

General Meeting Minutes

Thursday, June 15, 2023 | 8:30-10:30 A.M. | Online Meeting – Zoom

8:30 a.m. Meeting Called to Order

- Guests: Carlos Martinez, Mary Hernandez, Veronica Salazar
- Attendees: Melissa Blanton, Anna Boyer-Chadwick, Stef Casper, Sara Cliffe, Yasmín Codina, Jake Erney, Angel Espinoza, Jaime Fernandez, Matthew Fey, Julie Fisher, Amy Fritz, Wanda Guntz, Damaris Ibarra, Nnenna Ikwuagwu, Olamiposi Kolajo, Demetrius Johnson, Destiny Jones, Xavier Loreda, Sharon Martinez, Ty Middleton, Jeffrey Miller, Dominick Morales, Sapna Naik, Olinda Ongay, Cindy Orth, Amanda Perez, Veronica Salazar, Xavier Santos, Jenny Stokes, Sara Tate, Norma Van Winkle, Drew Vincent, Matt Keneson
- Excused: Lisa Alonzo, Clarisa De La Fuente, Justin Marmolejo, Jessica Vela, Robert Ripley
- Unexcused: Victoria Downing, Brandy Garcia

8:30 a.m. Legislative Updates – Carlos Martinez, Chief of Staff for Office of the President

- The legislature meets every two years for 180 days. The last day of the legislative session was May 29. It takes time to unravel what they've done. The governor still has an opportunity to sign or veto until June 18.
- For higher education, there are two main areas: budget and all other areas.
- For budget, they are still trying to figure all of it out. They've provided funding contingent upon universities doing certain things, like adopting policies. They've reconstructed the research system. They've provided funding for affordability. It's an unusual session in that they made certain funds contingent upon freezing of tuition. It was a commitment made by the six system chancellors. Some institutions did extraordinarily well but UTSA was left out. We know a lot but there are a lot of questions left.
- On the policy side, legislature made significant changes in two main areas. On tenure, they passed SB18, which made significant changes on tenure. If we modify or adjust our tenure process, within the UT System, we'll be okay, and will be able to manage.
- On SB17, still trying to better understand. It relates to DEI. Legislature made significant policy changes which prohibits certain things, like offices focused on DEI activities. It's clear and it's not clear. Legislature gave ability to certify that it's in compliance with UT System. Two lenses: Statute (language of SB17) and second, how UT System will interpret it. We're early in that second process. We have not received any guidance on how it's rolled out. We haven't heard yet what that means for us and how they've interpreted it.
- A couple of important dates: The bill becomes effective on January 1, 2024. It'll be hard to make the change mid-year. We have the summer to receive UT System guidance and implement it by the January 1 deadline. We don't have a lot of time to figure it out, and it'll be a challenge to implement it mid-year. We know it'll have personnel impacts but we don't know how. The second date that's important is when we'll be reviewed for our compliance. Certification period in which the board has to certify that we're in compliance so that it won't affect our budget. Certification period will start in the FY that starts on September 1,

2024. That's when we'll be graded. In 2025, we'll be reviewing the FY that starts in 2024. That'll be a challenge to figure out and implement how the state auditor will review institutions to ensure compliance with the statutes.

- There are hundreds of other bills related to higher education generally and UTSA more specifically, for example, ban on transgender athletes. There are others on transcripts, hazing. Governmental relations is working on a summary for university leadership to understand and digest.
- Questions
 - If I understand correctly, the ideal goal is to finalize many decisions over the summer inclusive of personnel decisions related to DEI offices?
 - Can you speak to any discussions that have been had regarding what will happen to our departments and staff under Diversity and Inclusive Excellence?
 - These are similar questions about timing. A lot will depend on guidance received by UT System. Committed to DEI staff and mission and goals of UTSA, which is so embedded with DEI initiatives. Timeline has not been determined yet and will depend on UT System guidance.
 - There's a strong commitment to employees and DEI.
 - Are there other plans or conversations to have those conversations with community, whether it's coming from higher leadership or Deans, similar to town halls, where we can have discussions about impacts and plans?
 - Pres Eighmy's approach is different than other campuses. This conversation with Staff Senate, that he'll be having with different affinity groups, is one tool to communicate. You won't see a broad message until system guidance. Even then, it'll be one-on-one rather than broad messages, because people are listening to what we're saying and doing. We want to make sure we're not saying or doing things that'll have a negative consequence on our initiatives. We don't want to say something that'll fuel the interpretation or guidance that'll negatively affect what we do. We have to be very careful. The game is still being played. Worry about coming out too forcefully, frequent. In UT Austin, they're in a different position. We're crafting our approach specific to UTSA. There's a lot of ambiguity, so there's a chance we do something inadvertently that negatively affect us.
 - It's also contingent to our funding. We might lose our second-year funding. That's a significant portion of our budget, more than 50%. We have to make sure we don't put in jeopardy our funding.
 - Do I remember right that some of the System leadership indicated their intent to comply with the Governor's edict made several months ago on this subject, and if I do, any idea or thought as to how that will affect System's view of SB 17?
 - What the governor said before is subsumed by SB17. He signed it yesterday so he seems to agree with the bill.
 - As you continue to interpret the second half of the law - is there anything that shows an effect on cultural or diverse organization (student for affinity)?
 - At one point, the Coordinating Board called for a study to analyze the effects, but that was removed from the bill. That's still for us to determine on our own, and is still not know.

