

SENATE HIGHLIGHTS

UTSA Faculty Senate Newsletter



2024-2025 OFFICERS AND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Alexis Godet: Chair
Marie Tillyer: Secretary
Zachary Tonzetich: Graduate Council
Valerie Sponsel: ADTS Representative
René Zenteno: Past Chair
Mike Baumann: Parliamentarian
Ginny Garcia-Alexander: Academic Freedom, Evaluation & Merit (AFEM) Committee
Mary Dixon: Budget Committee
Sonya Aleman: HOP Committee
George Perry: Research Committee
Zaid Haddad: Curriculum Committee



Consent Agenda - APPROVED

- Approval of Minutes – May 2, 2024
- Graduate Council Item – approved at the May 7, 2024, Graduate Council Meeting
 - Online Bilingual Education Graduate Certificate

CHAIR'S REPORT: Alexis Godet

- An Update was provided from the University Leadership meeting.
 - The Little Runner in downtown has been a success, providing transportation options for the community.
 - A productive meeting was held with LT Robinson, Senior Vice Provost and Dean of Students, to discuss expressive activity and institutional neutrality policies.
- The Faculty Senate will receive a presentation from the Athletics Department later this fall regarding the Athletic Strategic Plan.
 - This presentation will provide insights into the future direction of UTSA's athletic programs.
- On September 4, 2024, Provost Heather Shipley hosted a reception for the Faculty Senate and the Department Chairs' Council.
- The Chair and Secretary of the Faculty Senate will attend the Texas Council of Faculty Senate meeting scheduled for September 27-28, 2024.
- The UT System Faculty Advisory Board meeting is set for October 10-11, 2024.
- The Faculty Senate is seeking a representative to serve on the Dining Committee, which plays a crucial role in shaping campus food services. Faculty Senate members interested in representing UTSA at the upcoming fall meeting are encouraged to contact Dr. Godet for more information and to volunteer their participation.

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.



Leadership Update: Academic Affairs Update

Heather Shipley, Ph.D., *Provost & Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs*

- An update was provided on the new 90+ full-time faculty that started at UTSA this fall.
- Six new faculty cluster hiring priorities were identified from the CCP proposals submitted last spring:
 - Artificial Intelligence
 - Brain Health
 - Microbiome and Human Health
 - Space
 - STEM Education
 - Transdisciplinary Materials Research
- For the 2024-2025 recruitment cycle, the institution has planned cluster hires of 26 scholars. This initiative is partially funded by the Board of Regents' Research Excellence Program.
- UTSA is committed to fostering civil discourse through comprehensive capacity-building initiatives. These efforts span three key areas:
 - Students: Offer courses and co-curricular activities to enhance students' abilities to engage constructively with diverse perspectives.
 - Faculty and Staff: Provide professional development opportunities to equip faculty and staff with skills to facilitate classroom and campus dialogue and effectively manage conflicts.
 - Community: Extend UTSA's impact through inter-university collaborations and community partnerships.
- The new college focusing on AI, Cyber, Computing, and Data Science is progressing as planned.
 - Task force final reports have been made available on the initiative website for review.
 - Faculty and staff were surveyed for input in early September and the college structure and official name will be announced later this semester.
- There were updates on the launch of three new provost's initiatives for the 2024-2025 academic year and the leads working on those efforts. All of these initiatives will have Faculty Senate representation.
 - Enhancing Wellbeing, led by LT Robinson and Tammy Wyatt
 - Advancing Open Educational Resources, led by Dean Hendrix and Melissa Vito
 - Expanding Peer Mentoring and Leadership Programs, led by Jill Fleuriot and Tammy Wyatt
- The UTSA-UT Health San Antonio Integration was announced by the UT System Board of Regents. Information sessions will be held in every department at UTSA to discuss the integration. For the latest updates and plans, everyone is encouraged to visit the UT System website at utsystem.edu/san-antonio and <https://utsanantoniotogether.org/>.

Real Estate and Property Management/District Planning Update: Josh Gerken, Associate Vice President for Asset Management

- The District planning and the next steps for the 2019 master plan were discussed, with a focus on physical space planning for the upcoming five to ten years.
- The University Stakeholder Objectives were presented:
 - The support service objectives aim to understand current functionality and work on capacity analysis, and develop initial scenarios to accommodate growth and adjacencies.
 - The Academic space objectives aim to optimize space for departmental success, enhance student engagement, and foster interdepartmental collaboration.
 - The research space objectives focus on addressing lab needs and future resiliency, promoting collaboration and efficiency, and ensuring core lab suitability and growth.
- The communication plan includes a FAQ website, a District Planning [email address](#), and ongoing campus-wide updates from VPBA Comms & RPM.



