

**Project South Texas
Academic Administration Working Groups
FINAL Report**

February 14, 2014

Working Group Name	Faculty Governance
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND INTRODUCTION

The UTRGV Faculty Governance Workgroup began working from the basic premise the success of the new university and its students begins with positive working relationships and a positive environment. From a faculty perspective, this is best accomplished through shared governance which provides active and meaningful participation in the governance process by, not just academic faculty, but by all university stakeholders including students and staff. Accommodations must be made for incorporating the new medical school faculty into the faculty governance structure. A corollary of this important principle is that transparency, openness and sufficient information to evaluate key decisions must be a hallmark of UT RGV's shared governance structure.

Focusing on the faculty aspect of shared governance, the representative faculty structure (be it a Faculty Senate, Faculty Council or some other entity) must be inclusive of faculty interests, whether academic or health sciences; tenured or tenure-track; lecturers or clinical faculty.

UT RGV must be mindful of *Regents' Rule 40101* which mandates faculty have a major role in any policies dealing with general academic policies; student life and activities; requirements of admission and graduation; honors and scholastic performance; approval of candidates for degrees; and faculty rules of procedure. Accordingly, any procedure, process, and/or guideline involving any of the theses areas should be promulgated in consultation with the faculty of UT RGV by and with the consent of the Faculty Senate thereof.

With these tenets in mind, the Faculty Governance Workgroup met 6 times beginning in October 2013, had numerous email conversations, and met informally several times to address how best to address issues of meaningful participation, transparency, inclusiveness, and ensuring respect for the role of the faculty in all policies directly and/or tangentially affecting faculty. As many of these concerns are already being addressed we arrived at the following key recommendations:

1. Development and implementation of a Faculty Handbook which will incorporate, not only HOP Policies affecting faculty as well as UT RGV Procedures and Guidelines **that have an impact on faculty**, but also other useful information for faculty all in one place.
2. Identification and/or recommendation of a faculty governance structure that is most inclusive of all UT RGV faculty and ensures meaningful stakeholder input at all levels of governance.
3. Delineation of three categories of regulation relating to governance—(1) substantive policies and statute or regulation required policies; (2) non-substantive procedures; and (3) guidelines.

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4. Identification of UT RGV HOP and other policies in which faculty are mandated to play a major role in the creation of policy.
5. Encourage communication and interaction between faculty and other stakeholders in the policy arena.
6. Development of model, perhaps, pre-approved, HOP policies pertaining to significant faculty matters such as workload and tenure and promotion to facilitate an easy transition from the existing universities to UT RGV.
7. Ensure meaningful faculty participation in budgetary processes.

FINDINGS

Innovative Initiatives Currently in Place

At the outset, we have to determine a process of how and in what proportion members of the faculty representative body shall be selected. Currently, both existing universities have a different basis for representation. UTPA utilizes an at-large system with proportional representation by college determined by a mathematical formula. This system has resulted in a 27 member Faculty Senate. UT-B recently went to a per department representational strategy designed to secure greater participation and greater faculty awareness.

At UTPA, non-tenure/tenure-track lecturers and clinical faculty are eligible to serve on the Faculty Senate so long as they meet the criteria they have been employed full-time by the university for the preceding two years. The author of an article from AAUP dated November 11, 2013 indicates that one-third of research institutions include contingent faculty in governance. Contingent faculty can also hold office in the UTPA Senate. Contingent faculty are not presently allowed to participate in the UTB faculty senate.

Both existing universities list faculty as review stakeholders in the areas mandated by *Regents' Rules* and additional policies affecting faculty as well.

The use of guidelines for matters not necessarily involving policy that would require being placed in the HOP. UTPA is presently exploring this with the use of "Provost's Guidelines" but the processes have not been well-defined and protocols for stakeholder input are still being developed. UTB presently has no mechanisms for formal guidelines.

The UTPA Faculty and Staff Senates, the Council of Chairs, and Student Government have increased interactions substantially with each other and often exchange knowledge and information, co-sponsor events and resolutions, and share concerns. UTB currently has only sporadic interaction with other stakeholder organizations.

The UTPA Faculty and Staff Senates and Student Government are currently invited each spring to the Presidential Budget Hearings for all Divisions including Academic Affairs. The UT-B Faculty Senate presently has no meaningful input in the budgeting process.

Innovative Initiatives not Currently in Place

The creation of a Faculty Handbook which will provide useful information for faculty including expectations for faculty conduct. Many universities use such a handbook to great effect. Alternatively or supplementally, the creation and adoption of a Faculty Code of Conduct which would define, in general terms, acceptable faculty conduct and, by implication, what is unacceptable both as it pertains to conduct toward students, staff, and fellow colleagues.

