

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT SAN ANTONIO

DOCUMENTS AND PROCEEDINGS OF THE GENERAL FACULTY

SUMMARY MINUTES OF THE FACULTY SENATE MEETING Of December 5th, 2024

The regular monthly meeting of the Faculty Senate for the 2024-2025 academic year was held December 5th, 2024 at 3:30 p.m. via Zoom (online meeting) with Dr. Alex Godet, Chair of the Faculty Senate, presiding.

I. Call to order and taking of attendance.

Present: Alan Whittington- (Sub), Alex Godet, Alex Mejia- (Sub), Andrew Lloyd, Ashwin Malshe, August (Gus) Allo, Catalina Zarate, Chantal Fahmy, Chris Reddick, Cristian Botez, Curtis Brewer, David Beheshti, Devon Romero, David Weber, Edwin Barea-Rodriguez, Emilie Amrein, George Perry, Ginny Garcia-Alexander, Humberto Saenz, Jie Huang, John Alexander, John Quarles, Jusung Lee, Kimberly Garza, Kimberly Kline, Kirsten Gardner, Lauren Hoffmann, Marcus Hamilton, Marguerite Newcomb, Marie Tillyer, Marissa Wechsler, Mark Bayer, Mary Dixon, Michael Baumann, Michael Karcher, Milos Alamaniotis, Minghe Sun, Nancy Membrez- (Sub), Neil Debbage, Rahul Raghavan, Rene Zenteno, Rica Ramírez, Sidury Christiansen, Sonya Aleman, Susan Thomas, Valerie Sponsel, Zachary Tonzetich- (Graduate Council), Zaid Haddad, Zhigang Feng- (Sub), Zijun Wang

Absent: Alperen Ergur, Anthony Rios, Hongjie Xie (excused), Jelena Todoc, Jimi Francis, Juan Mao, Kirk Schanze, Pepe Chang, Valeria Meiller (excused), Xunwu Chen

Total members/substitutes present: 50 Total members absent: 10

Guests: Heather Shipley- (VP), Kelly Nash - (VP), Abi Caceres - (AA), Debra Del Toro - (AA), John Davis, Katie Meersman - (AA), Paul - (Guest), Sarah Soulek - (AA), Ximena Barbagelatta Grau - (AA)

II. Consent Agenda

- Approval of Minutes – November 7, 2024
- Graduate Council Items – Program Changes
 - Doctorate of Business Administration
 - PhD – Clinical Psychology
 - MS – Business Analytics
 - MS Business Research
 - Certificate – Quantum Information Science and Engineering
 - MS – Marketing
 - Dual Master's Degree – Artificial Intelligence

The Chair of the Faculty Senate, Alex Godet, called for the approval of the consent agenda and it was unanimously approved by the senate with no objections.

Dr. Alex Godet welcomed Dr. Heather Shipley, Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs, to the Faculty Senate.

Dr. Shipley delivered a presentation that began with an update on the Enhancing Wellbeing initiative. UTSA has introduced a variety of resources available to all students, faculty, and staff. Among the student-focused services are Wellness 360 Counseling Services, Timely Care, and the Crisis Help Line. Dr. Shipley also shared a QR code during her presentation, which can be used for easy access to these resources.

The student listening sessions, which were initiated during the Day of Reflection, will conclude this week. However, faculty and staff listening sessions will take place in the spring. The task force responsible for collecting and evaluating the feedback from all listening sessions will complete their assessment and provide formal recommendations by March 2025. For information on wellbeing training and updates, please visit the provost.utsa.edu/wellbeing website.

Question: Students have been talking about long wait-times for the counseling resources. Is this a current concern?

Answer: This is being reviewed and will continue to be reviewed as part of the taskforce recommendations to ensure timely access for everyone.

Question: Students have reported that when they use the online services they are first directed to an AI bot. Is there anything that can be done to improve this and provide a more human response for students?

Answer: Thank you for sharing. I will bring this information to the task force and update on this next time.

Dr. Shipley continued the presentation by outlining the formal evaluation process for deans and department chairs. The evaluation of deans occurs in the spring, following three years of service. The provost will make a recommendation to the President based on the evaluation criteria outlined in the Handbook of Operations, and also on a survey sent out by the Office of Compliance which highlights strengths and areas for growth for the dean. These results are then reviewed with the dean, and the dean will then have the opportunity to address both strengths and concerns in a college meeting. After the provost's recommendation is made, the President of the university will make the final decision regarding reappointment.

For department chairs/school directors, the evaluation process and criteria are largely the same, with the distinction that the survey is distributed by Institutional Research (IR), and the results are shared by the dean. Department chairs will also have an opportunity to address the results in a department chair meeting (similar to the feedback process for the dean reviews).

