

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT SAN ANTONIO

DOCUMENTS AND PROCEEDINGS OF THE GENERAL FACULTY

SUMMARY MINUTES OF THE FACULTY SENATE MEETING Of April 17th, 2025

The regular monthly meeting of the Faculty Senate for the 2024-2025 academic year was held April 17th, 2025, at 3:30 p.m. via Zoom (online meeting) with Dr. Alex Godet, Chair of the Faculty Senate, presiding.

I. Call to order and taking of attendance.

Present: Alex Godet, Andy Lloyd, Anthony Rios, Ashwin Malshe, Catalina Zarte, Chantal Fahmy, Chris Reddick, Cristian Botez, David Beheshti, Devon Romero, Edwin Barea-Rodriguez, Emilie Amrein, George Perry, Ginny Garcia, Hongjie Xie, Humberto Saenz, Hung-Da Wan (sub), Jelena Todic, Jie Huang, Jimi Francis, John Alexander, John Quarles, Juan Mao, Jusung Lee, Kimberly Garza, Kimberly Kline, Kirsten Gardner, Lauren Hoffmann, Marcus Hamilton, Marguerite Newcomb, Marie Tillyer, Marissa Wechsler, Mark Bayer, Michael Karcher, Mihai Popa, Mike Baumann, Minghe Sun, Pepe Chang, Rahul Raghavan, Rene Zenteno, Rica Ramírez, Sidury Christiansen, Sofia Bahena (sub), Sonya Aleman, Susan Thomas, Valeria Meiller, Valerie Sponsel, Xun Chen, Zachary Tonzetich- (Graduate Council), Zaid Haddad, Zijun Wang

Absent: August (Gus) Allo, Curtis Brewer (excused), David Weber, Kirk Schanze, Mary Dixson (excused), Miltos Alamaniotis, Neil Debbage (excused), Zhigang Feng (excused)

Total members/substitutes present:51

Total members absent: 8

Guests: Dr. Jennifer Sharpe Potter, Dr. Carlos Martinez, Dr. Kelly Nash, Katie Meersman, Chris Packham, Debra Del Toro, Abi Caceres, Ximena Barbagelatta Grau

II. Consent Agenda

- Approval of Minutes – March 20th, 2025

The Chair of the Faculty Senate, Alex Godet, called for the approval of the consent agenda and it was unanimously approved by the senate with no objections. In addition, Mary Dixson's nomination as Vice Chair / Chair Elect of the Faculty Senate was unanimously accepted by the senate.

Dr. Alex Godet welcomed Dr. Jennifer Sharpe Potter, Interim Vice President for Research, and Carlos Martinez, Senior Vice President for Institutional Strategic Planning, Compliance Risk Management, and Office Operations Chief of Staff

III. Reports

A. Report of Dr. Jennifer Sharpe Potter, Interim Vice President for Research and Carlos Martinez, Senior Vice President for Institutional Strategic Planning, Compliance Risk Management, and Office Operations Chief of Staff

Dr. Potter began by expressing gratitude to the Senate for the opportunity to speak. She holds a Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from the University of Georgia and earned a master's in Public Health, among other degrees. Dr. Potter addressed one of the Senate's requested questions regarding the approach to federal funding. She emphasized the importance of harmonizing data collection methods between UT Health and UTSA. While both institutions utilize similar data collection strategies, she noted that the goal right now is to align efforts without creating additional layers.

Regarding Facilities and Administrative (F&A) costs, Dr. Potter highlighted how they have been deeply engaged, including involvement from President Eighmy and collaboration with the Federal Consulting Group Cornerstone, since day one. She reaffirmed their commitment to raise any concerns and advocate effectively. As an example, Dr. Potter discussed a recent grant cancellation at UT Health and described how they are working closely with Cornerstone and others to determine the next steps. She noted that the pace of cancellations appears to be slowing down. Nevertheless, they remain committed to maintaining regular communication with advocacy groups and relevant entities to address any issues in the future. She also mentioned how, based on the best evidence they have, and out of an abundance of caution, they are budgeting for a 30% F&A rate as of now.

Question: How will the distribution of F&A be adjusted?

Answer: Currently, the F&A rate is retracting because there have been budget changes. We do not anticipate a dramatic change, but we are still reviewing all the data.

Question: One of my grants was canceled because we had a late fiscal report. Will this be something your office will address moving forward?

Answer: A late financial report is unacceptable, so I will investigate it further. If anyone else has a problem like this please email me.

