

# 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

**Corey Sparks:** Graduate Council

**Valerie Sponsel:** ADTS  
Representative

**Curtis Brewer:** Parliamentarian

**Mary McNaughton-Cassil:**  
Secretary

**Felicia Castro-Villarreal:**  
Academic Freedom, Evaluation &  
Merit (AFEM)

**Kirsten Gardner:** Budget  
Committee

**Sonya Aleman:** HOP Committee

**Alexis Godet:** Research Committee

**Andrew Lloyd:** Curriculum  
Committee

## Consent Agenda

- Approval of Minutes – September 8, 2022 Faculty Senate Meeting
- Approval of of PhD in Computer Engineering degree program

**ALL ITEMS APPROVED**

## CHAIR'S REPORT: Rene Zenteno

- The Chair attended a University Leadership Council meeting where President Eighthmy discussed potential policy changes regarding promotion and tenure, academic freedom and critical race theory that may be coming out of Austin. It seems that there will be no governmental action on these items until after the November elections.
- The Chair reminded the Senators of the high level of engagement surrounding the Statement on Academic Freedom last spring and asked that they remain engaged in monitoring the progress of these issues that pertain to faculty.

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SENATE  
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*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.*



## Leadership Report: **Kimberly Espy, Provost** **Heather Shipley, Senior Vice Provost of Academic Affairs** **Jaclyn Shaw, Interim Vice President, Research, Economic Development and Knowledge Enterprise**

- **Hispanic Heritage Month:**
  - The HHM events will culminate with a virtual livestreamed event with U.S. Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona. The discussion is open to the UTSA community as well as the public and will cover pertinent topics impacting the country's higher education landscape.
- **Annual *Excelencia* in Education celebration in Washington DC**
  - Event included Seal recipients as well as 800 plus HSIs
  - The M.S. in Environmental Science program was selected out of over 200 applications to be awarded a 2022 Example of *Excelencia* recognizing excellence in graduate education. Janis Bush represented the program at the event. The Masters of Social Work was also a finalist. UTSA was the only institution to have two finalists.
  - UTSA received the prestigious Seal of *Excelencia* in 2020. The Seal certifies the university's commitment to Latino student success. *Excelencia* in Education is an organization promoting Latino student success in higher education.
  - *Excelencia* data was distributed. Of note, the level of faculty who identify as Hispanic/Latino is 3x higher at Seal-recognized institutions than at all institutions (17% compared to 6%). UTSA is at 17% but continues efforts to diversify faculty.
- Inaugural **Faculty Appreciation Week** held with various events honoring our outstanding faculty. Special thanks to the Faculty Success team for coordinating all the events throughout the week. Special thanks to Athletics who donated tickets for giveaways to faculty to enjoy the upcoming football game.
- Summarized great work happening in **Academic Innovation**. One of chief missions in Academic Affairs is to support faculty. Academic Innovation is a resource for faculty to support and provide opportunities for professional development. Visit the [AI website](#) for the various opportunities available. If you have new ideas, please share them.
- Faculty Senate asked the provost for information on **merit based compensation** for this year.
  - While the provost did not have a definitive answer, she provided some context and expressed her understanding about faculty members concerns.
  - Looking back on last year, UTSA invested in faculty with the largest percentage in the UT System.
    - \$3.7 million invested in faculty compensation
    - Developed a minimum pay scale for FTT's and promotions for FTT's = ~ \$2 million
    - Started new program around market retention and compression adjustments; over 97 faculty received adjustments and increases to their salaries. = ~ \$3.6 million
    - Over \$17 million invested in compensation for our faculty and staff.
  - The provost explained that university funds increase through new monies obtained through tuition and fees increases and the state. We are in the second year of the legislative biennium, so there are no new monies from the state and there was no tuition increase this year.
  - The provost conveyed that UTSA senior leadership is aware of the rising costs affecting everyone and remains committed faculty and staff and is looking for ways to help.
  - **Promotion and tenure increases** = 42 faculty received either \$5K for promotion to associate professor and \$7K for promotion to full professor last year. The provost suggested the Senate conduct a compensation study of other UT System and peer institutions to help guide the university through their findings.
  - Continue the program around **market retention and compression**: Effective Sept. 1, 82 faculty received adjustments. A total of 179 faculty from this year and last, received either a market retention or compression salary increase.

