

**THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT SAN ANTONIO**

**DOCUMENTS AND PROCEEDINGS OF THE GENERAL FACULTY**

**SUMMARY MINUTES OF THE  
FACULTY SENATE MEETING  
Of September 7, 2023**

The regular monthly meeting of the Faculty Senate for the 2023-2024 academic year was held September 7, 2023 at 3:30 p.m. via Zoom (online meeting) with Dr. René Zenteno, Chair of the Faculty Senate, presiding.

I. Call to order and taking of attendance.

Present: René Zenteno, Chris Packham, Mike Baumann, Kirsten Gardner, Sonya Aleman, Mary Dixson, Ginny Garcia-Alexander, Andrew Lloyd, George Perry, Valerie Sponsel, Victor Villarreal, Hector Aguilar, John Alexander, Edwin Barea-Rodriguez, Mark Bayer, David Beheshti, Cristian Botez, Curtis Brewer, Sidury Christiansen, Neil Debbage, Victor DeOliveira, Kimberly Garza, Dmitry Gokhman, Zaid Haddad, Marcus Hamilton, Jie Huang, Michael Karcher, Kim Kline, Huy Le, Jusung Lee, Dennis Lopez, Ashwin Malshe, Justin Marmolejo, Alex Mejia, Valeria Meiller, Harry Millwater, Branco Ponomariov, Jeff Prevost, John Quarles, Rica Ramirez, Lauren Riojas Fitzpatrick, Devon Romero, Maho Sonmez, Marie Tillyer, Jelena Todić, Zijun Wang and David Weber

Absent: August (Gus) Allo, James Chambers (excused), Xun Chen, Glenn Dietrich, Jimi Francis (excused), Alex Godet (excused), Humberto Saenz, and Kirk Schanze

Guests: Heather Shipley, Paul Ardoin, Ann Marie Ryan, Nancy Cheak-Zamora, Rhonda BeLue, Debra Del Toro, Ximena Barbagelatta Grau, Angela Griffith, and Debbie Howard Rappaport

Total members present: 47    Total members absent: 8

II. Consent Agenda

- Approval of Minutes – May 4, 2023 Faculty Senate Meeting
- Elect Secretary – Kirsten Gardner
- Elect Parliamentarian – Mike Baumann

The Minutes and the election of the Secretary and Parliamentarian of the Faculty Senate were approved.

Dr. Zenteno thanked Dr. Shipley for attending today's meeting. He also thanked her for hosting the reception with colleagues from the Department Chair's Council and University Leadership Council at the San Pedro I building (Weston Conference Center) to celebrate the beginning of the academic year.

### III. Reports

#### A. Academic Affairs Update – Heather Shipley, Interim Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs (*PowerPoint presentation uploaded to Faculty Senate SharePoint site and [website](#)*)

- Dr. Shipley welcomed the Faculty Senate back to the new academic year. It's exciting to see all of the activity on the campuses.
- Dr. Shipley highlighted the UTSA's achievement of meeting the State's criteria to participate in the National Research University Fund (NRUF), which has been an objective towards becoming a great public research university. She explained that with the outcomes from the 88<sup>th</sup> Legislative Session, there will be changes to the funding structure with the creation of the Texas University Fund (TUF), which will provide funding for Texas Tech University, Texas State University, University of North Texas and University of Houston. The other set of funding is the Core Research Support Fund (CRSF) which was renamed the National Research Support Fund (NRSF) and is anticipated to bring additional resources to UTSA and the other three-emerging research universities in the UT System – The University of Texas at Arlington, The University of Texas at Dallas and the University of Texas at El Paso, contingent upon UT System matching NRSF funding. Dr. Shipley will share more information regarding this process and funding as it becomes available.
- Dr. Shipley highlighted the new faculty hires for 2023-2024, which total 97 total new TT/T/FTT faculty bringing the total faculty at UTSA to nearly 1,500 across 7 academic colleges.
  - Among the new hires, include 4 new department chairs from the Alvarez College of Business, College for Health and Community Policy and the College of Sciences
  - In addition, she highlighted new leaders appointed and hired within Academic Affairs and mentioned these are “home-grown” leaders from UTSA. Some are serving interim positions and some were selected from internal or national searches:
    - Jill Fleuriet – Vice Provost for Honors Education
    - Eric Brey – Interim Dean, Margie & Bill Klesse College of Engineering and Integrated Design
    - Jianwei Niu – Interim Dean of University College
    - Angelica M. Barrera – Associate Vice Provost for Student-Athlete Retention and Excellence
    - Kelly Nash – Associate Vice Provost for Faculty Success
    - Libby Rowe – Inaugural Director of the School of Art (COLFA)
- Other exciting announcements:
  - The new Interdisciplinary School for Engagement in the Humanities and Social Sciences within the College of Liberal and Fine Arts or E-School became effective September 1, 2023. The new director is Sean Kelly. It will be a great addition to UTSA/COLFA.
  - New Living/Learning Community will break ground this fall – Blanco Hall. The new residential community will expand housing options for first-year students and sophomores. She mentioned how important it is for