Regarding post-award processes, Dr. Potter emphasized the importance of Associate Deans of Research as partners. In her recent meetings with the deans, it was noted that the current grants model requires approximately 14 months of preparation. In response, they are exploring the development of a program to review this model and assess whether additional training or support is needed. Further updates on this initiative will be shared as it progresses. Several faculty members also shared concerns about delays in payments that have impacted their work. Dr. Potter acknowledged these challenges and offered a sincere apology to those affected. She reaffirmed the Research Office's commitment to addressing and resolving such issues and assured attendees that she would personally advocate on their behalf to ensure improvements in the system.

Dr. Carlos Martinez began his presentation providing an update on SB 37 in Austin. With only 45 days remaining in the legislative session, numerous bills are progressing through the legislative process. SB 37 has successfully passed the Senate and is now moving to the House. Dr. Martinez noted that the bill will likely be referred to the House Education Committee, although updates have been limited at this stage. Should the bill advance out of committee, it will

proceed to a full House vote. If it passes there, it will move to a conference committee composed of members from both the House and Senate. If the bill makes it out of the committee, it would then be sent to the Governor for final approval and signature. Given the May 24th deadline for legislative action, Dr. Martinez anticipates that the bill will likely receive a House hearing, but the subsequent steps remain uncertain due to the fluid nature of the process. He acknowledged that the rapidly evolving legislative landscape has made it difficult to go into detail about the bill during the Faculty Senate meetings. However, his team is closely monitoring developments and will provide timely updates as new information becomes available.

Question: What can UTSA faculty do to help advocate for any of these matters?

Answer: You are welcome to share comments or express concerns. If you choose to do so, please make it clear that you are speaking solely on your own behalf and not as a representative of the university. Additionally, do not use any university resources or communication channels.

B. Report of Report of the Chair – Alex Godet

Dr. Godet began his presentation with an update on the UT System Faculty Advisory Council (FAC) meeting held with Dr. Serenity King on March 31st. During the meeting, they discussed various aspects of the current legislative session; however, many developments have occurred since then, making some of the information now outdated. However, one key issue that remains under close observation is the possibility of changes to the size and structure of faculty senates. They will continue to monitor any developments for this matter closely. Dr. Godet then reminded the Senate of the upcoming in-person meeting scheduled for May. He also encouraged all senators to watch for a special invitation to a meeting with President Eighmy, which will take place on May 1st.

Question: Will the meeting with President Eighmy be for faculty senators or all faculty?

Answer: The meeting will be for faculty senators only.

Dr. Godet finished his report by encouraging all senators to bring any questions they might have to ask Dr. Eighmy in person.

C. Report of the Secretary – Marie Tillyer

- None

D. Reports of the Committees

- Academic Freedom, Evaluation and Merit Committee – Ginny Garcia-Alexander and Michael Karcher

The committee provided an update on the statement previously presented to the Senate during earlier meetings. They determined that the most effective course of action would be to request an in-person meeting with the provost. The latest version of the statement is now available on SharePoint, and senators were encouraged to share it with their colleagues.

Additionally, a separate document has been uploaded to SharePoint where all senators were asked to gather potential action strategies relating to the statement. Senators were asked to consult with their colleagues and submit their top three action strategies or key questions by next week, in preparation for the upcoming meeting with Provost Shipley.

At the end of the report, a motion was introduced to approve the upcoming meeting with the provost. The motion was second, and with no objections, it passed unanimously.

- Budget Committee – Mary Dixson
- None
- Curriculum Committee – Zaid Haddad

Committee Chair Zaid Haddad began by presenting the outcomes from program proposals and certificate closures.

From the Alvarez College of Business:

- Minor in Entrepreneurship submitted by the Department of Management (new program proposal)
- Minor in Business Analytics submitted by the Department of Management Sciences & Statistics (new program proposal)

From the College for Health, Community and Policy

- Community Health Worker, Undergraduate Certificate submitted by HCaP (certificate closure)

The University Curriculum Committee supports these programs and closure for the HCAP certificate and motioned for the senate's approval. The motion was seconded. There were no objections from the senate and the motion was unanimously approved.

Dr. Haddad also brought up the request shared during the last Faculty Senate meeting from the Math department. After much discussion, it was decided that Dr. Godet and the committee would set up a meeting with all the parties involved to make a better decision about the request.

- Graduate Council Chair – Zachary Tonzetich

Dr. Tonzetich provided an update on Graduate School leadership. Dean Ambika Mathur is retiring, so the university is currently running an internal search for the new dean of the Graduate School. More updates to come.

- HOP Committee – Sonya Alemán
- None
- Research Committee – George Perry
- None

IV. Unfinished Business – None

V. New Business – None

VI. Adjournment of Meeting

There being no further business, a motion to adjourn was made, seconded, and unanimously passed at 5:02 PM.