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### **Leadership Report (continued):**

***Kimberly Espy, Provost***

***Heather Shipley, Senior Vice Provost of Academic Affairs***

***Jaclyn Shaw, Interim Vice President, Research, Economic Development and Knowledge Enterprise***

- Faculty Senate asked about NRUF and how the process can be more transparent.
  - Dr. Espy explained the Texas Educational Code outlines the process for NRUF and what the monies can be used for:
    - Faculty
    - Faculty Startup
    - Doctoral Students Stipend
    - Undergraduate Research
- The provost reminded the Senate that two years ago, Graduate Council submitted priorities that the top priority was graduate student stipends and the second priority was faculty salaries. Also have guidance from the 2018-2019 Graduate Student Task Force that included faculty from across campus. The task force submitted priorities that we have been implemented over the past few years.
- Working with deans, \$1 million was allocated towards new graduate student stipends and \$800K towards improving processes for doctoral appointments. The university intends to grow that amount as these funds are to allocated to priorities.
- Regarding hiring proposals, all departments submitted requests for NRUF, in addition to regular faculty line requests. Those were prioritized through the same process as in previous cycles and searches were approved. Process: chairs/school directors and deans submitted their priorities for review by Academic Affairs.
- NRUF funding is anticipated for Sept. 2023, so by the time the appointments begin, we anticipate having the funds. In the interim, institutional reserves will be used.
- Faculty requested more guidance on promotion and tenure process, while full P&T guidelines are being determined. The provost explained that UT System Regents' Rules and Regulations call for each institution to have provost's guidelines for the overall process. They are very general guidelines and may not fit every discipline at UTSA. Through Faculty Success, a system of support has been created by which colleges and units interact with early career faculty.
- Dr. Heather Shipley commented that the colleges are developing P&T guidelines for T/TT faculty, FTT promotion guidelines and Faculty Annual Reviews. Some colleges have completed their processes, some are in the developmental stage, others are at the college committees. The committees are comprised of Faculty Senators and FTT faculty and leadership from the college. It is anticipated that all the guidelines should be submitted by December, which will be followed by discussions in the spring so everything is in place for the next academic year.
- In the meantime, Faculty Success has workshops on P&T. In addition, associate deans have been meeting with faculty, especially early career faculty, guiding them through the required mentoring plans. A mid-career faculty mentoring program was started last spring. There are also other mentoring programs, including partnering with VPR on faculty development.
- Once the guidelines are in place, the colleges will schedule sessions to explain the guidelines adopted.
- Jaclyn Shaw, Interim Vice President for Research, Economic Development and Knowledge Enterprise explained the issue with the state audit that resulted in not successfully receiving the NRUF funding for Fall 2022.
- She explained that the report is typically issued in February or March. If an institution is eligible at that point based on information reported, it triggers an audit by the State Auditors office. UTSA's audit did not start until June 2022 because we were still going through the review of the graduate faculty and graduate program for NRUF. Our programs successfully passed the audit, with the response that our programs were similar to AAU institutions. Because the process took longer than expected, the report was not issued until May, so the State Audit began in June which was later than usual.

