

**THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT SAN ANTONIO**

**DOCUMENTS AND PROCEEDINGS OF THE GENERAL FACULTY**

**SUMMARY MINUTES OF THE  
FACULTY SENATE MEETING  
Of October 13, 2022**

The regular monthly meeting of the Faculty Senate for the 2022-2023 academic year was held October 13, 2022 at 3:30 p.m. in the Coates Chapel at the Southwest Campus with Dr. René Zenteno, Chair of the Faculty Senate, presiding.

I. Call to order and taking of attendance.

Present: René Zenteno, Chris Packham, Curtis Brewer, Mary McNaughton-Cassill, Kirsten Gardner, Sonya Aleman, Alex Godet, Andrew Lloyd, Valerie Sponsel, Chad Mahood, John Alexander, Lorenzo Brancaleon, Xun Chen, Candace Christensen, Sidury Christiansen, Mary Dixson, Rick Gretz, Zaid Haddad, Marcus Hamilton, Kim Kline, Don Lien, Justin Marmolejo, Jeff Prevost, John Quarles, Rica Ramirez, Humberto Saenz, Maho Sonmez, Zijun Wang, Zenong Yin, Tianou Zhang

Absent: Hector Aguilar, August Allo, Kiran Bhaganagar (excused), Felicia Castro-Villarreal (excused), James Chambers (excused) Whitney Chappell (excused), Neil Debbage (excused), Victor DeOliveira, Ginny Garcia, Dmitry Gokhman, Ying Huang, Drew Johnson, Brian Laub, Huy Le (excused), Richard LeBaron, Dennis Lopez (excused) Charles Liu, Sue Ann Pemberton, Branco Ponomariov, Lauren Riojas-Fitzpatrick (excused), Devon Romero, Gabriela Romero Uribe, Kirk Schanze (excused), Arturo Schultz (excused), Kerry Sinanan (excused), Corey Sparks (excused), Marie Tillyer (excused) and David Weber

Guests: Kimberly Andrews Espy, Heather Shipley, Jaclyn Shaw, Debra Del Toro, Angela Griffith, Debbie Rappaport, Michael Karcher (for Felicia Castro-Villarreal), Isaura Contreras-Rios (for Whitney Chappell), Walter Wilson (for Neil Debbage), Catalina Zarate (for Huy Le),

Total members present: 30 Total members absent: 28 Substitutes present: 4

II. Consent Agenda

- Approval of Minutes – September 8, 2022 Faculty Senate Meeting
- Approval of PhD in Computer Engineering degree program  
The Minutes and the PhD in Computer Engineering degree program were approved

III. Reports

**Academic Affairs Updates:** Provost Kimberly Andrews Espy

Dr. Espy welcome everyone to the Southwest Campus and thanked those who were able to attend the meeting in person. She provided the following updates:

