

# SENATE HIGHLIGHTS

UTSA Faculty Senate Newsletter



## 2023-2024 OFFICERS AND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

**Rene Zenteno:** Chair

**Alexis Godet:** Vice Chair-Chair Elect

**Chris Packham:** Secretary of the General Faculty

**Victor Villarreal:** Graduate Council

**Valerie Sponsel:** ADTS Representative

**Mike Baumann:** Parliamentarian

**Kirsten Gardner:** Secretary

**Ginny Garcia-Alexander:** Academic Freedom, Evaluation & Merit (AFEM)

**Mary Dixon:** Budget Committee

**Sonya Aleman:** HOP Committee

**George Perry:** Research Committee

**Andrew Lloyd:** Curriculum Committee



## Consent Agenda - APPROVED

- Approval of Minutes – September 7, 2023 Faculty Senate Meeting

The Minutes of the Faculty Senate were approved.

## CHAIR'S REPORT: René Zenteno

- The Executive Committee is updating the bylaws and a draft version expected by the end of the month.
  - The objective is to have a final version by January, which will be subject to a vote by the Faculty Senate.
  - The changes are minor and include the removal of the office of the Secretary of the General Faculty, with those responsibilities transferred to the Secretary of the Faculty Senate.
- Dr. Zenteno, Dr. Packham, Dr. Perry, Dr. Godet, and Dr. Browning had a productive meeting to discuss research priorities.
  - Dr. Browning will attend a future Faculty Senate meeting to address these priorities.

**FOR FULL FACULTY SENATE MINUTES & REPORT, [CLICK HERE](#)**

**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.*



# ROADRUNNERS

## **Leadership Update: Proposed Athletics Fee Student Vote Overview** **Lisa Campos Ed.D., Vice President for Intercollegiate Athletics,** **LT Robinson, Senior Vice Provost for Student Affairs and Dean of Students**

- The positive impact of the partnership between student affairs and athletics was highlighted, emphasizing the sense of belonging it provides to students and the national recognition it brings to UTSA, benefiting the university as a whole.
- The fee proposal was based on feedback gathered from leadership and student organizational groups, aiming to improve areas of athletics.
  - The suggested increase of \$1.50 per credit hour (up to 12 hours per semester), which was considered appropriate to ask of the students.
- Efforts have been made to visit classes and student organizations to ensure students are well-informed regarding the proposed fee increase before the October 25-26 vote. Building the brand identity can assist in recruiting the best faculty, staff and students.
  - For example, UTSA had a 5.5 billion audience last year through newspaper articles, nationally televised athletics games, etc. which translates into over \$200 million in ad equivalency, adding value to degrees and experiences of students and alumni.
- Also, Athletics is engaged in the Classroom to Career initiative, with students volunteering and conducting research in nutrition and kinesiology. They also have students majoring in a wide variety of programs, including data science.
- The department plans to use some of the proposed fee increase to support the Spirit of San Antonio (SOSA) band and other student benefits.
- The proposed fee increase is \$1.50 per credit hour (capped at 12 SCH). For seniors graduating in Spring 2024, it would be an \$18.00 investment, while for freshmen, it would increase the cost over eight semesters to approximately \$300.

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**Could you clarify the calculations behind the proposed fee increase? Is it calculated based on 15 SCH?**

- The proposed athletics fee increase is capped at 12 SCH. Currently, students pay \$20 per credit hour, capped at 12 SCH or \$240 per year. If approved, the fee would be \$258 for the first year and gradually increase by \$1.50 over five years, reaching \$27.50 per credit hour (capped at 12 SCH) by 2027-2028. (see [PowerPoint](#) with the proposed athletics fee).

**Is there an extra charge for football?**

- There is no additional fee for football. Students are provided complimentary access to all sporting events at UTSA.

**Can you provide any information about the conversations that have occurred with the students? How was this data collected to support the chosen course of action?**

- Focus groups and meetings were conducted with various student organizations such as the Student Government Association (SGA), President's Student Advisory Council (PSAC), Rowdy Crew, and others. Written feedback was collected from these interactions. Some of the feedback received was specifically about the proposed fee. The discussions with other student organizations focused on identifying areas of strength within the athletics department and exploring opportunities for improvement.

