UTSA Faculty Senate

SENATE HIGHLIGHTS

UTSA Faculty Senate Newsletter

2022-2023 OFFICERS AND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

***Rene Zenteno**: Chair*
***Chad Mahood**: Past Faculty Senate Chair*
***Chris Packham**: Secretary of the General Faculty*
***Victor Villarreal**: Graduate Council*
***Valerie Sponsel**: ADTS Representative*
***Curtis Brewer**: Parlimentarian*
***Mary McNaughton-Cassil**: Secretary*
***Kerry Sinanan**: Academic Freedom, Evaluation & Merit (AFEM)*
***Kirsten Gardner**: Budget Committee*
***Sonya Aleman**: HOP Committee*
***Alexis Godet**: Research Committee*
***Andrew Lloyd**: Curriculum Committee*

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FOR MORE DETAIL, CONTACT YOUR SENATOR

The purpose of the newsletter is to communicate updates from the Faculty Senate and to encourage faculty participation in the spirit of shared governance and the success of UTSA students, faculty, and staff.

Consent Agenda - APPROVED

- Approval of minutes – April 6, 2023
- Elect Vice Chair/Chair-Elect – Alexis Godet
- Graduate Council items – ·approved at their May 2, 2023 meeting
  - M.A. in Chicana/x Studies
  - Ph.D. in Applied Community Research
  - Dual Degree in Cyber Security (UTSA/ACOB and Tec de Monterrey)
  - Graduate Council Executive Committee election results:
    - Chair – Victor Villarreal
    - Secretary – Zachary Tonzetich
    - Parliamentarian – Elaine Sanders
    - Council member-at-large – William Land
    - Student Representative – Roberto Silva Villatoro

CHAIR'S REPORT: *René Zenteno*

Dr. Zenteno shared an update from the University Leadership Council that included:

- a Legislative update, discussed by Carlos Martinez,
- a discussion of the Strategic Plan Refresh by Dr. Heather Shipley. A joint listening session on April 11th was highlighted as a great example of shared governance.
  - Notes were sent on April 30, 2023. Please read and share with your department.

Chair's Report *(continued)*

- The Faculty Senate will be hosting an in-person retreat on **August 16, 2023,** in the JPL Assembly Room, from 12:00 pm to 4:00 pm to establish priorities for the upcoming year.
- Dr. Zenteno summarized the issues that the Faculty Senate addressed during the last academic year. More details are available in his *report*. Topics included:
  - Faculty Equity & Compensation
  - Maintaining R1 Status/Greater Research Administrative Support & Funding.
    - NRUF support will be used for other higher education programs in the State of Texas, but a similar program for institutions like UTSA will be created, called the Core Research Support.
  - Improving transparency on budget, IRM, funding colleges and hiring.
  - Shared governance.
  - Effective use of meetings.
  - Advocating for faculty.
- Other important issues that the Faculty Senate discussed included:
  - Approval of various graduate and undergraduate degree programs.
  - HOP review process.
  - Review of the Faculty Senate Bylaws (to be addressed in the fall).
  - Faculty Code of Conduct.
  - Implications of Chat GPT.

Leadership Update: Academic Affairs Update
Heather Shipley, Sr. Vice Provost for Academic Affairs and Dean of University College

- Dr. Shipley reviewed some accomplishments from the past academic year, including:
  - The selection of the MS in Environmental Science as an Example of *Excelencia,* and the Masters of Social Work being recognized as a finalist.
  - The inaugural Faculty Appreciation Week (Fall) and Celebrate Teaching Week (Spring) which included events to recognize faculty and their important role in our students' success.
  - The transition from Blackboard to Canvas Learning Management System.
- Dr. Shipley reviewed UTSA's shared governance model noting the decision-making process, starting with the UT System Board of Regents and ending with the approved UTSA Strategic Plan. The various shared-governance bodies within UTSA and their roles in the university's decision-making processes were emphasized and the many levels of review were described.
- Dr. Shipley also discussed the important role that faculty members play in educational policy formulation. For example, faculty members serve on committees within their departments and create processes and practices through their by-laws and the Faculty Senate who have the authority to consider matters such as academic curriculum, degree programs, policy and the actions the Senate undertakes on a monthly basis.
- Further highlights from the year included:
  - Fiscal Transparency and how the new IRM model is used to manage funds.
  - The Provost met with the FS Executive Committee and Academic College Deans to share information. The Deans shared how they use IRM and their thoughts on the model. As a result, the Deans will include college IRM information in their fall college meetings. In addition, the Provost will include IRM on the agenda for Spring College Senator meetings with the Deans.
  - The VPBA Budget meetings will continue with the Faculty Senate and Department Chairs.

