

General Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, July 17, 2024 | 8:30-10:30 A.M. | Teams

8:30 a.m. Meeting Called to Order	1
8:30 a.m. UFT IRM Focus Group	2
10:00 a.m. Old Business	7
10:04 a.m. Continuing and New Business.....	8
Communications	8
Elections.....	8
E-Board Updates	9
10:27 a.m. Questions about Written Updates.....	9
10:27 a.m. Reminders	9
10:28 a.m. Adjourn	9
Written Updates	10
University Service Committees	10
Staff Senate Committees	11
E-Board Updates	12

8:30 a.m. Meeting Called to Order

- Guests: Brian McNamara, Phranses Williams, Patti Ramirez
- Attendees: Amy Fritz, Andrea McClure, Angel Espinoza, Angela Trejo, Anna Boyer-Chadwick, Bev Ostmo, Cynthia Orth, Drew Vincent, Eric Uriegas, Estefania Casper, Evette Flores, Gabriela Rodriguez, Harshan Raj, Heather Frazer, Jacqueline Ortiz, James Rodriguez, Jeffrey Miller, Jenny Stokes, Jessica Vela, Josefina Fernandez, Justin Marmolejo, Katia Diamante, Lauren Smith, Lisa Johns, Matthew Fey, Mickie Tencza, Nikki McGovern, Nnennaya Ikwaagwu, Olamiposi Kolajo, Peppy Garner, Sapna Naik, Sharon Martinez, Veronica J. Salazar, Victoria Downing, Xavier Loredó
- Excused: Jennilee Garza, Julie Fisher, Lauren Hoffmann, Lisa Alonzo
- Unexcused:

8:30 a.m. UFT IRM Focus Group

Brian McNamara, Assistant Vice President, Academic Resource Management

Phrantes Williams, Assistant Vice President, Budget & Financial Planning

Patti Ramirez, Assistant Vice Provost for Academic Support

IRM 5-Yr. Assessment

- Agenda
 - Assessment Objectives
 - Structure and Stakeholders
 - Focus Group Key Questions
 - Projected Timeline
- Objectives
 - IRM budget model was introduced to provide more transparency, data-driven information, supports decisions.
 - The intent of the initiative of the process is to capture relevant information about stakeholder expectations, experiences, and levels of satisfaction.
 - Project deliverables will include a comprehensive IRM Report with actionable enhancement recommendations
- Structure and University Stakeholders



- Looking to understand how different groups have different perspectives
- IRM Budget Model Background
 - Incentivized Resource Management: <https://www.utsa.edu/budget/irm/> and <https://www.utsa.edu/budget/irm/documents/UTSA-IRM-Budget-Model-Overview.pdf>
 - About 5 years ago, UTSA adopted the IRM model. Includes student credit hours and research expenditures, and for the auxiliary areas, by revenues they generate.
- Incentive Alignment: How well are stakeholder actions aligned with the intended incentives of the model? Which areas could be adjusted to better motivate desired behaviors?
 - Support units don't have much of an ability to impact the model
 - We need more exposure/training across campus
 - Chat comments from Staff Senators
 - It takes me quite a while to process information containing budget/numbers!