**It was mentioned that students have expressed a desire for more giveaways and more fun during sporting events. Is there data to support that this is a consensus among students?**

- The information was gathered from the groups and organizations they met with last spring. Examples include Greek organizations wanting to enhance the entertainment value of tailgates and VOICES wanting to incorporate community service events with athletic events. Dr. Campos offered to share the written notes with the Faculty Senate.



**Could you provide more details about the comment regarding the \$300 investment over a student's undergraduate career and the ROI?**

- There are intangible benefits of athletics, such as exposure to a large audience and brand recognition, which contribute to return on investment and the value of a student's degree. Tangible benefits include increased enrollments and national recognition. For example, UT-RGV's consideration of adding football to its program may have been influenced by UTSA's success in alumni and donor engagement after adding football to its athletic program.

**How was it decided that raising student fees was the most suitable approach to address the financial requirements of this project? Have all alternative options been taken into consideration?**

- Athletics receives funding from ticket sales and fundraising and they will continue to work towards increasing those areas. The athletics fee that began in 2004 previously accounted for 60% of the operating budget. The athletics fee was increased in 2011 but has not been increased since then and now only accounts for 35%. To manage the budget, they rely on sponsorships, donations, and media rights, but it is common for student fees to be part of the operating budget for Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS) schools in the Group of 5 conferences.

**Are there any specific requests or actions that the Athletics Department would like the Faculty Senate to consider?**

- The purpose of the visit to the Faculty Senate was to provide information, but also to dispel any misconceptions that may have existed.



## Leadership Update: Academic Affairs Update Heather Shipley, Ph. D., *Interim Provost & Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs*

- UTSA has been recertified by Excelencia in Education with the Seal of Excelencia, recognizing its commitment to accelerating Latino student success. UTSA joins a group of nine institutions that were recertified and earned the Seal this year.
  - Additionally, the Graduate School's Keep Running With Us program was named a 2023 Examples of Excelencia finalist.
- An update on the program to address market and salary compression for tenured and tenure-track faculty was provided. The [presentation](#) included project details and how some colleges are addressing this issue for their TT/T faculty.
- Data was shared with the Faculty Senate to demonstrate the effect of market retention and compression. Dr. Shipley is also aware of the Faculty Senate's priority on faculty compensation and the previous memo recommending changes to promotion and tenure increments.
  - She is reviewing the data provided by the ad hoc committee convened by former Provost Espy which included deans, department chairs and representatives from the Faculty Senate to review promotion and tenure, CPE, department chair and FTT's compensation.
- The university's National Impact Travel Award program for faculty and staff was discussed. The program now offers full reimbursement for FTT participants, without requiring matching funds from the college or support unit.
  - More information can be found on the [Academic Affairs](#) website.
- She provided an update to the Faculty Senate on [SB 17](#) and emphasized the importance of referring to the email sent to the UTSA community on August 28, 2023. The university is following its core values and seeking guidance from The University of Texas System during this process.
- She discussed the Implementation Timeline (included in her [presentation](#)). The PAIR team will share preliminary recommendations on October 18th, which will be reviewed by the Executive Leadership Review Committee and the Advisory Group. The President will make determinations and action plans by January 1, 2024, to ensure the university's compliance with the new law. The campus-wide stakeholder working group is reviewing collected, screened and submitted programs, activities and initiatives that are subject to SB17 to look at the next steps in this process.
  - [SB 17](#) will not affect UTSA's status as a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI). HSI designation is defined by federal law (the Higher Education Opportunity Act, Title V, 2008), as [SB 17](#) is a state law it has no impact on the designation.

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## Leadership Update (continued)

