

**THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT SAN ANTONIO**

**DOCUMENTS AND PROCEEDINGS OF THE GENERAL FACULTY**

**SUMMARY MINUTES OF THE  
FACULTY SENATE MEETING  
Of January 19, 2023**

The regular monthly meeting of the Faculty Senate for the 2022-2023 academic year was held January 19, 2023 at 3:30 p.m. via Zoom (online meeting) with Dr. René Zenteno, Chair of the Faculty Senate, presiding.

I. Call to order and taking of attendance.

Present: René Zenteno, Chris Packham, Curtis Brewer, Mary McNaughton-Cassill, Sonya Aleman, Kirsten Gardner, Alex Godet, Andrew Lloyd, Valerie Sponsel, Chad Mahood, John Alexander, August (Gus) Allo, David Beheshti, Lorenzo Brancaleon, James Chambers, Whitney Chappell, Candace Christensen, Sidury Christiansen, Neil Debbage, Victor DeOliveira, Mary Dixson, Ginny Garcia, Dmitry Gokhman, Zaid Haddad, Marcus Hamilton, Michael Karcher, Drew Johnson, Kim Kline, Huy Le, Charles Liu, Dennis Lopez, Ashwin Malshe, Justin Marmolejo, George Perry, Branco Ponomariov, Jeff Prevost, John Quarles, Rica Ramirez, Lauren Riojas Fitzpatrick, Devon Romero, Gabriela Romero Uribe, Humberto Saenz, Kirk Schanze, Arturo Schultz, Kerry Sinanan, Maho Sonmez, Marie Tillyer, Zijun Wang, David Weber, Zenong Yin

Absent: Hector Aguilar, Kiran Bhaganagar, Ying Huang, Brian Laub, Sue Ann Pemberton, Victor Villarreal and Tianou Zhang

Guests: Kimberly Andrews Espy, Heather Shipley, Ambika Mathur, Jianwei Niu, Veronica Salazar, Paul Goodman, Liz Rockstroh, Corrina Green, Josh Gerken, Melissa Vito, Marcela Ramirez, Jonathan Gutierrez, Dustin Barrows, Debra Del Toro, Ximena Barbagelatta Grau, Angela Griffith, Yvette Milo and Debbie Howard Rappaport

Total members present: 50    Total members absent: 7

II. Consent Agenda

- Approval of Minutes – December 1, 2022 Faculty Senate Meeting
- Approval of the following proposals which were approved at the December Graduate Council meeting:
  - M.A. in Multidisciplinary Studies
  - M.S. in Multidisciplinary Studies
- The Minutes and the Graduate proposals were approved.

### III. Reports

#### **Sr. Vice President for Business Affairs Update** (Facilities & Real Estate, Construction and Planning [RECaP] Presentation) – Veronica Salazar, Chief Financial Officer and Senior Vice President for Business Affairs

Dr. Zenteno thanked Veronica and her team for attending the Faculty Senate meeting to address the concerns brought forth from the Faculty Senate regarding facilities and classroom upgrades.

- Ms. Salazar introduced her team to the Faculty Senate (Corrina Green, Assoc. VP for Real Estate, Construction and Planning Office, Josh Gerken, Sr. Asst. VP for Space Management and Space Planning, Paul Goodman, Associate VP for Facilities, who has served UTSA for 22 years as but will be retiring as of January 20, 2023.
- Ms. Salazar thanked the Faculty Senate for providing their comments/feedback regarding concerns on classrooms, facilities, etc. Her team is reviewing the document and will address those concerns and provide a response as soon as their team is able to do so.
- Ms. Salazar reviewed the areas Facilities Services covers for the University:
  - Building Maintenance & Operations
  - Custodial Services
  - Energy & Utility Management
  - Event & Moving Services
  - Grounds Maintenance
  - Vehicle Maintenance
- Facilities Preventive Maintenance
  - There is a small crew that manages preventive maintenance which completes tasks before they become larger problems.
  - Multi-trade crew of electricians, mechanics, plumbers, etc.
- Ms. Salazar addressed the following concerns brought forth from the Faculty Senate including:
  - Air quality in the buildings. She addressed it in terms of the broader pandemic operations the university has implemented, which are still in effect. She further mentioned the other services the university provides which includes testing for our students, vaccine clinics, and referred to the email that was distributed on January 11, 2023 from her, President Eighmy and Provost Espy for additional information and all of the services that are being provided to the university.
  - She stated the university is following the CDC recommendations regarding air quality, which happened early on in the pandemic and include:
    - minimum 4 air changes per hour
    - regular maintenance of filtration systems
  - Portable White Boards – are available upon request. Faculty may request using the [IService Desk](#) form which is the preferred method for submitting any work requests. Work requests are prioritized and addressed through this site. There is also an email address [facilitieservicecenter@utsa.edu](mailto:facilitieservicecenter@utsa.edu) In emergency situations, please call phone number (210) 458-4262. Also