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Identifying a model or variety of models to incorporate representation of faculty from UTB, UTPA and the new medical school into one senate structure. As the UT RGV and UT Austin medical schools will be the first integrated medical schools in the UT System, the workgroup is still exploring how this is done at integrated medical schools elsewhere in the nation and has been in touch with the UT Austin Faculty Senate to ascertain how the Dell Medical School faculty will be represented in faculty governance. We discovered the UT Austin Faculty Senate is using many of the same tactics we are and, similarly, has so far been unsuccessful in discovering anything of substance. *Ex officio* representation, such as the Texas A&M Medical School appears to have, is also a possibility if the medical school chooses to have its own representative body. This would be a decision outside the charge/purview of the workgroup.

Although both universities have different methods of determining representation on the faculty representative body, we are still left with the task of determining which is better or if some third possibility might better accomplish the inclusiveness the workgroup is striving to attain. We are also left with the more daunting task of addressing relative geographies given the fact that the universities are some 70 miles apart with the initial two years of medical school north of the UTPA campus and the remainder in Cameron County. Technology to link all sites is one possibility, distribution of the representation is another to consider.

Creating a 3-tiered structure for standards pertaining to university governance. This appears to be the direction in which university rules and regulations are evolving and has the advantage of flexibility and being easier to revise as only more categorical policy statements would have to go through a full-blown approval process. The 3 levels would be (1) general policy statements addressing issues of a substantive nature and matters required by statute or regulation which would be placed in a Handbook of Operating Procedures (HOP); (2) Procedures which would detail how policies are implemented; and (3) Guidelines which would provide more concrete examples for specific instances and circumstances. Only the first would require an extensive approval process including review by system. The challenge of the latter two is to devise a system by which there is sufficient input concerning and respect for stakeholder concerns including, where appropriate, a stakeholder right of veto.

Development of model, perhaps pre-approved, HOP policies pertaining to significant faculty matters such as workload and tenure and promotion to facilitate an easy transition from the existing universities to UT RGV.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Key Recommendations for the Final Report

1. Develop a Faculty Handbook/Faculty Code of Conduct
2. Identify and/or create the best structure for an integrated/consolidated faculty senate with inclusive faculty representation.
3. Identify and/or create the best structure for incorporating representation of the medical school faculty.
4. Ensure that shared governance, transparency and meaningful stakeholder input are incorporated in any administrative structure.
5. Increase communications and information-sharing between all policy stakeholders.
6. Identify HOP and other policies which faculty are mandated to have a major role in formulating.
7. Develop HOP and other policies affecting faculty directly or tangentially or in which faculty are mandated to play a major role.
8. Develop a 3 tiered system of (1) policies, (2) procedures, and (3) guidelines.
9. Develop a transparent budgeting process in which faculty play an active role.

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Required Actions for Implementation – Fall 2015

1. Determine, identify and/or develop what should be incorporated in a Faculty Handbook/Faculty Code of Conduct.
2. Identify and/or create the best structure for an integrated/consolidated faculty senate.
3. Identify and/or create the best structure for incorporating representation of the medical school faculty.
4. Ensure that shared governance, transparency and meaningful stakeholder input are incorporated in any administrative structure at all levels.
5. Identify and/or develop means by which all stakeholders can interact with each other to the advantage of all.
6. Identify HOP and other policies which faculty are mandated to have a major role in formulating and ensure the faculty representative body is listed as a stakeholder.
7. Develop HOP and other policies affecting faculty directly or tangentially or in which faculty are mandated to play a major role and ensure the faculty representative body is listed as a stakeholder.
8. Develop HOP and other policies affecting faculty directly or tangentially or in which faculty are mandated to play a major role. Workgroup members Elizabeth Heise and Tom White have already agreed to serve on a taskforce with Dan Sharphorn, Vice Chancellor and General Counsel for UT System.
9. Identify what policies are policies, procedures, and guidelines as described herein and move them into the appropriate category.
10. Develop a transparent budgeting process and identify how faculty can best play an active role.

Possible Consultations

A teleconference with Gwen Bradley and Joerg Tiede at AAUP about faculty governance and faculty handbooks would be helpful. Bobbette Morgan participated in a webinar on Faculty Handbooks with these speakers from AAUP on Friday, November 15, 2013. It was very informative.

Participation in the AAUP Conference in Washington, DC in June 2014 and/or the NEA Higher Education Conference in St. Louis in March 2014 would support our efforts. Meetings of the Texas Faculty Association or the American Federation of Teachers might also be helpful.

Visits to universities which have successfully integrated medical schools into their university structure as well as interviews/consultations with appropriate persons at these universities. We hope to utilize the knowledge of Dr. Kenneth Shine in identifying these schools. As previously noted, we intend to stay informed of UT-Austin's efforts in this regard and will do the same for them relating to our progress.

Dan Sharphorn regarding HOP policies for the new institution. Workgroup members Elizabeth Heise and Tom White have already agreed to serve on the taskforce reviewing and proposing these policies.

As other specific resources continue to be identified, we will/may request additional support.

Appendices