



Brownsville, Edinburg, Harlingen

2023-2024 Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, January 16, 2024, 3:00–5:00pm CST Via Zoom

Senators Present:

Mohamed Abdel-Raheem, Jair J. Aguilar, Antonio Aguirre, Mataz Alcoutlabi, Michelle Alvarado, Bruno Arthur, George Atisa, Roseann Bacha-Garza, Norma Beardwood-Roper, Ben Brown, Erica Buchberger, Mircea Chipara, Joel Chirinos, Ruth Crutchfield, Elizabeth Deven-Hernandez, Laurie De Leon Escobedo, Louis Falk, Marcus Farris, Fuat Firat, Chris Gabler, Cynthia Lopez Guerrero, Suad Ghaddar, Jimmy Gleason, Jonathan Guist, Marcela Hebbard, José Esteban Hernandez, Kip Austin Hinton, Wanrong Hou, Joseph D. Hovey, Timothy Huber, Ulku Karabulut, Megan Keniry, Jeong Han Kim, Sanjeev Kumar, Dean Kyne, Kye-Hwan Lee, Qinyu Liao, Denise Longoria, Lisa Longoria, Gladys Maestre, Salma Mahmood, Pedro Martinez, Ferenc Moldovanyi, Randall Monty, Cynthia Paccacerqua, George Padilla, Marisa Palacios Knox, Mahmoud K. Quweider, Monika Rabarison, Genaro Ramirez-Correra, Padmanabhan Rengasamy, Jeannean Ryman, Clarissa Salinas, Laura Seligman, Silvia Patricia Solís, Hooman Tabatabai-Mir, Owen Temby, Mohammed Uddin, Viren Vejoya, Aaron Wilson, Haiyan Zhou

Guests Present:

Alyssa Cavazos, Jonikka Charlton, Criselda Garcia, Mary King, Michael Lehker, Jaime Ortiz, Cinthya Saavedra, Laura Saenz, Paul Sharpe, Christine Shupala, Luis R. Torres-Hostos, Cristina Villalobos, Thuy Vu, Bin Wang, Jeff Ward, Luis Zayas, Alex Zuo

Senators Absent:

Sonia Chapa, Krista Jobson, Pauline Jojo, Nancy Nadeau, Noushin Nouri, Tamer Oraby, Nilanjana Paul, Ricardo Pizzinato, José Antonio Rodriguez, Jack Ruelas, Ahmed Touhami, Christian Zuniga, Sarah Williams-Blangero

Minutes:

- I. Meeting Called to Order at 3:03pm**
- II. Report of FS Parliamentarian – Senator Falk**

- a. Meeting norms and expectations
 - b. Remember why we are here. We are all trying to make this a better place. Be kind to one another!
- III. Report of FS Secretary – Senator Monty**
- a. Approval of November minutes
 - i. Zoom generates of list of attendees based on your name on your profile
 - ii. Using the transcript to make sure the minutes accurately reflect what the speaker said and best represent the meetings
 - b. Motion to approve: **36**; Against: **3**; Abstain: **0**
 - c. **Approved: Faulk Seconded: Gabler**
- IV. Report of FS President-elect – Senator Gabler**
- a. SB17: Requested a full list of changes implemented by UTRGV
 - b. SB18:
 - i. Erika [Buchberger] promoted to university T&P committee
 - ii. Looking at language of SB18
 - iii. University Presidents provided guidance from system; We'll get it, but we're not waiting to develop language we want to incorporate (following the model from Texas Tech; ensuring due process, faculty roles)
- V. Report of FS Past-president – Senator Hinton**
- a. SB17: Anti-diversity bill
 - i. Some changes have been implemented at UTRGV
 - ii. If you know of any policy changes at your college/program related to this law, contact KAH
- VI. Report of FS President — Senator Paccacerqua**
- a. Concerns:
 - i. Money to departments/programs
 - 1. Timing of release of information re how much; need to ask for clarification as to why it's changed
 - 2. Department chairs are expected to be transparent about how the department funds are used
 - 3. Some funds are used to supplement travel, including for NTT faculty
 - ii. AI
 - 1. used in classrooms (back to in-person written exams?)
 - 2. Other concerns?
 - iii. Student fee committee
 - 1. Need a volunteer!
 - 2. Recruit committee representatives for academic committee vacancies
 - iv. Feedback on how to improve the graduation ceremony?
 - 1. Send to CP
 - v. Course modalities

1. Faculty are holding back planning F2F classes because they might not make
2. Concerns about socializing students back into the classroom; feeling of emptiness on campuses
3. Students are scheduled to teach traditional F2F classes, but for various pressures, those classes get moved to online
4. Does it matter that students take most of their courses online?
 - a. Gabler: International students have requirements for F2F to meet their Visa

VII. Guest Presentations:

- a. Jonikka Charlton, Christine Shupala, Laura Saenz
 - i. NOTE: See attached presentation document
 - ii. Topic: Updates on Course Modality Distributions: Data and Considerations
 1. Forthcoming: disaggregated online data synchronous/asynchronous
 2. Students are asking for different options v. pre-pandemic
 3. Will trends continue to shift, or will they shift back?
 4. Falk: University definitions of modalities?
 - a. Christine Shupala: Follow SACS and THECB guidelines, for an individual course, 49% or less taught when students are not F2F is considered F2F; everything else is considered distance (which is then further defined by online & hybrid; because of distributed campus, we've been able to count ITV as F2F, but waiting on new THECB policies to see if we'll continue to be able to do that; colleges & departments have to work w/i the regulatory parameters
 - b. NOTE: FSEC requested a formal description of course designations and will update the FS when we receive that information.
 5. If a single section of a course is offered online, then that course is considered online for the purposes of reporting
 6. Gabler: Campus doesn't look like what it did in 2019; Do we have a picture of how many classes are actually being offered online;
 - a. For degree plans, when departments/programs decide modality, do we run into a situation where another unit decides and now our program is online, we need to do our due diligence to track that
 - b. Jonikka Charlton: Steering/advising committee for interdisciplinary programs
 - c. Christine Shupala: program coded as online could happen unintentionally, or it could be an intentional move; if a program wants to go back to F2F, we must do a "teach-out plan" for those students who want to finish online