- Yes, I agree. Some training/workshops on understanding the IRM model would be helpful. I would imagine there are quite a few staff who would want to know more.
 - SIF and other opportunities for resources?
- Budgets of those areas funded by student fees are said to be tight. How are those budgets meant to be supplemented? It seems like we're expected to do more with less.
 - Auxiliary services are meant to generate revenues. Leadership are talking about it, and know it's a challenging situation. They are asking what they can do and finding ways to increase revenue or support.
 - IRM model promotes transparency and information. What will it look like in 2, 3, 4, 5 years as well?
- Common trends are less budgets to work with in direct services that work with students but does not generate its own revenue. How can we make sure that we have the funds to support students without making it more expensive for them to go to college? Incentives for enrollment seems to hurt some areas more than others. How does the IRM model address challenges within the units?
 - Phranses wrote that feedback down as How does the IRM model address challenges within the units?
- How does the IRM model allow for alignment across colleges, from the perspective of Research in different fields and what is funded?
 - The model uses research dollars brought in and that derives a total weight for each college. That driver impacts state appropriation amount. For that portion of funds, those colleges that do better. Each college is incentivized.
 - Heightened focus across universities to pull in as many research dollars as possible. Business, COLFA, COEHD – there's a heightened awareness to improve their grant research. There's an incentive to do more research that's impacting citizens directly. That's typically during applied research through grants.
- Comments: In HCAP, a DOE grant of \$3mil was just brought in a couple of years ago - and yet we were just told that our budget is being cut due to enrollment numbers...
 - Piggybacking off of this - does this model mean that, in time, some research initiatives and projects would die out because of continuous cuts due to the continuous realignment of funds to projects that have "more points"?
 - No, that would not be the case. For any research project with external funding – those are restricted funds. For the IRM model, those funding sources are not implicated at all, and they cannot be used for other purposes.
 - There's an overhead component that gets charged to grants. There's also a rebate that is part of standard grants.
- How much does the state contribute to our university?
 - They have some information and share with us.
- Expense Management: How does the model influence improved expense efficiencies? What are some specific strategies or best practices we can explore?
 - Comments: Million dollars saved via vendors. Vendor management office, can we explore having offices like that in each of the departments, to help the university save money?

- Question written as follows: do we have an opportunity to explore working with contract team to assess inefficiencies in existing contracts? What opportunities do we have for contracting with different vendors to produce savings?
- Related questions:
 - It seems like there are multiple vendor contracts in different areas but an enterprise solution could save money
 - It would be nice for agreements about to expire if there was emailed warnings like 120 days until expiration, 90 days, 30 days, etc.
 - BCO and Purchasing rely on the departments to keep track of the contracts. In UTS, before the VMO was stood up, usually the department heads or team leads were responsible for keeping track of their contracts. Because of their other duties, contracts were pushed aside. That is where the VMO comes in. We keep track of the contracts and dates. Then we meet with the holders of the contract quarterly to let them know that the contract is coming up for renewal.
- Comment: Continue to explore opportunities for lean process improvements to eliminate waste.
- Comment: What considerations are taken to consider those areas that may be traditionally seen as less valuable? What about protecting staff who are seen as less valuable or
 - Eliminating positions and restructuring is not on the table with this.
 - What they will speak to with the process improvement group, is people are frustrated with certain processes.
 - Our staff work really hard and people are at capacity with their work, things can get overwhelming. Continually pushing ourselves. That's how UTSA is growing.
 - Efficiencies of processes free up more time for staff to evolve and add value and free up time. Allow leadership to do more strategic things and pilot programs
 - Another idea is more automation to reduce manual and repetitive tasks.
- Unit Partnerships: Is the model influencing stronger partnerships between units to align towards achieving UTSA's overall goals? What can we do to further strengthen these partnerships?
 - What was the intended outcome of the model to influence stronger partnerships?
 - Stronger partnerships are helpful. Are groups talking to each other? How are we collaborating to improve partnerships.
 - Comment: That's dependent on the unit, and in Student Success, we do a great job across Student Success Centers to collaborate for goals. Strengthen: We still have silos – we have data silos, communication silos. When we are looking at applications and platforms, why are we using so many? For example, why aren't we fully using student information systems? An application may have ability to do something but it is limited to certain areas. It'd be important to look at those different silos of information.
 - Written as: How can we use our technology and systems (full functionality) to be more cohesive across units to best serve units and students?
 - Related comment: Salesforce is used by One Stop and some areas like Graduate Advising. Academic Advising uses Civitas Inspire, why not use the same system so we can all see records and notes? Others use Handshake.
 - Related comment: Some of these platforms are sold in modules and are funded

separately, so we don't have all of the functions. Have noticed that software purchases are made without consideration of existing software that may already have that functionality.

