

SENATE HIGHLIGHTS



UTSA Faculty Senate Newsletter

APRIL 2025

FULL FACULTY SENATE MINUTES AND REPORT

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.



Consent Agenda - Approved

- Approval of Minutes – March 20, 2025
- Mary Dixon's nomination as Vice Chair / Chair Elect of the Faculty Senate was unanimously accepted by the senate

CHAIR'S REPORT: Alexis Godet

- An update was provided regarding a recent UT System Faculty Advisory Council (FAC) meeting. While discussions covered current legislative session topics, many updates have occurred since the meeting making much of the information outdated. A key topic still being monitored is potential changes to faculty senate size and structure. The changes to faculty senate structure will be monitored closely.
- The Senate will hold an in-person meeting in May. Senators are advised to watch for a special invitation to a meeting with President Eighmy.

Question and answer

Is the meeting with President Eighmy open to all faculty or just faculty senators?

- The meeting is for faculty senators only.



Leadership Update

Jennifer Sharpe Potter, Ph.D., Interim Vice President for Research
Carlos Martinez, Senior Vice President for Institutional Strategic Planning,
Compliance Risk Management, and Office Operations Chief of Staff

- Dr. Potter addressed the Senate's question about the approach to federal funding. She emphasized harmonizing data collection methods between UT Health and UTSA. Though both institutions already use similar strategies, she explained that their current goal is to align these efforts without adding complexity.
- Regarding Facilities and Administrative (F&A) costs, she emphasized their continuous engagement with senior leadership and external consultants, Cornerstone. There was a reaffirmed commitment to raising concerns and supporting effective advocacy on key issues.
 - A recent grant cancellation at UT Health was used as an example of how leadership is working with Cornerstone and others to determine next steps.
- Dr. Potter noted that the pace of cancellations appears to be slowing. Continued efforts are underway to maintain open lines of communication with advocacy groups and relevant stakeholders to address any future issues. It was also shared that, based on the best available information and as a precautionary measure, budgeting is currently being planned with a 30% F&A rate.
- Discussion around post-award processes highlighted the important role Associate Deans of Research play as partners in grant activity.
- Recent conversations with college deans also noted that the current grants model typically requires around 14 months of preparation. In response, efforts are underway to review the model and evaluate whether additional training or support may be beneficial.
 - Updates will be provided as this work moves forward.
- Faculty members shared feedback regarding delays in payments and the impact on their work. The concerns were acknowledged, along with an expression of understanding for those affected.
- She reaffirmed the Office of Research's commitment to addressing concerns and improving processes, emphasizing ongoing efforts to advocate for system-wide improvements.



- Dr. Carlos Martinez shared a legislative update on SB 37, noting its progress from the Senate to the House. With 45 days left in the session, numerous bills are actively moving through the process.
- The bill is expected to be referred to the House Education Committee, although updates remain limited at this stage. If it advances out of committee, it will proceed to a full House vote. From there, the bill could move to a conference committee made up of members from both chambers. If approved by the committee, it would then be sent to the Governor for final consideration.
- With the May 24th deadline for legislative action approaching, it is anticipated that the bill may receive a House hearing, though the next steps remain unclear due to the evolving nature of the process. The fast-changing legislative landscape has made it challenging to provide detailed updates.
 - However, relevant teams continue to monitor developments closely and will share updates as new information becomes available.

Question and answer

How will the distribution of F&A be adjusted?

- The distribution of F&A is currently under review due to recent budget developments. While no significant changes are expected at this time, the process remains ongoing as data continues to be evaluated.

One of my grants was affected due to a delayed fiscal report. Is this something that will be addressed moving forward?

- The issue of delayed fiscal reporting will be reviewed to help ensure timely processes. Faculty who have experienced similar situations are encouraged to share their concerns for further assessment.

What can faculty do to engage in advocacy related to legislative matters?

- Faculty are welcome to share their perspectives or concerns as individuals. If choosing to do so, they should clearly state that they are speaking on their own behalf and avoid using university resources or communication channels.



Academic Freedom, Evaluation and Merit Committee

Ginny Garcia-Alexander, Chair and Michael Karcher

- The committee shared an update on the statement previously presented to the Faculty Senate. After discussion, the committee recommended requesting an in-person meeting with the provost as the next step. The most recent version of the statement has been uploaded to SharePoint, and Senators were encouraged to review and share it with their colleagues.
- In addition, a separate SharePoint document has been made available for collecting potential action strategies related to the statement. Senators were asked to consult with their departments and submit their top three proposed strategies or guiding questions by next week, in preparation for the upcoming meeting with Provost Shipley.
- A motion to approve the meeting was passed unanimously.

Curriculum Committee

Zaid Haddad, Chair

- The committee shared updates on recent program proposals and a certificate closure:
 - From the Alvarez College of Business:
 - Minor in Entrepreneurship submitted by the Department of Management (new program proposal)
 - Minor in Business Analytics submitted by the Department of Management Sciences & Statistics (new program proposal)
 - From the College for Health, Community and Policy
 - Community Health Worker, Undergraduate Certificate submitted by HCAP (certificate closure)
- The committee expressed support for the new programs and the certificate closure and put forward a motion for Faculty Senate approval. The motion was passed unanimously
- Additionally, the committee revisited a request previously brought forward by the Department of Mathematics. Following discussion, it was determined that a meeting will be scheduled with all relevant parties to further evaluate the matter.



Graduate Council

Zachary Tonzetich, Chair

- An update was shared regarding Graduate School leadership. With Dean Ambika Mathur retiring, an internal search is underway to identify the next dean.
 - Additional updates will be provided as the process moves forward



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 Dixson:** Budget Committee
- **Sonya Aleman:** HOP Committee
- **George Perry:** Research Committee
- **Zaid Haddad:** Curriculum Committee

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

2024-2025 Faculty Senate Members

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

2024-2025 Faculty Senate Members

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, Faculty Senate
- **Zachary Tonzetich**, Chair, Graduate Council
- **Mark Bayer**, Department Chair Council Representative
- **Valerie Sponsel**, ADTS Representative
- **Lauren Hoffman**, Staff Senate Representative