Question: Within the review process, do you look at the collected set of data equally or is there prominence placed on certain types of data over other types of data?

Answer: No, all data is considered and is very important for a comprehensive decision.

Question: Are responses for the survey anonymous or are they seen by the Dean or Department Chair?

Answer: The results that the deans see are aggregated to make sure that everything remains as anonymous as possible. Unless someone wants to disclose it, their identity will remain anonymous.

Question: In regards to merit, would you be able to explain the rationale behind the decisions?

Answer: We did have the highest enrollment this year, but our budget is a biennium. Our current budget was set two years ago, and the one-time payment was based on that. As we move into the next biennium with the legislative session, we'll see what the budget looks like for the next two years.

Question: Will UTSA executives and administrators receive a salary increase in place of merit this year?

Answer: No, merit will be the same for all faculty and staff this year.

Question: Summer continues to be a concern for faculty. Is summer counted in the budget this year?

Answer: The Provost has talked with college leaders/Deans and they will continue to work on avoiding reduction in teaching for summer. They are actually looking into opening more courses in some colleges, and they will continue to update based on the needs the students have.

III. Reports

A. Report of the Chair – Alex Godet

Dr. Alex Godet, Chair of the Senate, began his report by providing an update on the progress of the Senate's priorities for the current academic year. Regarding the two main priorities—administrator evaluations and the strategic compensation plan—Dr. Godet referenced Provost Shipley's recent presentation, noting that it had addressed all outstanding questions. The next step for the Senate will be to follow up on these matters in 2025.

In preparation for JoAnn Browning's presentation to the Senate in the spring of 2025, Dr. Godet encouraged members to consider potential questions they would like to raise and to solicit input from their respective departments to ensure any additional concerns are addressed. He requested for all questions to be submitted to him by January 10, 2025. During the second meeting of the spring, Carlos Martinez, Senior Vice President for Institutional Strategic Planning, Compliance Risk Management, and Chief of Staff for Office Operations, will also present to the Senate and will address the Texas Legislature in the spring session.

B. Report of the Secretary – Marie Tillyer

- **None**

C. Reports of the Committees

- Academic Freedom, Evaluation and Merit Committee – Ginny Garcia-Alexander
- **None**
- Budget Committee – Mary Dixon

No official report from the budget committee, however, Dr. Mary Dixon reaffirmed that there are no differences in merit allocations across campus. She was also able to confirm this

information with Sheri Hardison. In addition, Sheri Hardison is scheduled to present before the Senate in January of 2025. This timing will allow the Senate members ample opportunity to consider any questions or matters they would like addressed, so please send Dr. Dixon any questions in advance.

Question: There are a lot of promotions happening in the administration areas at UTSA. Do promotions always come with an increase in salary?

Answer: Usually, we know that promotions happen because of retiring, staff leaving and/or merging, which might include a salary increase but not always. We can bring up this question with Sheri Hardison.

- *Curriculum Committee – Zaid Haddad*
 - From the Interdisciplinary School for Engagement in Humanities and Social Sciences (Faculty Representative: Paul Ardoin)
 - Bachelor of Arts in Dramatic Arts
 - Minor in Dramatic Arts
 - Minor in Media, Literacy and Education
 - From the School of Art (Faculty Representative: Emilie Amrein)
 - Bachelor of Arts in Community Arts
 - Minor in Community Arts
 - From the College of Education, Department of Educational Psychology & Department of Counseling (Faculty Representative: John Davis)
 - Bachelor of Science in Behavioral Science

The University Curriculum Committee supports these programs and motioned to approve all. The motions were seconded. There were no objections from the senate and the senate unanimously approved all six requests.

- Graduate Council Chair – Zachary Tonzetich

Dr. Tonzetich mentioned that a report on doctoral student mentoring (best practices, faculty recommendations) is being developed in Grad Council and more information will be shared in the spring. The Grad Council bylaws are also being updated to prepare for the upcoming integration with UT Health.

- HOP Committee – Sonya Alemán
 - **None**

- Research Committee – George Perry

Dr. Perry said that his committee will follow up with Dr. Browning when she presents before the Senate and will work to ensure that all questions are thoroughly addressed.

IV. *Unfinished Business* – **None**

V. *New Business* –

There was no new business to discuss. However, members were reminded to review the report on on-campus dining, which has been uploaded to the SharePoint site.

VI. *Adjournment of Meeting*

There being no further business, a motion to adjourn was made, seconded, and unanimously passed at 4:22 PM.