- I understand the necessity to not make broad statements and to prevent unwanted attention that will affect us negatively; however, how can UTSA still ensure that staff, students, and faculty know that UTSA supports us without broad communication efforts? Many people are not in the communication methods like Senate, affinity groups, or leadership.
 - This is a commitment that we're making; rather than statements, hope is you'll see them in actions. SB17 is a challenge, not only for us, but for every higher education institution in Texas that is committed to DEI environments on campus. HEIs are where society turns to figure out the most difficult of questions, so we have to figure it out, within the confines of this law, and still maintain commitment to students, staff, and faculty.
- If I read SB 17 it does at least recognize the need to comply with federal anti-discrimination laws (Title VII, IX, etc.)
 - Those laws preempt anything the legislature does and it's woven in there. The way you read the statute, you read them both to make them work together. That'll be a challenge, and we have to make them both work. There were things that were excluded from the bill. It'll all depend on the guidance we receive from UT System.
- Actions speak louder than words and we'll show commitment to whatever we can to push the envelope.

9:03 a.m. Phishing – Veronica Salazar, VPBA

- Phishing attempts through email. UTS is sending us education about phishing attempts. These phishing attempts get very sophisticated, and 6 employees clicked on links and provided personal information and were recently affected.
- Make sure you pay attention and always err on the side of caution. It can have a significant impact on personal information and the institution.

9:12 a.m. Motion to vote on Staff Senate Minutes 5/18/2023 – Jake Erney, Parliamentarian

- Minutes: <https://www.utsa.edu/staffsenate/Minutes/2023-05-18-Staff-Senate-General-Meeting-Minutes.pdf>
- Seconded by Amanda Perez
- Votes: Abstentions: 4; Yays: 23; No: 0
- Passes

9:14 a.m. University Service Updates

- **Enriching Campus Wellbeing Steering Committee** – Damaris Ibarra
 - The next meeting will be on June 30. More on the status in the July General Meeting.
- **Faculty Senate** – Justin Marmolejo

The University of Texas at San Antonio
UTSA Staff Senate

- Dormant
- Justin will continue to represent Staff Senate in the upcoming cycle.
- **Hispanic Thriving Initiative** – Amanda Perez
 - Have not met since April, so no updates.
 - Amanda will be transitioning to UT Arlington – congratulations!
 - We'll be needing new representation for this committee.
- **HOP Committee** – Jaime Fernandez
 - [21 Hop Staff Senate General Meeting Update 6-15-23.docx](#)
 - Published Policies
 - HOP 5.09 – Class Attendance – Posted 5/19/23
 - HOP 2.24 – Third Year Review (Faculty) – Posted 6/2/23
 - HOP 9.01 – Nondiscrimination Policy – Posted 6/5/23
 - Policies Reviewed
 - HOP 4.09 – Student Employees – Reviewed 6/14/23
 - Policies Being Re-Reviewed
 - HOP 3.01 – Annual Non-Faculty Performance Evaluation – Re-review (4th time). 6/5/23
 - HOP 3.03 – Discipline and Dismissal of Classified Employees – Re-review (3rd time) 5/25/23.
 - Policies Voted On
 - HOP 2.24 – Third Year Review (Faculty) – Voted to Abstain – 5/22/23.
 - HOP 2.34 – Faculty Grievance Procedures – Voted to Abstain - 5/31/23.
 - HOP 5.09 – Class Attendance – Voted to Abstain – 5/23/23.
 - HOP 2.41 – Endowed Chairs, Professorships & Faculty Fellowships – No comments 6/5/23
 - Policies Abstained From Comments
 - HOP 2.41 – Endowed Chairs, Professorships & Faculty Fellowships – No comments 6/5/23
- **Inclusive Excellence Advisory Board** – Damaris Ibarra
 - Dormant
- **Operational Review Committee** – Amy Fritz
 - No updates. ORC is dormant until next year.
- **Out of State Work Modality** – Amy Fritz
 - No updates.
- **Parking & Traffic Committee** – Estefania Casper, Wanda Guntz, Clarisa De La Fuente
 - You can now order 23-24 parking passes:
<https://www.utsa.edu/campuservices/parking/>
 - No other updates.
- **People Excellence and Staff Senate Working Group on Modality and Educational Benefits** – Amy Fritz, Anna Boyer-Chadwick, Sapna Naik, Stef Casper, Xavier Santos
 - Notes in [People Excellence and Staff Senate Working Group](#)
 - Last meeting was Monday, May 15: [PE and SS Working Group Notes.docx](#)
 - Next meeting on Friday, June 23
 - Focus areas:
 - Educational benefits