our students to live on campus as they have higher retention rates, feel a sense of belonging and meet other student success metrics.

- The next construction project to begin this fall will be San Pedro II – new Innovation, Entrepreneurship and Careers (IEC) building, which is across from the San Pedro Creek from San Pedro I which is where the Fall reception was held on September 6, 2023.
- The Faculty News email has been updated, including a new email address – [faculty@utsa.edu](mailto:faculty@utsa.edu). It will be feature important information so look for it in your inbox.
- Dr. Shipley discussed the Classroom to Career and that industry needs the “T-shaped” talent that will ensure our students receive a broad approach to their academic career through the courses you teach at UTSA and are ready to begin their careers upon graduation. Continue to develop strategies to align programs with workforce needs. Dr. Shipley stated this will be developed into a new strategy referred to as the C2C through UTSA’s Bold Advantage Formula.
  - High quality instruction by R1-level faculty +
  - Industry aligned programs with cutting-edge curricula+
  - Immersive “learning by doing” classroom to career (C2C) experiences and experiential learning maps =
  - Marketable skills that prepare students and employers seek or Career-Ready Roadrunners
- Dr. Shipley highlighted the Presidential Charge of Advancing a Culture of Respect and Accountability for doctoral, graduate and post-doctoral education with the Faculty Senate. This charge was then developed into an action plan which highlights programs that already exist, but will be rolled out by Graduate Studies and Faculty Success.
- Dr. Shipley provided an update on the Strategic Plan Refresh. She reminded everyone of the original vision Ten-Year Strategic Plan Destinations for 2018-2028, which is a living document:
  - A model for student success;
  - A great public research university; and
  - An exemplar for strategic growth and innovative excellence

Dr. Shipley then reviewed the reasons behind the Refresh, the process and the opportunities the university had to share their shape the Refresh. She specified the refreshed plan allows the university to

- Acknowledge what we have achieved since 2018;
- Map our progress and chart our future directions;
- Adapt to changes in the higher education landscape;
- Capitalize on lesson learned during the pandemic; and
- Align our goals and pro forma (long-range financial plan) as require by UT Regents.

Dr. Shipley then reviewed the key steps to the Refresh process which began in Fall 2022 leading to the following recommendations

- Recommendation #1 – Affirm UTSA’s Mission, Vision and Values
- Recommendation #2 – Affirm and refine our Destinations:
  - Destination One – UTSA will be a model for student success
    - Affirmed; no changes, continued updates to initiatives
  - Destination Two – UTSA will be a great public research university

- Affirmed; modest changes to rationale; becoming R1 and small changes to acronyms with NRUF.
- Destination Three – UTSA will be an innovative place to work, learn and discover
  - Affirmed; further refine destination; name and rationale

Dr. Shipley mentioned people who responded through the feedback process mentioned Destinations Three as the one that was difficult to recall and would like to refine so that it speaks to where we want to be as an institution. Therefore, the name was refined to one that everyone could relate to and understand—we work, learn and discover at UTSA.