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Leadership Update *(continued)*

- *Faculty Compensation*
  - UTSA's Strategic Compensation Strategy invests in our exceptional faculty. The university will continue to use the strategies to ensure that it remains competitive with our Carnegie R1 peers.
  - Following the Provost's charge, a committee is conducting peer investigations of compensation practices for P&T, CPE, Chairs, and FTTs. The committee includes faculty senators, chairs, deans, and faculty-at-large. Once findings are available, they will be shared with the Senate. The Provost will also share these findings with the Deans and formulate a strategy to address them.
  - The Faculty Senate memo regarding compensation for P&T has been received. The Provost will share the memo with the Deans as part of a larger discussion surrounding compensation practices.
- Government Relations
  - Through Chairs Janis Bush and René Zenteno, the Department Chairs and Faculty Senate have been involved in discussions with President Eighmy regarding the legislative session.
  - Updates have been provided during University Leadership Council meetings and other forms of communication.
  - The Faculty Senate have been provided updates through Dr. Zenteno and Carlos Martinez with the goal of providing quality updates and feedback as the legislative bills have progressed through the various stages in the Texas House and Senate.
- *Strategic Plan Refresh* – UT System requests review of the Strategic Plan every 5 years. UTSA took the opportunity to refresh the plan and ensure it continues to be in alignment with the university's goals.
  - In November, a Town Hall was held to initiate the process.
  - Faculty, staff, and students were able to provide feedback through college conversations.
  - On April 11, a joint Faculty Senate/Department Chair's session was conducted to gather additional input regarding the Strategic Plan.
  - The Committee is drafting the report based on all of the input gathered from the feedback and listening sessions and further opportunities for input will be provided.

- Facilities & Real Estate, Construction and Planning
  - Veronica Salazar, Senior Vice President for Business Affairs, attended a Faculty Senate meeting to address the concerns raised by the Faculty Senate regarding classroom conditions, furniture, and building conditions. She developed a memo summarizing the concerns (also available on the Facilities website).
- FTT Task Force Update – Last month, Valerie Sponsel provided the Faculty Senate with an update on the FTT Task Force.
  - HOP 2.02 and HOP 2.50 were updated with input from FTT faculty senators and the ADTS FTT Committee. The updated policies:
    - Align with the revised UT System Regents' Rules;
    - Clarify various titles and ranks;
    - State that senior lecturer positions can be full-time or part-time; and
    - Add a college review committee to the review process
  - FTT promotion workshops were conducted to aid faculty during the review process. The workshops will continue each fall to support FTT faculty undergoing the promotion process;

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Leadership Update *(continued)*

- Currently assessing the following efforts:
  - Formal mentoring program for FTT faculty
  - Office space for FTT faculty
  - Development leave program for FTT faculty related to teaching and other pedagogical themes in accordance with our HOP policy and the Regents' Rules.

In HOP 2.50, why are certain categories "no-limit", especially in the area of senior lecturer? How is the university monitoring the implementation of this policy?

- *This has been noted. The issue will be reviewed by the committee. Dr. Shipley suggests that it may be due to the recent addition of part-time positions in that series. The next step is discussion within the shared governance process and recommendation to update the HOP policy. Many colleges are transitioning their faculty into full-time positions in this series, which have minimum requirements. Nevertheless, the senior lecturer series will be reevaluated.*

Should every review committee have at least one FTT member for better representation?

