

2022-2023 Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, September 20, 2022, 3pm – 5pm CST Via Zoom

Community Agreement

The UTRGV Faculty Senate is brought together in the spirit of shared governance to move forward in a positive open manner for input that allows all stakeholders to speak regarding policy and process formation. To create a safe environment where everyone's opinions are valued and considered, let us observe the following:

- 1. Try to be on time to the meeting and actively participate*
- 2. Review the pre-reading materials to be discussed, and if you plan to comment have your thoughts organized in advance*
- 3. Assume positive intent, seek to understand, be inclusive, bring productive energy to discussions*
- 4. Only one person speaks at a time (use raise hand feature to be recognized)-chat is not part of the official record (will not be included in the minutes).*
- 5. Respect and acknowledge everyone's opinions, even if they differ from yours*
- 6. Confidentiality: some things should not be repeated outside the meeting*

Senators Present:

Khalid Aada	Christopher Gabler	Jeong Kim	Gerardo Munoz-Monaco	Hooman Tabatabai-Mir
Jair Aguilar	Christine Gerin	Sanjeev Kumar	Nancy Nadeau	Eloisa Tamez
Antonio Aguirre	James Gleason	Dean Kyne	Rafael Otero	Owen Temby
Stephanie Alvarez	Sergey Grigorian	Kye-Hwan Lee	Cynthia Paccacerqua	Ahmed Touhami
Andrew Anabila	Jonathan Guist	Karin Lewis	Diana Paz	Mohammed Uddin
George Atisa	Tekla Hawkins	Qinyu Liao	Emmy Perez	Paul Valadez
Ben Brown	Marcela Hebbard	Michael Machiorlatti	Riccardo Pizzinato	Jorge Vidal
Grant Benham	Kip Austin Hinton	Gladys Maestre	Monika Rabarison	Vejoya Viren
Mircea Chipara	Krista Jobson	Robert Magee	Genaro Ramirez-Correa	Aaron Wilson
Joel Chirinos	Pauline Jojo	Salma Mahmood	Jeannean Ryman	Yingchen Yang
George Diaz	Hale Kaynak	Pedro Martinez	Manuel Saldivar	Christian Zuniga
Louis Falk	Ulku Karabulut	Theresa Mata-Pistokache	Clarissa Salinas	
Fuat Firat	Megan Keniry	Randall Monty	Andrea Schwarzbach	

Senators Absent:

Sonja Arredondo	Linda Belau	Federico Guerra	Nilanjana Paul	Miguel Salazar
Roseann Bacha-Garza	Narayan Bhat	Hansheng Lei	Padmanabhan Rengasamy	Dana Shackelford
Jameela Bana	Ayleen Godreau	Lucia Carreon Martinez	Jack Ruelas	Sarah Williams-Blangero

Guests:

Janna Arney	Brad Christoffersen	Michael Dobbs	Gina Gwen Palacios	Rachel Rayburn
Jonikka Charlton	Monica Clua	Kirstin Munro	Ala Qubbaj	Can Saygin

Meeting convened at 3:03pm

I. Welcome by Faculty Senate President Kip Austin Hinton

- a. Welcome to all new senators, returning senators and guests

II. Report of FS Parliamentarian- Louis Falk

- a. Review of Roberts Rules of Order and meeting procedures; Roberts Rules Cheat Sheet placed in the chat for senators to review

III. Report of the FS Secretary-Jonathan Guist

- a. May 2022 Minutes
 - i. Question raised by Senator Firat regarding the resolution on academic freedom and tenure that was voted on in April meeting. Uncertainty about whether or not resolution should have failed due to how abstain votes are considered and whether this is accurately documented in minutes. Vote totals should be detailed in the minutes.
 - ii. Comment by Senator Paccacerqua suggesting that perhaps the official record should have names attached to votes so department members can see how their senators are voting and we need a clearly documented policy on how abstain votes are included in the vote tallies.
 - iii. Motion to table vote on approving the May minutes to give FS Secretary opportunity to review Zoom recording and make sure the vote on the motion was accurately documented.
 - 1 Motion by FS Secretary Guist; 2nd by Senator Kaynak
 - 2 Motion carried by acclamation

IV. Report – President-Elect Cynthia Paccacerqua

- a. Invitation to senators to please reach out to FS officers and FSEC with items that you want to bring to the attention of the FS. Is considering holding “office hours” for the senate and will notify once that is organized.