- Performance evaluation
- Work modality
- Links from People Excellence
 - People Excellence [summer offerings](#)
 - [June July 2023 Classes Flyer 5.31.pdf](#)
 - Performance Evaluation Training
 - Training for completing the [self-evaluation](#) portion of the UTSA Annual Performance Evaluation as well as training for completing the [manager evaluation](#).
 - Tips for ensuring a smooth year-end process for employees ([PE - 5 Tasks for Employees.pdf](#)) and managers ([PE - 5 Tasks for Managers.pdf](#))
- **Sustainability Council** – Jake Erney
 - No updates.
- **Public Safety Advisory Committee** – Wanda Guntz
 - No updates.
- **University Excellence Awards** – Sharon
 - Dormant
- **University Leadership Council** – Damaris Ibarra
 - Legislation conversations – SB17 and 18 are on their ways to the governor’s desk
 - President Communication: utsa.edu/president/2023/05/story/2023-05-30-interim-legislative-update.html
 - The system and institution are reviewing and figuring out what to do. Any implementation of processes will take place by 1/1/24.
- **University Scholarships Committee** – Damaris Ibarra
 - Dormant

9:26 a.m. Committee Updates

- **Communications – Drew Vincent and Destiny Jones**
 - Contact Communications if you have something you want on the website and/or social media or complete the form through Teams
 - Added LinkedIn as a communication channel:
<https://www.linkedin.com/company/utsa-staff-senate/>
 - Revamping communication request form – the idea is to bring together a PDF form and Qualtrics form – they are standardizing it so it’s all in one place. Next step will be user tests to make sure it’s meeting the needs of the team, then it’ll be launched.
- **Community Outreach & Events – Cindy Orth**
 - We had a successful Great Staff Appreciation! The attendance was great.
 - There was a survey that was sent to Staff Senators. The committee will look at these and a few things for opportunities for next year. They’ll take any new ideas and incorporate those into next year.
 - Now looking at the scholarship process. We did not have a silent auction this year, so we’ll look at opportunities in the fall to fund our Staff Senate scholarships.

- **Elections – Cindy Orth**
 - [Staff Senate Elections Timeline – 2023](#)
 - Big thanks to Sara Tate and Matt Kenson for helping with the elections process.
 - You should have received the nominations email that went out on June 9.
 - The deadline for self-nominations or other nominations is Thursday, June 22. Reminder emails will go out on Tuesday, June 20. There's one more chance to self-nominate. Once it closes, then the elections committee will review those and validate them, reach out to each and get confirmation that they accept the nomination and that they have talked to their supervisor to get permission. Once those are validated, then we start with the elections process. By the time we meet in July, that elections process will have started. Each area has at least 1 nomination so far.
 - Thanks to those who set up the Coffee Hour, which had a good attendance, especially among non-Senate members. Great way to let them hear about Staff Senate.
- **Finance – Stef Casper and Angel Espinoza**
 - We have money left in our account! Congratulations to all the committees for following the budget process and staying within your allocation.
 - \$975.73 total remaining in Operations cost center
 - \$499.50 remaining in Official Occasions cost center
 - Please email any feedback on the Budget Request Form or Purchase Request Form processes to Angel / Estefania :)
- **Health & Wellness – Anna Boyer-Chadwick**
 - Have not met recently, but will give an
- **QIC – Sapna Naik and Dominick Morales**
 - [QIC Progress](#) updated
 - Vacation Payout – Olamiposi ([Staff Senate Idea - Vacation Payout.docx](#))
 - In progress
 - Name Changes – Lisa and Melissa ([Name changes.docx](#))
 - The concern was about changes to names in one system that does not change in others. Lisa and Melissa have met with Ann Margaret in MSCEJ and partners in Strategic Enrollment about how to communicate and make this process more smooth. They will have more information at the next session. MSCEJ and Ann Margaret have done a lot of work
 - Retirement acknowledgement
 - Ideas: Connect to Staff Appreciation, University Excellence Awards; Retired staff benefits, which currently includes library privileges and Employee B parking (faculty's: <https://provost.utsa.edu/rfa/benefits.html>); Personal recognition from University Leadership
 - Other ideas?
 - Recognition from University Leadership should be expected.
 - A plaque or certificate, something physical, is baseline.
 - I would like our recognition committee to be able to discuss it being a part of our duties. With monthly awards it might be a bit overwhelming. I'm not sure it's the duty of Staff Senate, but I do