- Related comment: Cost is the thing. If the university purchased an application to full functionality, then units would not need to purchase individual modules.
 - Money is really the issue. There is not a software budget that is across the university. Each department/college has control over their own budget. UTS is not able to fund all of the software expense across campus.
 - We have also come across several departments purchasing individual licenses for software that we already have a campus/enterprise license. Most of the time, this does come down to communication between all units. One thing that the departments can do is to contact UTS to see if a particular software is already in use on campus and what licensing is available.
 - Is there a specific person we can contact to check whether a particular software is already being used on campus, and by who?
 - Contact Tech Cafe.
 - I know that we are trying to build a software list that is available across campus but things so frequently and no one lets the other departments or UTS know that the software is no longer in use.
 - Along those lines, consider funding commonly utilized software and systems from a general fund, similar to institutional memberships. This approach would free up departmental budgets for other essential items, such as staff retention initiatives.
- Brian: Budget model dynamics could evolve to bring in more partnerships and bring in collaboration.
- Dynamic Resource Allocation: How effectively does the model adjust resource allocations across units based on changes in enrollment, research, or support required from your unit? Are there opportunities to optimize this process for better responsiveness to evolving needs?
 - Feedback captured as: If units only have an evolving budget related to student fees, how can it handle increased demand on the unit when the fee increases can't support the needs?
 - The model does not naturally increase the budget, support units do not have a natural mechanism in the model to increase budgets. That's a concern and area to focus on. When the model was incepted, they were trying to look at support units. Accounting, HR, BA groups, Student Success, Student Affairs, etc. (non-academic, non-auxiliary units). Look at different drivers and data points. Difficulty with tying retention/outcomes to funding is that units across campus are involved. They are trying to figure out logically allocating resources to units.
- Resource Allocation Transparency: How clear is the understanding of resource allocation through the model for stakeholders? Are there ways to improve transparency and communication in this area?
 - We touched on it early on. Develop regular training programs/workshop for campus to better understand the model.

- Opportunities to create interactive dashboards that provide real-time data on how resources are allocated.
- Another category where we can be more transparent – at a higher level are we spending on software licenses, infrastructure support, to make it more transparent. We might assume that areas have a lot of money but not realize their allocations.
- Educate campus on the granular centralized resources cost to support campus units (i.e., software, applications, etc.)
 - Related comment: I also think there should be a place where departments can go to see what other departments have purchased whether it is software or not to promote the collaboration that we seek. Just a thought!
 - There were a lot of partnerships that started with IRM but they have broken down.
- How does IRM relate to funding staff salaries, wage, benefits? How does merit work related to this?
- Also, these IRM assessment feedback sessions are an excellent way to enhance transparency and facilitate continuous improvement of the process.
- Strategic Investment Fund (SIF) Impact: How effectively does the SIF process facilitate UTSA's ability to achieve its strategic goals.
 - Background: Works like an internal grant process to a diversified committee that funds projects.
 - Comment: Increase flexibility of the allocation to respond to more urgent needs that arise unexpectedly throughout the year instead of units having to wait until the following cycle.
 - There's an opportunity to highlight this process and communicate more about the process to departments more strongly.
 - Streamlining request process and funding processes for the SIF. Experience is that there are different expectations depending on the unit. Having a more universal streamlined process on the request side would be helpful.
- ORC Effectiveness: What are the strengths and weaknesses of the Operating Review Committee (ORC)? Are there areas to improve its effectiveness in promoting best practices for how units are supported?
 - ORC is a committee is that supports collaborative nature, to get units to define best practices, to continue to evolve to the universities' needs and practices.
 - Comment: ORC provides recommendations – but how do we know they are implementing suggestions for improvements? There is no follow up. Perhaps developing something to allow for units to present how they are using the review and improving their operations.
 - Comment: When we see who sits on the committees, they are often administrators at a higher level – it would be nice to see staff members who are working in these systems, positions at all levels, be represented instead of having high-level leadership only on these committees. They are the staff that are truly impacted.
 - Perhaps could solicit an open volunteer process. Having staff apply to these committees.
- IRM Communication Clarity: What improvements can be made to improve the clarity, consistency, and effectiveness of IRM communications and website materials to ensure

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everyone has easy access to clear and relevant information?

