

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT SAN ANTONIO

DOCUMENTS AND PROCEEDINGS OF THE GENERAL FACULTY

**SUMMARY MINUTES OF THE
FACULTY SENATE MEETING
Of January 18, 2024**

The regular monthly meeting of the Faculty Senate for the 2023-2024 academic year was held January 18, 2024 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, Alex Godet, Kirsten Gardner, Mike Baumann, Sonya Aleman, Mary Dixson, Ginny Garcia-Alexander, Andrew Lloyd, George Perry, Valerie Sponsel, Victor Villarreal, John Alexander, Edwin Barea-Rodriguez, Mark Bayer, David Beheshti, Cristian Botez, Curtis Brewer, James Chambers, Xun Chen, Neil Debbage, Victor DeOliveira, Glenn Dietrich, Jimi Francis, Kimberly Garza, Zaid Haddad, Jie Huang, Michael Karcher, Kim Kline, Huy Le, Jusung Lee, Justin Marmolejo, Ashwin Malshe, Alex Mejia, Valeria Meiller, Harry Millwater, Branco Ponomariov, Jeff Prevost, John Quarles, Rica Ramirez, Lauren Riojas-Fitzpatrick, Devon Romero, Humberto Saenz, Maho Sonmez, Marie Tillyer, Jelena Todić, Armando Trujillo, and David Weber

Absent: August (Gus) Allo, Dmitry Gokhman, Marcus Hamilton, Dennis Lopez, Chris Packham, Kirk Schanze, and Zijun Wang

Guests: Heather Shipley, Stacey Davis, Sean Kelly, Turgay Korkmaz, Chad Mahood, Stephanie Schoellman, David Vance, Mamie Frank, Katie Meersman, Debbie Howard-Rappaport and Debra Del Toro

Total members present: 47 Total members absent: 7

II. Consent Agenda

- Approval of Minutes – November 30, 2023 Faculty Senate Meeting
- Graduate Council item – approved at the December 5, 2023 meeting
 - Accelerated Master of Public Administration

The Minutes of the Faculty Senate and the Graduate Council item were approved.

Dr. Zenteno welcomed Dr. Heather Shipley, Interim Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs to the Faculty Senate.

III. Reports

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

Dr. Shipley provided an update on Senate Bill 18 (tenure bill). The committee convened to review the bill has been meeting every two weeks and plans to provide recommended policy updates in early March. UT System shared a model template policy which is being reviewed by the committee for drafting a policy that is relevant for UTSA. The recommended policy will proceed through the normal shared governance procedures established at UTSA. Once approved, the university will seek UT System approval and then the HOP will be updated.

Dr. Shipley reminded the Senators about UTSA's National Impact Travel Award which is open to tenured/tenure-track and FTT faculty, and college or academic support division staff. The purpose of the travel award is to enhance pedagogical skills and showcase the university's accomplishments on a national scale.

- Full-time FTT faculty – reimbursements up to \$2,000 with no matching funds required by the sponsoring college or support unit;
- T/TT faculty and staff – reimbursements up to \$1,500 with a max of \$1,000 if the college or support division provides \$500 through a 2:1 fund matching model.

Dr. Shipley also reminded the Senators nominations for the [University Excellence Awards](#) is open until February 2nd. She encouraged faculty to nominate a worthy staff member to show them how much their work and contributions at UTSA are appreciated. In addition to the staff awards, Dr. Shipley mentioned nominations for the [Regents' Outstanding Teaching Award](#) are open. The deadline for colleges to email the names of their nominees (max 1 T/TT and 1 FTT faculty) is February 22, 2024. The process includes preparing a 50-100 page nomination packet so there is additional time for the faculty to compile their materials for this nomination.

Dr. Shipley stated that [Celebrate Teaching Week](#) will occur the week of February 19-23, 2024 and is hosted by the Academy of Distinguished Teaching Scholars. The week includes many events and Showcase to attend. If you wish to participate in the [Teaching Showcase](#) please review the details and application, which is due January 19, 2024. Dr. Shipley mentioned last year's Showcase included 30 faculty who shared tips and techniques on active learning, pedagogy and other learning ideas.