President Eighmy will present the plan at the November UT System Board of Regents' meeting for review and approval. In the meantime, units will align their priorities and activities to this plan.

- Dr. Shipley discussed two bills that were passed during the 88<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislative Session.
  - Senate Bill 17 (Diversity, Equity and Inclusion) was signed into law by the Governor in June 2023 and goes into effect on January 1, 2024. She mentioned UTSA is acting in accordance with real-time guidance from UT System. A QR Code is included in her presentation which directs you to the bill. She indicated that SB 17 is limited in scope and many campus activities can continue.
  - Details concerning the activities that are considered exempt and the process for reviewing campus programs, activities, language, and initiatives that must be reviewed may be found in her presentation.
  - Governing boards must provide a report certifying compliance and if a violation is found, institutions have a period of time to make corrective actions. In addition, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board will conduct a biennial impact study to review enrollment, retention, etc.
  - Dr. Shipley referenced the email that was sent to the UTSA community on August 28, 2023 and reposted on [UTSA Today](#) regarding UTSA's commitment to our core values and academic freedom, "creating a strategy that aligns with UT System guidelines", and "will ensure our efforts are guided by our deep commitment to the inclusiveness, collaboration, and well-being of all Roadrunners."
  - Dr. Shipley described the review process that will commence this Fall regarding SB 17, including a Campus-wide Stakeholder Working Group, PAIR Team, SB 17 Advisory Group (shared governance group which includes President's Cabinet, Faculty Senate and SGA Chairs), Executive Leadership Review Committee (Veronica Salazar, Carlos Martinez and Heather Shipley). Their work and responsibilities are outlined in her presentation. The President will make final determinations of permissibility based on provided recommendations. This process will not include the Office of Inclusive Excellence as that is a separate process which will be handled by the President's office. Dr. Shipley used the analogy of a stop light (red, yellow and green light). Green light for items

that we know are exempt, yellow are maybe and need review, and red which are not exempt from the bill. However, for those items that are not exempt the groups will look for ways to make changes, to re-purpose or amend so that it does not violate SB 17.

- Dr. Shipley discussed Senate Bill 18 which was signed into law by the Governor in June 2023 and made changes to the promotion and tenure process. She mentioned that UTSA is acting in accordance with real-time guidance from UT-System. A QR code is included in her presentation which directs you to the bill.
  - At the August UT Board of Regents' meeting, UT System updated Regents' Rules and Regulations: 31002, 31007, 31008, and 31102. These changes went into effective September 1, 2023. The recommended changes were shared with René Zenteno and the Faculty Senate Executive Committee. Dr. Shipley thanked the group for providing feedback which was shared with UT System prior to the August Board of Regents' meeting.
  - Dr. Shipley will be forming a committee to review the changes and review our relevant HOP policies. She has requested nominations from Faculty Senate and Department Chair's Council to participate on this committee.
- Dr. Shipley received a copy of the Faculty Senate priorities which were developed at the August retreat. She stated she is looking forward to collaborating on the goals/initiatives over the academic year.
  - Dr. Shipley reminded the Senators of the various resources UTSA offers through Faculty Success, Academic Innovation, and Research, Economic Development and Knowledge Enterprise. In addition, People Excellence offers professional development and personal journey enrichment through My Training, LinkedIn Learning, the Employee Assistance Program and wellness.
  - Dr. Shipley also provided the social media links:
    - X (formerly Twitter) and Instagram: Academic Affairs - @utsa\_academics
    - LinkedIn: Heather Shipley - @HeatherShipleyPhD

### ***Q&A Session with Dr. Shipley***

***Question*** – Do we know if faculty have left UTSA due to the passage of SB 17 and SB 18?

***Answer*** – Dr. Shipley did not have any specific data that indicated faculty have resigned due to the passage of these bills. However, anecdotally, she has heard that some faculty, unfortunately, may have resigned in light of the bills, but it has not been an overwhelming number of faculty.