## Hispanic Heritage Month:

- Culmination of recognizing Hispanic Heritage month – virtual, livestreamed event featuring U.S. Education Secretary, Miguel Cardona. Open to the UTSA and community and will discuss topics surrounding higher education.
- In September, a group from UTSA traveled to Washington, D.C. for the *Celebración de Excelencia* hosted by *Excelencia* in Education, an event honoring programs that work for Latino student success, including the 2022 Examples of *Excelencia* award. The M.S. in Environmental Science program was selected out of over 200 applications to receive this honor. The Examples of *Excelencia* award recognizes programs who implement ideals of belonging for Latinos and dismantle barriers to access which leave a lasting impact on individual students and their communities. Dr. Espy reminded the Senators that UTSA received the prestigious *Seal of Excelencia* in 2020, which certifies the university's commitment to Latino student success. Dr. Espy also provided a hand-out regarding the profile of *Excelencia* and noted that Latino faculty at universities with the certification represent 17% compared to 6% at all other institutions. She further stated UTSA is among those who reached the 17% mark, but continues its work to have a diversified faculty.
- During October, UTSA celebrated the faculty with various events during the inaugural Faculty Appreciation Week. She thanked Heather Shipley, Norma Guerra and the Faculty Success team for their work on developing the events. Among those events included:
  - Reception for Endowed Chairs, Professors and Fellows. We have 85 faculty who currently hold one of these positions.
  - Members of the UTSA Academy of Distinguished Teaching Scholars hosted an opportunity for individuals to write notes of thanks and appreciation for faculty at both main and downtown campuses.
  - College Faculty Appreciation
    - Each college held an event to express appreciation to the faculty
  - Bolder Together – Faculty and Staff Campaign kickoff event with President Eighmy
  - Resource Fair with Affinity Groups, such as ADTS, ADR, Faculty Champions and Mentoring groups
  - Reception for new faculty, which included raffling 20 tickets to the UTSA football game.
- Dr. Espy also provided information from the Academic Innovation division, which is a great resource to support faculty at UTSA. She encouraged the Senators to share this information with their faculty and to visit the Academic Innovation website <https://provost.utsa.edu/academicinnovation/> for more information. Also, if you or your colleagues have new ideas to please contact her or Dr. Melissa Vito, Vice Provost for Academic Innovation.
- As part of the Faculty Senate priorities for this year, Dr. Espy was asked to update the Faculty Senate on any discussions regarding merit for this year and what is being done with merit-based compensation this year?
  - Dr. Espy stated she does not have an answer yet regarding merit for this year. Dr. Espy recapped investments the university had made towards improving faculty compensation which took place last year:
    - 4% pool in UT System schools = \$3.7 million invested in faculty compensation
    - Developed a minimum pay scale for FTT's and promotions for FTT's = ~ \$2 million

- Started new program around market retention and compression adjustments; over 97 faculty received adjustments and increases to their salaries.
    - Informed the Senate of promotions and one-time stipends for faculty.
    - Over \$17 million invested in compensation for our faculty and staff.
  - Dr. Espy fully understands the concerns about compensation considering inflation and costs associated with everyday living. She explained that the university funds increases through new monies obtained through increases in tuition and fees. Unfortunately, we did not receive new tuition increases; therefore, there is relatively little money to add to increases. In addition, the new legislative session begins in January 2023 which is a two-year cycle for budgets.
  - However, Dr. Espy mentioned that she and the senior leadership are committed to the faculty and staff at UTSA. They recognize the great work and while she doesn't have an answer at the time of this writing, the senior leadership is cognizant of rising costs affecting everyone's budget. She hopes to update the Faculty Senate if the university undergoes a merit program.
  - Dr. Espy discussed this past year's promotion and tenure class – 42 faculty received either \$5K for promotion to associate professor and \$7K for promotion to full professor. She asked the Faculty Senate to think about how the university can increase this part of faculty compensation. She asked if the Faculty Senate would consider conducting a compensation study of other UT System institutions and our peer institutions. Also, should this include increases following a CPE review. The study would help guide the university and hopefully incorporate the findings.
  - Market retention and compression. 82 faculty received adjustments effective Sept. 1<sup>st</sup>. Her office also increased salaries through this program to faculty from the prior year, for a total of 179 faculty receiving either a market retention or compression salary increase. Her team is committed to continuing this program.
- The Faculty Senate posed questions concerning National Research University Fund (NRUF) and the recent news that UTSA will not be receiving funds this year due to the findings from the State Audit.
  - Dr. Espy explained the Texas Educational Code outlines the process for NRUF and what the monies can be used for:
    - Faculty
    - Faculty Startup
    - Doctoral Students Stipend
    - Undergraduate Research

Dr. Espy mentioned that the Graduate Council from two years ago submitted their priorities and the top two were 1) graduate student stipends and 2) faculty salaries. Also received input from the Graduate Student Task Force from 2018-2019 which submitted their priorities. Worked with Deans to allocate \$1 million towards new graduate student stipends. Also allocated \$800K on improving processes for doctoral appointments. The university is hoping to grow that because these are meant to be monies to allocate to priorities.
  - Dr. Espy spoke about the NRUF hiring proposals process – all departments submitted requests for NRUF along with regular faculty line requests.

NRUF requests were processed in same manner as in previous cycles for priority (Chairs/School Directors and Deans submitted their priorities and all were reviewed by Academic Affairs) and searches were approved. We fully anticipate we will receive NRUF funding in September 2023. At that time, we will have the monies to support the new hires. In the interim, the university will use institutional reserves.

