

**THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT SAN ANTONIO**  
**DOCUMENTS AND PROCEEDINGS OF THE GENERAL FACULTY**

**SUMMARY MINUTES OF THE  
FACULTY SENATE MEETING  
of April 10, 2014**

The regular monthly meeting of the Faculty Senate for the 2013-2014 academic year was held April 10, 2014, at 3:30 p.m. in the Assembly Room (JPL 4.04.22) with Dr. Rebekah Smith, Chair of the Faculty Senate, presiding.

I. Call to order and taking of attendance

Present: Diane Abdo, Emily Bonner, Pepe Chang, Fengxin Chen, Frank Chen, Karen Daas, Glenn Dietrich, Jim Dykes, Martha Fasci, Yongli Gao, Mark Giles, Vaidya Gundlupet, Suat Gunhan, Robert Hard, Richard Harris, Harry Jarrett, Drew Johnson, Turgay Korkmaz, Richard Lewis, Marian Martinello, Lydia Martinez-Rivera, Debbie Menger, John Merrifield, Michael Moyer, Wing Chung Ng, Clyde Phelix, Libby Rowe, Juana Salazar, Elaine Sanders, Dan Sass, Rebekah Smith, Johnelle Sparks, Woodie Spivey, Rob Tillyer, Alistair Welchman, Bennie Wilson, Wayne Wright, John Zhang

Absent: David Akopian, Robert Ambrosino (excused), Rajesh Bhargave, Karla Broadus, Natasha Burns, Felicia Castro-Villarreal (excused), Francisco Marcos-Marin (excused), Marcelo Marucho, Joycelyn Moody (excused), Ashok Nedungadi, John Nix (excused), Antonio Petrov (excused), Branco Ponomariov, Anand Ramasubramanian, Misty Sailors (excused)

Guests: Edwin Barea-Rodriguez, Jim Dawes, Ron Ellis (for John Nix), John Frederick, Sarah Leach, Patricia McGee (for Felicia Castro-Villarreal), John Murphy, Tia Palsole, Shirley Rowe, Sandy Welch

Total members present: 38

Total members absent: 15

II. Approval of the March 6, 2014 meeting minutes

The minutes were approved.

III. Reports

A. Chair of the Faculty Senate – Rebekah Smith

GRIP

Dr. Smith gave an update on the recent GRIP meeting, which Glenn Dietrich attended. She said that the meeting topics included IR-math level predictors of pre-

major/major transition in engineering and biology and an update on the possible cost-issue of summer school for students.

Policies

Dr. Smith said that HOP 2.17 will be undergoing a revision soon and encouraged the senate to fill out the pilot survey they picked up on the use of time during final exam sessions.

She said that HOP 2.34 will be going out very soon for stakeholder review and feedback is due to Bob Hard by April 30<sup>th</sup>. The senate's HOP committee will present their recommendations at the first fall senate meeting.

Department Chair Council

Dr. Smith reported on two Chair's Councils in March and April. She said there was a discussion of HOP 2.10, a PeopleSoft presentation, a GRIP items progress report, information on summer school course cancellations, and a possible limit on the number of attempts taken for courses. In addition, there was discussion regarding the Graduate catalog eventually moving to annual updates.

Charge to NEP committee

Dr. Smith said that the NEP committee will present a report at the May 1 senate meeting proposing a bylaws change to have a department chair's council representative serve as an ex-officio member of the senate HOP committee.

COA name change

The College of Architecture has proposed (according to their strategic plan) to change the college's name to the College of Architecture, Construction, and Planning. The senate's executive committee recommends that the senate support this non-substantive change. The senate voted to unanimously approve the college's name change.

Committee and Officer Elections

Dr. Smith said that committee elections will be held at the May 1 senate meeting and Karen Daas will be contacting senators with available committee openings. She reminded the senate that all senators must serve on at least one committee and that committee expiration dates may not be the same as senate term expiration dates. She recommended that senators check the senate's webpage for details on their current committee terms. She encouraged senators with expiring terms to invite newly-elected senators to the May 1 meeting and said that there will be a faculty mixer immediately following the meeting.

B. Consent Calendar – Rebekah Smith

Dr. Smith announced that the Graduate Council has re-elected its current chair, Dr. Elaine Sanders for another term. The senate voted unanimously to approve Dr. Sanders as the returning Graduate Council chair.

C. Provost's Report – John Frederick

Dr. Frederick told the senate that UT System representatives visited UTSA today and discussed the student success initiatives being implemented at UTSA, including advising, the early alert system, and the GRIP. Student recruitment was also discussed. Dr. Frederick thanked the faculty members who participated in "UTSA Day" last weekend.

He addressed some questions involving the DFRAC's role in peer observations. He clarified that while there are general guidelines that should be followed, each department may determine the specific details of their peer observations. Dr.

Frederick clarified that the written summary by the observer is not shared with the DFRAC, but the observer may share details verbally if needed. The candidate's written response is shared with the DFRAC.

Dr. Frederick addressed the issue of VIP recruitment of students into Graduate programs, and clarified that no new admissions criteria are being instituted for this purpose. The recruitment efforts are simply a mechanism to engage students through faculty nominations, but the standard requirements must still be met to enroll in Graduate School.

Dr. Frederick said that the university's tuition and fee proposal will be presented to a select group of board members on April 23<sup>rd</sup>. This group will determine whether or not to recommend the proposal for the entire Board of Regents' review in May.

