

SENATE HIGHLIGHTS

UTSA Faculty Senate Newsletter



2022-2023 OFFICERS AND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

- Rene Zenteno: Chair*
- Chad Mahood: Past Faculty Senate Chair*
- Chris Packham: Secretary of the General Faculty*
- Victor Villarreal: Graduate Council*
- Valerie Sponsel: ADTS Representative*
- Curtis Brewer: Parliamentarian*
- Mary McNaughton-Cassil: Secretary*
- Kerry Sinanan: Academic Freedom, Evaluation & Merit (AFEM)*
- Kirsten Gardner: Budget Committee*
- Sonya Aleman: HOP Committee*
- Alexis Godet: Research Committee*
- Andrew Lloyd: Curriculum Committee*

Consent Agenda

- Approval of minutes – December 1, 2022
- Graduate Programs – Approved by Graduate Council on Dec. 5, 2022
 - M.A. in Multidisciplinary Studies
 - M.S. in Multidisciplinary Studies

ALL ITEMS APPROVED

CHAIR'S REPORTS: Rene Zenteno

- Dr. Zenteno emphasized key topics that have reappeared: budget transparency; future salary compression exercises; use of COVID statements in annual evaluations; FTTs, and hiring and retention strategies for Latino/a faculty.
 - These are currently under discussion between Deans and faculty Senators from each college within cross-functional study groups.
- Dr. Zenteno and Chris Packham will attend a UT System Faculty Advisory Council meeting on January 26-27, 2023, and anticipate a legislative update including discussions surrounding diversity and inclusion. Details will be discussed at the February Senate meeting.
- The next Faculty Senate meeting will be held on Thursday, February 19, in a hybrid format.
 - Via Zoom
 - Assembly Room, JPL 4.04.22

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: Facilities & Real Estate, Construction and Planning [RECaP] Veronica Salazar, CFO and Senior Vice President for Business Affairs

- Ms. Salazar reviewed the areas Facilities Services cover for the University - Building Maintenance & Operations, Custodial Services, Energy & Utility Management, Event & Moving Services, Grounds Maintenance, and Vehicle Maintenance.
- The Facilities Preventive Maintenance team manages issues before they become larger problems. There is a multi-trade crew of electricians, mechanics, and plumbers who provide support.
- Ms. Salazar addressed the following Faculty Senate concerns:
 - Regarding air quality in the buildings, the university's pandemic operations are still in effect.
 - Additional services such as testing for students and vaccine clinics were announced via an email from President Eighmy, Provost Espy, and Ms. Salazar on January 11, 2023.
 - CDC recommendations are being met with a minimum of four air changes per hour and regular maintenance of filtration systems.
 - Portable Whiteboards can be requested using the [iService Desk](#) form. There is also an email address facilitieservicecenter@utsa.edu. For emergencies, call (210) 458-4262.
 - The use of QR codes is being explored to streamline the work request process.
 - For Audio/Visual needs, reach out directly to Academic Technologies.
- Amidst the aging core buildings of UTSA, the university faces a \$92.5M deferred maintenance backlog comprised of \$64.7M E&G (academic facilities only), and \$27.8M non-E&G (\$79.2M at the Main Campus, \$12.M at the Downtown Campus and \$.0.8M Southwest Campus which is new). This is not uncommon among universities worldwide. It has become difficult to manage as facility funding decreases.
- Ms. Salazar stated that the university's budget allocates around \$3M towards necessary deferred maintenance based on safety requirements and usage of space itemized by category, building type & system.
- Ms. Salazar has been working with Finance and UT System to increase funding for aging facilities. \$5M was secured through the LERR financing mechanism, but we must compete for that funding. However, it is still not sufficient to meet all of the present needs.
- Committed to sustainability and efficiency, Ms. Salazar is leading the way with President Eighmy and Provost Espy in requesting a Tuition Revenue Bond of \$155M from the legislature for deferred maintenance.
- Ms. Salazar's office is focused on improving their data through a Facilities Condition Index (FCI) methodology to understand the conditions of all of the buildings. Plans include hiring a consultant for a thorough assessment of all five campuses including components such as roof, interior/exterior surfaces, electrical, mechanical, plumbing, and HVAC systems. A project list will be finalized by September 2023.
- Regarding furniture, Ms. Salazar's team will conduct an inventory to determine which pieces need repair, replacement, or to be declared surplus.
- Regarding classrooms upgrades:
 - UTSA recently invested over \$31M to renovate 67 classrooms – with more than 40% of them completed within a two-year span.
 - This investment was partly made possible by HERFF financing granted due to pandemic conditions.
- To determine the priority for renovations, a team visited classrooms and used a rubric to grade each item: furniture, walls, flooring, lighting, etc. That score along with the space utilization score reported to the Coordinating Board that ties formula funding to usage and capacity of the classroom were used to determine an overall score to prioritize the order of renovations.