- Engaging students in understanding SB 17 was discussed, with LT Robinson leading a review process similar to PAIR. The communication with students will include:
  - Roadshows/information sessions with SGA and other sponsored student organizations and registered student organizations.
  - Community gatherings and town halls.
  - Discussions with the *Paisano* editorial team.
  - Strategic social media.
  - Meetings with the Staff Senate and Student Affairs Leadership team to share and provide training on talking points.
- The following [website](#) shared with the Faculty Senate includes an FAQ guidance from The University of Texas System on SB 17.
  - Additional questions should be directed to the PAIR team at [PAIRTeam@utsa.edu](mailto:PAIRTeam@utsa.edu).
- Dr. Shipley provided an update on [SB 18](#), highlighting the updated UT System Regents' Rules and the formation of a committee to review HOP changes or clarifications. The committee will consist of 3 senators, 2 chairs, one dean, AVP Kelly Nash, and will be staffed by Katie Meersman in Academic Affairs.
- The expanded Charge to the Committee was reviewed. It now includes faculty rights and responsibilities to pursue teaching and research within their field of study. The committee will review the changes to the Regents' Rule, how that affects our HOP policies, but to also look at how that affects faculty members abilities to pursue teaching, research and scholarship in their respective field of study.
  - Recommendations for revising UTSA's existing policies and procedures and creating new policies will be provided to clarify and codify the pursuit of knowledge and communicate these changes to the faculty.
- The annual Season of Thanks reception for Academic Affairs faculty and staff will be held on November 6, 2023, from 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at the H-E-B Student Union Ballroom on the Main Campus.



### Where can the report or data for the Market Retention Compression Adjustment analyses be found? Is it possible to get a copy of the "dashboard analysis of the R1 and R2 salary medians by CIP code"?

- That specific information related to market retention compression adjustment analysis cannot be provided due to personal information concerns. It is suggested to reach out to the specific Dean for questions on the process and to check IPEDS or CUPA for R1 and R2 salary medians by CIP code.*

### Could you provide clarification on the language used in SB 17 and SB 18 regarding faculty members teaching specific subjects, public speaking, or conducting research?

- Those items to be covered in the ongoing process. UTSA leadership is also awaiting guidance from the University of Texas System. This committee will work to define the broad language in SB 18.*

### Has a definition of "moral turpitude" been provided or will it be provided to the faculty?

- The goal of this process is to provide a better understanding of SB 18 and UTSA leadership is awaiting guidance from UT System. However, moral turpitude does have a legal definition and there are set things that go with that, but we are waiting to hear from UT System.*



### Are there any support systems for faculty who have concerns about teaching or discussing research related to DEI?

- Faculty Success will develop the necessary materials to provide assistance to faculty members.*



## **Leadership Update: American Association of University Professors Update Dr. Brian Evans, Interim President, Texas Conference of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP), Dr. Karma Chavez, UT Austin AAUP Chapter Officer and UT Austin Provost SB 17 Implementation Committee member**

- Dr. Evans, a faculty member at the University of Texas at Austin, introduced himself as a private citizen and a representative of the Texas AAUP.
- The American Association of University Professors (AAUP) was founded in 1915 to establish principles of academic freedom, tenure, and shared governance. UTSA is a member of AAUP and adheres to the principles of academic freedom and tenure. Tenure is a crucial safeguard for academic freedom, and shared governance involves shared decision-making and due process to protect academic freedom.
- SB 18 consists of three parts:
  - It defines tenure as continuous employment.
  - It defines 10 reasons for dismissing a tenured faculty member through regular policy and procedures.
  - It also defines the process for summary or immediate dismissal of a faculty member.
- He mentioned many of the reasons for dismissal are vague, however the bill allows for institutions to develop their own policies for regular dismissal. The bill also introduces post-tenure review, which can result in dismissal.
  - He emphasized the need for university committees to review the reasons for dismissal and provide clarity and definitions to address the vagueness of the legislation, as the current list of violations does not consider intent, severity, or frequency.
- The process for dismissing a faculty member was discussed, highlighting the optional nature of the summary of dismissal and the minimal protections provided by SB 18.
  - He discussed the process and emphasized the importance of defining intent, severity, and frequency in any dismissal policy to ensure due process.
- Texas Tech was noted as having a [model policy](#) on how to implement SB 18.
  - A link to a recent Texas AAUP [presentation](#) about SB 18 was also shared.
- Dr. Karma Chavez, speaking as a private citizen, acknowledged the partnership between the NAACP Legal Defense Fund and the AAUP organization during the legislative session.
- Dr. Chavez commented on SB 17, focusing on its relevance to UTSA.