- The Faculty Senate posed questions concerning Promotion and Tenure Guidelines and the initiative that all of the colleges have been tasked to create college-wide P&T Guidelines. The Senate understands that some guidelines are not finalized. The Faculty Senate would like guidance on how to manage P&T until the college-wide guidelines are completed.
  - Dr. Espy mentioned the UT System Regents' *Rules and Regulations* calls for each institution to have Provost's guidelines for the overall process. They are very general guidelines and may not fit every discipline at UTSA. Therefore, she asked the colleges/departments/schools to develop their own guidelines.
  - Faculty Success has a system of faculty mentoring that offers support for junior faculty to interact with senior faculty which should assist with promotion and tenure. Dr. Espy asked Dr. Heather Shipley to expound on the P&T process.
- Dr. Shipley mentioned the colleges are in the process of developing P&T guidelines for tenure/tenure-track faculty as well as processes for FTT promotion guidelines and Faculty Annual Reviews. Some colleges have completed their processes, some are in the developmental stage, others are at the college committees. The committees are comprised of Faculty Senators and adjunct faculty and leadership from the college. Dr. Shipley mentioned that she should have all of the Guidelines by December and will then have conversations with the Deans and Associate Deans. Hopefully everything will be finalized so that the new guidelines can be used next academic year. In the meantime, Faculty Success will conduct workshops on P&T in November. In addition, associate deans have been meeting with faculty, especially career faculty, guiding them through the mentoring plans. Also, her team has started a mid-career faculty mentoring program – started last spring. Dr. Shipley mentioned there are other avenues for mentoring programming, including partnering with VPR on faculty development.
- Once the Guidelines are in place Dr. Shipley stated that their team will schedule workshops to understand the process.
- Jaelyn Shaw, Interim Vice President for Research, Economic Development and Knowledge Enterprise, introduced herself to the Faculty Senate. She mentioned that she has been in various roles at UTSA over the past 9 years and is grateful to be serving as the Interim VP REDKE while the search for the new VP is being conducted. Jaelyn mentioned that the position name is being amended to VP for Research and Economic Development.
- Jaelyn stated that everyone knows we did not successfully receive the funds for Fall 2022 as we did not pass the State Audit. Jaelyn provided a brief background on NRUF. The report comes out in the spring, typically February or March consistently. Based on the information reported, it will generate an audit by the State Auditor's office. Our audit began in June 2022 due to going through the review of graduate faculty and the graduate programs. Our programs successfully passed the audit – the response was that our programs were along the lines of AAU institutions. Because the process took

longer, the report did not come out until May, so the State Audit took place later than usual.

- In June, the State Auditor's submitted questions which were handled by Grants and Contracts financial representatives, VPBA financial representatives and Development representatives on restricted items that were gifts. We hit all of the optional criteria, but did not pass the audit on the restricted research expenditures but only for the first year of the audit. For FY2020, we reported \$56 million, but the auditors found one large item – part of the Dell gift—which was not recognized for restricted research, therefore it brought the expenditures to \$45 million. In FY2021, the State Auditors did reduce part of the Dell gift, but we were successful in meeting the criteria for that year.
- Jaelyn mentioned that the Dell gift is considered research expenditures and we were able to apply that to the Carnegie R1 classification, but we learned the Coordinating Board uses a different accounting standard than we use on our daily business for NRUF. We use Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) and the State Auditor's office and THECB uses Standards of Accounting Method for Restricted Research Expenditures. The Coordinating Board uses this method for NRUF. There was nothing egregious, but very disappointing news. The audit showed us everything we need and most items can be fixed manually and we have confidence we will pass the next audit.
- Finalizing our restricted research monies and will submit that to the Coordinating Board. We have already been audited for FY2021.
- Jaelyn mentioned that the President is waiting confirmation from THECB on whether or not we will need to submit a graduate faculty roster or graduate programs for the next cycle. This is a yes/no question and since we already passed that criteria, we should be fine, but awaiting formal confirmation. We've already met the criteria for membership in Phi Kappa Phi an 50% of our class is in the top 25% of their high school class and that was for Fall 2021 and we reported 54%.
- Dr. Espy and Jaelyn answered questions surrounding R1, NRUF and budget:
  - Will we need the categories of graduate faculty and graduate faculty scholars for future R1 and NRUF now that we have met and close to meeting eligibility? Dr. Espy clarified that R1 and NRUF are different entities. Carnegie R1 is a categorization from the Carnegie Foundation and administered by American Council of Education (ACE); they pull data every 3 years. We should be in good shape for renewal. NRUF is a fund created by the Texas Legislature; applications are sent to and reviewed by the Coordinating Board. Dr. Espy mentioned that the Graduate Dean, Ambika Mathur is a better resource to answer the question about the need for faculty categories going forward.
  - With regard to merit – there are two sources of money. One source of funding is from the state, the other source is gifts. The Regents' Rule does allow for using a portion of endowment funding towards salary, typically not base salary, but not used for faculty hiring. The other source is restricted research—that is a source that has a purpose which is why we use E&G funding for merit. Dr. Espy was asked to provide historical data for merit. She mentioned she would be able to provide that information to the Senate.
  - Jaelyn answered a question regarding the accounting for NRUF. She mentioned that the interpretation of the accounting methods was one of the issues for the smaller deductions. Even though there are a lot of nuances in accounting standards used for NRUF, once we meet NRUF eligibility we will not need to use separate systems for keeping the data. NRUF is a one-time eligibility. Once you have satisfied all of the requirements, you are a part of the NRUF. Dr. Espy reiterated Carnegie classification is different; it is renewable and this is our counting year. Also, there is another index that Carnegie may use – social

