

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT SAN ANTONIO

DOCUMENTS AND PROCEEDINGS OF THE GENERAL FACULTY

SUMMARY MINUTES OF THE FACULTY SENATE MEETING Of May 2, 2024

The regular monthly meeting of the Faculty Senate for the 2023-2024 academic year was held May 2, 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, Alexis Godet, Chris Packham, Mike Baumann, Kirsten Gardner, Sonya Alemán, Mary Dixon, 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, Glenn Dietrich, Jimi Francis, Kimberly Garza, Zaid Haddad, Marcus Hamilton, Kim Kline, Huy Le, Jusung Lee, Dennis Lopez, Ashwin Malshe, Alex Mejia, Valeria Meiller, Harry Millwater, Jeff Prevost, John Quarles, Rica Ramirez, Lauren Riojas-Fitzpatrick, Devon Romero, Humberto Saenz, Kirk Schanze, Susan Thomas, Marie Tillyer, Jelena Todić, Armando Trujillo, David Weber and Catalina Zarate

Absent: August (Gus) Allo, Victor DeOliveira, Ginny Garcia-Alexander (excused), Glenn Dietrich (excused), Dmitry Gokhman, Lauren Hoffman (excused), Jie Huang, Michael Karcher, Ashwin Malshe, Branco Ponomariov, Lauren Riojas-Fitzpatrick and Zijun Wang

Guests: Heather Shipley, Mark Appleford, Sharon Nichols, Leslie Neely, Katie Meersman, Kelly Nash, Christi Fish, Mason Hickok (KSAT 12), Debra Del Toro, Mamie Frank, Ximena Grau, and Debbie Howard Rappaport

Total members present: 43 Total members absent: 12

II. Consent Agenda

- Approval of Minutes – April 4, 2024 Faculty Senate Meeting
- Election of Secretary of the Faculty Senate – Dr. Marie Tillyer
- Election of Parliamentarian – Dr. Michael Baumann
- Graduate Council item – approved by electronic vote on April 15, 2024
 - Graduate Certificate in Teaching

The Minutes of the Faculty Senate, the elections of the Secretary of the Faculty Senate and the Parliamentarian and the Graduate Council item were approved.

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

III. Reports

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

Dr. Shipley provided an update on the new college planning process. The task force recently shared the first draft of its conceptual models through campus forums. Dr. Shipley will provide her feedback to the group following their presentation to her next week. Information on the new college planning process may be found on the [website](#) that has been set up for the initiative.

Dr. Shipley outlined the next phase of the initiative:

- Phase 2 Report will be shared in June;
- Conversations with faculty and departments of those proposed in the notional model will occur; and
- Iteration of the proposed models will be developed with additional opportunities to provide feedback. The proposed models in this phase will be used to form the final model for the college.

Dr. Shipley provided an overview regarding the launch of Simple Syllabus for all faculty which occurs in Fall 2024 following two years of successful pilots of the program. She stated that Academic Innovation is leading the implementation of the new platform. Highlights of the platform:

- It is integrated into Canvas;
- Makes syllabi management, duplication and modification simpler;
- Allows faculty to track student engagement through the syllabi; and
- Meets the requirement of HB 2504 for an accessible and public syllabus repository.

Further, through the Office of Academic Innovation, faculty resources and training are provided. Workshops launched in March and will continue through Summer 2024. Department trainings, virtual and in-person consultations are available. In addition, UTSA Digital Learning has created a [website](#) which includes templates, FAQ's, instructional videos, etc.

Dr. Shipley highlighted the collaborative activities between Academic Affairs and Faculty Senate through service on task forces, working groups, committees, Chair's Council, and memos, discussions, which occurred during academic year 2023-2024:

Compensation – updated faculty compensation practices for P&T, CPE and FTT promotion. Last month Dr. Shipley presented the new rates for successful promotion and tenure, CPE and FTT promotion minimums.

- Accomplished with input from the committee which included deans, department chairs and Faculty Senate;

- Internal review of FTT minimum pay scale; (concurrent with staff compensation study). The research and data collection, including obtaining data and assessment from peer and aspiring institutions, for these studies is occurring at this time.