Dr. Shipley reminded the Senators about the State of the University address which will be held on Monday, January 22, 2024 at 9:00 a.m. in the Buena Vista Theatre. If you are unable to attend in person the event will be live-streamed at: <https://www.utsa.edu/president/event/sotu.html>

B. Report of the Chair – Dr. René Zenteno (*PowerPoint presentation uploaded to Faculty Senate SharePoint Site and [website](#)*)

Dr. Zenteno provided an update from the recent University Leadership Council meeting:

- President Eighmy provided an update on the Office of Inclusive Excellence. In December, the President's office sent out an email stating that the Office of Inclusive Excellence would be re-purposed establishing a new office of Campus and Community Belonging in January 2024. However, those plans were cancelled (email sent out to the university community on January 2, 2024) due to employees from the Office of Inclusive Excellence accepting other positions within UTSA or retiring from UTSA. In addition, Dr. Myron Anderson, VP for Inclusive Excellence has accepted a faculty position within UTSA. Many of the services that were going to be offered within the new office will now be moved to various offices at the university.
- The Department Chair's Council is forming a working group to review faculty annual evaluations. The working group will be charged with making recommendations to the Office of Academic Affairs on the use of the scales currently utilized in the annual evaluation process. According to the Regents' Rules, they only require using categories for assessment and the usage of incorporating the scales along with the categories has caused confusion over the years. The other suggestion to consider is to de-couple the annual evaluation process with the merit process. According to the Board of Regent's Rules, there is no connection between the faculty annual review and the merit increases. Please be on the lookout for an email regarding participation in this working group to include one or two members from the Faculty Senate Executive Committee and one or two members from the Faculty Senate to work with members from the Department Chair's Council and to present recommendations by May, 2024.

Dr. Zenteno also encouraged the Faculty Senate members to attend the State of the University address on Monday, January 22, 2024 either in person or via the livestream.

Comment – Regarding annual evaluations and the merit process - In the past merit was managed at the departmental level instead of Human Resources which allowed the departments to utilize resources to increase salaries of faculty who were underpaid. The Chairs were able to use merit as a mechanism to eliminate compression. Once the annual evaluation process was managed by HR, it seemed to take the power away from the department chairs as they were able to use any funds that were remaining to manage compression salaries.

Answer – Dr. Zenteno mentioned this has been discussed at the Department Chair's Council (he attends these meetings). He further stated he is unsure if this particular topic will be considered, but could be discussed by the working group.

C. Secretary of the General Faculty – Dr. Chris Packham

Dr. Packham was unable to attend today's meeting. Dr. Zenteno provided the Secretary's update:

The UT System Faculty Advisory Council meeting will be held in Austin, TX on January 25-26, 2024. Many of the items discussed there will be topics of conversation such as SB 17 and SB 18, research and faculty evaluations. Dr. Packham will provide a detailed report during the February Faculty Senate meeting.

D. Committee Reports

Academic Freedom, Evaluation and Merit Committee – Ginny Garcia-Alexander,
no report

Budget Committee – Mary Dixon

Dr. Dixon stated the Budget Committee met with Sheri Hardison, Chief Financial Officer and Sr. Associate Vice President for Financial Affairs, and her team on January 10, 2024, to review the university's 23-24 year-end financial results and budget update. She stated the meeting was open to the entire Faculty Senate and approximately twenty Senators were able to attend the meeting. Dr. Dixon mentioned the presentation was 50,000-foot information, but were able to ask questions pertinent to information faculty are most interested in. She stated in general, the university is financially in good health. Ms. Hardison's presentation included information on how the university's money is allocated:

- Merit
- Adjustments to faculty salaries

There were a few questions regarding the numbers and percentages that were in the presentation and Ms. Hardison said that she would review and correct some of the "quirks." It was a matter of calculation and the manner in how they were presented.

Dr. Dixon mentioned there were a few questions regarding the administrative costs and asked how that number was benchmarked and decided. Dr. Dixon had a follow-up conversation with Ms. Hardison to clarify how the university makes decisions on the number of administrative positions that have been in question and how to benchmark those salaries since those costs seem to be on the rise. Dr. Dixon stated the positions/salaries are managed at the vice-presidential level and it's not an area that is required to be benchmarked by UT System or the State of Texas. The Budget Committee will decide if further conversations on this particular topic are needed.