- We've touched on a lot of these: Dashboards, workshops, etc.
 - Review of job aids and websites to provide more simple language related to budgets. Create a glossary of terms and acronyms, that are commonly misunderstood, and make sure it's updated and simple.
 - There are a lot of websites that UTSA has that we don't visit regularly. Once a quarter, in UTSA Today, or emails that go out could spotlight information/websites, so it brings it back to memory and to improve awareness/advocacy for information.
- Projected Timeline



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- Email Brian, Phranses, or Patti with additional feedback you may have.

10:00 a.m. Old Business

- June general meeting minutes: <https://www.utsa.edu/staffsenate/Minutes/2024-06-26-Staff-Senate-General-Meeting-Minutes.pdf>
 - Vote on Staff Senate June general meeting minutes
 - Andrea made a motion, Harshan seconded
 - 26 Yay, 0 Nay, 2 Abstain
 - Minutes approved

10:04 a.m. Continuing and New Business

Communications

Drew Vincent – 5 minutes

COMMUNICATIONS – 3 MONTH LOOKAHEAD SUBMIT REQUESTS 3 WEEKS BEFORE FIRST COMMUNICATION

Date	Topic	Category	Committee Owner	Request Form
25-Jul	Senate Newsletter Q4	Senate	Executive	Yes
Jul 15-25	Senate Elections: Voting Period	Senate	Elections	Yes
29-Jul	Senate Elections: Members Confirmed	Senate	Elections	Yes
20-Sep	LEGO of Stress	Senate	Health and Wellness	No

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Elections

Cindy Orth and Victoria Downing – 5 minutes

- [Election webpage](#) includes link to bios
- Timeline
 - July 15-25: Elections via Qualtrics ballot (with a reminder next week)
 - Week of July 29: Results
- Numbers of votes as of this morning
 - AA = 158
 - A&P = 120
 - IMT = 19
- Business Affairs, Pres, Adv, Athletics, UR are not having elections because confirmed nominees = open seats. Email communications will go out Wednesday or Thursday.
- Let us know if there are any glitches or problems you hear about or ask staff to email us at UTSAStaffSenate@utsa.edu
 - Reports of links not working – some of these are in Business Affairs. They are not having an election.
- If for any reason you are not returning for the second year of your two-year term (for 2023-2025 Senators), let the E-board and Elections Committee know so we can plan to fill your seat.
- Feedback from Senators about process, bios, etc.
 - “It was easy!”
 - “Bios were helpful! I liked reviewing them before voting.”
 - Process was smooth on user side.
 - “I also appreciated the opportunity to submit a bio!”
 - Surprising was you nominate a person, you have to include a title. Question about nominating someone who is not in your area.

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- Extending the deadline was appreciated.
- Note we will have two new members to replace vacancies.

E-Board Updates

Amy Fritz, Justin Marmolejo, Harshan Raj – 10 minutes

- Harshan's update: Harshan is leaving Staff Senate and UTSA for a new opportunity.
- Justin's update:
 - Staff Senate Retreat is Tuesday, August 13, 8:30am-1:30pm, JPL Assembly Room. There will be food!
 - Question: Is it possible to come for a little bit? Yes.
 - RSVP request will be sent out soon.
 - General Meetings are returning to in-person meetings.
 - 2024-2025 General Meetings. Times from 9-11AM on the following dates:
 - 9/18/24
 - 10/16/24
 - 11/13/24
 - 12/18/24
 - 1/15/25
 - 2/19/25
 - 3/19/25
 - 4/16/25
 - 5/21/25
 - 6/18/25
 - 7/16/25
 - Amy's updates: Thank you for your service this year! We did so much: New events, scholarships, newsletter, updated elections process, updated communications processes.

10:27 a.m. Questions about Written Updates

- Note: For updates from Staff Senate Committees and University Service Committee Representatives, please review the written updates at the end of the agenda.
- No additional questions.

