

# SENATE HIGHLIGHTS

UTSA Faculty Senate Newsletter

**UTSA**  
Faculty Senate

MAY 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 – April 17, 2025
- Nomination of Miltos Alamaniotis for Parliamentarian was unanimously accepted by the Senate.

## **CHAIR'S REPORT:** Alexis Godet

- The presentation began with updates from the UT System Faculty Advisory Council meeting, which included discussions about Senate Bill 37. The UT System is working to ensure all voices are heard regarding this legislation.
- The recent Non-Tenure Track (NTT) / Fixed-Term Track (FTT) faculty report from the Governance Committee outlines recommendations for faculty titles and promotion timelines. The report has been shared with the Executive Committee and Dr. Nash to gather feedback, help inform the working group on the UT System's direction, and provide insights for the Vice Chancellor.
- An overview of a recent meeting with President Eighmy was shared, highlighting discussions on legislative priorities and budget matters. It was an opportunity to learn more about the President's engagement in Austin and to communicate faculty concerns directly.
- The Faculty Senate Retreat for returning senators is scheduled to take place in person on August 20. A calendar invitation will be sent out closer to the date.
- For the 2025–2026 academic year, meetings will primarily be held via Zoom, with the final meeting in May 2026 planned as an in-person session.



## Leadership Update

**Heather Shipley, Ph.D.**, Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs; **Jason King**, Associate Vice President of Strategic Risk Management and Chief Legal Officer; **Carlos Martinez**, Senior Vice President for Institutional Strategic Planning, Compliance Risk Management, and Office Operations Chief of Staff

- Dr. Shipley shared an overview of key outcomes from a recent meeting with the Academic Freedom, Evaluation, and Merit (AFEM) Committee. Moving forward, Dr. Nash and Dr. Wyatt will meet with the AFEM Committee twice per semester to support ongoing communication and serve as liaisons with the Faculty Senate.
- A working group will be established in the upcoming academic year with representatives from AFEM Committee, Chairs Council, Staff Senate, the Center for Dialogue and Deliberation, Academic Affairs, Legal Affairs, and other key areas. The group will develop recommendations to support faculty, staff, and students through resources, training, workshops, and opportunities for dialogue. More information will be shared this fall.
- The next initiative for Faculty Success is revising the COVID-19 Impact Statement to create a more general version that can be used more broadly in the future. A draft will be shared with the Faculty Senate for review soon.
- Senate Bill 37 (SB 37) has undergone several revisions but remains in the process of being finalized.





## Question and answer

### **Is there guidance on what faculty can and cannot do to voice concerns?**

- Faculty members have the right to voice their concerns, but must do so in their personal capacity—not as UTSA representatives. University resources like university email or official letterhead should not be used. To stay informed, faculty can listen to the hearings and review testimonies from students and other faculty who have shared similar concerns.

### **What key information should be shared with incoming faculty senators regarding potential changes to the senate structure?**

- The main changes under consideration include potential adjustments to membership structure and possible modifications related to institutional integration. More will be shared when the final version of the bill is known.

### **When will the integration take effect?**

- The integration will be effective September 1, 2025.

### **Does the 4% budget reduction apply to all offices, including the Academic Affairs' office?**

- Yes, all departments and offices are subject to the same reduction.

### **What should we communicate to students about course reductions?**

- If faculty observe high student demand for specific courses, they should communicate this through their dean's office for further discussion and potential solutions.

### **Given the current uncertainties, is there any flexibility on research deadlines?**

- This concern will be shared with the Research team for their consideration.

### **Is there any way to have transparency about what is being cut from the budgets?**

- Yes, the provost will discuss this with the deans, but planning is still in progress.



## Report of the Secretary

### Marie Tillyer

- Dr. Tillyer acknowledged faculty who served on committees this year and noted appreciation for those who responded to participation requests.
  - A list of contributing faculty is available on the Faculty Senate SharePoint site.

## Academic Freedom, Evaluation and Merit Committee

### Rica Ramirez

- A report was given on the committee's meeting with the Provost, which focused on actionable items gathered from Faculty Senate feedback.
  - The main document from the discussion is available on SharePoint.
- One of the main goals of the action items was the formation of working groups referenced in Provost Shipley's report.
  - Faculty may refer to the shared document during meetings with deans or department chairs as appropriate.
  - The committee will remain in communication with Dr. Nash and Dr. Wyatt as these efforts develop.
- The committee acknowledged the number of comments received, around 500, and the quick 24-hour turnaround that contributed to the development of the document. The priorities outlined will continue to be discussed in ongoing leadership meetings.

## Curriculum Committee

### Andrew Lloyd, Chair

- The Committee reviewed several academic proposals, including new concentrations and programs.
  - BS in Public Health with new concentration
  - BS in Health, Aging and Society with new concentration (pending review)
  - BA in Sociology with new concentration
  - BA in Journalism as a new program
- The University Curriculum Committee reviewed four program proposals and forwarded them to the Faculty Senate for approval. The Senate approved the three proposals unanimously.
- The Senate voted to send back the Health, Aging and Society concentration proposal to the committee for further review and approved an electronic voting process for final approval by month's end. Both motions passed with unanimous support.



## Graduate Council

### Zachary Tonzetich, Chair

- The Faculty Senate received updates regarding Graduate School leadership changes. The Graduate Dean, Dr. Ambika Mathur, will retire this summer and an internal search is underway for a new dean.
  - Candidates will be interviewed in the coming weeks and faculty can expect communication about open forums from their dean or department chair.
- Plans are moving forward for a new graduation hooding ceremony that will serve students earning MFA and Master of Architecture degrees.
- The scheduled council meeting was postponed; a vote on graduate program approvals will be held on May 13. A motion for electronic voting was approved by the Senate with unanimous support.



## 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
- **Andrew Lloyd:** 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
- **Jennifer Swoyer,** 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