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**Leadership Report (continued):****Kimberly Espy, Provost****Heather Shipley, Senior Vice Provost of Academic Affairs****Jaclyn Shaw, Interim Vice President, Research, Economic Development and Knowledge Enterprise**

- In June, the State Auditors submitted questions, which were addressed by Grants and Contracts financial representatives, VPBA financial representatives and Development representatives on restricted items that were gifts. We met all of the optional criteria, but did not pass the audit on the restricted research expenditures for the first year of the audit. For FY2020, we reported \$56 million, but the auditors a portion of the Dell gift that they would not recognize for restricted research expenditure, therefore it brought the expenditures to \$45 million. In FY2021, the State Auditors did reduce part of the Dell gift, but we were successful in meeting the criteria for that year.
- Jaclyn mentioned that the Dell gift is considered research expenditures and we were able to apply that to the Carnegie R1 classification, but we learned the the State auditors and the Coordinating Board use a different accounting standards than we use on our daily business for NRUF. We use Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) and the State Auditor's office and THECB uses Standards of Accounting Method (SAM) for Restricted Research Expenditures. The Coordinating Board uses this method for NRUF. The audit showed us everything the auditors found and it was all fixable so we have confidence we will pass the next audit.
- Currently finalizing our restricted research expenditures and will submit that to the Coordinating Board in Oct./Nov. We have already been audited for FY2021.
- Our research expenditures is growing significantly every year, 2022 total \$141 million up from \$140 million in 2021.
- The President is waiting for confirmation from THECB on whether or not we will need to submit a graduate faculty roster or graduate programs for the next cycle. This is a yes/no question and since we already passed that criteria, we should not have to repeat the work, but we await formal confirmation. We will have to do the financial audit again, but we are prepared for that. We've already met the criteria for membership in Phi Kappa Phi (50% of our class was in the top 25% of their high school class for Fall 2021 and we reported 54% for 2022).



**What is the logic with having the division between graduate faculty and graduate faculty scholars given that we don't have to do the graduate review process again for NRUF requirements?**

- *Dr. Espy clarified that R1 and NRUF are different entities. R1 is a categorization from the Carnegie Foundation and administered by American Council of Education (ACE); they pull data every 3 years. We should be in good shape for renewal. NRUF is a fund created by the Texas Legislature; applications are sent to and reviewed by the Coordinating Board. This question could best be answered by having Graduate Dean, Ambika Mathur is a better resource to answer these questions going forward.*

**With regard to the two sources of funding for merit, are any other sources being pursued?**

- *Regarding the sources of funding, 1) the state and 2) tuition and fees increases generally are used for merit. The other source of funding to the institution is gifts. The Regents' Rule does allow for using a portion of endowment to be used towards salary, typically not base salary, but it is not typically used for faculty merit. The other source is restricted research—that is a source that has a purpose which is why we use E&G funding for merit.*

**Is there a way for us to inform ourselves of how often in the past 10-15 years we have received merit increases?**

- *Dr. Espy said she would pull that data for the Senate. When merit was given last year, there was a five-year historical study that was included.*

**When did we realize that there were different recording systems and moving forward how will we adapt to having two systems going simultaneously and what is the cost of doing that?**

- *Jaclyn answered that the interpretation of the accounting methods was one of the issues for the smaller deductions. Even though there are a lot of nuances in accounting standards used for NRUF, it is an anomaly so there are no separate systems being created. It is a cost to the university in people-time for this one audit that will be done next year. NRUF is a one-time eligibility. Once you have satisfied the requirements, you have NRUF.*
- *Dr. Espy reiterated Carnegie classification is renewable and this is our counting year. Also, there is another index that Carnegie is considering that focuses on social mobility. UTSA does very well in this area of excellence through access (programs like Bold Promise). This could provide an opportunity for UTSA not just to lead, but to tell the story of how excellence can be defined in this way.*



