



Brownsville, Edinburg, Harlingen

2022-2023 Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, December 6, 2022, 3pm – 5pm CST Via Zoom

Senators Present

Khalid Aada, Jair Aguilar, Antonio Aguirre, Stephanie Alvarez, Andrew Anabila, Sonja Arredondo, George Atisa, Roseann Bacha-Garza, Linda Belau, Ben Brown, Grant Benham, Mircea Chipara, Joel Chirinos, George Diaz, Louis Falk, Fuat Firat, Christopher Gabler, James Gleason, Sergey Grigorian, Federico Guerra, Jonathan Guist, Tekla Hawkins, Marcela Hebbard, Kip Austin Hinton, Krista Jobson, Pauline Jojo, Ulku Karabulut, Hale Kaynak, Megan Keniry, Jeong Kim, Sanjeev Kumar, Dean Kyne, Karin Lewis, Qinyu Liao, Michael Machiorlatti, Robert Magee, Salma Mahmood, Lucia Carreon-Martinez, Pedro Martinez, Theresa Mata-Pistokache, Randall Monty, Gerardo Munoz-Monaco, Nancy Nadeau, Cynthia Paccacerqua, Diana Paz, Emmy Perez, Riccardo Pizzinato, Monika Rabarison, Genaro Ramirez-Correa, Padmanabahn Rengasamy, Jack Ruelas, Jeannean Ryman, Miguel Salazar, Manuel Saldivar, Andrea Schwarzbach, Dana Shackelford, Eloisa Tamez, Owen Tamby, Ahmed Touhami, Mohammed Uddin, Paul Valadez, Jorge Vidal, Vejoya Viren, Sarah Williams-Blangero, Aaron Wilson, Christian Zuniga

Senators Absent

Jameela Banu, Narayan Bhat, Christine Gerin, Ayleen Godreau, Kye-Hwan Lee, Hansheng Lei, Gladys Maestre, Rafael Otero, Nilanjana Paul, Clarissa Salinas, Hooman Tabatabai-Mir, Yingchen Yang

Guests

Frank Ambriz, Janna Arney, Bruno Arthur, Alyssa Cavazos, Angela Chapman, Amy Cummins, Esi Elliot, Jorge Esteban-Hernandez, Roda Galang, Veronica Gonzalez, Michael Hocker, Ala Qubbaj, Gerry Rodriguez, Margaret Rubi, Melinda Wilding

I. Meeting Called to Order at 3:02pm

II. Report of FS Parliamentarian – Senator Falk

- a. Reminder of Roberts Rules of Order

III. Report of FS Secretary – Senator Guist

- a. Approval of November minutes
 - i. Motion to Approve by Senator Rengasany; 2nd by Senator Belau
 - ii. No discussion
 - iii. **Minutes approved: 36 approve; 3 abstain**

IV. Old Business

- a. Tenure-track/Tenured Evaluation H.O.P. policies
 - i. [UTRGV HOP ADM 06-503 - Tenure Track Faculty Evaluation](#)
 - ii. [UTRGV HOP ADM 06-504 - Tenured Faculty Evaluation](#)
 - iii. [HOP ADM 06-503 and 06-504 Appendix A – UTRGV](#)
 - iv. [HOP ADM 06-503 and 06-504 Appendix B – UTRGV](#)
- b. Motion to Approve by Senator Falk; 2nd by Senator Gabler
- c. No discussion
- d. **Approve: 36; Abstain 17; Disapprove 1**
 - i. **Motion passes**

V. Committee Reports

- a. Professional Faculty Committee – Senator Magee
 - i. Committee met and discussed the following topics: a) time to promotion; b) salary increases; c) committee name change
 - 1. Committee voted to change committee name from Non-Tenure Track Faculty Committee to Professional Faculty Committee
 - 2. Dr. Arney's office suggested a standard of 4-years to be eligible for promotion from one level to the next. Up for discussion – is this something committee should advocate for or is it preferred to maintain the current 3-year period. The 3-year period does coincide with current review timelines. 3-year can also be beneficial in attracting new faculty and retention of existing faculty. If administration does decide on 4-year timeline, committee will advocate that faculty will have the option to apply early.
 - ii. Discussion:
 - 1. FS President Hinton: Dr. Arney has stated that early promotion needs to be an available option across all campus units and would propose market studies undertaken every 3 years for market equity of salaries.
 - 2. Senator Paccacerqua: NTT faculty can go up for promotion early even if in the 1st 3-year hiring period? And is each department responsible for these market equity studies?
 - a. Hinton Response: Yes to promotion in 1st 3-year period and market equity studies would be done at the college level
 - 3. Senator Magee: early promotion does happen at other UT institutions. UTSA can apply for promotion as early as after 2 years.
 - 4. Senator Elliot: What is the exact timing for applying for promotion?
 - a. Hinton Response: There is currently no university wide policy so it varies between units
- b. Provost Search Committee – FS President Hinton
 - i. Zoom interviews took place last week. The search committee is now in the referencing stage of the search. Checking references for seven applicants. Looking to schedule campus visits soon but timeline still TBD.

