

Discussion Questions for February 2-16 Faculty Senate Meeting with the President

SB1838/HB2581

- In the spirit of shared governance and open communication, faculty would appreciate clarification regarding SB1838/HB2581, which has been referred to the Senate Education Committee. Are you aware of this legislation, and could you share your perspective on its potential implications for Tennessee Tech and its faculty? Additionally, to support faculty planning and stability, could you clarify whether individuals who are currently under contract in tenure-track roles would continue in their designated appointments should the bill advance? For faculty reference: <https://www.capitol.tn.gov/Bills/114/Bill/SB1838.pdf>
- What can the University and faculty do to assist the University administration in defending tenure to the Senate Education Committee?
- Faculty who are in the process are concerned because they are already in the process, and the change would affect them. This will also affect morale, recruitment of quality faculty, and retention, particularly in colleges with faculty in high-demand disciplines such as nursing.

606 Funds

- What can be done to improve reimbursements for students receiving 606 funds? We have a PhD GA in our department who traveled at the end of November 2025, submitted all receipts on December 4, 2025, and is STILL waiting for a reimbursement “pending” in Talon for \$990.61. These expenses have now been on the PhD GAs' credit card for 4 months and exceed the total earned monthly stipend. How can we possibly encourage student travel or student/faculty research when we cannot reimburse our students in a timely manner? This is how we lose good student researchers.
- When are department-level people getting a raise/reclass? Especially now that they have INCREASED workload due to Talon? When will there be an RIF for HR/Payroll/Business Office?

Raises and Extra Pay

- If a faculty has more than 1 compensation needed in a month, Talon will NOT let users data enter data for more than one at a time. You must wait until the first one is 100% approved before you can enter the second one. What could take 10 minutes

will now take more than 2 weeks. Talon said this is how the system is set up. How is this better?

Faculty Course Reimbursement

- What are the policies for tuition reimbursement for faculty? There is a faculty member in our department who paid for courses out of her own pocket and has not yet been reimbursed for those taken last semester, even though all paperwork was submitted immediately. How can we demand timeliness from others while not being timely in reimbursement?

Talon Concerns/Questions

- Several bookkeepers/staff don't have access to accounts they manage, but then have access to other accounts that have nothing to do with them. The Business Office doesn't seem to care and just tells bookkeepers to "deal with it."
- You can't split expenses between grants and a regular amount. How is this better? Now you must assign to the department and then reallocate funds, which is EXTRA WORK. More room for error and things to be overlooked.
- Where are checks and balances with the transition to Talon?
- Why was the transition to bi-weekly pay not transparent? Communication was lacking, and many were blindsided by that first paycheck. There seems to be a grievous lack of communication related to the Talon implementation.

GA Contracts and Pay

- GA's in our department are reporting a pay shortage, and it was reported that over 50 Graduate Assistants received NO pay at all in January.
- A PhD GA is contracted to receive \$1,000/month yet only received \$857.14 in January. This is an unacceptable way to treat our graduate assistants and this must be rectified immediately. Direct comment: Also, does no one care that the university is going against GA contracts by changing the amount of pay they get per month?
- The video from the payroll manager says to just change GA working dates so pay will be closer to old amount/correct amount. We cannot say that the contract ends April 19 and then ask them to continue working until May. That's a potential lawsuit. How is this putting our students first? This can cause significant issues for international students.

- GA's signed a contract with TN Tech for a monthly stipend. When will this be fixed? TN Tech didn't explain clearly that their pay would be reduced by several hundred dollars per month.
- GA's that were here in Fall 25 and confirmed into Spring 2026 didn't get paid. Payroll is telling them to wait until next period for pay instead of cutting a payroll advance. Our GA's don't even make living wages as it is, and we expect them to wait even longer to go without pay?
- We have a reported GA in our department who was paid during the first half of January but didn't receive pay for work completed during the second half of January. How is this going to be fixed? GAs continue to be given the runaround without resolve.
- Someone needs to look into processes for implementing Talon specific to C&S and GA pay. Both are not getting paid what their contracts spell out. And, current solutions are spotty at best with little or no official communication. For example, GA's are getting shorted their monthly pay that will be "made up" at the beginning of the next fiscal year at which point they may have graduated. If a contract says you will receive X amount monthly, payroll should adhere to that!

Search Committees

- Over the last 20 years, I've served on multiple search committees across campus and have noticed variations in how things are done. For example, some deans and chairs change the job descriptions, some want to be involved in every detail (including chairing search committees), and some trust the search committee to do what they're charged to do. Those in the first two categories say they got approval from Kevin Veder or that he knows what's happening. Can everyone on campus get clarification on how hiring practices are supposed to work? If the search committee cannot be in charge of hiring, then why waste people's time?