

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 – September 5, 2024
- Graduate Council Items
 - MED – Higher Edu Administration Leadership Concentration
 - MS – Adv. Materials Engineering Semiconductor Materials and Manufacturing Concentration
 - MS – IT Cyber Analytics Concentration
 - MS – Management of Technology (Program Closure)

CHAIR'S REPORT: Alexis Godet

- Dr. Alex Godet and Dr. Marie Tillyer attended the Texas Faculty Governance Leaders meeting. The event provided an opportunity to discuss the role of Faculty Senates at universities, identify action items, and connect with faculty senate representatives from UT Tyler, which recently integrated with UT Health Science Center at Tyler. It also allowed for gathering information and building relationships that could benefit UTSA.
- A new mission statement has been proposed for consideration regarding the UTSA-UT Health integration. The statement was distributed during the meeting and via email for Senate feedback.
- The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) has announced a temporary pause in the approval process for new academic programs.
 - This pause is scheduled to be in effect from January 1, 2025 through July 2026.

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

- A presentation was given with recent highlights:
 - An update was provided on the UTSA and UT Health integration and the task forces that have been formed. As they become available, integration updates will be sent via email and all are encouraged to visit the [official website](#) anytime for additional information.
 - One of the first priorities is accreditation to ensure a smooth merger.
 - An update was provided regarding the new college. The recently conducted survey received 650 responses, which are currently under review to determine the college's structure and name. It is anticipated that the college's name will be decided by the end of the current fall semester.
 - The latest fall enrollment report shows positive trends for UTSA. According to preliminary data from the UTSA Office of Institutional Research and Analysis, there is a 3% increase in overall student enrollment compared to last fall. First-time in college undergraduates and transfer students increased by 4%, Ph.D. students by 8%, and online students by 14%.
 - Faculty participation in professional development has also shown impressive growth. The latest report indicates that 60% of faculty have engaged in professional development activities, which is double the national average of 30%.
 - The National Impact Travel Awards program has been updated. Academic Affairs continues to provide funding for faculty travel, with a change in the process. Funding awards will now be requested and approved before travel, rather than after travel as was previously the case. Detailed information and all necessary materials for submitting requests can be found on the [official website](#).



Is the First-year Faculty Institute still available?

- Yes, the First-year Faculty Institute is currently available. It primarily serves faculty members in their first through third years, with additional mentoring opportunities for mid-career faculty.

How do UTSA's enrollment trends compare to other schools in Texas?

- Based on preliminary data, UTSA's enrollment appears to be relatively strong compared to other institutions in the UT system. However, official figures are still pending and will be necessary for a definitive comparison.

Is there a breakdown available of the student enrollment increase by college?

- Yes, the dashboard containing the requested information is currently being updated. The college's deans and associate deans will receive the updated figures soon.

What is the current ratio of Hispanic students to Hispanic faculty, and what initiatives are in place to address potential disparities?

- Our institution is an active member of the Hispanic Serving Research Universities Alliance, which implements programs to recruit qualified faculty. We consistently analyze our demographic data and provide support and development opportunities for all faculty members, including those of Hispanic heritage.



What is the current status of budget allocation for summer classes across colleges?

- The final Institutional Resource Management (IRM) numbers are currently being distributed. Enrollment figures and research activity are the key factors in determining budget allocation. While many colleges have seen increases in these areas, discussions with individual Deans will address any concerns. Support from Academic Affairs may be considered where appropriate.

Athletics Update

Lisa Campos, Ph.D., Vice President for Intercollegiate Athletics, Gregg Michel, Ph.D., Faculty Athletics Representative

- Dr. Campos presented a strategic overview of UTSA Athletics' program, outlining a comprehensive plan. This initiative aims to foster excellence, integrity, and unity, with the overarching goal of providing all student-athletes with an exceptional experience that culminates in their graduation.
- Dr. Michel explained his role as the university's Faculty Athletics Representative. He provided an overview of the Intercollegiate Athletic Council, which advises the UTSA President on policies and procedures related to the Intercollegiate Athletics program.
 - The council convenes at least three times per academic semester and includes representation from Faculty Senate, students, faculty, and staff from various university departments.
- Dr. Michel presented data on the academic performance of student-athletes:
 - The NCAA graduation rate stands at 89%, with an average team GPA of 3.08.
 - 60% of UTSA student-athletes maintain a GPA of 3.0 or higher.
 - In addition to their academic achievements, student-athletes demonstrated significant community engagement, contributing a total of 3,551 hours of community service during the 2023-2024 Academic Year.
- Dr. Campos provided an update on UTSA's participation in the American Athletic Conference and highlighted the university's notable achievements over the past year. She also announced a significant \$57 million investment in Athletics.
 - The groundbreaking for the new athletic facility is anticipated to occur between December 2024 and January 2025.



Is there a system in place to report when student-athletes are struggling academically? Additionally, how is the scheduling of classes managed to prevent conflicts between athletic and academic commitments?

- The academic performance monitoring system has been updated to use Canvas for more accurate reporting due to low response rates with the previous method. While scheduling conflicts between athletic and academic commitments occasionally arise, academic priorities are maintained. Faculty members are encouraged to communicate any concerns regarding student-athletes' academic progress or scheduling conflicts.

Secretary Report: **Marie Tillyer, Secretary**

- An update was provided on the current Senate representatives serving on various committees and task forces. Additionally, a call was made for a Senate representative to serve on the Snack Vending RFP Committee.

Academic Freedom, Evaluation and Merit Committee (AFEM) Committee **Ginny Garcia-Alexander, Chair**

- The committee unanimously determined that a statement regarding free speech is not currently necessary. It was agreed that a statement should be issued when circumstances warrant.
- A recommendation was made to approve the current draft statement on SharePoint for potential future use.





Budget Committee

Mary Dixon, Chair

- The committee participated in the IRM review session.
 - Comprehensive notes from the meeting are accessible on the Faculty Senate SharePoint site.
- During the IRM review session, faculty members discussed transparency and potential student impact.
- The committee will thoroughly analyze all points discussed in the coming weeks and provide further information.
 - All senate members are encouraged to review the document on SharePoint.

Curriculum Committee

Zaid Haddad, Chair

- The committee proposed a motion to close the B.A. Interdisciplinary Studies program.
 - After review, the Senate unanimously approved the program closure.
 - This proposal requires SACSCOC approval.
- The committee proposed a motion to close the Digital Communication Concentration within the B.A. in Communications.
 - The Senate unanimously approved the closure of the concentration.
 - This proposal does not require SACSCOC approval.



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
- 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