## Secretary of the General Faculty Report: Chris Packham, Chair

- Dr. Packham attended the UT System FAC meeting on Oct 6 & 7, with Dr. Chad Mahood.
  - All campuses (health and academic) report on current issues.
  - The outcomes of the FS Senate retreat (maintaining R1, research and compensation) resonated with a lot of the members.
  - Some institutions are conducting faculty compensation studies, especially comparing to aspirant universities, to report back to their provosts and presidents. He suggested that UTSA Faculty Senate consider a similar study.
  - The population growth in Texas was discussed at the FAC meeting in relation to the need to address the modality in which classes are delivered.
- Archie Holmes, UT System associate vice chancellor addressed the FAC meeting on the following topics.
  - All campuses are concerned about salaries
  - A key thing the Chancellor wants to focus on this year is faculty mental health. Dr. Packham said Mary McNaughton-Cassill would be asked to pull some data and make suggestions to take back to the System FAC for future discussion
  - It is imperative to increase diversity in UT System faculty
  - Tenure and CRT were discussed at length, but no activity is expected at this time.
  - Legislatures are touting that Texas now has as many R1s as California, but improved funding is needed once the institutions have achieved.
- Regarding research infrastructure, a lot of campuses across the UT System have outpaced their research infrastructure. The FS Research Committee updates could be used to further the discussions with the FAC.
- Dr. Mahood recommended to the senators to review the email sent from Dr. Zenteno on the COVID legacy and impact it has had on faculty and share with their chairs and deans to ask for clarity for faculty with regard to annual reviews, workload and P&T. Dr. Zenteno indicated he has shared the document with Drs. Espy & Shipley but will follow up to see how the impact statement will be used in faculty evaluations.
- The next 'Board of Regents' meeting which will take place on November 16-17, 2022.



### How was the COVID checklist was used last year and how will they be used this year?

*Dr. Zenteno is going to take the question to Drs. Espy & Shipley for feedback.*



## Budget Committee Report: Kirsten Gardner, Chair

- Dr. Gardner thanked the Research Committee for clarify on NRUF questions presented.
- The committee has also asked questions about the IRM model and how the discourse can be changed to how the IRM model can be used. What are some positive ways the departments have improved by using the IRM model? How are faculty supposed to use it? Changing the discourse from the formula to how it should be used.
- The committee is keeping an eye on faculty compensation.
- Dr. Gardner attended the Texas Council of Faculty Senators meeting. She mentioned a reminder that faculty senators can tend to be activists and that when doing so with the community or legislators, you should remove your "faculty hat". Much of what is happening in Austin is due to confusion about tenure. Any chance to talk to your community or legislators, it can lead to really effective discourse. Please be mindful when you do so that you are not representing the university. If you email, use your personal email, not your UTSA email.

## Research Committee Report: Alexis Godet, Chair

- The Research Committee met in September and helped develop the NRUF questions asked of the provost and Jaclyn Shaw for discussion today.
- The goal for this semester is to try to help Jaclyn and her team to improve research systems by reviewing other institutions, especially UTSA's aspirant institutions.

## New Business

- Dr. Zenteno raised an items that resulted from the Faculty Senate retreat, the review of the current Faculty Senate mission statement. It was the consensus that the definition should be reviewed and that it was too lengthy.
- A proactive group of Senators drafted a new definition that was included in the document sent to all Senators from Dr. Zenteno prior to the meeting.
- The Senators issued a motion and a second to discuss modification to the mission statement followed, after no discussion, by the chair confirming the Senate would conduct an electronic vote to adopt a simplified mission statement . The vote would be sent to voting members and closed no later than Monday, Oct. 17, 2022.
  - **Current mission statement:** The Faculty Senate exists to give voice to all faculty through collaboration with administration to achieve shared governance in order to advance the mission of UTSA. This is accomplished through collaboration with UTSA Administration, Student Government, Staff Senate, the UT System, and other representative bodies on campus.
  - **Proposed mission statement:** Faculty Senate is a representative body that cultivates shared governance to advance UTSA's mission.



## 2022-2023 FACULTY SENATE MEMBERS

### Alvarez College of Business

- **Dennis Lopez**, Dept. of Accounting
- **Don Lien**, 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
- **Rick Gretz**, 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
- **Felicia Castro-Villareal**, 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 Dixon**, 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
- **Richard LeBaron**, 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 Ponomarev**, 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
- **Corey Sparks**, Chair, Graduate Council
- **Arturo Schultz**, Department Chair Council Representative
- **Valerie Sponzel**, ADTS Representative
- **Chad Mahood**, Past Faculty Senate Chair
- **Justin Marmolejo**, Staff Senate Representative