will be handled to not negatively affect faculty.

Misty mentioned information about sabbaticals that are being interrupted due to Covid 19. Linda responded that the campuses may address differently, but all will have to think about the sabbatical situations.

Chris Caldwell contacted faculty about the motion for the updated board policy. There were some questions about the terms "research and scholarly activity" because it wasn't broad enough.

Beth requested that service be added to the terms. Linda added service and teaching to the wording. Chris asked if the group wants to vote on our recommendation for this. Martin and Beth both recommended that the group vote on this language and recommend the updated language. Beth moved, Martin seconded. The motion carried with all in favor.

Jeff asked what we should do if we have a situation on how a class should be closed/suspended/ended before the end of the semester. Linda mentioned that Chancellors are working with Deans right now to figure this out. What do we do if a faculty member falls ill with Covid, etc. Having a policy could be useful going forward. Philip mentioned that many departments are only one person deep and if someone gets ill, it may be difficult to continue or replace them.

Misty mentioned that a lot of faculty are scrambling to get their classes online and lots of the communication has been general to the community and not specific to faculty. Linda mentioned that department heads are reaching out to faculty directly to ensure faculty are getting the information they need.

Peg mentioned that UTHSC has lots of experience and is getting lots of support for the changes. Martin mentioned that they are getting the support they need.

Jorge mentioned a Facebook group about higher education and the Corona virus that everyone can review. Peg mentioned that those and other resources can be very helpful. Misty clarified that we need specific information and aggregated information for faculty. Lots of things are happening in informal networks; can we create some formal information/communication to the faculty. For example, institutional messages about latitude in the midst of this, compassionate messages. Jorge mentioned the system corona website (has sent us all a link). Misty recommended adding a faculty section.

Chris mentioned that the UTM faculty are getting so much support and messages that it almost gets in the way.

4. Usual System Updates (Linda, Jorge, Stacey?)

Linda reported that the Covid 19 issues have been all day, every day. They are working to focus on the issues and ensure they are answering questions and facilitating the kind of discussions that need to happen. THEC has let us know that anything in the pipeline will continue to move forward. THEC is pausing on any new programs coming through due to Corona. There will be a Special Board meeting on March 27 – trying to pull all the information together. Trying to figure out alternative solutions for student programming and other activities and how we reach out to students, faculty, and staff – the well-being part of the situation.

5. Possible motion about the presidency?

The group decided that there was no need to move forward with a motion.

6. Other business

Martin brought up the issue of non-tenure track faculty at this time. There have been questions about what we can do to support these faculty. Current proposal is to codify extended contracts.

Some are supportive and some are not. Linda mentioned that the board is aware of these concerns and is looking at the issues related to non-tenure track faculty. Misty brought up that there are multiple issues, not just contracts and salary. Linda mentioned that the Board has charged the Chancellors with taking a deeper dive on the situation and gathering information - look at salaries and at loads. Peg mentioned that these issues are also on the UTHSC campus. What can we do to support the people teaching basic science versus those in clinical situations? It would be interesting to do some comparisons of clinical versus not clinical and the teaching load issues.

The meeting adjourned.