exploring use of QR codes to facilitate routine work requests to make it easy to report items that need attention.

- Audio/Visual – requests should be directed to Academic Technologies
- Deferred Maintenance Program at UTSA
  - Our core buildings are 50 years old and we have been good stewards of them, but they need attention. Many are due for replacement. The State does not provide allocation for deferred maintenance at the levels we need.
  - Not uncommon to UTSA or other universities in Texas, the United States or across the world. Managing deferred maintenance has become focus of many CFO's at universities, especially as funding for new facilities has decreased.
  - UTSA has recently reported to UT System a deferred maintenance backlog of \$92.5M comprised of \$64.7M E&G (academic facilities only) and \$27.8M non-E&G (\$79.2M at the Main Campus, \$12.M at the Downtown Campus and \$.0.8M Southwest Campus which is new). This includes, roof repairs, light systems that need to be upgraded, ADA compliance, items mentioned by the Faculty Senate, etc.
- Facilities has a deferred maintenance process which is itemized by category, building, type, system, and the prioritized based on safety requirements, usage of space, can we extend life of equipment or does it need to be replaced. The crews are familiar with our campus. We have faced scenarios where the part no longer exists in the market and the team has to bring in a back-up system and the replace with something new. We also look at the budget and how much can be allocated to deferred maintenance. Ms Salazar stated the university has around \$3M in the budget to allocated towards deferred maintenance.
- Ms. Salazar mentioned that she has working with Finance and UT System to increase the amount of funding to address aging facilities. She stated she was able to secure \$5M a year through financing mechanism – LERR—we compete for that money. Unfortunately, it's not enough to address all of the needs we have at this time.
- Ms. Salazar stated she is committed to ensuring that we use our space efficiently and have a sustainable way to continue to meet our needs for the institution. As a priority during this legislative session, she, along with President Eighmy and Provost Espy have submitted a Tuition Revenue Bond (TRB) request in the amount of \$155M to the legislature for deferred maintenance. In hopes of securing the funding through the TRB her office wanted to improve their data:
  - Facilities Condition Index (FCI) methodology to understand the condition of all the buildings and development of comprehensive renewal, repair, and replacement plan.
  - Hire a consultant to review all of our facilities
  - All five campuses will be included in the assessment
  - Oldest buildings will be assessed first
  - Components that will be analyzed include exterior, roof, electrical, mechanical, plumbing, HVAC, and interior
  - Project list to address issues will be finalized by September 1, 2023
  - If we are unsuccessful in receiving the TRB, Ms. Salazar stated that the university will prioritize the needs and to look for other creative financing mechanisms to address the aging facilities we have.

- Ms. Salazar addressed the feedback received regarding furniture. Her team needed to conduct an inventory of common area furniture and assessment of furniture that may need repairs, replacement, or placed in surplus.
- Ms. Salazar discussed the upgrades to classrooms. This was an important project to her during the past four years of her time at UTSA and getting up-to-speed as to who was responsible for maintaining classrooms, the technology, etc. She noticed that classrooms were not all up-to-date or well taken care of. She, along with Provost Espy, partnered together to make a larger impact on renovating classrooms (Academic Affairs, Academic Innovation, Business Affairs, Planning, Facilities and UTS), so the experience is there for the faculty and students. In addition, the university received HERFF financing due to the pandemic, so that allowed the university to create online learning experience classrooms.
  - Devoted over \$31M in classroom renovations
  - Total number of classrooms renovated: 67
  - Over 40% of classrooms renovated in last two years
- Ms. Salazar described how the team determined the priority for renovating classrooms. They visited each classroom and developed a rubric and graded each item: furniture, walls, flooring, lights, etc. These categories were given a number to prioritize which one went first. They also used the space utilization score which is reported to the Coordinating Board and is tied to our formula funding which indicates how many hours we are using the room and the seating capacity. This resulted in an overall score which led to the determination of the classrooms that were updated.