ii. Discussion:

1. Senator Falk: After the seven candidates, how many is the committee looking to cut the list down to after this?
 - a. Response: not sure
2. Senator Eliot: to what extent is the search global?
 - a. Response: This is an important criteria and was incorporated into the advertisement for the position. Have received applications from a number of international candidates.
3. Senator Lewis: Campus visits as soon as possible? Before Holiday Break so that faculty can meet the candidates?
 - a. Response: Possibly or could be in January.
4. Senator Firat: Were there any internal candidates?
 - a. Response: Yes
5. Senator Paccacerqua: Surprise that there could be campus visits this late in the semester as everything is wrapping up? Would encourage the committee to think about faculty accessibility to candidates and discourage trying to squeeze in campus visits before the break.

VI. New Business

a. Proposed HOP Policy ADM 10.803 Gifts

i. Changes relate to:

1. New minimum funding level for endowments (\$25,000)
2. Changes in minimum funding levels for endowed academic positions
3. Senator Gabler: regarding endowed academic positions – in some cases this is a new line item and in some cases, this can replace or supplement an existing faculty line. Concerned that if we raise these thresholds it might discourage smaller donations but acknowledges that there are experts working on these processes and defers to that expertise and is okay with the proposed funding levels.
4. FS President Hinton: a positive is that the new policy adds the possibility of endowed graduate fellowships which will help on the path to R1 status.
5. Senator Chipara: Because these involve invested funds, the amount of money available can be variable so how do we know how much salary these can generate?
 - a. Hinton Response: that is a question for finance staff but these policies simply set a minimum amount. The endowments could be higher.

ii. Senator Lewis: Motion to move the policy forward by acclimation; 2nd by Senator Gabler

1. Discussion:

- a. Senator Chipara: there is a problem mixing donations with an endowment. Endowments may result from donations,

but some endowments might be generated and supported by the university therefore the link between donations and endowment is unclear

- b. Hinton response: it doesn't have to necessarily be a donation that creates the endowment. It could be existing money

2. Senator Falk calls the question

3. The motion does not pass by acclamation so goes to a vote

- a. Vote to move HOP policy forward to university HOP committee

b. 36 approve; 9 decline; 13 abstain

c. The policy moves forward

VII. Report of the President-Elect – Senator Paccacerqua

a. Has been asked to share the following concerns with the FS

- i. Internet reliability on campus is inconsistent and problematic
- ii. Summer money has been reduced. This has a big impact on how departments plan and it is unclear how it was determined that summer money needed to be reduced. There is a need for greater transparency on this issue.

VIII. Report of the President

a. Commencement

- i. Mace bearers representing the FS will be at each ceremony
- ii. Please make every effort to attend commencement and support our graduates

b. Workload Meeting & Effort Plan requirements

- i. Each faculty member is required to have a meeting with chair/director. These workload effort plans are entered into FPT. These meetings should start January 15, 2023 and continue until completed. The workload plan is proposed by the faculty member and responded to by the chair/director
- ii. Discussion:
 - 1. Senator Firat: Why is there a need to meet with chairs and discuss? Is worried that so much faculty time is being taken by this type of activity
 - 2. President Hinton: The meetings are designed to make sure chairs are aware of each faculty member's needs. They are for the protection and benefit of the faculty.
 - 3. Senator Gabler: Feels this is an important meeting worth spending time on as it protects our time and our work. The meetings hopefully clarify expectations and avoids confusion and/or conflicts.

c. Johnson Controls Team

- i. Campus visits are currently ongoing. There is a meeting open to all at noon on December 8 in Brownsville

d. Proposal for a FS Social Gathering

- i. Looking for a volunteer to organize this

e. Faculty Senate shirts

- i. Is there interest in this? There is interest so President Hinton will look into this and share info on style, price, etc.

