

Faculty Voices

Senate Highlights

- **The Interim President addresses the Senate.**

See below under "Open Forum" for details.

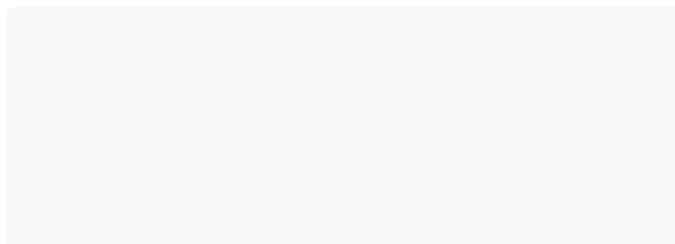
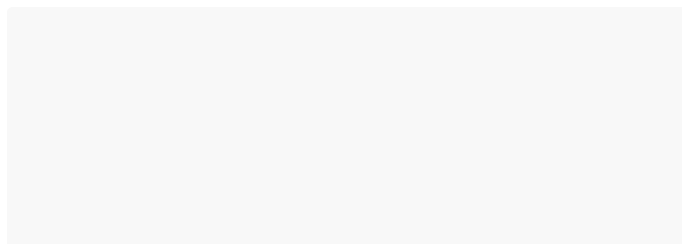
- **News on Summer and Fall 2017 faculty hires.**

See below under "Chair's Report" for details.

- **Other Senate News**

Content below was taken directly from the minutes of the Faculty Senate meeting on March 23, 2017.

Many thanks to Sarah Soulek for preparing the minutes.



Chair's Report



Dr. Emily Bonner

Dr. Bonner said that minutes from the Dean's Advisory Council meetings are available [here](#). They include updates on topics such as scholarships, census updates, and doctoral applications. Additional agenda items may be sent to Dr. Bonner. Summer hires were discussed at the most recent

Chair's Council meeting. If a summer hire is already on the payroll for spring 2017, no additional action needs to be taken. For those few who are not on payroll, a waiver is being asked for. All positions for fall 2017 are also okay. At yesterday's CLASS meeting Tammy Wyatt and Rhonda Gonzales said they are currently speaking with university leadership and touring the colleges. They have also been invited to next month's senate meeting. Main focuses include the first year experience, onboarding, revamping advising, expanding the functionality of financial aid, leadership/PD, and providing focused academic support.

Secretary of the General Faculty



Dr. Joshua Thurow

Dr. Thurow said that at the last Texas Council of Faculty Senates meeting, a resolution was passed in support of the issues raised in the higher education documentary *Starving the Beast*. He said the resolution endorses some of the issues in the documentary as an accurate representation of concerns today. The documentary can be viewed for free using

Kanopy. Former UT President Bill Powers was interviewed in the documentary and attended the meeting to speak about some of his reflections on the state of higher education. Dr. Thurow said there was also a panel held at the meeting called, "What I Wish They Knew: Faculty to Admin and Back Again". Key takeaways included recognizing that faculty and administrators have a common goal; but that they often approach problems from a different perspective due to their roles. Both roles have challenges and different skill sets. Although there isn't a lot of prep for administrators in higher education, they should be transparent and explain decisions. Faculty should feel free to approach administrators with questions and concerns.

Provost's Report



Dr. Mauli Agrawal

Dr. Agrawal said that results from a survey sanctioned by Chancellor McRaven will be released next week. The survey looks at the sexual environment at each campus and gathers data from students on each campus. He said that he has heard concerns from students about the cost of textbooks. Students are asking that faculty consider utilizing free, online textbooks when possible. Dr. Agrawal said that the senate may want to consider developing a set of guidelines to address this issue. Dr. Agrawal said that last fall he traveled to UT Arlington to see how their online programs were operated. UT System has put together the Institute for Transformative Learning with two programs in cyber security and computer science to launch soon. Dr. Agrawal said that UTSA will monitor the revenue gained from these courses to assess what changes to make in the future. He also said that CLASS has launched. UTSA currently retains approximately 70% of students after one year. The national average is 80-85%. If UTSA were to reach the national average, it would save 1,500 students which would ultimately increase

Curriculum Committee



Dr. Alistair Welchman

Dr. Welchman said that the curriculum committee reviewed a request for an undergraduate Certificate in Professional Writing and Rhetoric from the department of English. The committee recommends that the proposal be accepted. Due to lack of a quorum, a motion was made and unanimously approved to conduct an electronic vote on the proposal.

enrollment. He said more details about this will be shared in the fall.

Open Forum



Interim President Pedro Reyes

Interim President Pedro Reyes introduced himself to the Faculty Senate. He said that he met with the executive committee recently to discuss areas of focus for UTSA. One of the issues discussed was the budget. He said that the university is losing funding due to SB1, which would specifically cut funding for special items. He said this type of funding is critical for UTSA, and that he is trying to convey the return on investment, pointing out that the money is put back into the state's economy in even greater numbers. Special funding items include TX prep, the Institute of Texan Cultures, the Small Business Development Center, etc. Dr. Reyes said that there could be as much as \$25 million cut from UTSA's budget over the next biennium. With regard to policy, he said that the state is looking at whether or not to increase tuition, or attach it to some kind of metric such as graduation rates. Dr. Reyes said that there are about 6 bills related to

Open Forum



Edwin Barea-Rodriguez

Edwin Barea-Rodriguez said that on behalf of LaRazza faculty, an op-ed has been sent to the media regarding the lack of minority representation on the Presidential search committee. The editorial also addresses the fact that the search is closed to faculty, restricting them from providing input. He said LaRazza is concerned about UTSA's current three interim positions in upper administration and believes that new representation is needed. Dr. Barea-Rodriguez said to contact him with any questions or concerns.

sexual assault, a few of which are expected to reach the senate/house floors which are likely to have implications for higher education. He said that Hazlewood is costing UTSA \$14 million, and that while there is a \$50 million fund available, that is spread out over 35 institutions. This is something UTSA continues to address going forward. Finally, Dr. Reyes said that UTSA's Presidential search committee has finished with their work and has recommended 4-5 candidates to the Board of Regents. After board interviews in April, a final candidate will be selected. The candidate will have 30 days to make a decision before negotiating a start date at the university. Dr. Reyes stressed the importance of confidentiality in this process, but said he may be able to have the final candidate come to UTSA and meet with faculty. Dr. Reyes said that he is thankful for the opportunity to serve UTSA and encouraged anyone with questions or concerns to contact him.

The Senate is responsible for gathering stakeholder feedback related to HOP Policies. Be on the lookout for emails from your department Senator seeking feedback on these policies. This is one way that faculty provide important feedback for policy, so please send comments as indicated. Without your comments, your Senator cannot represent your voice.

QUESTIONS/COMMENTS ABOUT THE NEWSLETTER?

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