7. Jonikka Charlton: Responding to a question in chat, numbers pertain to number of classes (not number of students enrolled).
 8. Paccacerqua: Can we track individual students? With the uncertainty of online/F2F classes, what does it mean to graduate from UTRGV? Maybe this can be part of program assessment?
 - a. Jonikka Charlton: Right now, tracking individual students and the modalities of classes is difficult.
- b. Cinthya Saavedra
- i. Topic: Introduction and Vision for the Office of Faculty Affairs
 1. Wants to make UTRGV a place where you want to work, where you can find resources and tools that you need.
 2. Available this semester for faculty to meet and address faculty needs.
 3. Want to hear more about FPT about how to make this a better experience.
 4. Falk: Common syllabus?
 - a. Jonikka Charlton: Some of the changes might be related to offices disconnected to faculty affairs/student success
 5. Beardwood-Roper: Can we get the template out sooner?
 - a. Jonikka Charlton: Yes. Can also provide template of updates, so that faculty don't feel like they have to do the whole thing over.
 6. Paccacerqua: What vision do you have for working with Faculty Senate? FS representation of the full faculty speaking to you.
 - a. Cinthya Saavedra: Come to the meetings, hear what's going on university wide. I'm accessible and here in case people want to come to me.
 7. Falk: More about "a different way to evaluate faculty"?
 - a. Cinthya Saavedra: Not a different way, but in raising standards, there will be changes to the criteria—more robust, more rigorous—for T&P
 8. Monty: What can be expected for faculty hired under different conditions?
 - a. Cinthya Saavedra: Always a period before the guidelines are implemented. Ultimately, those conditions for T&P will change.
 - b. Monty: So what faculty were hired under will be replaced? If faculty planned out their first three years under one set of guidelines, and those guidelines are changed, they can't go back and re-do those three years.
 - c. Cinthya Saavedra: With UTPA/B there was a period to follow previous guidelines before catching up to new ones.

Faculty will have input on new policies, but faculty will have to follow new policies

d. Paccacerqua: No grandfathering in for HOP

9. Falk: [Reading Firat's comment] "1. Support that minimizes admin work/chores, 2, Connect with academics in intellectual area, 3. Information sources to access publications and extant research, 4 funding to perform research and access teaching materials. Currently UTRGV is weak on all ... What plans do you have to improve along these areas?"

a. Cinthya Saavedra: Some of these will be in collaboration w/ Division of Research to learn what we can add to support faculty.

b. Falk: Perhaps faculty going up for T&P could have more time to input and upload content

10. Marisa Palacios: Our department has spent years revising and going back/forth with T&P policies. Does this happen every year Is there an awareness at the Provost Office of [what we've been working on]?

a. Cinthya Saavedra: Provost Office wants to make sure we're moving in the right direction to avoid a huge jump when we get R1 classification. Hopefully won't have to work on those policies for much longer!

11. Paccacerqua: Does FA cover SOM? There are things that FA manages that are resources for SOM (awards, HOP).

a. Cinthya Saavedra: No. But there are some things that FA covers.

12. Marcela Hebbard: Awards for NTT faculty?

a. Cinthya Saavedra: Hope to hit different levels for faculty success.

c. Jaime Ortiz

i. NOTE: FSEC requested presentation document and will update the FS when we receive that information.

ii. Vision for the Internalization of UTRGV

1. Vision of Global Affairs: global outcomes for students

2. Paccacerqua: What "pillars" are the priorities? What is the strategy for heading in that direction? What role can FS play to facilitate your vision?

a. Jaime Ortiz: Created an advisory committee and invited a FS member to be a part of that. Announced faculty development fund.

b. Paccacerqua: If anyone is interested in serving on the committee, send me an email.

VIII. Old Business

- a. FS Committee Reports/Work
 - i. Paccacerqua: Reach out to me to schedule meetings
 - ii. Monty: COLTT LMS starting up again; let me and Cyndy Guerrero know if you have any questions; Will be on Edinburg campus with Zoom option
 - 1. Beardwood-Roper: What are the LMS?
 - 2. Guerrero: Canvas, Blackboard Ultra, Brightspace
 - 3. Paccacerqua: What's the timeline?
 - 4. Monty: Not certain, but it's moving quickly because of compressed timeline. Faculty will be asked to test it out next semester.

IX. New Business

- a. Ramirez Correa: We should let guest speakers go through their presentations.
 - i. Falk: Just trying to move this along to the relevant points
 - ii. Paccacerqua: It was an expert in the field trying to help us learn how these things are thought of from their perspective.
- b. Paccacerqua: Will discuss faculty service survey in ExecComm
- c. Atisa: Can the FS talk about the changing T&P requirements?
 - i. Paccacerqua: Will take it as a new business item for FacSenExecComm

X. Meeting adjourned

- a. Motion to adjourn: **Gabler**; Seconded: **Crutchfield**
- b. Meeting adjourned at **5:01pm**; closed at **5:02pm**
- c. Next meeting:
 - i. February 13, 2024