### ***Q&A Section with Veronica Salazar***

***Question*** – What is the current status of the Monterrey Building at the Downtown Campus?

***Answer*** – The annex building is still in operation and use by the Architecture program for studios. The rest of the building remains closed and we've been able to accommodate the space needed for the program in other buildings. An assessment has been conducted to see if it's feasible to renovate pending funding and other priorities.

***Question*** – Concerned about campus mapping and providing directions to students, especially the MS Building.

***Answer*** – There is a collaborative project working on a digital map, so you should see something that will address campus mapping soon.

***Question*** – Is the air quality standards in individual classrooms aligned with CDC recommendations?

***Answer*** – Yes, as mentioned in the slide presentation, the air exchanges that occur in the buildings are the same as the classrooms; they are aligned with CDC recommendations

***Question*** – The most common concern from instructors and students teaching graduate courses in lecture hall-style classrooms is the furniture is unmovable with attached chairs or the classroom is set-up in a tiered configuration thus not allowing for interactive discussions or experiential learning. Any chance the Downtown Campus classrooms will be modified to include moveable furniture? Also, is there a way for faculty to request classrooms that will work with active learning and cooperative learning styles.

*Answer* – General answer is yes. Over the years, we have learned quite a bit regarding the needs of our faculty and students. Dr. Vito will discuss this more in depth during her presentation, but the concepts of working in groups in the room and virtually is included in the renovation project going forward. Dr. Vito will be able to address how to request specific classrooms in her presentation. Dr. Espy also interjected that Academic Affairs is aware the next steps are to ensure faculty can request classrooms that meet their needs beyond essential technology of computer and camera and they are all working on that with the Registrar's office.

*Question* – Monterrey Building – the main building is completely empty and accommodations have been made for classes, but the Annex is being used for 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> year student classes and is the public face of UTSA and the Architecture program's Open House and to recruit future students to the program. The Annex still needs attention. Internal assessment on deferred maintenance – is your office engaging faculty who use the classroom in determining what needs attention?

*Answer* – Ms. Salazar has toured the Annex and understands the importance of our buildings, what they represent to UTSA and the community and is doing her best to prioritize the needs of the university. Ms. Salazar mentioned that her approach has to do with building systems, but it is a good idea to convening a group of users to get their input.

*Question* – Have there been any discussion about creating a classroom space at the Downtown Campus that will allow faculty whose offices are downtown to teach face-to-face from the Downtown Campus but also be simultaneously broadcast to a classroom at the Main Campus? This might allow for increased enrollment in the undergraduate courses by department located downtown.

*Answer* – Yes. This was also brought up at the Department Chair's Council meeting. Dr. Vito will be able to address this during her presentation.

*Question* – In your presentation you mentioned requesting funds through the Tuition Revenue Bonds process. What are the odds of obtaining funds through that process? If we are unsuccessful, what is the back-up plan?

*Answer* – Ms. Salazar indicated they are hopeful to receive the TRB funds as this is a year the legislature from the forecasts on how much money the State has to spend from the surplus and from the rainy-day fund. We have been successful in past legislative sessions in receiving funds for projects, such as San Pedro II, although not all projects were fully funded, but based on past experiences, we are hopeful that we will receive some funds this year. If not, we will look at strategies for financing, possibly borrowing money, etc. If we receive funding from the legislature the university can look at leveraging those funds with other sources of financing to make as much of an impact as we can to improve the campus.

**Vice Provost for Academic Innovation Update (Innovative Learning Environments)** – Melissa Vito, Vice Provost for Academic Innovation, including her team: Marcela Ramirez, Associate Vice Provost Teaching, Learning & Digital Transformation, Jonathan Gutierrez, Associate Director of Digital Learning and Dustin Barrows, Associate Director Academic Technologies

Dr. Zenteno thanked Dr. Vito for attending the Faculty Senate meeting to update the group on the changes in classroom technology and the transition in learning management systems from Blackboard to Canvas and how that decision was made at the university.