Dr. Dixon stated the next topic that was discussed concerned the online programs and how profitable they are for the units that have engaged in online learning. Initially, it seemed these programs were going to be more profitable for departments who engaged in online learning than the residential programs/students. However, once the programs began the finances did not bear it out. Dr. Dixon stated Ms. Hardison needed to research the topic, but was open to additional conversations. The presentation from the Budget Committee meeting can be found on the Faculty Senate Sharepoint site.

Question – Regarding the online classes, you mentioned that at first the classes were making money, but now it's not entirely clear they are making money? Can you clarify your statement?

Answer – Dr. Dixon stated her understanding is that the university began fully online programs about five years ago and this would be a prosperous financial program for the departments. The departments would be able to increase student enrollments as the classes are eight-week sessions, game changer with student population as you could

recruit from the military, professionals, and adult learners. In addition, while the program was growing, the Online Learning Programs Office would absorb the costs/losses that the department was incurring while you developed the program. In addition, the faculty would undergo training and develop the programs in order to get classes approved. Once the program was profitable, which included students not paying the same fees as residential students, this was to provide more money back to the departments. However, the tax actually increased on the students as students were paying for fees, such as parking, gym and other fees, so it hasn't become profitable. The department is double-taxed. The department is paying the Online Learning Programs Office to develop and market the online program, but the department is also paying the same amount as you would for a residential program. In some ways the program is getting taxed twice.

Dr. Dixon mentioned that she has online residential and fully online program students in the same class she teaches with different coding. The online residential students are not taxed by Online Learning Programs; whereas the students who are coded as "online program" are being taxed by Online Learning Programs Office. She stated that the "online program" students are costing her more than the online residential students.

Additional Comment – A guest attending the Faculty Senate meeting provided additional comments regarding the online programs. He stated that the Online Programs have a different tax structure in place. Fully Online Programs are not subject to regular tuition and fees. It is also not weighted-student credit hours or fees. Online Learning Programs has a separate per credit hour fee that is charged to the student. This program also doesn't follow regular IRM tax structure:

25% - Academic Affairs – Provost's Office – not sure what the funds are used for;

25% - Academic Innovation (pays for the advisors, course designers, marketing, etc.);

50% - Returns to the department as profit.

Over the summer VPBA and others found out about the tax structure and amended it so that it would be subject to IRM:

33% - VPBA IRM tax first;

25% - Academic Affairs – Provost's Office – not sure what the funds are used for;

25% - Academic Innovation (pays for the advisors, course designers, marketing, etc.);

50% - Returns to the department (or whatever funds are left after paying the taxes)

The new tax structure makes it unprofitable and unsustainable going forward for the departments/schools.

The guest asked Ms. Hardison at the Department Chair's Council presentation to explain the amended tax structure and to see the actual numbers because it appears the departments/schools with online programs are being double-taxed. The guest stated it doesn't seem the program is producing the financial returns as it was prior to the amended financial structure. Ms. Hardison is looking into the matter.

Question – For clarity, the 25%, 25%, 50% breakdown that had been in place previously which adds up to 100%, is now only 67% of that same amount of money divided by 25%, 25%, 50%? Since 33% is going to VPBA/IRM. Also, the students who enroll in fully online classes could sign up to go to the gym if they live in San Antonio, correct?

Response – Give or take, depending on how IRM is being calculated. But, yes, they are taking funds off the top first and then taxing it again. Yes, students enrolling in a fully online program could live in San Antonio and decide to use the UTSA gym.

Dr. Dixon interjected with the question if that is the case, then why is that student in the fully online program instead of the residential program? She further stated that she has students in the same online class who are coded as residential online students and students coded as “online programs” students. Departments are paying an extra fee for the fully online program. You also need sufficient faculty to teach the courses in sequence. What is the value added of having both programs?

University Curriculum Committee – Andy Lloyd

Dr. Lloyd and the University Curriculum Committee reviewed nine (9) Core Curriculum proposals for the 2024-2026 Undergraduate Catalog. The UCC did not have any concerns regarding the proposals presented to the committee and unanimously approved all of the proposals with one member unable to respond:

- MUS 2733: History of the American Musical Theater
- COM 2313: Introduction to Media Studies
- PHI 2093: Philosophy of the Americas
- ART 1113: Image Culture
- REGS 2003: Intersectional Approaches to Social Justice
- NDRB/BIO 1033: Drugs and Society
- SWK 1013: Intro to Social Work
- KIN 2123: Exercise as Medicine
- NDT 2043: Introduction to Nutritional Sciences

Question – Which aspects of the core were these courses mapping to?