mobility. UTSA does very well in this area of excellence through access (Bold Promise initiative).

Dr. Zenteno thanked Dr. Espy, Dr. Shipley and Jaclyn Shaw for attending the Faculty Senate meeting and providing relevant updates from Academic Affairs and the National Research University Fund (NRUF). He further thanked them for addressing questions posed by the Faculty Senate on compensation, promotion and tenure guidelines and NRUF.

**A. Chair's Report – René Zenteno**

Dr. Zenteno stated that he recently attended a University Leadership Council meeting wherein President Eighmy spoke about what is currently taking place in Austin surrounding policies that may be changing such as promotion and tenure, academic freedom and critical race theory. President Eighmy reported that during his meetings with elected officials, his peers at other institutions and others in Austin, that right now, everything seems to be calm regarding these topics due to the upcoming election in November. Dr. Zenteno mentioned that the faculty and the university will need to remain steadfast to monitor the issues pertaining to faculty. He reminded the Senators how engaged the group was on the Statement on Academic Freedom and many of members on the Faculty Senate offered their support on the Statement.

**B. Secretary of the General Faculty – Chris Packham**

Dr. Packham attended the UT System SYSFAC meeting on Oct. 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> along with Chad Mahood. Highlights from the meeting:

- All campuses, including the health affairs campuses provide a report on topics/issues going on at their respective campuses.
- The members resonated with the outcomes the UTSA Faculty Senate discussed at the August Retreat- maintaining R1, research, and compensation.
- A couple of the institutions are conducting faculty compensation studies, comparing with other universities, especially their aspirant universities, and then reporting the data back to their respective President and Provost. Dr. Packham stated that the Faculty Senate should consider conducting its own faculty compensation study since it was a top-rated outcome from this summer's retreat.
- There was a brief discussion about the population growth in Texas and the need to address how to deliver classes to students – whether it be face-to-face, hybrid or online.
- An Associate Vice Chancellor at the UT System, spoke and addressed the following:
  - All campuses are concerned about salaries
  - He and the Chancellor would be focusing on faculty mental health this year. We will ask Mary McNaughton-Cassill to provide data/suggestions that we can take back to SYSFAC for future discussions
  - Imperative to increase diversity at faculty at UT System
  - He spoke about tenure and CRT and sees no major activity on these issues at this time.
  - Senators in Texas legislature are commenting on how wonderful it is so many universities in Texas are obtaining the R1 designation and that we have as many as California, but mentioned that need to improve funding once receiving the designation.