- Dr. Vito referred to Ms. Salazar’s presentation slide on Classroom Prioritization Criteria and specifically the column “Persona” which identifies the type of classroom each one is from a technology standpoint and how they thought about upgrades in order to meet the needs of faculty and students in order to have an engaged learning experience. Dr. Vito mentioned this process was conducted during the pandemic so the modalities had already shifted to remote learning, but they learned there were some benefits to online learning and that hybrid was a model that was very appealing. Even face-to-face courses could benefit from remote access, such as inviting an internationally renowned speaker who can only join remotely. We needed our classrooms to match those modalities. Her team:
  - Created a cross-functional team that worked with Ms. Salazar’s team and the Provost’s team to look at the classrooms
  - Examined peer models
  - Met with students and faculty—understand their needs:
    - Predictability from faculty: where is the podium, how things would look and feel in the classroom)
    - Student-centered: accessible, all students have the same learning experience and all faculty have the same teaching experience
    - Faculty want flexibility: they do not want to be tied to one brand of technology (e.g. Zoom, Webex, etc.)
- Dr. Vito described how they came up with the personas for the classrooms using the grid developed by Ms. Salazar’s team. They developed 4 personas:
  - Core Classrooms – need to bring in technology, but want to ensure there is some technological capacity
  - Zoom Unified Classrooms – highest level of technology, remoting in
  - Active-Connected Classrooms – more moveable furniture, more technology
  - Connected Classrooms – add more technology, more screens, more whiteboards
- Created a team within Marcela’s area for faculty development and developed a training program called RowdyFlex. Working with faculty that are in the classroom to understand the technology and to ensure they are in the correct classroom. Dr. Vito stated their team continues to refine their processes throughout each phase of the project. Also working with the Registrar’s office and Josh Gerken’s office to understand what faculty need in a classroom based on pedagogy, e.g. will people be Zooming in regularly or occasionally, does the furniture need to be moveable and then match faculty priorities with what her office has in their inventory.

**Question** – Noticed new Touchpads in McKinney classrooms yesterday. However, we did not receive an email with an “How To.” Can we have something placed in the classroom and receive an email with instructions on how to use them?

**Answer** – Yes, we can provide that information to you. Her team will have a quick follow up with the faculty.

Due to time constraints, Dr. Zenteno opted to send the comments from the Chat to Dr. Vito for her to address off-line.

- Dr. Vito introduced Marcela Ramirez and Jonathan Gutierrez from her team who will be leading the LMS transition from Blackboard to Canvas. Dr. Vito stated that the university needed to change the LMS from Blackboard.
  - No significant LMS enhancements since 2012
  - Blackboard contract and support was ending; their upgrade would include a different experience
  - Evolving student needs and behavior: students want a mobile option
  - Canvas emerged as the best option
  - Surveyed faculty and students
  - Conducted focus groups
  - Looked at Peer institutions
  - Worked with UT System partners
- Marcela mentioned that 40% of our students are transfer students and are familiar with Canvas. Faculty also shared same feelings during surveys that were sent out over past two years. Marcela stated we are gaining the following from moving to Canvas:
  - Modern navigation system
  - Mobile responsive: students work on phones or tablets; intuitive for faculty
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> party digital tools
  - Built-in calendar, tools and templates
  - Accessibility features
  - 24/7 support
- Partnered with K16 Solutions for migration. They will map courses from Blackboard and move them into Canvas. K16 Solutions typically move 5,000 courses per week.
- Jonathan discuss the phased training for faculty beginning this spring, including hybrid workshops with Academic Innovations team members.
  - Self-paced courses
  - Faculty and student bootcamps
  - Training Faculty Champions who will be the gateway for training other faculty
  - Departmental trainings and customize those sessions to meet the needs of the departments
  - Launched website: [www.utsa.edu/canvas](http://www.utsa.edu/canvas) and email address: [canvas@utsa.edu](mailto:canvas@utsa.edu)
  - Updates on project can be found on the website or in the Faculty News
  - Will also provide 24/7 support
  - Academic Innovation Center will offer open Canvas hours for training
- Canvas Timeline Overview
  - Spring 2023: migration begins
    - Faculty Access to Canvas in March and 2022 courses
    - Phase I Training (online, in person and self-paced)
  - Summer 2023
    - Course Migration Concludes
    - Access to Spring 2023 courses
    - Phase II Training Begins
    - Semester Prep Bootcamps (end of spring semester, 2 weeks prior to fall semester beginning, and 2 weeks when fall semester begins)
  - Fall 2023