- think the recognition is important.
- At a previous institution, staff retiring would be recognized at athletic events or internal video feeds, including a list of recognized individuals and where they worked, at a monthly or semesterly basis.
- Mass email, not something in the newsletter because people don't read it, but something for each VP area. It wouldn't cost much. That one email would be dedicated to that specific group.
- After hours requests
 - Leaders emailing, calling, texting after hours or during time off. Staff being asked/expected to join meetings while on paid leave. In recent weeks, I have taken the opportunity to participate in leadership classes offered by UTSA. In just about every class, there have been individuals who express their frustration about communications they receive after hours/late at night, and the expectation placed on them to join work meetings during their time off. This is a concern that has been voiced by employees even before the leadership classes began. If this is the first time this concern is being suggested to Staff Senate, what can be done to prevent this type of behavior from continuing? If this is not the first time Staff Senate has been approached about this, what was the outcome when addressed previously?
 - Ideas and your experience?
 - Leadership should be reported if that happens, so higher ups can have that conversation.
 - Sure you can be asked, and if it's an expectation to do things on paid leave. An individual has the right to express their boundaries. Should not be expected to respond. This goes back to be effective with communication on both sides. These are my boundaries and why is that expectation there. If it is an expectation, report or make it known.
 - There are expectations about being on-call – that's a different situation. For other positions, does not require that.
 - Boundaries are important, however, for some they don't have that skill yet, or often times those same supervisors are required by their supervisors to do the same during paid leave. It's a complicated work culture issue.
 - Could be a training course
 - It's easy to tell people to set boundaries but they are already not being respected, it's difficult to do. What are training or Day ONEs for supervisors? That's a lot of expectation for the supervisee, especially new ones.
 - There are no required supervisory trainings that I know of. They are suggested.
 - Yes, there's a power imbalance for employees and supervisors.
 - It needs to be a Day ONE topic – so that it's not a training, but it's as a university, here's an expectation based on classifications (non-

- exempt, exempt, classified, A&P) - that may sit a bit better because it does not have the word training or mandatory.
- I think a lot of people aren't directly hired into the supervisory role and are internally promoted and don't require Bold New Journey.
- I think that's one of the best ways Staff Senate can help in this scenario, keep the conversation going and grow with the methods.
- Next steps can include Damaris taking it to PE.
- Encourage staff members to submit via <https://www.utsa.edu/staffsenate/Contact.html>
- **Staff Appreciation & Scholarships – Sharon Martinez and Sara Tate**
 - Nominate individual staff and teams at <https://www.utsa.edu/staffsenate/Appreciation.html>
 - We have a few nominations for this month. We only have this month and next month.
 - They'll work on process improvements and will utilize the closets for items. They'll update their procedures, and will also talk about retirement acknowledgment.
 - Are nominees notified that they were nominated and why if they aren't a winner? If not, is that possible?

10:00 a.m. General announcements, discussion, and reminders

- Updating Standard Operating Procedures this summer – complete by July 31
 - [Template](#)
- Reminder about attendance policy
 - Article III Section 4 Attendance of [Bylaws](#)
- Reminders
 - Performance Self-Evaluation due August 9, 2023
 - From UTSA News: As a reminder, benefits-eligible staff were awarded up to 32 hours of paid time off for outstanding performance as part of this year's compensation strategies. These hours must be used by Thursday, August 31. You are encouraged to use your hours to take a meaningful break from work to support a healthy and productive work/life balance. For questions, contact your supervisor or HR Business Partner

10:10 a.m. Committee breakouts about Standard Operating Procedures

- Breakout rooms
 - Communications – 1
 - Community outreach and events – Not meeting due to lack of rep
 - Elections – 2
 - Finance – 3
 - Health and Wellness – 4
 - QIC – 5
 - Staff Appreciation and Scholarships – 6

10:30 a.m. Adjourn

- Next General Meeting: Thursday, July 20 at 8:30 a.m. – Hybrid