***Question*** – One of our goals has been to increase diversity at UTSA, will the working group be able to address that matter within the guidelines/policy of SB 17?

***Answer*** – Dr. Shipley discussed UTSA's commitment to faculty diversity and the great strides made in this area. She stated she is open to setting up another group to review diversity as well as the first question and to think through processes. She stated the university first needs to receive guidance from UT System regarding both SB 17 and SB 18 and get through the first iterative process/data collection, understand the changes and

know what we can and cannot do. Dr. Shipley met with the Department Chairs Council on September 6<sup>th</sup> and discussed the faculty recruitment process with them in the context of the new legislation and highlighted that UTSA as an HIS and heavily involved with *Excelencia in Education*, remains committed to serving our students, faculty and staff. She further stated we are continuing to remind people that this is the work that we are committed to do at UTSA. Lastly, this is an evolving process and we are being very deliberate and thoughtful in our decision-making while seeking guidance from UT System.

**Question** – Has the administration had any conversations regarding the misapplication or misunderstanding of what these bills mean? How does the university support faculty members knowing that students and the general public may not fully understand the nuances in the bill?

**Answer** – Dr. Shipley is collaborating with the Dean of Students, LT Robinson, to meet with the President of the Student Government Association (SGA) and others on how best to communicate with students and educate them on what is allowed and not allowed. The students received the email that faculty and staff did from Aug. 28<sup>th</sup> explaining how this process is working and the various strategies the university is implementing. Dr. Shipley also stated she welcomes all ideas; please share with René Zenteno and he will pass those along to her. (Dr. Zenteno mentioned that faculty protection was one of the topics that was discussed at the Faculty Senate retreat and will be discussed in future Senate meetings).

**Comment** – More training from HR/People Excellence regarding actively faculty recruiting in a way that increases our pool of diverse candidates would be helpful.

**Answer** – Dr. Shipley stated her office is working with HR/People Excellence on that topic.

**Question** – Will the current college/departmental committees that are focused on DEI initiatives need to be evaluated?

**Answer** – Dr. Shipley stated this is a great example of what this process will do—evaluate initiatives, programs, etc. for further review. She mentioned an FAQ will be provided to the university in the near future from UT System which will offer further guidance. If you have any questions, please work with your department chair or dean during this time.

## **B. Chair's Report – René Zenteno (*PowerPoint presentation uploaded to Faculty Senate SharePoint site and [website](#)*)**

Dr. Zenteno welcomed guests who are representing their areas regarding the curriculum proposals that will be reviewed later in the meeting. He also welcomed all of the Senators, including the new Senators serving on the Faculty Senate. He then provided an update from the University Leadership Council which included:

- SB 17 and SB 18—he referred to Dr. Shipley's remarks on the subject and the process. He mentioned that we need clarification regarding these bills, their implications and how SB 18 will change the HOP.
- Strategic Plan Refresh – he referred to Dr. Shipley's earlier remarks.
- Dr. Zenteno thanked Interim Provost Shipley for hosting the joint reception for the Faculty Senate, Chair's Council and University Leadership Council at San Pedro I building on September 6<sup>th</sup>.

### **C. Secretary of the General Faculty – Chris Packham**

Dr. Packham mentioned he and Dr. Zenteno represent the Faculty Senate on the UT System Faculty Advisory Council and attend meetings three times a year in Austin. The first meeting will be held on October 5-6, 2023. Dr. Packham stated he serves as Research Chair on the FAC Executive Council. Dr. Packham mentioned that it will be important for the FAC to speak with a common voice across the UT System campuses on various activities this year. Dr. Packham hopes FAC can engage discussions surrounding SB 17 and SB 18 around a goal and vision of what the faculty can and cannot do, spirit of influence vs. spirit of control. In addition, determining who is the audience, what is the message for that audience and method of delivery, including clear and concise timeline for delivery. Dr. Packham welcomes any comments/input and asks they be sent to him or Dr. Zenteno prior to the October meeting.

