



Staff Senate

Minutes

Wednesday, September 23, 2026 | 3:00 PM | MUC 307

1. **Call to Order**
2. **Recognition of Attendance**
 - Senators reminded to scan in for attendance
3. **Approval of Agenda**
4. **Reports**
 - President Mike Licari
 - Enrollment update: Record-breaking year, up 1.4%
 1. Across the state: MTSU down 20 students; University of Memphis down 3.4%; Tennessee Tech up less than 1%; ETSU up less than 1%; UT-Chattanooga down over 2%; UT Knoxville up about 2%; TSU up 17% (recovering from steep decline); TCATs across Tennessee up 14% — main enrollment competition
 - Strategic Framework Steering Committee information available in weekly message
 - Carnegie Community Engaged Campus designation — self-assessment report available in weekly message
 - U.S. Department of Education letter received in August requesting responses on cost effectiveness and value of higher education; deadline is December
 - Darren Michael, Faculty Senate President
 - Goals for the year: transparency and ensuring faculty/staff needs are heard
 - Building relationship between Faculty Senate and Staff Senate
 - Discipline policies: Ad hoc committee reviewing five policies due to state legislation changes; some policies may overlap with staff
 - Open door policy — welcomes coffee meetings with faculty and staff
 - Sydney Miller, SGA Vice President
 - First meeting held September 9
 - Currently have 22 senators, 8 freshmen council members, 4 tribunal members
 - Appointed liaisons for various centers (Newton Center, Student Athlete, Community Belonging Center, Full Spectrum Learning)
 - Mudbowl is next upcoming event (Sunday, Sept. 27)
 - Welcomes guest speakers for student input/feedback
 - Staff Senate President
 - Salary letters and Oracle: Two discrepancies in nonexempt employee letters due to auto-generated rounding; all hourly employees received

correct increase (64 cents/hour or 60 cents/hour depending on workweek); next year's letters will include hourly rates only

- Mileage reimbursement: Employees may resubmit for difference using same account source; additional approval may be required if exceeding original budget
- Imputed income on pay stub: Required for IRS Code Section 79 compliance (group life insurance premium exceeding \$50,000)
- Bonus policy clarifications:
 1. Must complete program on or after May 1, 2026 to be eligible for degree completion bonus
 2. 90-day submission deadline extended to September 10
 3. Pre-approval submission to HR is for tracking, not final approval
 4. Spot bonuses are at division head discretion; contact division head with questions
- Staff Senate Vice President
 - Not present.
- Secretary
 - Form created for submitting events to be announced at Staff Senate meetings; link in agenda email. Please submit those in advance of meetings.
- Treasurer
 - No update; budget in good standing
- Communications Director
 - No report; send items to be distributed

5. Committee Reports

- Recognition and Appreciation Committee
 - Reached out to Zac with questions; working on some potential efforts
- University Policy Committee
 - Met and did introductions
 - No current recommended, revised, new, or rescinded policies posted
 - Contact Jordan Longan with policy questions or concerns
- Parking Citation Appeals Committee
 - First meeting scheduled for tomorrow
 - Appeals jumped from 6-7 to 17 overnight
 - Canned goods for parking fines will NOT be reinstated; process became too large and SOS handles food drives through local collaborations
- Leadership Academy Committee
 - Continuing new hire onboarding sessions with Staff Senate presence
 - Campus-wide supervision leadership training initiative on hold pending:
 1. Campus-wide survey for supervisors
 2. HR Training Coordinator hire
- Student Success Committee
 - September webinar spotlight: First Year Experience and Retention
 - Upcoming Webinars (October 21): Military and Veteran Affairs (Jasmin Linares), November 18: University Recreation (Lauren Michael-Smiley)
 - Working to get webinar videos to Zac to post on website

- Events and Programs Committee
 - Thanks to everyone who attended volleyball game
 - October and November event info coming soon

6. **Old Business**

- None

7. **New Business**

- Streamlined Surveys and Focus Groups (Amber Button)
 - Goal: Coordinate feedback-gathering efforts across committees
 - Work with HR, Institutional Effectiveness, and Institutional Research
 - Avoid duplicating efforts and survey fatigue
 - Committees should share any plans for surveys/focus groups by October 15
 - Institutional Research reinstating Survey Committee
- Strategic Framework (Zac Moore)
 - New strategic framework replacing strategic plan (ending 2027)
 - 3-year framework (not 5-7 years like traditional strategic plans)
 - Reviews every 18 months
 - Currently identifying "Where to Play" — 3-5 overarching focus areas
 1. Ideas brainstormed:
 - a. Military-affiliated students
 - b. Career readiness
 - c. Staff pathways/career trajectories
 - d. First-generation student success (40-60% of student population)
 - e. Fiscal sustainability and funding formula
 - f. Adult learners and graduate degree completers
 - g. Staff culture
 - h. AI-enabled operations and learning
 - i. Student health and wellbeing
 - j. Gen Ed as transfer pathway
 - k. Affordability
 - l. Compensation plan follow-up
 - m. Trade school/certification programs
 - n. Housing/infrastructure
- Textbook Submission Process
 - Concern raised about textbook submission process changing to department chairs and admins only
 - Clarification: Changes not implemented until Fall 2027; workflow form being developed by Dr. Nagel to streamline process

8. **Announcements**

- Homecoming next week — events every day; please participate
- Career Expo next week, Tuesday and Wednesday, 10:00 AM - 2:00 PM — rebranded to include jobs, internships, networking, and volunteer opportunities; please encourage student attendance

- Office of Dual Enrollment hiring Academic Advisor — posted on HR website; bachelor's degree required (no master's needed); serves K-12 students

9. Adjournment

- Meeting adjourned at 3:54 PM