Continued on next page



Leadership Update: Facilities & Real Estate, Construction and Planning [RECaP] Veronica Salazar, CFO and Senior Vice President for Business Affairs



What is the current status of the Monterrey Building on the Downtown Campus?

- The Architecture program is using the annex building for its studios, but other areas are closed and need renovation. Space in other buildings has also been used to accommodate program needs. An assessment has been conducted to see if it's feasible to renovate pending funding and other priorities.

How can we improve campus mapping for students, especially in the MS Building?

- There is a collaborative project working on a digital map that will provide an efficient and convenient solution to campus mapping.

Are the air quality standards in individual classrooms aligned with CDC recommendations?

- Yes, the air quality standards in individual classrooms are in accordance with CDC guidelines.

Can the Downtown Campus be updated with movable furniture?

- The general answer is yes. Dr. Vito will present the concept of both in-person and virtual group work during her presentation, including how to request classrooms suited for such activities. Academic Affairs is addressing requests for additional classroom needs beyond essential technology with assistance from the Registrar's office.

Is VPBA engaging faculty in discussions regarding their needs for the Monterrey Building Annex?

- Ms. Salazar recognized the integral role of UTSA's Annex buildings, both within our school and in the community. She said she is committed to ensuring they are well-supported. Her strategy prioritizes building systems but agreed it would be beneficial for a panel consisting of users' voices to have an influence on future decisions made regarding these structures.

Could Downtown Campus provide a space for faculty members to teach face-to-face and simultaneously broadcast their lessons to the Main Campus? This could create an opportunity for increased enrollment in undergraduate courses.

- Yes, Dr. Vito will discuss this further in her presentation.

What are the chances of securing funding through the Tuition Revenue Bonds process? And what is the alternative if funding is not received?

- Ms. Salazar is optimistic that the university will receive TRB funds. However, if not received, alternative financing strategies could be explored to compensate, and if approved by the legislature, these resources could be leveraged with other sources of funding to maximize improvements on campus.

Continued on next page

Vice Provost for Academic Innovation Update: Melissa Vito, Vice Provost for Academic Innovation Marcela Ramirez, Jonathan Gutierrez, Dustin Barrows



Classroom Updates:

- Dr. Vito referenced Ms. Salazar's presentation on Classroom Prioritization Criteria specifically the "Persona" data that identifies the type of classroom based on technology and the upgrades required to best meet the needs of faculty and students. The process conducted during the pandemic when modalities had already started shifting online, recognized the value of hybrid delivery for an engaged learning experience.
- This outlines how to best use classroom technology for faculty and students to learn remotely or hybrid - especially during the pandemic when many modalities shifted online. Technology advancements have made remote access possible, which benefits face-to-face courses by inviting speakers from around the world. These advancements are necessary for classrooms to keep learning engaging.
- Dr. Vito, Dr. Espy, and Ms. Salazar's teams looked at classrooms, examined peer models, and met with students and faculty to understand their needs. The interviews found that faculty and students want their classroom layout and visuals to be predictable and accessible, and for technology brands to be flexible.
- Dr. Vito and Ms. Salazar worked together to create four distinct personas for classroom learning:
- Core Classrooms: focusing on providing basic tech capacity.
- Zoom Unified Rooms: for utilizing remote connections.
- Active-Connected Classrooms: offering more furniture flexibility plus advanced tech tools.
- Connected Classrooms: aiming at maximum connectivity through enhanced screens, whiteboards, and other equipment.
- A faculty development team and training program, RowdyFlex, were created to work with faculty and the Registrar's office to understand the technology and ensure the best usage of the classrooms. Dr. Vito's staff continues to redefine the process to improve performance.