### **D. Committee Reports:**

#### **University Curriculum Committee – Andy Lloyd**

- Minor in Adaptive Decision Models for Business – Closing a Program
- B.A. Geosciences – adding a concentration in Grades 6-12 Physical Science Teacher Certification
- Secondary Education Minor
- B.S. in Health Administration
- B.A. Film and Media
- Minor in Media and Medicine

Dr. Lloyd reported the University Curriculum Committee reviewed the above-referenced proposals. Dr. Lloyd thanked his committee for their diligent work in reviewing all of the proposals. The committee found a few minor corrections and consulted with the program proposals for clarification, and all of those have been resolved. Therefore, his committee unanimously approved the proposals.

A brief discussion was held concerning the overall process for reviewing programs and whether or not other departments are consulted when programs are being reviewed and approved, especially if the program will be collaborating with another department or if courses will be offered in the new program from another department. It was mentioned the proposals are routed through various curriculum committees and Academic Council prior to being reviewed by Faculty Senate so there is a process for additional consultation/review. In addition, the proposals are uploaded to the Faculty Senate SharePoint so all Senators have an opportunity to review the supporting materials prior to the meeting.

Dr. Maho Sonmez, FTT Representative from the Alvarez College of Business briefly described the collaborative process for reviewing the Minor the Adaptive Decision Models for Business in his department and how they arrived at the conclusion to submit the request to close the program. Dr. Lloyd stated if there were specific questions to please contact him.

Dr. Mike Baumann, Parliamentarian, mentioned that the University Curriculum Committee's proposal may serve as the motion to approve the proposals. Dr. Mary

Dixson seconded the approval to the above-referenced proposals. There being no further discussion, and no objections, the motion was approved.

**Graduate Council Chair** – no report

**Budget Committee** – no report

**HOP Committee** – no report

**Research Committee** – no report

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

IV. **Unfinished Business – None**

V. **New Business – Faculty Senate Priorities – compiled from Aug. 16, 2023 Retreat**

Dr. Zenteno presented the priorities that were developed at the Faculty Senate retreat which were then compiled and placed into a matrix and divided among the Faculty Senate committees. The document is uploaded on the SharePoint site. Dr. Zenteno asked the Faculty Senators to share this document with the faculty in their departments and for each committee to begin working on the goals/actions in each of the areas.

Dr. Zenteno acknowledged that SB 17 and SB 18 will consume a lot of time for the Faculty Senate this year because they are important to faculty and the institution. He would like for the Senators to understand the bills as they are important to the everyday life of a faculty member and will have implications for many years.

Dr. Zenteno further stated Interim Provost Dr. Shipley is very receptive to the topics that were developed from the retreat. He further stated last year the Faculty Senate was very successful due to the roadmap that was developed and clearly defined expectations. It was suggested that each committee develop a system to measure outcomes of goals/actions of the priorities.

A question was asked if UTSA is a member of AAUP. Dr. Perry and Dr. Zenteno stated they are members of AAUP, as individual faculty members. Also, it was suggested to contact Dr. Marisol Cortez, Professor of Practice in the Department of English, at [cortez.marisol@gmail.com](mailto:cortez.marisol@gmail.com) regarding AAUP membership. Dr. Zenteno mentioned that AAUP played a crucial role in shaping higher education legislation this year.

A brief discussion was held regarding the VP-REDKE and Provost positions and the status of the search process. The VP-REDKE search process is currently paused, but no information has been shared lately regarding the search process. Both positions are important to the university and affect faculty. Discussion surrounded the importance of having Faculty Senate representation on both search committees and hiring the right people for these positions.

VI. **Adjournment:**



There being no further business, a motion was made by Dr. Rica Ramirez seconded by Dr. Mary Dixson and the meeting concluded at 4:38 PM.