

Welcome from UTK Faculty Senate - Board of Trustees Lunch on October 23, 2021

Louis J. Gross, Chancellor's Professor of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology and Mathematics,
President, UTK Faculty Senate

Thanks for the opportunity to welcome you and thank you for all you do to guide the mission of this University System. UT has been my home for all 43 years of my academic career and it has been a real joy to watch and participate in the tremendous transformations of this campus over that time. We all have much to be proud of regarding the vast educational opportunities we have offered many generations of Tennesseans, the advances due to our faculty in scholarship and knowledge about how our world came to be as it is and how it functions, and the outreach and services we have provided to our State and nation. The remarkable commitment of our alumni to this University and the support from many constituencies across the State have enabled us to continue to expand the opportunities we offer. We have successfully competed to attract talented and diverse students from across our State, leading to the highest enrollment ever at UTK this year. We have instituted a wide array of scholarship, honors and student success programs that have enhanced our attractiveness to students and no doubt contributed to our increased national rankings. My faculty and staff colleagues have dealt with the challenging conditions over the past two years with flexibility, generosity and kindness. I am continually impressed with the professionalism of our faculty, their devotion to the principles of shared governance and the successful ongoing collaborations with administrators at every level to both advance our mission and to consider how we might transition our programs to serve the changing needs of our nation.

There are many challenges to higher education in the US today. I have confidence that the collaborative approaches we are taking to guide our University will allow UT to thrive. Be assured that I and the other leaders of the various campus Faculty Senates appreciate your devotion to UT and will continue our efforts to provide outstanding educational experiences for our students as well enhancing the knowledge that our nation depends upon to maintain its leadership in so many areas of human endeavor.