10:27 a.m. Reminders

- Use your merit leave by August 31
- Elections are July 15-25
- Benefits Annual Enrollment is July 15-31

10:28 a.m. Adjourn

- Retreat: Tuesday, August 13, 8:30am to 1:30pm, JPL Assembly Room

Written Updates

University Service Committees

- Enriching Campus Wellbeing Committee – Gabby and Vero
- Employee Advisory Council – Brandy and Matt
 - UT work in person update discussion
 - No other institutions are receiving information that it'll happen there
 - Our leadership has no plans to do this at UTSA
- Faculty Senate – Lauren H.
- Hispanic Thriving Leadership Council – Eric
 - No updates from Eric.
- HOP Committee – Andrea
 - [HOP 6.01 University Committees](#) is posted to the HOP website, effective June 13, 2024.
 - [11.09 Website Criteria and Requirements](#) is posted to the HOP website, effective July 3, 2024.
 - 4.12 – Overtime for non-exempt employees is currently in review stages.
 - DOL Exempt rule is still on hold, so no changes have been made thus far. Any impacted employees were notified that it's on pause
- Operational Review Committee – Amy
 - No updates
 - Justin may be sitting on this committee next year or Amy for a third year
- Out-of-State Work Modality Committee – Lisa A.
 - The committee has not met recently
 - There were no cases to review for this time period.
- Parking & Traffic Committee – Heather, Lauren H., Harshan, Gabby
 - No updates
- People Excellence Working Group – Stef, Anna, Jennilee, Eric, Sapna
 - EEB on hold because it'll be taken up by the new Employee Success Center
 - An email about the Employee Success Center just went out
 - Work modalities was taken up by the Campus Experience Task Force
 - Performance Evaluations
 - They are continuing with training sessions. Please attend their sessions.
 - Employee Success Center: <https://www.utsa.edu/people-excellence/employee-success-center/>
- Placemaking Team – Heather, Gabby, Harshan
- Public Safety Advisory Council – Xavier
- Strategic Investment Fund Committee – Damaris
- Sustainability Council – Julie
- University Excellence Awards Steering Committee – Pebby and Sharon
 - No updates
- University Leadership Council – Amy

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- No updates
- University Scholarship Committee – Justin
 - No updates
 - Questions about meetings and representation. Sharon recommended connecting with Stacey Garza Amy and Justin connected with Stacey Garza.

Staff Senate Committees

- Bylaws – Harshan
 - Bylaws have been approved and will be updated and put on the website.
- Communications – Drew and Jennilee
 - Last newsletter is going out on July 25
 - Senate Elections messaging going out
 - [Election webpage](#)
 - [Comms request form](#) is active
 - It's not too early to submit your comms requests for Fall
- Community Outreach & Events – Jessica and Cindy
 - Reviewed the survey results from Great Staff Appreciation and looking for opportunities for enhancement.
 - [2024+Staff+Senate+Great+Staff+Appreciation+Post-Event+Survey_Results.xlsx](#)
 - Next meeting in September
 - Already discussing Touchdowns for Tuition this fall
- Elections – Cindy and Victoria
 - Nominations updates
 - Verified nominations = 105 across areas
 - Nomination confirmations opened on July 1, reminder sent on July 9, close Wednesday, July 10
 - 33 accepted, 22 declined
 - We are aware of glitches! Some survey links expired, so we'll follow up with that.
 - We'll extend the survey link expiration to 2 weeks
 - Elections Committee met on July 11
 - Elections are July 15-25!
 - Connecting with people who have not replied? We'll discuss and connect with them on Teams.
 - Change in number of declines may be due to commitments in the document
 - Could we have a drop down asking why they are declining, because that might help make changes, education, get more support from supervisors
 - Maybe we need an opportunity for nominees to ask questions before they submit, formally or informally by reaching out
- Finance – Angel and Lauren S.

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- Good news! Everything has been paid for and we have a bit of money left over for the retreat
- Health & Wellness – Vero and Heather
 - Meeting this Friday to discuss things to promote for the next year
- QIC – Lauren H. and Bev
 - Meeting this Friday
- STARS – Sharon and Peppy
 - No updates

E-Board Updates

- Retreat for AY24-25 will be Aug 13, 2024 from 8:30AM-1:30PM in the JPL Assembly Room
- Bylaws have been approved by Veronica!