Is it possible to have a "How-to" guide with instructions for the new Touchpads placed in the classrooms and sent to faculty via email?

- *Dr. Vito's team will follow up to provide the information.*

Canvas Transition:

- With no significant enhancements made to the LMS since 2012 and the Blackboard contract and support scheduled to expire, Marcela Ramirez and Jonathan Gutierrez from Digital Learning will lead the transition from Blackboard to Canvas. Canvas emerged as the best choice after feedback from faculty and student surveys, and focus groups around peer institutions.
- It was shared that 40% of our students are transfers who, already have experience with Canvas. Faculty expressed that transitioning to Canvas will give access to a capable platform with innovative responsiveness, calendars, and templates supported by 24/7 support coverage.
- K16 Solutions will be in charge of mapping courses from Blackboard and moving them into Canvas.

(continued)

Vice Provost for Academic Innovation Update: Melissa Vito, Vice Provost for Academic Innovation Marcela Ramirez, Jonathan Gutierrez, Dustin Barrows

- Phased faculty training will begin this spring and will include:
 - Hybrid workshops
 - Self-paced courses
 - Boot camps for instructors and students
 - Faculty Champions training - to help train other faculty.
 - Customized departmental training
- Academic Innovation team members will provide:
 - A website www.utsa.edu/canvas and an email address canvas@utsa.edu.
 - Project updates on the website or Faculty News
 - 24/7 support
 - Open Canvas hours for training
- Canvas Timeline Overview
 - Spring 2023: Migration begins
 - Faculty Access to Canvas in March and 2022 courses
 - Phase I Training (online, in-person, and self-paced)
 - Summer 2023
 - Course Migration Concludes
 - Access to Spring 2023 courses
 - Phase II Training Begins
 - Semester Prep Bootcamps
 - Fall 2023
 - Access to Summer 2023 courses
 - Classes begin with Canvas as UTSA's LMS
- Jonathan Gutierrez mentioned that the Canvas Transition Working Group has the representation of students, faculty, and administrators.



Secretary of the General Faculty Report: Chris Packham, Chair

- David Coursey - Chair of UT System's Faculty Council attended last's Faculty Senate Executive Committee. His insight and presentation have been made available on the Faculty Senate Sharepoint site to review. Any feedback from the presentation is welcome.
- Email suggestions to Chris (chris.packham@utsa.edu) and René (rene.zenteno@utsa.edu) to consider at the UT System FAC meeting.

New Business

- Mary McNaughton-Cassill, Secretary of the Faculty Senate, and Debbie Howard-Rappaport reviewed the bylaws and found that some aspects of the document are no longer applicable or outdated, including divisions listed and conducting votes via paper ballots. Other areas of suggestion include:
 - Appointing an Ex-Officio member from the Academy of Distinguished Researchers.
 - Increasing FTT representation on the Faculty Senate Executive Committee.
 - Defining roles and selection processes associated with the Secretary of the General Faculty.
- Amended By-laws need two-thirds (2/3) of an affirmative vote to be adopted and approved.

Continued on next page



New Business (continued)

