

# 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 – October 3, 2024
- Graduate Council Items
  - MS in Biology (addition of concentration in Pre-Professional Human Health)
  - Graduate Certificate in National Security Studies – University College
  - Graduate Certificate in Data Engineering – University College
  - PhD in Electrical Engineering (addition of concentration in Power and Energy)
  - MS in Electrical Engineering (addition of concentration in Power and Energy)
  - MS in Mathematics Consolidation (Closure of MS in Applied Industrial Math and MS in Mathematics Education, and addition of new concentrations to the MS in Mathematics)
  - Graduate Certificate in Predictive Analytics and Modeling – Management Sciences and Statistics

## CHAIR'S REPORT: Alexis Godet

- The presentation began with a discussion of one of the senate's priorities—the evaluation of administrators (deans and chairs). The Chair met with Provost Shipley to discuss the priority.
  - Provost Shipley will present the guidelines for evaluating chairs and deans at the December senate meeting, with a follow-up presentation in spring regarding the completion of evaluations.
- The UT System Faculty Advisory Council meeting was held on October 10 and 11. The meeting aimed to facilitate idea exchange between faculty, the Board of Regents, the Executive Chancellor, Chancellor and UTS administrators.
  - Discussion topics included the next legislature and the planned UTSA-UTHSA integration.
- Faculty will receive a satisfaction survey in spring regarding Canvas, Simple Syllabus, Adobe and Gen AI. The results will be shared with the Senate in the spring.

**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.*

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## Chair's Report (continued)

- Following a meeting with Tammy Wyatt, senior vice provost for student success, regarding Student Disability Services. Due to a projected increase in student accommodation requests, additional staff will be hired in the near future. The Senate addressed scheduling challenges related to accommodations at the downtown campus.
  - The matter will be discussed in an upcoming meeting with SVP Wyatt.
- The University Leadership Council, where Dr. Godet serves as a member, recently received a presentation from the Office of Sustainability and Energy. The office outlined plans to reduce the university's carbon dioxide emissions, energy use and water consumption over the next 15–20 years.
- The council also discussed the Institute of Texas Cultures' new designation as a historical landmark and its future use.
- Regarding the upcoming [integration](#) with UT Health San Antonio, SACSCOC will conduct a site visit in fall 2025.
  - Integration task forces are now forming.

## Leadership Update

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

- Provost Shipley reaffirmed UTSA's dedication to the well-being of the entire campus community by announcing a [Day of Reflection](#). On November 8, 2024, all classes were canceled, and non-essential work activities paused, providing an opportunity for students, faculty and staff to engage in free support programs and resources. This day exemplified UTSA's intentional and ongoing commitment to enhancing campus well-being, as part of the provost's [Enhancing Wellbeing Initiative](#). Information was shared about resources and townhalls to hear from students, faculty and staff:
  - Students
    - Student listening sessions – Offered online and in-person to hear directly from our students. These sessions will be offered in collaboration with the [Wellbeing Enhancement Task Force](#).
    - Enhanced student programming – Students can engage in ongoing meaningful mental health programming on topics ranging from healthy body image, recovery, therapy animals and more. Learn more about upcoming [wellness programming on RowdyLink](#).
  - Faculty and Staff
    - Enhanced employee programming – The [UTSA Employee Success Center](#) will offer leadership programming focused on well-being through the month of November.
    - [Additional training for faculty and staff](#).
    - [Additional resources for faculty and staff](#).
- Concerns about any campus community member can be addressed through various campus resources, including the Behavioral Intervention Team (BIT).

## Secretary Report: Marie Tillyer, Secretary

- A PowerPoint presentation from the Office of the Registrar has been uploaded to the Senate's SharePoint site.
- Senators were asked to share it with their departments and submit any questions about the presentation by November 18.

## Budget Committee Mary Dixon, Chair

- The committee has postponed its monthly meeting since the IRM review remains incomplete. Once the IRM report is finished in early spring, they will provide updates to the Senate.
- Faculty members are encouraged to meet with their departments to discuss summer classes and salaries for early planning purposes.
  - Senators were asked to inform adjunct and FTT faculty, as they typically have greater involvement and more questions regarding summer courses.
- The committee will meet again in November to discuss one-time merit pay and the impact of inflation on salary raises. These topics have become the committee's top priority, with IRM ranking as their second most important concern.



### **What is the reason for this year's one-time merit payment, and is it connected to the UT Health integration?**

- *The rationale was not included in the initial email communication. The committee will follow up to get clarification.*

### **How is the one-time payment amount calculated?**

- *The payment amount is calculated based on evaluation results.*

### **What is the current status of merit raises and IRM implementation at UT Health?**

- *Discussions are ongoing with UT Health leadership regarding their compensation and resource management practices.*

### **What is the reasoning behind the administrator salary increases?**

- *After consulting with Financial Affairs administrators, it was clarified that for fiscal year 2025, there will be no permanent merit increases implemented. However, a one-time merit payment has been approved for all eligible faculty and staff members.*



## Research Committee George Perry, Chair

- The committee leadership met with JoAnn Browning, interim, vice president for the Office of Research to discuss improving grant processing and accounting efficiency. Recent data showed improved approval times, with grant setup now averaging 15 days.
- Further improvements are expected as processing updates to the program are implemented. The F&A distribution has been modified for the colleges and VPs. The faculty distribution remains at 5%.
- The group also discussed potential support for publication costs, both at the local level and across the UT System.
- Dr. Browning reported that the onsite NSF review was successful. She noted that while overall research funding has increased by 10 million annually, federal funding levels have stayed flat.

## New Business

- Drs. Godet and Tillyer participated in general discussions at the UT System FAC and will continue representing the Senate and UTSA.



### 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
- **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