- *According to the guidelines, at least one FTT member should be on those committees. Additional FTT members can participate, but the guidelines require at least one member to be an FTT member. The department and college by-laws may dictate additional requirements, but they do emphasize the inclusion of FTTs in the process.*

As departments are requested to write clear merit and promotion guidelines, are they also requested to write clear guidelines for FTT colleagues?

- *Yes, evaluation guidelines are requested for promotion and tenure, FTT promotion and annual review.*

The 2023-2024 Promotion and Tenure Guidelines now include a new level of review, the College Review Committee. This brings the total number of levels of independent review to five, in the merit and annual process. What is the timeline required to ensure that this process is conducted and have the departments also been informed about the timeline?

- *Yes, these guidelines have been communicated. Please note that FTT promotions occur in the Spring, providing sufficient time to send out all the necessary information regarding the process and timelines. Eligible faculty will receive information to schedule peer observations, and the first email will be sent around May 15, with a reminder following shortly after the fall semester begins.*

University Leadership Report: Legislative Update

Carlos Martinez, Senior Vice President for Institutional Strategic Planning, Compliance Risk Management and Office Operations, Chief of Staff

- As of the day of the meeting, there were 25 days left in the regular legislative session. The process is a lengthy one, with members working long hours.
- To illustrate how a bill is presented on the floor of the House, Mr. Martinez provided an example of another bill.
  - Due to the nature of the specific bill, House rules were broken, causing the Speaker to clear the House so the debate could resume.
  - This particular bill was pulled on a point of order, and he used this example to explain that some points of order can be fatal to a bill while others are procedural and allow the bill to return to the House floor for continued debate and review.
  - At this stage, the bill was returned to the committee and will return to the floor for further discussion the following day. Martinez emphasized that time is a challenge, as critical deadlines are approaching.
  - Any issue that delays or stops the process for one bill also delays all other bills from being read, having hearings, etc., until the issue is resolved.
- Bills of interest to the Faculty Senate are SB 16 - CRT, SB 17 - DEI, and SB 18 - tenure, which have not yet been heard. The next deadline for the second reading is May 23, and there are three readings in total for each bill.
- According to Martinez, a House sponsor will arrive next week, and the House Committee on Higher Education will hear the sponsor's detailed account of the bill, followed by hours of public testimony.
  - Representatives from AAUP and UT Austin are expected to provide public testimony.
  - As a reminder, if a member of the Faculty Senate plans to attend, they should clarify that they are attending in a personal capacity and not as a representative of the University.
  - Staff from UTSA are also expected to attend the hearing to monitor the session.
  - The committee may leave the bills pending in committee for a day or two to work out any issues with the language. If the bill is voted out of committee, the following are the next steps:
    - The bills will go to a calendaring committee, of which there are two main calendars:
      - Major State Calendar — moves very quickly and includes issues of statewide priority for the legislature.
      - General State Calendar — contains everything else except local matters (SB 17 & SB 18 would not appear on a local calendar).
      - For both calendars, the bills go in order of appearance. The bills remain on these calendars until the House debates, votes, amends, passes, or fails to pass. There is a new calendar every day, and it takes time for a bill to get on the calendar.
    - The budget bill (HB1) is in the conference committee, having already passed both the House and Senate. As is standard, the committee is holding the final decisions on the budget bill as leverage while all the other bills are reviewed and debated. Final actions on the budget bill are not expected until May 27 or May 28, because of other ongoing activities.
    - Conversations are ongoing surrounding SB 17 (DEI) and SB 18 (tenure), the details are not yet finalized, and the language is being edited.

Q. A.

Could you provide the voting deadline for bills to move forward?

- *For Senate bills that are currently in the House, such as SB 17 and SB 18, the second House vote must occur by May 23. However, the date may be changed if other legislation is moving quickly.*

Is it possible that these bills could be reintroduced in the future if they don't pass in this session?

