



Brownsville, Edinburg, Harlingen

2022-2023 Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, October 18, 2022, 3pm – 5pm CST Via Zoom

Senators Present:

Khalid Aada	Joel Chirinos	Sanjeev Kumar	Diana Paz	Eloisa Tamez
Jair Aguilar	Louis Falk	Dean Kyne	Emmy Perez	Owen Temby
Antonio Aguirre	Fuat Firat	Karin Lewis	Monika Rabarison	Ahmed Touhami
Stephanie Alvarez	Christopher Gabler	Qinyu Liao	Padmanabhan Ramasamy	Mohammed Uddin
Andrew Anabila	Sergey Grigorian	Michael Machiorlatti	Jack Ruelas	Jorge Vidal
Sonja Arredondo	Federico Guerra	Salma Mahmood	Jeannean Ryman	Vejoya Viren
George Atisa	Jonathan Guist	Pedro Martinez	Miguel Salazar	Sarah Williams-Blangero
Roseann Bacha-Garza	Marcela Hebbard	Theresa Mata-Pistokache	Manuel Saldivar	Yingchen Yang
Linda Belau	Kip Austin Hinton	Randall Monty	Clarissa Salinas	Christian Zuniga
Ben Brown	Hale Kaynak	Gerardo Munoz-Monaco	Andrea Schwarzbach	
Grant Benham	Ulku Karabulut	Rafael Otero	Dana Shackelford	
Mircea Chipara	Megan Keniry	Cynthia Paccacerqua	Hooman Tabatabai-Mir	

Senators Absent:

Jameela Bana	Ayleen Godreau	Kye-Hwan Lee	Nancy Nadeau	Aaron Wilson
Narayan Bhat	Tekla Hawkins	Hansheng Lei	Nilanjana Paul	
George Diaz	Krista Jobson	Gladys Maestre	Riccardo Pizzinato	
Christine Gerin	Pauline Jojo	Robert Magee	Genaro Ramirez-Correa	
James Gleason	Jeong Kim	Lucia Carreon Martinez	Paul Valadez	

Guests:

Bruno Arthur	Marianella Franklin	Mark Kaswan	Ala Qubbaj
Maria Carmona-Alonso	Dania Lopez Garcia	Jacob McDonie	Rachel Rayburn

I. Meeting convened at 3:02pm by Senate President Kip Austin Hinton

II. Report of FS Parliamentarian – Louis Falk

- a. Reminder that we are using Robert's Rules of Order which are distributed, along with Zoom rules, with the pre-reading materials

III. Report of the FS Secretary – Jonathan Guist

a. May Minutes

i. Motion to approve: Senator Lewis; 2nd: Senator Falk

- 1. Approve: 35; Disapprove 0; Abstain 4 – May Minutes are approved**

b. September Minutes

i. Motion to approve: Senator Lewis; 2nd: Senator Falk

- 1. Approve 42; Disapprove 0; Abstain 3 – September Minutes are approved**

IV. Report of the President-Elect – Cynthia Paccacerqua

a. Nothing to report

V. Report of the President – Kip Austin Hinton

a. Provost Search Update

- i. The search process is underway. The university is using the search firm, Greenwood Asher which it has worked with many times in the past. Dr. Hinton shared the list of search committee members and the job advertisement. Interviews are planned for 1st week of December. Confidentiality throughout the process is essential. Feel free to reach out to search committee members with questions.**

b. Safeguards to protect student athletes

- i. In response to the Wall Street Journal Report regarding women's soccer, Dr. Hinton is looking into UTRGV processes and guardrails to ensure misconduct does not occur at UTRGV. Dr. Hinton spoke to Chase Conque and Molly Castner from the Athletics Department. Received very thorough answers. We go beyond NCAA requirements. Comprehensive processes and policies are in place to monitor and document all employees who spend time with student athletes; Title IX education and enforcement; Behavioral counseling designed for student athletes; Student Athlete Advisory Committee (a committee of students, led by students - currently pursuing mental health initiatives); Faculty Athletic Representative serves on several athletics committees that oversee student athlete supervision and safety.**

- 1. Question – Senator Alvarez: Looking at the list of things being done, how much of the education and processes are geared toward female athletes themselves and not necessarily coaching and athletics staff? Concern is to be sure student athletes are being specifically educated on what is right/wrong and that there are safe ways to report misconduct.**

- a. Dr. Falk serves on athletics committee and responds that there is a great deal of specific training and education that goes on in this area**

- 2. Question - Senator Tamez: Has the athletics department reached out to health-related departments to help design these programs for the athletes?**