Legislative Changes – SB 17 and SB 18

- Faculty Senate participated in the SB 17 Program, Activity, and Initiative Review process (PAIR). Dr. Zenteno served as the representative on the PAIR team;
- Established the SB 18 committee to study and recommend changes to the HOP; included three department chairs and three Faculty Senators.

Transparency and Representation

- Faculty Senate represented or collaborated on key institutional initiatives:
 - Klesse College Dean Search;
 - College of Sciences Dean Search;
 - New College Task Force; and
 - Annual meetings with Provost and college dean and Faculty Senators

Dr. Shipley provided the May 2024 Commencement schedule:

- May 15th – Doctoral Conferral Ceremony – Arts Building Recital Hall
- May 16th – Roadrunner Walk – Student Union Paseo
- May 17th – Commencement Ceremonies – Alamodome

Please [RSVP](#) by noon on May 3rd if you wish to participate. There is also additional information on the website for those participating in commencement ceremonies.

Comment – The Simple Syllabus is a great tool. The Faculty Senator stated he has been using the tool for a year. The Senator mentioned one feature of the platform is the ability to upload assignments which students find very helpful. The Senator also mentioned the platform allows faculty to modify the syllabus template.

Answer – Dr. Shipley agreed that piloting the program for two years has been helpful and allowed faculty and students to get familiar with the new program.

Question – Would you remind us again of when the implementation of adjustments salaries following a successful CPE will occur?

Answer – Dr. Shipley stated those adjustments will take place in Fall 2025 due to the budget cycle. For those who have a successful Spring 2025 CPE they will receive the increase in Fall 2025.

Question – Will this also be the case for faculty who receive early promotion and tenure?

Answer – Dr. Shipley acknowledged that all of the new increases are effective Fall 2025. Notifications for successful promotion and tenure, including early promotion and tenure, occur in January 2025 so those successful cases will see their increases in Fall 2025.

Dr. Zenteno thanked Dr. Shipley for her willingness to work with the Faculty Senate during his tenure as chair of the Faculty Senate.

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

Dr. Zenteno provided a brief update:

- As the incoming chair of the Faculty Senate, Dr. Godet will be working on the August summer retreat for the senate in order to set and align priorities for the upcoming year. More information regarding this year's retreat will be forthcoming.

Dr. Zenteno provided a review of topics the Faculty Senate addressed with the administration in 2023-2024:

- Salary/pay issues at all stages of faculty lifecycle for all faculty (FTT, T/TT, adjunct)
 - Merit Increase;
 - Ad-Hoc Compensation Committee recommendations led to updated compensation for successful TT/T faculty promotions and CPE reviews; and,
 - UTSA Staff and Fixed-Term Track Faculty Compensation Study
- Maintaining R1Status/Research Infrastructure
 - UTSA Office of Research reorganization; and,
 - Post-award administration updates
- Shared Governance
 - ULC Participation which keeps the Faculty Senate informed of university activities;
 - Faculty Senator Check-In with Deans and Provost;
 - SB17 and SB18 Implementation Process;
 - Approval of many graduate and undergraduate degree programs; and
 - HOP review process
- Protections for All Faculty
 - SB17 and SB18 Implementation Process
- New Faculty Senate Bylaws were passed this year.

Dr. Zenteno mentioned this is his final time to preside over the Faculty Senate meetings and offered his thanks to the Faculty Senate Executive Committee. He acknowledged Dr. Godet for serving as Vice Chair this past year and wished him well as he begins his tenure as the Chair of the Faculty Senate. Dr. Zenteno also expressed his gratefulness to Dr. Packham who has served as the Secretary of the General Faculty for many years. He offered a special thanks to the Academic Affairs team who provide support for the meetings. Finally, Dr. Zenteno thanked the entire Faculty Senate who have participated and raised their voices in support for the improvement of the well-being of all faculty.

C. Report of the Secretary of the General Faculty

Dr. Packham provided a brief report from the UT System Faculty Advisory Council. He stated there was a discussion regarding higher education items that are already on the list for the upcoming legislative session in 2025. Among the items include:

- Role of the Faculty Senate; and
- Implementation of SB17 and SB 18

Dr. Packham stated there was also a discussion of publication costs which was led by the FAC Research Committee. He mentioned the Associate Vice Chancellor for Research and the Chief Librarian are amenable to obtain a common publication link or reduction of fees with some of the publishing houses. Dr. Packham mentioned some publishing houses already offer a reduction in fees, but it is patchwork and the faculty are needing something more cohesive.