How does the Real Estate and Property Management team gather input for all the objectives, especially for the downtown campus?

- *The team has reached out to department leads, who are expected to meet with faculty and staff. Following feedback from the Senate, there will be outreach to Deans and Department Chairs to ensure they're communicating with faculty. Senate members and all UTSA faculty are encouraged to watch for an upcoming email inviting direct feedback on these matters.*

What approaches will be used to get feedback about lab spaces and utilization information?

- *Wi-Fi and Bluetooth data tracking is one method currently in use. This will be supplemented with focused conversations to gather additional feedback.*

How can faculty assist in upgrading buildings on Main Campus, and what is the approval process for funding classroom upgrades?

- *Funding varies for different areas, but all require government approval. Since May 2024, efforts have been made to allocate money to the areas of greatest need. To date, 50 out of 140 actively used classrooms have been upgraded. Further discussions with the Faculty Senate are welcomed.*



A faculty member from the School of Architecture and Planning had been in contact with the Real Estate and Property Management team. The master plan presented was a collaborative effort from all faculty members. Will this plan be incorporated into the district planning?

- *Yes, it will be incorporated into the District Planning. The team looks forward to continuing this collaboration.*



Secretary Report: Marie Tillyer, Secretary

- Faculty Senate's top goals and priorities for 2024–2025 were discussed during the summer retreat, they are:
 - Administrator Accountability
 - Shared Governance
 - Faculty Compensation
 - Research
 - Budget/IRM
 - Academic Freedom
- The Senate voted unanimously to approve these proposed goals for 2024–2025.



Is the goal to have measurable achievements of the Senate's priorities?

- *Yes, when possible. The expectation is that committees will provide intermediate goals and reports to the Senate.*

How can the Senate gain budget transparency and observe the direct benefits to departments through the university's strategic initiatives?

- *An upcoming panel on the IRM budget model will provide more opportunities to achieve transparency.*

Budget Committee Mary Dixon, Chair

- A committee meeting has been scheduled to discuss the IRM review.
- All senators are encouraged to participate in this discussion.
 - Timely RSVPs are requested for the upcoming meeting.





Unfinished Business: Update from René Zenteno about Faculty Senate Statement

- The Executive Committee began with a draft statement about supporting free speech, but it is still under discussion. As a result, the statement will be brought back to the full Senate for further discussion at a future meeting.



Has there been clarification regarding the Senate's ability to make a statement in light of the university's recent message on supporting free speech?

- Yes, it has been confirmed that the Faculty Senate can issue a statement of support.*



2024-2025 FACULTY SENATE MEMBERS

Alvarez College of Business

- Juan Mao**, Dept. of Accounting
- David Beheshti**, Dept. of Economics
- Zijun Wang**, Dept. of Finance
- Catalina Zarate**, Fixed-term Tenure Track Representative
- Anthony Rios**, Dept. of Information Systems & Cyber Security
- Huy Le**, Dept. of Management
- Minghe Sun**, Dept. of Management Science and Statistics
- Ashwin Malshe**, Dept. of Marketing

College of Education and Human Development Studies

- 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 Alemán**, 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
- Miltos Alamaniotis**, Dept. of Electrical and Computer Engineering
- August (Gus) Allo**, Fixed-Term Track Representative
- Alex Mejia**, Department of Biomedical and Chemical Engineering
- Zhigang Feng**, 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
- Emilie Amrein**, Interdisciplinary School for Engagement in Humanities and Social Sciences

College of Sciences

- Kirk Schanze**, Dept. of Chemistry
- John Quarles**, Dept. of Computer Science
- Hongjie Xie**, Dept. of Earth and Planetary Sciences
- Susan Thomas**, Fixed-term Tenure Track Representative
- Edwin Barea-Rodriguez**, Dept. of Integrative Biology
- George Perry**, Dept. of Neuroscience, Developmental and Regenerative Biology
- Alperen Ergur**, Dept. of Mathematics
- Rahul Raghavan**, Dept. of Molecular, Microbiology and Immunology
- Cristian Botez**, Dept. of Physics and Astronomy

College for Health, Community and Policy

- Chantal Fahmy**, Dept. of Criminology & Criminal Justice
- David Weber**, Fixed-term Tenure Track Representative
- Chris Reddick**, 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

- Marguerite Newcomb**, Fixed-term Tenure Track Representative

Ex-Officio Members

- Alexis Godet**, Chair, Faculty Senate
- René Zenteno**, Past Chair, Faculty Senate
- Marie Tillyer**, Secretary of the General Faculty
- Zachary Tonzetich**, Chair, Graduate Council
- Mark Bayer**, Department Chair Council Representative
- Valerie Sponsel**, ADTS Representative
- Lauren Hoffman**, Staff Senate Representative