3. Question – Senator Paccacerqua: Based on the questions asked, can we have a report from faculty on these committees to make sure we understand everything being done. Is it enough? Are we happy with what is being done?
4. Follow-up Question – Senator Tamez: What is set up for students to refer problematic situations? What are the processes?
 - a. President Hinton – There are several processes in place and plans in place to address issues, much of which are required by NCAA rules

c. Commencement

- i. Faculty attendance has been poor. Reminder that HOP state that full-time faculty must attend one commencement per academic year. We need to do better in this area.
 1. Comment – Senator Falk: Example needs to be set by administration. When President and Provost do not attend that does not send a good message. Comment seconded by Senator Paccacerqua.
Response by President Hinton: Yes, administrators need to attend however, that is a separate issue. Faculty attendance is part of the commitment between us and the students.
 2. Comment – Senator Paccacerqua: it may help if university can provide regalia for faculty that do not own their own so that this is not an additional expense.
 3. Comment – Senator Alvarez: UTB commencement used to be bilingual and that is no longer happening. This is something that FS should be addressing. Senator Falk responds that, at least in Brownsville, there has been a significant bilingual component

d. Ad-Hoc Faculty Committee on Sustainability

- i. FS President has assembled a committee made up of faculty whose teaching and research overlap w/ elements of our sustainability plans.
 1. A number of senators call in to question the manner in which the committee was assembled and comment that there are faculty whose research would be very well suited to the charge of this committee but were not included.
 2. Senator Paccacerqua requests that senators be given the opportunity to solicit volunteers from their departments and makes the point that committee members need to reach out to faculty in their departments for their input
 3. To resolve these issues, FSEC will determine the size and charge of the committee and how it will be populated before moving forward

VI. Guest Presentations

- a. Marianella Franklin, UTRGV Chief Sustainability Officer
 - i. Moving forward, with the leadership of VP Finance, with a directive to create a strategic plan to bring sustainability to operations. Working with Johnson Controls to create this plan. This will take time. There is a lot of data to collect from all of the campuses and due to the distributed nature of our university, there are different counties to work with a different situation in each, that will also take time to sort through. VP Finance has suggested that we do not limit ourselves with trying to make the goal "Net Zero." Does not believe this is achievable at the moment but this is something we can work toward later. Goal is to begin reducing our carbon footprint and work towards being able to produce our own energy leading down the road to a carbon neutral campus. A lot of opportunity to integrate research into the work being done to capitalize on grant opportunities.
- b. Gerry Rodriguez, Director of Facilities, Planning & Construction
 - i. Not present at meeting – will present at a future meeting
- c. Dania Lopez Garcia – Interim Executive Director of the B3 Institute
 - i. Shared the B3 mission from our strategic plan. We are trying to become a B3 university, but we are not there yet. We have 61 faculty teaching 481 courses that are designated either bilingual or Spanish language. 10,835 students have enrolled in these courses which works out to an average of 1,084 students per semester. The selection of courses each semester is based on faculty availability to teach these courses which varies from semester to semester. Bilingual courses are coded "X" in the course catalog, and Spanish courses are coded "E." There is an application process to have a course designated as X or E. B3 offers Spanish Immersion programs for faculty and staff. Currently being taught on Zoom. We have done a lot but there is still a lot to do. The support of all faculty to truly become a B3 institute.

VII. Questions & Comments for Guest Presenters

- a. Question – Senator Alvarez: For Dania Lopez Garcia – would a resolution from the FS supporting B3 be helpful to moving things forward? If so, if there are any senators willing to work with her to do this?
 - i. Dr. Garcia responds that this would indeed be incredibly helpful
- b. Question – Senator Gabler - for Marianella Franklin: Is social sustainability part of this plan?
 - i. Response: The company we are working with is focused only on the energy side of things. Asked if we could later consider adding food. We could potentially add social sustainability, but we would need to bring in other partners. Senator Gabler followed up to stress the importance of social sustainability as part of this process. Ms. Franklin urges the ad-hoc committee to mention this with administration because administration is listening, and faculty have a lot of power in driving this process. May take a little more time

but it helps to have these conversations driven by faculty and students.

- c. Question – Senator Paccacerqua - for Marianella Franklin: is environmental sustainability something that is considered in all new construction on campus? Also comments on the importance of creating a culture of sustainability which is why the make-up of the ad-hoc committee is so important
 - i. Response: Yes, on the construction side sustainability does need to be part of the process. Regarding a culture of sustainability on campus – there are over 600-700 faculty that are teaching focused sustainability and conducting research on sustainability across all disciplines. Have three sustainability faculty fellows working with the Office of Sustainability. Can help in this aspect of the culture of sustainability.
- d. Question – Senator Vidal – for Marianella Franklin: Concerned about partnering with Johnson Controls. This company has a focus on very energy intensive systems that are not necessarily sustainable. Is this an issue?
 - i. Response: Just happy that something is being done and that we finally have a directive from upper administration. Working with Johnson Controls is part of this directive as Johnson Controls is already involved in this type of project at UT-San Antonio. Johnson Controls and its various branches encompass much more than just the heating/cooling area. They have an entire branch devoted to sustainability which is the branch that we will be working with.
- e. Comment – Senator Kaynak: Agrees with Senator Gabler that social sustainability is an important component that needs to be part of the long-term plan and needs to extend beyond campus to also include the local community.