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- Dr. Chavez reviewed the demographics at UTSA, acknowledging that she was excluding certain groups from her data points.
- She highlighted that over half of UTSA faculty are not on a tenure track.
- UTSA has a student body that is approximately 60% Hispanic and 20% white.
- She pointed out that, based on the data, UTSA's faculty are hired due to their excellent qualifications, but an expansive body of research in education and organizational development suggest there are biases which may be prevalent in the hiring process. She stated the two most noteworthy are: 1) affinity bias, which is a tendency to prefer individuals who are similar to or appear to share professional qualities, motivations, backgrounds and experiences with our own; and 2) similarity bias, which refers to a strong preference to individuals who exhibit a cultural, social or experiential background that are similar to ourselves.
- Dr. Chavez indicated that UTSA's hiring practices of our tenure-track faculty by race and gender more closely resemble our student body, which is a goal something to strive for; however, the limitations of SB 17 are going to make that goal more difficult with its insistence on color-blindness and gender neutrality hiring. Dr. Chavez mentioned that in the guidance from UT System, and in the law, there is the use of the words "preferential" and "special." A "special" benefit refers to the term condition opportunity or privilege that is unavailable or substantially better than what is available or provided to others. It furthers states that opportunities open to all do not become a special benefit. A "preferential" consideration refers to treating someone more favorably than others, which is a straightforward definition, but it is embedded throughout the guidance.
- As SB 17 is implemented, Dr. Chavez believes that institutions should consider how to go about challenging the meaning of these two terms in light of the factual demographics at each institution, especially when faculty will be serving on hiring committees.
- Dr. Evans provided the following emails for anyone who has any questions:
  - [aaup.texas@gmail.com](mailto:aaup.texas@gmail.com)
  - [karmachavez@gmail.com](mailto:karmachavez@gmail.com)
  - [aingram@naacpldf.org](mailto:aingram@naacpldf.org)
- He also provided the following links:
  - AAUP [Statement on Collegiality](#)
  - AAUP [Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities](#)
- UTSA has some degrees of freedom to establish policies and procedures within its own HOP, despite some ambiguity with the law. However, guidance from the University of Texas System may be needed before taking any action.



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### How will the law be incorporated into UTSA's HOP policies?

- *Carlos Martinez, UTSA Chief of Staff, confirmed that The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board will submit the law to the Texas Administrative Code for review and comments. Once adopted, it will serve as guidance for the UT System to amend the Regents' Rules, which will then be adopted by institutions for changes to their own HOP policies and procedures.*

### Where can faculty find training that they can use to educate themselves in order to identify and address the biases mentioned earlier?

- *Dr. Chavez mentioned that starting January 1st, we are unable to outsource training. However, seeking literature and possibly LinkedIn resources can provide available training options.*

### Have the other UT System institutions been open to providing further explanation regarding the terms "intent, severity, and frequency"?

- *Dr. Evans is not aware of the actions of other UT System institutions at this time. However, he has raised the issue with his own Senate as a private individual and is aware that policies are being developed at UT Austin.*

### Regarding AAUP, one of the member benefits is the inclusion of liability insurance. Could more details be provided?

- *Dr. Evans purchased liability insurance for general concern. AAUP membership offers an option for liability insurance. Texas Faculty Association and Texas Associate of College Teachers include professional liability insurance in their memberships. If joining AAUP, professional liability insurance needs to be purchased separately.*

### As a member of the SB 18 committee representing the Faculty Senate, there is concern about the summary dismissal process and the autonomy of each institution to decide whether to include it in their HOP. What is the extent of freedom each institution has in making this decision and what could be the best resource to address this concern?

- *Dr. Packham will provide clarification on managing SB 17 and SB 18 during his Secretary of General Faculty Report. There is a desire for consistency in the broad framework across the UT System, but the implementation details should be determined by each campus.*

## Secretary of the General Faculty Chris Packham, Chair

- Dr. Packham reported on the UT System FAC meeting, providing background information on UT System FAC and their purpose. His presentation can be found on the Faculty Senate's SharePoint site.
- One of the documents, written in 2016, discusses shared governance and may be useful in discussions on summary dismissal about professionalism and collegiality.
- He provided the Faculty Senate with the Summary of Legislation Impacting Higher Education from the 88th Legislature- Regular Session for review.
- He reviewed the process of changes and identified the need for "rule making" in several areas.
  - Rulemaking is initiated by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, expected to take place in January 2024.
  - THECB distributes the rules to the Governing Boards; UT System will engage in discussions with each campus and provide input on the Rules.
  - The rules are incorporated into the Texas Administrative Code (TAC); Regents' Rules are revised; and eventually, UTSA HOP policies will require updating.
- There are ongoing conversations between THECB and UT System, but we must await rules from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.