- Access to Summer 2023 courses
  - Classes begin with Canvas as UTSA's LMS
- Jonathan mentioned that they have created a Canvas Transition Working Group which has representation across the university, including students, faculty and administration.

Dr. Zenteno thanked Academic Innovation for the presentation. He also asked the Faculty Senators to email him if they are interested in serving on the transition working group (we need 2 representatives from the Faculty Senate).

#### **A. Chair's Report – René Zenteno**

Dr. Zenteno reiterated the topics the Senate has discussed in the past. Academic Affairs Office is in the process of scheduling the cross-functional study groups between the Deans and Faculty Senators of each respective colleges to directly address the issues:

- Budget transparency
- Future salary compression exercises (documentation of methodology and communication of outcomes)
- Use of COVID Statements in the annual evaluations
- FTTs
- Strategies to hire and retain Latino/a faculty

There may be other topics that you may wish to address in your college meetings, but this was the list that was developed this summer and the first Senate meeting.

There is a UT System Faculty Advisory Council meeting on January 26-27, 2023 which will be attended by myself and Chris Packham, Secretary of the General Faculty. We anticipate receiving a legislative update, especially on discussions surrounding diversity and inclusion. Will provide more information at our February Faculty Senate meeting.

The next meeting of the Faculty Senate will be held on Thursday, February 19, 2023. We anticipate hosting the meeting in a hybrid format: Zoom and in the Assembly Room, JPL 4.04.22. We look forward to seeing those who can attend in person.

#### **B. Secretary of the General Faculty – Chris Packham**

UT System Faculty Council Chair, David Coursey, attended last week's Faculty Senate Executive Committee meeting. His presentation is on the Faculty Senate Sharepoint site. We welcome any feedback from his presentation. Also, if you have any suggestions you would like for Chris or René to consider sharing at the UT System FAC meeting, please email them to both Chris and René.

#### **C. University Curriculum Committee – no report**

#### **D. Graduate Council Chair – no report**

#### **E. Academic Freedom, Evaluation and Merit Committee– no report**

#### **F. Budget Committee – no report**

#### **G. HOP Committee – no report**



## H. Research Committee – no report

### IV. Unfinished Business – None

### V. New Business: Proposal to amend the Faculty Senate By-laws

Mary McNaughton-Cassill, Secretary of the Faculty Senate, mentioned that she and Debbie Howard-Rappaport have been reviewing the current By-laws and noticed there are parts of the By-laws that are outdated, including areas where divisions are mentioned and conducting votes via paper ballots. Other areas of suggestion include:

- Adding a member from the Academic of Distinguished Researchers as an Ex-Officio member, similar to the Academy of Distinguished Teaching Scholars
- FTT representation on the Faculty Senate Executive Committee
- Definition of duties of the Secretary of the General Faculty and how that person is selected
- Clarification of the Research Advisory Board under the Panels Section

We anticipate adding all of this into the By-laws, which would then be presented to the entire Faculty Senate for review and discussion. The amended By-laws would need two-thirds (2/3) of an affirmative vote to be adopted and approved.

René Zenteno made a motion to move forward to amend the Faculty Senate By-Laws, to revise outdated information and propose changes to membership. Curtis Brewer seconded the motion. Chad Mahood clarified that this vote is to start the process of amending the By-Laws. The Faculty Senate would vote again to approve any changes to the By-laws. There was one question concerning the role of Secretary of the General Faculty. René mentioned the [HOP 2.01](#) policy which outlines the role of the General Faculty and the Secretary of the General Faculty. The Faculty Senate has assumed the role of the General Assembly, which had established the duties of the Secretary of the General Faculty and the process for election. But, it's not in our By-laws. So, we need to clarify this role and add to the By-laws. Chad Mahood provided a bit of history on faculty governance. Going back under previous administrations, prior to UTSA having a Faculty Senate, there was a General Assembly and the Secretary of the General Faculty presided over that body, which was allowed to present motions and create statements. Once the Faculty Senate was created, the Secretary of the General Faculty was made a member of the Senate. We will also need to update the HOP 2.01 policy once the By-laws have been amended.

