

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 – December 5, 2024

CHAIR'S REPORT: Alexis Godet

- An upcoming Academic Innovation survey will be distributed in the second week of February. The survey aims to assess the online tools and resources currently in use by faculty and identify areas for improvement. Faculty members are encouraged to participate and provide feedback with the survey estimated to take approximately ten minutes to complete.
- Meeting notes regarding merit stipends and other topics discussed by Sherri Hardison are available on the Faculty Senate Sharepoint site for reference.
- An update was provided regarding the Texas legislative session, with ongoing monitoring of key developments. Carlos Martinez and Jason King will present updates to the Senate at future meetings. The UT System Faculty Advisory Council (FAC) meeting is scheduled for January 30th and 31st in Austin with UTSA representatives in attendance.
- The Provost has scheduled meetings with senators from each college. All senators should monitor their email for a calendar invitation.
- The university leadership council discussed the potential addition of a fall break to the academic calendar. Further updates will be communicated as they become available.

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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

JoAnn Browning, Ph.D., Interim Vice President, Office of Research; Lori Schultz, Senior Associate Vice President for Research Administration; Jason King, Associate Vice President of Strategic Risk Management and Chief Legal Officer

- Dr. Browning presented an analysis of regularly collected data, beginning with the 2024 research expenditures overview. UTSA's cumulative research expenditures demonstrated growth in AY 2023-2024, with data indicating a 10% increase from \$158 million in 2023 to \$173 million.
- The Office of Research monitors monthly proposal submissions to assess research administration workload and tracks proposals according to submission timeline guidelines. Proposals submitted five or more days before the deadline receive a "full review" allowing for comprehensive evaluation and preparation. Proposals submitted between one to five days prior to the deadline receive a "limited review" with preparation conducted as thoroughly as time permits. Proposals submitted within the final 24 hours are designated as "at risk" due to limited review capacity within the time constraints.
- The Office of Research maintains comprehensive data on various proposal types categorized by time period and academic unit. The office monitors key metrics including award setup duration with a current average of two weeks and modification processing time averaging three weeks. Additionally, the office tracks processing times for subrecipient invoice payments.
- The Faculty Senate Research Committee convenes monthly to review publication costs, F&A, Office of Research services and international travel. The committee actively seeks ways to support faculty through reduced publication costs and expanded resources and opportunities. They collaborate with Dr. Chris Packham, who advocates at the UT System level for improved publication cost agreements with major providers. Additionally, the committee works alongside UTSA librarians to secure better deals and resources for cost reduction.
- Dr. Browning emphasized the joint effort between the Dean's Research Council, Research Council and Faculty Senate to establish a standardized distribution model that follows the researcher. For researchers without college affiliation, the distribution follows their respective VP unit. Lori Schultz distributed relevant information before the year-end break.
- An overview of recent federal policy changes regarding rate adjustments was presented. The new Facilities and Administrative (F&A) rate agreement was executed in November 2024. These changes will take effect for the upcoming school year but will not impact current awards or proposals submitted before the agreement. New proposals submitted after the agreement will incorporate the updated rates. Dr. Browning also discussed the ongoing implementation of ServiceNow in research administration processes to enhance tracking capabilities and data collection.
- An update on international travel was provided by Jason King. The presentation covered recent state-level executive orders regarding restricted university travel to certain countries. While personal travel to these countries is permitted, it must be reported to the university before and after the trip. A working group is evaluating these regulations and will provide further guidance. Additionally, efforts are ongoing to interpret and implement federal travel orders, with updates expected throughout the academic term.
- The full presentation can be found on the Senate SharePoint site for additional details.



What is the typical timeline for award setup and does the 25-30 day average reflect process complexity?

- The average timeline is indeed driven by process complexity. Delays can occur due to sponsor response times and communication challenges. In such instances, we collaborate with faculty members who may have established relationships with sponsors or access to additional information to facilitate the process.

When will there be a dedicated concierge for the College of Education and Human Development?

- Based on current award volumes and operational efficiency, the Office of Research will maintain the existing shared service model between COEHD and COLFA. For inquiries regarding processes or services, please contact Jesse Hernandez.

Is the new F&A rate, the final increase we will see or will the integration cause further changes?

- The UT Health rate is higher than ours, but UTSA just signed for the new one. As a combined institution nothing will need to be submitted for quite a long time. The rate you see now is expected to stay the same for the next five years.

What training programs are being implemented to facilitate inter-college collaboration and joint grant applications among offices across the university? How is UTSA preparing to support evolving research collaborations?

- UTSA is dedicated to training, supporting and developing faculty for collaborative work. Currently, research interest groups are available through our research page. We provide grant facilitation based on project scope, with each college having a research facilitator funded jointly by the Office of Research and the college to assist with grants up to \$5 million. For larger grants, a university-level research team provides additional support.





Budget Committee

Mary Dixon, Chair

- The Budget Committee encouraged the Senate to review the SharePoint materials from the January 17th meeting with Sheri Hardison.
- The committee will provide further updates to the Senate as they become available.



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