Dr. Packham mentioned this is his final meeting with the Faculty Senate serving first as a senator in 2014, then chair of the Research Committee. In 2018, Dr. Packham mentioned he was elected as the Secretary of the General Faculty. During his time as Secretary of General Faculty he was able to represent the Faculty Senate at the UT System FAC. Dr. Packham further stated that he was recently elected to the FAC Executive Committee beginning Fall 2024 as Parliamentarian and will also continue serving as the Chair of the FAC Research Committee.

Dr. Packham mentioned he was privileged to serve under wonderful Faculty Senate Chairs – Emily Bonner, Chad Mahood and René Zenteno. He encouraged the Faculty Senators to continue advocating for faculty as the Senate is the voice of the faculty at UTSA. The next total eclipse in San Antonio will occur in 2341, if anyone is around.

D. Committee Reports

Academic Freedom, Evaluation and Merit Committee –

Dr. Ginny Garcia Alexander, no report

Budget Committee – Dr. Mary Dixon, no report

Graduate Council Chair – Dr. Victor Villarreal, no report

University Curriculum Committee – Dr. Andy Lloyd

Dr. Lloyd presented the report by the University Curriculum Committee who reviewed the following certificate proposal:

- Undergraduate Certificate – Application of Behavior Analysis to Human Behavior

The proposal was reviewed and unanimously approved by the University Curriculum Committee. One member was unable to respond to the proposal.

The University Curriculum Report serves as the motion to approve the undergraduate certificate. Dr. Mary Dixon seconded the motion. There being no further discussion, and no objections, the motion was approved and the new undergraduate certificate proposal was approved by unanimous consent.

HOP Committee – Dr. Sonya Alemán, no report

Research Committee

Dr. Alex Godet provided the report on behalf of Dr. George Perry and stated that the committee met with Dr. JoAnn Browning, Interim Vice President for UTSA Research on April 18, 2024. She announced leadership positions within VPR that have recently been filled. Dr. Browning also discussed the communications between offices are improving. However, please forward any matters regarding the research enterprise to Dr. George Perry so that he may relay them to Dr. Browning that way she can address them.

Dr. Browning mentioned she has been traveling to various external agencies, such as NSF in Washington, D.C. to advocate for federal grants in sciences and to create relationships with the various funding agencies. Dr. Browning stated her office has received 29 proposals for the cluster hiring initiative. The next step is to review the proposals with the Deans and Academic Affairs to see which ones can move forward. Dr. Godet mentioned there was a brief discussion to see how UTSA can better position itself to pursue and obtain large grants - \$10-\$20 million.

Question – There seems to be an ongoing issue with setting up post awards and setting up grant accounts taking six months or longer. In addition, there has been a lack of response to email communication. Is it your suggestion that we send this information to Dr. Perry to pass along to the Office of Research? The interest is in professionalism and getting the job done, not in getting any particular person in trouble.

Answer – Dr. Godet confirmed that is the best course of action at this time. Please include as much detail as possible.

Comment – A Faculty Senator mentioned their department is interviewing a candidate and one of the questions that was posed by the candidate was “what is post-award like at UTSA?” We want the best faculty for a R1 school and they are interested in these areas, especially if the candidate has a big grant.

Answer – Dr. Godet concurred with the faculty member the importance of communication between the faculty and the pre- and post- award office to ensure the process is running smoothly.

Question – Has there been any developments or announcements on the VPR search? The faculty member believes Dr. Browning is doing a great job, but sometimes an interim and the staff can have a difficult time with changes and uncertainty.

Answer – Dr. Zenteno stated that he has not heard of any updates regarding the search process.

IV. Unfinished Business – Adoption of SB 18 Policy Recommendation by the Faculty Senate HOP Committee

Dr. Zenteno reminded the Faculty Senate of the discussion held during last month’s Faculty Senate meeting regarding SB 18 and the presentation by Dr. Sonya Alemán regarding the work by the SB 18 working group to modify UTSA’s policies based on the model policy provided by UT System to all UT System campuses. The working group reviewed the model policy in order to ensure due process for faculty is fair in the case of summary

dismissal. Following their review, an email was sent out to the Faculty Senate with the recommendation and the request to share the information with each Faculty Senator's respective departments. Feedback was requested which was reviewed by the working group.

