

# 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 – 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

## CHAIR'S REPORT: Alexis Godet

- An update was provided on the progress of key priorities for the current academic year. The two main priorities—administrator evaluations and the strategic compensation plan—were addressed during a recent presentation by the Provost, which clarified all outstanding questions.
  - Follow-up on these matters is planned for 2025.
- In preparation for Dr. JoAnn Browning's presentation to the Senate in spring 2025, faculty members are encouraged to gather and submit questions from their department faculty. This input will help ensure comprehensive coverage of all relevant concerns.
  - Questions should be submitted to Dr. Godet by January 10, 2025.
- At the Senate's second spring meeting, Carlos Martinez, Senior Vice President for Institutional Strategic Planning, Compliance Risk Management, and Chief of Staff for Office Operations will present and address the Texas Legislative session.

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

- Provost Shipley provided an update on the [Enhancing Wellbeing initiative](#). UTSA has several resources available for students, faculty and staff. Student resources include Wellness 360 Counseling Services, Timely Care, and the Crisis Help Line.
- Student listening sessions that began during the Day of Reflection concluded the first week of December, while faculty and staff sessions are scheduled for spring 2025. A task force will evaluate feedback from all sessions and deliver formal recommendations by March 2025.
  - For wellbeing training and updates, visit the [provost.utsa.edu/wellbeing](https://provost.utsa.edu/wellbeing) website.
- The formal evaluation process for deans and department chairs was outlined. Deans undergo evaluation in the spring after completing three years of service. The provost makes a recommendation to the President based on: the evaluation criteria in the Handbook of Operations Procedures and a survey from the Office of Institutional Research (IR) that assesses the dean's strengths and areas for growth. The results are reviewed with the dean, who then has an opportunity to address both strengths and concerns in a college meeting. Following the provost's recommendation, the university President makes the final reappointment decision.
- The evaluation process and criteria for department chairs/school directors remain largely the same, with two key differences: Institutional Research (IR) distributes the survey, and the dean shares the results. Like the dean review process, department chairs have an opportunity to address the results during a department chair meeting.



### What is being done to address student concerns about wait-time for counseling services?

- *We are actively monitoring and evaluating our services through a dedicated taskforce to optimize accessibility and minimize wait times for all students.*

### How can we improve the student user experience to provide more direct human interaction rather than relying on automated responses?

- *This will be discussed in the next task force meeting.*

### In the evaluation process, are all types of data weighted equally, or are some types given more importance than others?

- *No, all data is considered equally and plays a vital role in making a comprehensive decision.*

### How is confidentiality maintained in feedback submissions?

- *All feedback submissions are aggregated before being shared with leadership to ensure confidentiality. Individual responses cannot be traced back to specific respondents unless they choose to identify themselves.*

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### What is the rationale behind the merit decisions?

- *While we achieved record enrollment this year, our budget operates on a two-year cycle. The current budget, including the one-time payment, was established two years ago. We'll learn about our next two-year budget during the upcoming legislative session.*

### Will UTSA executives and administrators receive a salary increase instead of merit this year?

- *No, merit increases will be applied equally to all faculty and staff this year.*

### Will summer courses be included in this year's budget?

- *The Provost has met with college leaders and Deans to maintain summer teaching levels. Rather than reducing courses, they are exploring opportunities to add more sections in certain colleges. Course offerings will be adjusted based on student needs.*



## Budget Committee

### Mary Dixon, Chair

- Dr. Mary Dixon confirmed that merit allocations are consistent across campus. She verified this information with Sheri Hardison, Vice President for Financial Affairs and Chief Financial Officer, who will present to the Senate in January 2025. This schedule gives Senate members time to prepare their questions.
  - Forward any inquiries to Dr. Dixon in advance.



### What is the typical relationship between promotions and salary adjustments in higher education institutions? Are salary increases automatically included with promotions?

- *Promotions may include salary increases, but they are not guaranteed. For more detailed information, it is better to discuss it with Sheri Hardison.*

## Curriculum Committee

### Zaid Haddad, Chair

- The Committee reviewed and endorsed the following programs:
  - 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 and Human Development, Department of Educational Psychology & Department of Counseling (Faculty Representative: John Davis)
    - Bachelor of Science in Behavioral Science
- The Senate unanimously approved all six requests.



## Graduate Committee Zachary Tonzetich, Chair

- The Graduate Council is currently developing guidelines for doctoral student mentoring, which will include best practices and faculty recommendations.
  - Updates will be provided in the spring semester.
- The Graduate Council is revising its bylaws in preparation for the institutional integration with UT Health.

## Research Committee George Perry, Chair

- The committee will follow up with Dr. Browning during her Senate presentation and ensure all questions are thoroughly addressed.



## 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
- Pepe Chang**, Dept. of Management
- Minghe Sun**, Dept. of Management Science and Statistics
- Ashwin Malshe**, Dept. of Marketing

### College of Education and Human Development

- 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
- Marissa Wechsler**, 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