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- He provided the [UT System BOR Adopted Changes for Tenure](#) document, which was discussed during the Board of Regents' meeting on August 23-24, 2023.
- He provided guidance for SB 17 and a draft model for SB 18, requesting committee members to review these documents on the Faculty Senate SharePoint site.
- The UT System FAC voted on a Professionalism and Collegiality statement, which is a clause of SB 18. The draft version of the statement was provided in his presentation, while the final version is still being coded.
- Dr. Packham serves on the Executive Committee as founder and Chair of the Research Committee at SysFAC. The SysFAC Research Committee met with the new Associate Vice Chancellor for Research to discuss connecting UT System Schools to conduct research symposia. They also discussed improving post-doc and graduate student support and developing a request for a UTS-bloc for publication charges.

## Budget Committee

### Mary Dixon, Chair

- Dr. Dixon, Dr. Zenteno, and the Budget Committee met with Sheri Hardison, the Senior Associate Vice President for Financial Affairs and CFO, to review Faculty Senate priorities and discuss the faculty compensation memo mentioned by Dr. Shipley.
- The discussion focused on the need for administrative research support and travel within departments. There was also discussion about the effects of the BSC models, both positive and negative, since their implementation.
  - Additionally, they briefly discussed the increase in administrative costs over the years, the justification for these costs, and how they are benchmarked.
- They discussed the importance of faculty salaries, including FTT salaries, market retention, and compression to attract faculty to UTSA.
- Dr. Dixon will be serving on the IRM Committee to gain a better understanding of the model, funding allocation, and faculty input within departments/colleges.



## 2023-2024 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
- **Glenn Dietrich**, 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
- **Jeffrey Prevost**, Dept. of Electrical and Computer Engineering
- **August (Gus) Allo**, Fixed-Term Track Representative
- **Alex Mejia**, Department of Biomedical and Chemical Engineering
- **Harry Millwater**, Dept. of Mechanical Engineering
- **Jie Huang**, School of Civil and Environmental Engineering and Construction Management

### College of Liberal and Fine Arts

- **Marcus Hamilton**, Dept. of Anthropology
- **Humberto Saenz**, School of Art
- **Kim Kline**, Dept. of Communication
- **Kimberly Garza**, Dept. of English
- **Mary Dixon**, Fixed-term Tenure Track Representative
- **Kristen Gardner**, Dept. of History
- **S. Andrew Lloyd**, School of Music
- **Xunwu Chen**, Dept. of Philosophy and Classics
- **Neil Debbage**, Dept. of Political Science and Geography
- **Valeria Meiller**, Dept. of Modern Languages
- **Neil Debbage**, Dept. of Political Science and Geography

### College of Sciences

- **Kirk Schanze**, Dept. of Chemistry
- **John Quarles**, Dept. of Computer Science
- **Alexis Godet**, Dept. of Earth and Planetary Sciences
- **Hector Aguilar**, Fixed-term Tenure Track Representative
- **Edwin Barea-Rodriguez**, Dept. of Integrative Biology
- **George Perry**, Dept. of Neuroscience, Developmental and Regenerative Biology
- **Dmitry Gokhman**, Dept. of Mathematics
- **Stephen Saville**, Dept. of Molecular, Microbiology and Immunology
- **Cristian Botez**, Dept. of Physics and Astronomy

### College for Health, Community and Policy

- **Marie Tillyer**, Dept. of Criminology & Criminal Justice
- **David Weber**, Fixed-term Tenure Track Representative
- **Branco Ponomariov**, Dept. of Public Administration
- **Ginny Garcia-Alexander**, Dept. of Sociology & Demography
- **Jimi Francis**, Dept. of Kinesiology
- **Jelena Todić**, Dept. of Social Work
- **Mike Baumann**, Dept. of Psychology
- **Jusung Lee**, Dept. of Public Health

### University College

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

### Ex-Officio Members

- **Rene Zenteno**, Chair, Faculty Senate
- **Alexis Godet**, Vice Chair
- **Chris Packham**, Secretary of the General Faculty
- **Victor Villarreal**, Chair, Graduate Council
- **Mark Bayer**, Department Chair Council Representative
- **Valerie Sponset**, ADTS Representative
- **Justin Marmolejo**, Staff Senate Representative