- *Yes, if they are not resolved in a manner that satisfies the legislature, it is possible that these bills could reappear. The campus-carry bill, for example, was filed in 1995 and only passed in 2017. Some bills are filed and re-filed numerous times.*

Secretary of the General Faculty
Chris Packham, Chair

- Dr. Packham and Dr. Zenteno attended the final UT System Faculty Advisory Council meeting of the year in Austin on April 27-28, 2023.
  - The main topic discussed was the legislative session. The Governmental Relations Officer from UT System provided an overview of the situation.
  - The FAC discussed how to respond if the bills come up again in a few years and agreed on the importance of educating the community about tenure, academic freedom and DEI.
  - Dr. Packham suggested that this could be a topic for the next Faculty Senate session.
  - Additionally, he provided campus updates during the FAC meeting, and it appears that shared governance at UTSA is in a better position than at other institutions.

University Curriculum Committee
Andy Lloyd, Chair

- Dr. Lloyd reported that the University Curriculum Committee had reviewed the proposal for a Minor in Mexican American Studies.
  - The committee unanimously approved the proposal.
- Representatives from the department, Dr. Alejandra Elenes and Dr. Lilliana Saldaña, were present to answer any questions the Senate might have regarding the proposal.
  - With no questions, a motion to approve the proposal was made and seconded.
  - The proposal was approved without any objections.

Academic Freedom, Evaluation and Merit Committee
Kerry Sinanan, *Chair*

- The Faculty Senate chair opened a discussion regarding the merits of publishing a resolution at this time which would become a public document.
  - There was discussion about whether publishing the resolution would be considered using state resources to campaign for or against a bill which goes against our compliance training.
  - While no specific bill is mentioned in the resolution, it may point to bills being debated during the current legislative session.
  - Other points of discussion were:
    - The resolution only affirms existing facts and current status, which is allowed.
    - Stating the impact of a bill/policy on employment, if asked is allowed, but advocating for a bill is not.
    - The intended audience for the resolution was not clear. If it's for UTSA leadership, they already understand the importance of tenure and academic freedom.
  - The resolution may not have a significant impact in Austin and could potentially add to the existing distractions. So delaying action until the legislative session has concluded was suggested, in order to assess whether the tenure bill will pass, before revisiting the resolution.
- There was a discussion about this matter during the last meeting but due to time constraints there was little time to thoroughly discuss.
- Senators agreed that the topic needs further discussion regarding the timing of the resolution and the current intended audience.
- Dr. Chad Mahood noted that a motion had been proposed by Dr. Sinanan to vote on the resolution and a second was needed to continue the discussion or consider another motion. The motion received a second.
- Discussion continued on the timing of the bill and whether to publish the statement after the legislative session closed, which could help alleviate some of the concerns.
- Another idea discussed was to add an introductory paragraph that explicitly explains tenure, to address some of the concerns expressed by the Senators. Dr. Sinanan mentioned that this was considered, but ultimately omitted because it would have directly addressed SB 18.

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Academic Freedom, Evaluation and Merit Committee *(continued)*

- Comments were made that the statement should be released as originally written and envisioned in the timeline, as it was not meant to sway the opinions of a larger audience, but rather to speak to UTSA colleagues and champion the work of the faculty rather than remaining silent.
- It was pointed out that the resolution asks President Eighmy to "continue supporting and facilitating the protections of tenure as integral to academic freedom."
  - There was concern that the resolution extended beyond stating facts and that the Faculty Senate would be weighing in on a bill under consideration in the legislature.
  - It was noted that individual Senators are capable of commenting on legislation in a personal capacity.
- A motion was made and seconded to table the Resolution.
- The motion to table the Resolution did not pass.
- As a result, and due to time constraints, the original motion to vote on the Resolution was conducted via an electronic vote with the understanding that if passed, the Resolution would be immediately posted to the Faculty Senate website at once.
- Via electronic vote, the Faculty Senate approved the Resolution.