Response – Dr. Lloyd mentioned that he did not have that information with him at this time. However, Dr. Mahood, Chair of the Department of Communication, was present and stated that the COM 2313 is mapping to Language, Culture and Identity. Dr. Davis, Director of the School of Music, stated that the MUS 2733 is mapping to Critical Thinking, Communication, Teamwork and Social Responsibility.

The University Curriculum Report’s serves as the motion to approve the nine (9) Core Curriculum Proposals. Dr. Baumann seconded the motion. There being no further discussion, and no objections, the motion was approved and the nine (9) Core Curriculum Proposals were approved by unanimous consent.

Dr. Lloyd then presented the report by the University Curriculum Committee who reviewed five (5) new program proposals. Each proposal was reviewed and unanimously approved with one member unable to respond:

- Undergraduate Certificate in Creative Writing
- Minor in Medical Humanities
- B.A. in Digital Media Influence
- B.S. in Software Engineering

- B.A. in Commercial and Digital Music

Question – A question was asked regarding the B.S. in Software Engineering. Will the program seek ABET accreditation as there are a number of mathematics courses that need to be met in order to seek the accreditation?

Response – Dr. Korkmaz from Computer Science was present and responded to the question. The degree is being developed and housed in Computer Science department within the College of Sciences; therefore, since it is not an engineering program it does not need ABET accreditation. Software Engineering reduces the math requirement as part of the computer science degree which allows the department to reach out to a wide range of students because they are mainly working on software. Currently there are no plans to pursue ABET accreditation.

The University Curriculum Committee's proposal serves as the motion to approve each degree proposal. It was determined to provide a second for each individual program:

Undergraduate Certificate in Creative Writing – seconded by Mike Baumann

Minor in Medical Humanities – seconded by Mike Baumann

B.A. in Digital Media Influence – seconded by Alex Godet

B.S. in Software Engineering – seconded by Alex Godet

B.A. in Commercial and Digital Music – seconded by Zaid Haddad

There being no further discussion, and no objections, on each individual proposal, the motion was approved and the five (5) new degree programs were individually unanimously approved.

Dr. Lloyd thanked his committee for their diligent work in reviewing the core curriculum proposals and the new degree proposals. He also wanted to thank the programs directors, department chairs and school directors for attending the Faculty Senate meeting to answer any questions regarding their programs. He congratulated them all and wished them great success for their new programs.

Graduate Council Chair – Victor Villarreal, no report

HOP Committee – Sonya Aleman, no report

Research Committee – George Perry, no report

IV. **Unfinished Business – Faculty Senate Bylaws**

Dr. Zenteno stated he presented the changes to the Faculty Senate Bylaws at the November 30, 2023 meeting. He also followed up with an email on to the Senators on January 12, 2024 to review the changes and be prepared to discuss and vote at today's meeting. Dr. Zenteno stated that the motion would be the memo from the Faculty Senate Executive Committee.

Dr. Baumann, as Parliamentarian, concurred that the motion is the memo from the Faculty Senate Executive Committee. He stated the changes are related to changing the officers, changing the election schedule, updating to allow for online meetings. Dr. Baumann introduced the document as the recommendation of the Executive Committee and ask for any discussion or conversation at this time.

Dr. Zenteno reiterated the time the Faculty Senate Executive Committee has worked on updating the Bylaws. There were changes that needed to be made such as adding directors to the Bylaws, removing the reference to the Secretary of the General Faculty since that position has been eliminated and moving those duties to the Secretary. Also, extending the term of the Secretary's position to three years to allow for continuity. In addition, the term of the Parliamentarian has changed from one year to two years.

With no further discussion, Dr. Baumann reiterated the Faculty Senate Executive Committee proposal will serve as the motion to adopt the new Bylaws for the Faculty Senate.

Jimi Francis seconded the motion.

There being no further discussion, and no objections, the motion was approved and the new Faculty Senate Bylaws were unanimously approved by the Faculty Senate.

V. **New Business** – none

VI. **Adjournment:**

There being no further business, a motion was made by Dr. Mary Dixson and seconded by Dr. Mike Baumann; the meeting concluded at 4:21 p.m.