IX. Guest Speakers

a. Gerry Rodriguez – Assistant VP for Strategic Space Planning

- i. Starting an effort to improve efficiency and sustainability in our buildings. We are working with Johnson Controls to help us look at ways we can improve our efficiency in the way our building systems are being operated. Anything that would pay for itself in 20 years or less could be a viable option. The large level assessment should be completed around March with project development taking another 3-4 months after that. Improvements in systems could begin as early as late summer or early fall.

ii. Discussion:

- 1. Senator Paccacerqua: To what degree are issues of health considered in all of this work? Also, cognitive issues? There are certain environments in which people think and learn better – is this a factor in your evaluation?
 - a. VP Rodriguez: Yes, these are factors. We have very good building control systems that allow for monitoring quality of air and amount of outside air being recirculated through building. Began looking at options for UV light in our air handling systems to mitigate virus but before this was completed we began to come out of the need for social distancing so this work didn't come to fruition.
- 2. Senator Benham: many buildings are incredibly cold. The inability to limit the level of cooling seems incredibly inefficient.
- 3. VP Rodriguez: we do have an online system to submit requests about temperature issues, but we will hopefully get a better picture of this issue through the Johnson Controls study.

b. Michael Hocker: Dean, School of Medicine

- i. A lot of good things happening. Have now graduated our 3rd class. Around 40% of students are from the RGV. Recently announced groundbreaking of our new cancer and surgery center due to open around the end of the year in 2024.
- ii. Update on termination of affiliation agreement with DHR. Received notification in October that they were going to terminate our affiliation agreement. They asked for a mutual termination and UTRGV politely declined and wanted to continue this agreement. We now have 3 years to unwind the related programs. We are fully accredited, and we have the responsibility to make sure our residents receive the appropriate training and oversight. There were some factually inaccurate statements sent out by DHR. Statement that UTRGV is not fully accredited is false. We are fully accredited. We don't really know the reasoning for this decision by DHR. The School of Medicine will continue to move forward.

iii. Discussion:

- 1. Senator Firat: What alternatives are being considered for internships? Are they all in the RGV or are some outside of RGV?

- a. Dean Hocker: We have affiliate teaching sites at four other hospitals in the RGV and the goal is to keep as many of our students here to finish their training as possible. The exception is for certain specialties that we do not have locally
 - 2. Senator Correa: is the rupture w/ DHR going to have an impact on the McAllen Research Facility and our use of that facility?
 - a. Dean Hocker: Does not anticipate any impact on that
- c. Janna Arney, Executive Vice President and Provost
 - i. Updates:
 - 1. Academic Affairs is partnering with the Research Division to design an institutional base salary policy. This was done in consultation with Huron Group. In the process of finalizing this.
 - 2. Also working with Research is a policy for organized research units.
 - 3. Graduate Enrollment – doing a lot of work to find a baseline for what our programs should have and understand the data on enrollment. Four new doctoral programs brought online this year and two more planned for next year.
 - 4. Faculty Research and Development Council – reviewed applications for seed grants and are getting those funded
 - 5. Faculty Success and Diversity: mentoring initiative ongoing; update on NTT policy; cleaning up of website
 - 6. Board of Regents voted today on the addition of Stephen F. Austin University to UT System – more details to come
 - ii. Discussion:
 - 1. Senator Hebbard: Workload Effort Plans may feel burdensome for some tenured/TT faculty, but it is not at all the case for NTT faculty. Changes have happened to workload of NTT faculty w/out any discussion and many lecturers feel reluctant to bring this up due to their lack of protections.
 - a. Dr. Arney: since we are in the process of developing a NTT policy let's see how this new policy addresses these concerns and then go from there.
- d. Veronica Gonzalez, Senior VP for Governmental and Community Relations
 - i. Lt. Governor is still targeting tenure. This was mentioned among his priorities for his new term. He is well aware of university positions on tenure but believes if educators are not accountable, they get out of control. The good news is that the Speaker of the House has indicated he is not in favor of eliminating tenure but is open to tweaking certain aspects of it. UT System will take the lead in advocating against this. VP Gonzalez would like to gather a group of senators to meet with our state senators to explain why tenure is so important. Any resolutions on this issue may not be advantageous since system is taking the lead. We are not sure if Governor Abbott would take the same hard stand against tenure as the Lt. Governor.

ii. Discussion:

1. Senator Firat: I hope that those that dismissed the targeting of tenure as political theatre have learned an important lesson. If there is going to be a group meeting with legislators there should be a representative from the Academic Freedom Committee in that group.
2. FS President Hinton: One thing that has come up in meetings with Johnson Controls is meeting with and working with local governments to collaborate on these projects. How might we navigate this?
 - a. VP Gonzalez: Our cities are very involved and willing to partner with us. Opportunities to communicate with city managers or economic development authorities can be coordinated through her office to help make those connections.

X. Motion to Adjourn

- a. Motion to adjourn by Senator Chirinos; 2nd by Senator Lewis
- b. **Meeting adjourned at 4:45pm**