Dr. Zenteno stated that the Faculty Senate Executive Committee decided that given the complexities of the document, the Faculty Senate HOP Committee would meet and review the document and provide a recommendation to be considered by the Faculty Senate.

Dr. Zenteno mentioned that he recently learned the Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs at UT System is considering implementing a uniform policy for all UT System institutions. This is a new development because each campus was working to adopt their own HOP processes. Dr. Zenteno stated that UT System would need to review and approve UTSA's recommendation before it could be integrated into the *UTSA Handbook of Operating Procedures*. Dr. Zenteno stated that UT System is waiting to receive the recommendations from all of the UT System campuses so it may take some time before we hear back from their offices.

Dr. Zenteno presented Faculty Senate's HOP Committee's recommendation as the motion:

The HOP committee recommends that the Faculty Senate accepts the drafted policy on summary dismissal that was drafted by the SB 18 committee, and that the policy is integrated into UTSA's Handbook of Operating Procedures.

The motion was seconded by Dr. Alex Godet. Dr. Zenteno opened the matter for discussion. He thanked Drs. Alemán, Hamilton and Tillyer for participating in the SB 18 committee.

There being no further discussion, and no objections, another motion was made by Dr. Alex Godet and seconded by Dr. Andrew Lloyd to adopt the Faculty Senate HOP's recommended. The recommendation was unanimously approved by the Faculty Senate.

New Business

There was a discussion among the Faculty Senators about the importance of issuing a statement of support for our students on the matter of freedom of speech. The discussion mentioned President Eighmy's recent statements on freedom of speech and it was suggested that it may be the right time to reinforce the commitment to these issues and the mission of the university to train leaders in the global context. Dr. Zenteno recommended the Academic Freedom, Evaluation and Merit Committee (AFEM) could convene to consider writing a statement of support. Unfortunately, since this is the last meeting of the Faculty Senate for the academic year, we would need to ensure there is sufficient discussion. However, if the Faculty Senate agrees with the statement, it can be voted on electronically. Dr. Zenteno stated that the statement would require discussion. He stated that the AFEM committee could draft the statement, be reviewed by the Faculty Senate Executive Committee who, if approved, would send out to the Faculty Senate for their review and feedback prior to the electronic vote. Dr. Baumann, mentioned that the Faculty Senate needs to be cognizant of the [Faculty Senate Bylaws](#) Article V Rules of Procedures

– 5 – electronic voting. “If a minimum of five senators vote against voting procedure, the vote will be tabled until the next regular or special meeting of the Senate.”

There was also a brief discussion about the recent new policy added to the UTSA HOP on April 24, 2024 banning camping on university property which did not route through normal HOP Committee procedures omitting shared governance and discussion about policies. Dr. Zenteno provided clarification on that policy and stated there are two methods a policy can be added to the UTSA HOP. One method is through the HOP Committee review and the other method is through expedited review process. The new policy was implemented through the expedited review process. This process was used because UTSA was out of compliance with UT System Board of Regents’ Rules (80101) and it needed to be added. Dr. Zenteno also mentioned that other HOP policies have been updated recently due to the passage of SB 17.

There was a discussion regarding the review of the Graduate Catalog and one department noticing admission changes, specifically the suspension of the GRE requirement for their program. The faculty member mentioned their department requested to reinstate the admissions requirement and learned the decision was permanent and also that the decision was made at the university level. The faculty member commented these decisions should include faculty input and be reviewed by the Graduate Council and Faculty Senate. Dr. Zenteno stated that he and the Chair of the Chair’s Council are reviewing the matter.

Dr. Godet thanked Dr. Zenteno for his leadership serving as the Faculty Senate Chair over the past two years and look forward to his continued service as the past chair of the Faculty Senate. Dr. Godet also expressed his thanks to the Faculty Senate Executive Committee and to each Senator for their service.

V. **Adjournment:**

There being no further business, a motion was made by Dr. Alex Godet and seconded by Dr. Rica Ramirez; the meeting concluded at 4:38 p.m.