- The Faculty Senate approved a motion to begin the process to amend the Faculty Senate By-laws.
- Dr. Charles Liu discussed concerns about limited office space for FTT faculty to conduct online instruction without distraction in shared spaces as a result of enrollment growth. This concern is not unique to one department.
- Dr. Zenteno will reach out to the Provost and Dr. Shipley for a potential resolution to the space shortage issue; Mary Dixson suggested accessible classrooms in JPL's Faculty Center where lectures can be recorded.
 - Dr. Chad Mahood suggested the issue be shared with Veronica Salazar, and as a short-term solution, there are 'hotel suites' available at the Southwest Campus.
 - Joshua Gerken can provide information about the availability of hotel suites across campus.
- John Alexander initiated a discussion of the New York Times article about ChatGPT, an AI program that can be used by students to write papers.
 - Dr. Zenteno will address this concern at his meeting with the Provost and Dr. Shipley.
- Dr. Zenteno mentioned that he had received faculty concerns regarding availability of charging stations for electric cars only within in UTSA parking garages. Dr. Zenteno will discuss the matter with Campus Services and report back on the discussion.
- Senators raised a concern about staff disparity between departments, with some having only one administrative member assigned.
 - Dr. Zenteno discuss this with the Provost soon.
- Dr. Kerry Sinanan asked the Faculty Senate to remain attentive to a bill currently being considered by Texas legislature which, if passed, would bar public-funded institutions from promoting or supporting any office for diversity and inclusion.

2022-2023 FACULTY SENATE MEMBERS

Alvarez College of Business

- **Dennis Lopez**, Dept. of Accounting
- **David Beheshti**, Dept. of Economics
- **Zijun Wang**, Dept. of Finance
- **Maho Sonmez**, Fixed-term Tenure Track Representative
- **Charles Liu**, Dept. of Information Systems & Cyber Security
- **Huy Le**, Dept. of Management
- **Victor DeOliveria**, 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 Aleman**, 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
- **Sue Ann Pemberton**, School of Architecture and Planning
- **Gabriela Romero Uribe**, Dept. of Biomedical Engineering and Chemical Engineering
- **Drew Johnson**, School of Civil and Environmental Engineering and Construction Management
- **Jeffrey Prevost**, Dept. of Electrical and Computer Engineering
- **August (Gus) Allo**, Fixed-Term Track Representative
- **Kiran Bhaganagar**, Dept. of Mechanical Engineering

College of Liberal and Fine Arts

- **Marcus Hamilton**, Dept. of Anthropology
- **Humberto Saenz**, School of Art
- **Kim Kline**, Dept. of Communication
- **Kerry Sinanan**, Dept. of English
- **Mary Dixson**, Fixed-term Tenure Track Representative
- **Kristen Gardner**, Dept. of History
- **Whitney Chappell**, Dept. of Modern Languages and Literatures
- **S. Andrew Lloyd**, School of Music
- **Xunwu Chen**, Dept. of Philosophy and Classics
- **Neil Debbage**, Dept. of Political Science and Geography

College of Sciences

- **James Chambers**, Dept. of Molecular Microbiology and Immunology
- **Kirk Schanze**, Dept. of Chemistry
- **John Quarles**, Dept. of Computer Science
- **Brian Laub**, Dept. of Integrative Biology
- **Alexis Godet**, Dept. of Earth and Planetary Sciences
- **Hector Aguilar**, Fixed-term Tenure Track Representative
- **Lorenzo Brancaleon**, Dept. of Physics and Astronomy
- **George Perry**, Dept. of Neuroscience, Developmental and Regenerative Biology
- **Dmitry Gokhan**, Dept. of Mathematics

College for Health, Community and Policy

- **Marie Tillyer**, Dept. of Criminology & Criminal Justice
- **Ying Huang**, Dept. of Demography
- **David Weber**, Fixed-term Tenure Track Representative
- **Tianou Zhang**, Dept. of Kinesiology
- **Mary McNaughton-Cassill**, Dept. of Psychology
- **Branco Ponomariov**, Dept. of Public Administration
- **Zenong Yin**, Dept. of Public Health
- **Candace Christensen**, Dept. of Social Work
- **Ginny Garcia**, Dept. of Sociology

University College

- **Lauren Riojas-Fitzpatrick**, Fixed-term Tenure Track Representative

Ex-Officio Members

- **Rene Zenteno**, Chair, Faculty Senate
- **Chris Packham**, Secretary of the General Faculty
- **Victor Villarreal**, Chair, Graduate Council
- **Arturo Schultz**, Department Chair Council Representative
- **Valerie Sponzel**, ADTS Representative
- **Chad Mahood**, Past Faculty Senate Chair
- **Justin Marmolejo**, Staff Senate Representative