D. NEP Committee – Jim Dykes (for Karen Daas)

Dr. Dykes announced the results of the elections for Faculty Senate Chair and Secretary of the General Faculty for the 2014-2016 term. Dr. Karen Daas was elected by acclamation to serve as Faculty Senate Chair and Dr. Jill Hernandez was elected by acclamation to serve as Secretary of the General Faculty.

E. APR Committee – Bennie Wilson

Dr. Wilson said that his committee reviewed a proposal to modify the plus-minus grading system that was submitted by the Student Government President. The SGA's proposal recommended that the grade points awarded for an A+ be changed from 4.00 to 4.33. The committee found that other top tier universities rarely use an A+ grade, and if they did, rarely are the grade points calculated to 4.33. Students that currently earn an A+ at UTSA do have the grade shown on their transcript, although they are awarded the same number of grade points as students who earn an A. In addition, the plus-minus system is optional for departments to use so increasing the grade points awarded for an A+ would give an advantage to students in some departments and not others (those taking classes which are not using the plus-minus system). Due to these reasons, the committee recommended that the proposal not be approved. The Faculty Senate voted as follows:

- 34 approve of the committees' recommendation to not approve the proposal
- 1 opposed the committees' recommendation
- 1 abstention

Therefore, the committees' recommendation to not accept the proposal was approved.

#### IV. Unfinished Business

There was no unfinished business.

#### V. New Business

• Faculty Transition Project - *Patricia McGee, Educational Psychology*

Dr. McGee said that she and Dr. Shirley Rowe have been working with the Retired Faculty Association to create awareness and develop support for transitioning, or retiring,

faculty members. She said that most faculty members don't retire for multiple reasons including financial issues, a need to continue health benefits, and the desire to stay busy and maintain an affiliation with their institution. Dr. McGee said that this project focuses on assisting faculty members with the "pre-retirement" stage of planning, which occurs within about 5 years before retirement. She shared a breakdown of the number of faculty members at UTSA by age as well as by years + service. The data showed that there are many faculty members who are qualified to retire, but may not be able to do so for the reasons previously mentioned. UTSA currently offers financial planning services and information, as well as the recent one-time Voluntary Separation Incentive Program (VSIP). However, there are other best practices that may be implemented at UTSA. These include optional phased retirement/employment, faculty retirement cohorts, Emeritus centers for continued socialization and mentoring, post-career advising, and the use of retired faculty expertise. Dr. McGee asked the senate if they would support the further research of this topic and the senate unanimously agreed to endorse the continuation of the project.

- Hiring Process - *Leonard Flaum, Title IX Coordinator, Senior Equal Opportunity Investigator and Alan Shoho, Associate Vice Provost*

Mr. Flaum explained the recent changes to the faculty recruitment manual. In the past, the search committee would write a memo to the department chair with a recommendation on which candidate to hire. The department chair would agree or disagree, and send a memo to the Dean. The Dean would then make the final decision on whom to hire. The new changes to the faculty recruitment manual no longer require an official hiring recommendation memo from the search committee. This was done to provide the department chairs with more involvement in the process and the hiring decision. The process is now carried out verbally from the search committee, to the department chair, to the Dean. The Dean has final approval and may choose to hire any of the candidates brought in for interviews, whether recommended by the search committee or department chair, or not. Although it is not mandatory for the Dean to discuss any differences in opinion with the search committee and department chair, it is mandatory for the search committee and the department chair to discuss any differences in opinion. The search committee can provide a written recommendation for hire memo to the department chair if they get approval from the chair. The department chair can review the memo and take it into consideration, but the memo will not be sent to the Dean. Some faculty members expressed concern that the new process may give less weight to the search committee and weaken faculty governance. When Mr. Flaum was asked how the decision was made to remove the committee recommendation letter from the search process, he said the decision to remove the use of the memos was made by himself, the Provost, and Dr. Zapata during their annual review of the recruitment manual two years ago. Mr. Flaum said with the department chair being given the responsibility for hires in their departments, the committee recommendation letter no longer served a purpose since the department chair recommendation is the only recommendation given to the Dean. He said that the committee's hiring memo is not required and is not necessary to the recruitment process.

The Senate recognizes the faculty concerns about this process and will continue discussions on this issue. Mr. Flaum will share the Faculty Senate's concerns to the Provost and Vice Provost for Academic and Faculty Support at their annual review meeting this summer.

- Digital Measures - *Sandy Welch, Vice Provost for Accountability & Institutional Effectiveness*

Dr. Welch said that there is an official university vita template that each department can modify for their specific use. She said that if desired, revisions can be made to the template and changes should be implemented within about 1 month after the request is made. She said that a Promotion and Tenure vita has also been developed, which will automatically order activities/awards/etc. according to the HOP requirements. This vita is currently live and available for use. In addition, faculty will no longer have the ability to link functions to other's vitas. Co-authors, for example, will have to list their details on their own vita and will not have access to their co-author's vita. In addition, Dr. Welch said that a college-wide vita template may be created if desired by the college.

## VI. Open Forum

Dr. Abdo invited everyone to an open house at the Paisano Media Arts Center on April 26<sup>th</sup> from 11-2pm at 14526 Roadrunner Way. She said that private funds were raised to open this new building and the grand opening will take place in the fall.

The question was asked regarding whether or not students who have dropped a course still have the ability to fill out a course survey at the end of the semester. Dr. Smith said she would follow-up on this question.

## VII. Adjournment

There being no further business, a motion to adjourn was made, seconded, and unanimously passed at 5:05 pm.