VIII. Committee Reports

- a. Food Advisory Committee Vacancy
 - i. President Hinton reports that we need a representative on the Food Advisory Committee, which is not a faculty committee but needs a faculty representative.
- b. Graduate Committee Vacancy
 - i. There is a vacancy for a representative from the School of Medicine that needs to be filled. Refers to the self-nomination form on the FS website for anybody interested in serving.
- c. Texas Council of Faculty Senates (President Hinton)
 - i. President Hinton attended this meeting. Most universities have experienced decreasing student enrollment since 2020; There are problems at Sul Ross and UT Permian Basin caused by political appointments; a lot of talk about the importance of transparency of institutional, college/school, and department budgets. Something that we are already working on at UTRGV; UT Austin and Texas A&M have relabeled NTT positions as “Professional Faculty” to focus on what they are rather than what they are not; UT Austin has a policy to provide for developmental leave for Professional

Faculty – this is an interesting idea – 49% of our faculty are NTT so this could be something we look at; UNT adjuncts are now eligible for health insurance at some level; Texas Legislature – widespread threats to limit or abolish tenure, but the Speaker of the House has said this is not something that will be brought up in session; The spring meeting will include a visit to the statehouse to meet with legislative staffs.

- d. Parking and Transportation Committee – Pablo Aguilar, director of Parking Services
 - i. VOLT Services are free for all users to get around campus. There is an app that allows you to track VOLT locations to see how close/far they are; Conducting a parking study – working with a consulting group to formulate a parking strategy for the next 5-10 years for parking services. A survey will be part of this and should be released in the next few days to all members of the campus community.
- e. Library Committee - Andrew Anabila, chair of Library Committee
 - i. Library Committee Report from May 5, 2022
- f. Faculty Advisory Council - Past President, Karin Lewis
 - i. COVID-19 Legacy Project – distributed as pre-reading handout. Also distributed last year and FAC asked to re-distribute; FAC is basically the Faculty Senate of UT System – meet twice/year with a lot of committee work ongoing between meetings; Share concerns and address issues at the system level; Ex: Graduate Student benefits – one of their initiatives for this semester; one of main concerns is faculty burnout/attrition/mental health/wellness system wide. Governance sub-committee has been charged with investigating these issues – Dr. Lewis is on this sub-committee; continuing to work on academic freedom and tenure and how to address threats to these; increasing faculty diversity and faculty salaries are other issues currently under discussion
- g. American Association of University Professors – Past President, Karin Lewis
 - i. Texas Council of Faculty Senate meeting – one of the speakers spoke about the legal issues of academic freedom and tenure and the following day AAUP focused a lot of discussion on this issue. AAUP Executive Committee drafted a pledge on academic freedom and tenure that has been shared with FSEC for initial discussion. Meeting also included a presentation on the history of academic freedom and tenure in Texas which is helpful to know about for the current discussions.
- h. Questions about Committee Reports
 - i. Question – Dr. Firat for Dr. Lewis: in the past, FAC tried to get a representative on the UT Board of Regents – not successful but did get a rep. on the academic subcommittee. Is this still the case?
 - 1. Response: Can look into this and find out. Does know that the FAC does meet with the Board of Regents annually and provides a report. Chancellor also attends FAC meetings once per year to hear from FAC and Vice Chancellor attends all FAC meetings.

IX. Old Business

- a.** Tenure & Promotion Committee process policy changes (pre-reading handout)
 - i.** These changes are designed to streamline the work of the committee. Does not change in any way the review of the faculty member but makes it easier for the committee to do their work.
 - ii.** Motion to send updated policies to the Provost
 - 1.** Motion made by Senator Falk; 2nd by Senator Lewis
 - iii.** Discussion: Are we ready to vote or do we need to delay to give senators time to send to constituents for feedback? This is procedural only – not a HOP policy. This has been previously presented to FS on multiple occasions and ample time for feedback has been given.
 - iv.** Senator Lewis calls the question.
 - v.** Vote on the motion to send the process changes to the Provost
 - 1.** Approve: 34; Decline: 5; Abstain: 3
 - 2.** Motion carries
- b.** Spring 2022 Resolution on Academic Freedom
 - i.** Two versions of the resolution have been written. Senators Kaynak and Paccacerqua are being tasked with reconciling the two versions into one resolution that will be presented to the FS for approval at the next meeting
 - ii.** Senator Firat asks for two versions to be shared. President Hinton is reluctant to share the second version which was never approved but invites Senator Firat to work with Senators Kaynak and Paccacerqua on the final version of the resolution

X. New Business

- a.** Motion to invite Dr. Julieta Garcia, legacy president 1991-2015, recipient of Presidential Medal of Freedom to address faculty senate at a future meeting.
 - i.** Motion carried by unanimous consent
- b.** Senator Firat makes a motion that future FS meeting agendas should begin with FS business items and guest presentations should be reserved for after the conclusion of FS Business to allow for adequate time to discuss important FS business
 - i.** Motion by Senator Firat; 2nd by Senator Falk
 - ii.** Discussion: Senator Paz shares concern to make sure guests have adequate time to present. President Hinton responds that yes, that will be the job of the Parliamentarian to keep the meeting on schedule.
 - iii.** Senator Lewis calls the question
 - iv.** Motion carried by unanimous consent

XI. Meeting adjourned at 4:55pm