2022-2023 FACULTY SENATE MEMBERS

Alvarez College of Business
- ***Dennis Lopez***, *Dept. of Accounting*
- ***David Beheshti***, *Dept. of Economics*
- ***Zijun Wang***, *Dept. of Finance*
- ***Maho Sonmez***, *Fixed-term Tenure Track Representative*
- ***Charles Liu***, *Dept. of Information Systems & Cyber Security*
- ***Huy Le***, *Dept. of Management*
- ***Victor DeOliveria***, *Dept. of Management Science and Statistics*
- ***Ashwin Malshe***, *Dept. of Marketing*

College of Education and Human Development
- ***Sidury Christiansen***, *Dept. of Bicultural-Bilingual Studies*
- ***Devon Romero***, *Dept. of Counseling*
- ***Curtis Brewer***, *Dept. of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies*
- ***Michael Karcher***, *Dept. of Educational Psychology*
- ***Rica Ramirez***, *Dept. of Interdisciplinary Learning and Teaching*
- ***Sonya Aleman***, *Dept. of Race, Ethnicity, Gender and Sexuality Studies*
- ***Zaid Haddad***, *Fixed Term Track Representative*

Klesse College of Engineering and Integrated Design
- ***John Alexander***, *School of Architecture and Planning*
- ***Sue Ann Pemberton***, *School of Architecture and Planning*
- ***Gabriela Romero Uribe***, *Dept. of Biomedical Engineering and Chemical Engineering*
- ***Drew Johnson***, *School of Civil and Environmental Engineering and Construction Management*
- ***Jeffrey Prevost***, *Dept. of Electrical and Computer Engineering*
- ***August (Gus) Allo***, *Fixed-Term Track Representative*
- ***Kiran Bhaganagar***, *Dept. of Mechanical Engineering*

College of Liberal and Fine Arts
- ***Marcus Hamilton***, *Dept. of Anthropology*
- ***Humberto Saenz***, *School of Art*
- ***Kim Kline***, *Dept. of Communication*
- ***Kerry Sinanan***, *Dept. of English*
- ***Mary Dixson***, *Fixed-term Tenure Track Representative*
- ***Kristen Gardner***, *Dept. of History*
- ***Whitney Chappell***, *Dept. of Modern Languages and Literatures*
- ***S. Andrew Lloyd***, *School of Music*
- ***Xunwu Chen***, *Dept. of Philosophy and Classics*
- ***Neil Debbage***, *Dept. of Political Science and Geography*

College of Sciences
- ***James Chambers***, *Dept. of Molecular Microbiology and Immunology*
- ***Kirk Schanze***, *Dept. of Chemistry*
- ***John Quarles***, *Dept. of Computer Science*
- ***Brian Laub***, *Dept. of Integrative Biology*
- ***Alexis Godet***, *Dept. of Earth and Planetary Sciences*
- ***Hector Aguilar***, *Fixed-term Tenure Track Representative*
- ***Lorenzo Brancaleon***, *Dept. of Physics and Astronomy*
- ***George Perry***, *Dept. of Neuroscience, Developmental and Regenerative Biology*
- ***Dmitry Gokhan***, *Dept. of Mathematics*

College for Health, Community and Policy
- ***Marie Tillyer***, *Dept. of Criminology & Criminal Justice*
- ***Ying Huang***, *Dept. of Demography*
- ***David Weber***, *Fixed-term Tenure Track Representative*
- ***Tianou Zhang***, *Dept. of Kinesiology*
- ***Mary McNaughton-Cassill***, *Dept. of Psychology*
- ***Branco Ponomariov***, *Dept. of Public Administration*
- ***Zenong Yin***, *Dept. of Public Health*
- ***Candace Christensen***, *Dept. of Social Work*
- ***Ginny Garcia***, *Dept. of Sociology*

University College
- ***Lauren Riojas-Fitzpatrick***, *Fixed-term Tenure Track Representative*

Ex-Officio Members
- ***Rene Zenteno***, *Chair, Faculty Senate*
- ***Chris Packham***, *Secretary of the General Faculty*
- ***Victor Villarreal***, *Chair, Graduate Council*
- ***Arturo Schultz***, *Department Chair Council Representative*
- ***Valerie Sponsel***, *ADTS Representative*
- ***Chad Mahood***, *Past Faculty Senate Chair*
- ***Justin Marmolejo***, *Staff Senate Representative*