- Dr. Packham spoke on research infrastructure and learned at the SYSFAC meeting that this is not unique to UTSA; most universities, academic and health, have outpaced their research infrastructure. He stated that he could use the FS Research Committee updates as a means to further the discussion at SYSFAC meetings.
- Dr. Mahood, who also attended the SYSFAC meeting, reminded the Senators of the document Dr. Zenteno emailed regarding COVID. Dr. Mahood stated that COVID pandemic has had significant impacts on faculty, staff and students and that it will be around for quite some time. We should be cognizant of it and increase awareness on our campuses. UT System has acknowledged it. We should share the document with our chairs and deans so that we can be prepared to know how this affects faculty and their careers. He encouraged the Senators to share the document with the chairs and deans so they can provide clarity to the faculty as to items such as annual reviews, workload and P&T. Dr. Zenteno mentioned he shared the document with Drs. Espy and Shipley, but will inquire as to how the COVID impact statement will be used in faculty evaluations.
- Dr. Packham reminded the Senators of the upcoming Board of Regents' meeting which will take place on November 16-17, 2022.

**C. University Curriculum Committee – no report**

**D. Graduate Council Chair – no report**

**E. Academic Freedom, Evaluation and Merit Committee– no report**

**F. Budget Committee – Kirsten Gardner**

Dr. Gardner thanked the Research Committee for the collaboration in posing the questions on NRUF. She felt the Senators received a wonderful explanation and information on the NRUF approval process and clarity on what transpired recently regarding the State audit.

Dr. Gardner mentioned that the Budget Committee has posed questions to VPBA/Financial Affairs regarding IRM model and trying to change the discourse to how can we use the IRM model and what are positive ways our departments have improved by using the IRM model. How are faculty supposed to use it? Goal is to change the discourse from the formula to how to use the model.

Dr. Gardner mentioned that the Budget Committee is keeping an eye on faculty compensation.

Dr. Gardner attended the Texas Council of Faculty Senate meeting last week. She indicated that the discussions were fruitful and resonated with topics we are currently discussing. She mentioned that as a reminder that faculty can tend to be activists, especially if the discourse surrounds tenure. Most people are unaware of the definition of tenure. In that regard when you are speaking with the community and legislators to take your “faculty hat” off as you are not representing UTSA as a university/spokesman, but as an individual who happens to be employed with a university. Also, if you communicate to any of these groups via email, to please use your personal email and not your UTSA email.

**G. HOP Committee** – no report

**H. Research Committee** – Alexis Godet

The Research Committee met in September and assisted in developing the questions addressed today by Dr. Espy and Jaclyn Shaw. Continuing to work with Jaclyn and her team to learn about and improve research systems. Also, to review other institutions, especially our aspirant institutions.

**IV. Unfinished Business:**

There was no unfinished business.

**V. New Business:** Faculty Senate Mission Statement – René Zenteno

Dr. Zenteno discussed one of the items that resulted from the Faculty Senate retreat was to review the current Mission Statement. It was noted by many that the statement is too long and a new, simplified version was preferred. Dr. Zenteno reminder the Senators of the current version of the Mission Statement:

The Faculty Senate exists to give voice to all faculty through collaboration with administration to achieve shared governance in order to advance the mission of UTSA. This is accomplished through collaboration with UTSA Administration, Student Government, Staff Senate, the UT System, and other representative bodies on campus.

Proposed new version:

Faculty Senate is a representative body that cultivates shared governance to advance UTSA's mission.

Dr. Zenteno informed the Faculty Senate that the Faculty Senate Executive Committee agreed to discuss the adoption of the new Mission Statement. With no further discussion regarding the simplified Mission Statement, Dr. Zenteno confirmed that the Faculty Senate would conduct the vote to adopt the new statement via electronic vote.

Kirsten Gardner made a motion to discuss the modification of the Mission Statement. Alex Godet seconded the motion. With no discussion, Dr. Zenteno confirmed the Faculty Senate would conduct the vote to adopt the simplified version of the Mission Statement via electronic vote. The electronic vote would be sent out to the voting members of the Faculty Senate no later than Monday, October 17, 2022.

There was an electronic vote on simplifying the Mission Statement

***The Faculty Senate voted as follows:***

**Approve: 37; Disapprove: 4; Abstain: 2**

**VI. Adjournment:**

There being no further business, a motion was made by Alex Godet, seconded by Mary Dixon and the meeting concluded at 4:40 PM