Dr. Zenteno also clarified in the By-laws the ADTS ex-officio member was supposed to be an FTT member to represent FTT faculty, but the ADTS have elected to send a representative which could be a tenured, tenure-track or FTT, so we need to amend the By-laws to ensure that we have an FTT faculty member on the Executive Committee.

There being no further discussion or questions, an electronic vote was taken using the Chat to begin the process to amend the Faculty Senate By-laws:

***The Faculty Senate voted as follows:***

**Approve: 35; Disapprove: 0; Abstain: 0**

Dr. Charles Liu, Faculty Senator from Information Systems and Cyber Security, asked to discuss a matter within his department which concerns the office space for their FTT faculty members. Their department experienced tremendous growth in student enrollment, which coincide with the need to hire additional FTT faculty. Due to space constraints, the FTT faculty need to share offices which is problematic when they teach online classes. People are often in the background during their lectures. In addition, at times they are sharing space with doctoral students. Dr. Liu understands from other chairs that this is not unique to their department—other departments/faculty are facing the same issue regarding space/office constraints for their faculty, especially FTT faculty. This affects their working environment and productivity. Is there a way to convey to administration?

Dr. Zenteno concurred that this is a very important matter and he would speak with the Provost and Dr. Shipley to see if they can help find a resolution. He also asked Mary Dixson if this has been a topic among the FTT faculty. She was unaware, but would add it to her list. She also mentioned the Faculty Center in the JPL has several rooms that can be used to record lectures, if that is what the faculty members need. The rooms are equipped with technology and whiteboards; however, the reservation system is now through RowdyLink. Also, if you need to meet with students it may not be the best option as the Center is only for faculty. But, it is ideal for FTT faculty needing a quiet space or space to collaborate with other colleagues. Dr. Mahood mentioned this matter should be forwarded to Veronica Salazar, Sr. VP for Business Affairs. He also mentioned that as a temporary solution there are “hotel suites” available for use at the Southwest Campus. Joshua Gerken, Sr. Asst. VP for Campus Planning, has information regarding the hotel suites that are available across campus.

Dr. Zenteno also mentioned Senator John Alexander’s point from the Chat regarding the article from the NY Times about ChatGPC that can write papers for students. Dr. Zenteno stated that he will add this to his agenda when he meets with the Provost and Dr. Shipley.

Dr. Zenteno mentioned a matter that was brought to his attention via email is the matter of increase in electric cars on campus and the only way to charge cars on campus is to have a garage permit. Dr. Zenteno said that he would look into the matter with Campus Services and report back on what he learns.

There was discussion among the senators regarding the disparity among departments and the number of administrative staff assigned to the departments. One department only has one staff member and this person cannot take time off, or be out sick because they are the only person assigned to cover that department. Students are not allowed to have access to files. It may increase turnover in staff and affect moral. Dr. Zenteno agreed this is an issue and would consider having a conversation with the Provost.

Dr. Sinanan, Chair of the Academic Freedom and Merit Committee, mentioned that their committee will be paying attention to a bill that is being considered by the legislature regarding academic freedom. It would prohibit funding by any public-funded institution of promoting, sponsoring or supporting any office of diversity, equity or inclusion if passed by the legislature. Dr. Sinanan stated that the UT System FAC Chair did not

believe this bill would pass, but she feels that it is one that everyone needs to pay close attention to this legislative session.

<https://capitol.texas.gov/tlodocs/88R/billtext/pdf/HB01006I.pdf#navpanes=0>

Dr. Zenteno thanked Dr. Sinanan for bringing this matter to the attention of the Faculty Senate.

VI. **Adjournment:**

There being no further business, a motion was made by Alex Godet, seconded by Mary Dixon and the meeting concluded at 5:00 PM