V. Report - President Kip Austin Hinton

- a. Starts by addressing question in the Chat: “Do all colleges have representation on FSEC?” Yes, however, member representing the School of Podiatric Medicine was just elected the previous day and has not yet been added to FSEC but will be in short order.
- b. Brief details about Senator Duties: you represent your department/school; remind your chair/director to give you time to update faculty at department meetings; you represent faculty, not administrators; administrators are partners with faculty working toward shared goals.
- c. A Sustainable University: Sustainability part of our strategic plan. Met with members of UTRGV community over the summer (Environmental Studies faculty, Office of Sustainability, College of Engineering, etc. - people with expertise in this area). We need a greater focus on renewable energy on campus and conservation. We have some important technology and programs in place but need to do more. Electric vehicle charging stations need to be installed on campus. “Race to Zero” initiative is something we need to look at becoming a part of. More on this at next meeting.
- d. A Bilingual University: Also, part of our strategic but more needs to be done in this area. Bilingual website; expand number of courses that offer bilingual and/or Spanish language sections; expand number of degree plans offered bilingually or in Spanish.

Questions/Comments:

- 1. Senator Vidal: suggests creating a FS committee on Sustainability

VI. Guest Presentations

a. Janna Arney, Provost & Executive Vice President

- i A lot of alignment in institutional desire and interest with the sustainability initiatives the FS is taking on this year.
- ii Enrollment update: increase in Pell. Maintaining effort to deliver on promise to make education affordable. Seeing some leveling - down 1.5% from 2021 and 3% from 2020. Graduate enrollment seeing leveling from 2020 & 2021. Working to identify what the new normal for enrollment should be. Doctoral increase – several new programs coming online. Up 14% from 2021 and 30% from 2020. Largest incoming freshman class ever at 5781. Great responsibility to retain and keep these students on track. Very excited about 4-year graduation rate. We are at 31.3% and climbing (national average is 33%).
- iii Working with Council of Chairs to create a template and documentation to help promote budget transparency in an equitable way.
- iv Provost search is kicking off – FS President is on committee, WFN and every college also represented on committee.
- v Strategic Plan – information on launch coming first week of October.
- vi NTT special committee reconvening on October 6 to create policy and structure in support of NTT faculty.

b. Michael Dobbs, Chief Medical Officer, School of Medicine

- i Responding to questions from Campus Community
 - 1 When will UTRGV start distributing new COVID booster?
 - a Should be available soon. Has been ordered and Pfizer booster should be arriving in next couple days. Moderna on backorder. You can get either one regardless of which you have had before.
 - b When to get it? Can get it starting 2 months after first booster
 - 2 Do you have a sense that RGV community now know what to do when experiencing COVID symptoms?
 - a Dr. Dobbs thinks that the RGV community knows what to do and refers UTRGV community to all of the guidance available on the UTRGV website
 - 3 If a student with no mask is coughing frequently during class, what do you recommend we do or say?
 - a Good practice to remind students to review the daily COVID guidance that is contained in the Daily Messenger and make sure they know where to seek healthcare if needed
 - 4 Monkey Pox – should UTRGV community avoid things like handshakes?
 - a This is an individual choice. Not that easy to transmit Monkey Pox. Tends to require more sustained skin-to-skin contact than a handshake but if you are uncomfortable, you can make the choice to avoid handshakes, etc.

c. Can "John" Saygin, Senior VP for Research & Dean of Graduate College

- i In his first 7 weeks on the job has been looking at a variety data to understand the situation at UTRGV. Has met with Deans and Associate Deans to discuss individual colleges. Trying to understand the needs of the institution, where UTRGV needs to go in the future, goals, etc. Wants to be sure we are incorporating the right blend of teaching and research.
- ii Doctoral enrollment is 494, the highest in our history.
- iii \$400million worth of research proposals submitted in past 12 months (470 proposals) – we usually get about 25% success, and we received \$100million. Looking at a systematic approach that will help us improve this success rate – building the right infrastructure and institutional support

- iv Sent a survey to all faculty in an effort to evaluate the research division

VII. FS questions, comments, points of information re: guest presentations

- a. Question from Senator Maestre to Dr. Saygin: We need more transparency about indirect cost sharing and how this supports the research we are doing. Can you comment on this?
 - i One of the first things he has been looking into with Dr. Arney. Looking at a shared percentage model that we should hear more about in the next 3 weeks that would increase percentage that goes to the generating units.
- b. Question from Senator Paccacerqua (CLA) to Dr. Saygin: Requests Dr. Saygin reach out to all colleges, especially colleges that may not be as highly research intensive as others
 - i Yes, plans to do this – working with all colleges is especially important
- c. Question from Senator Ramirez-Correa (SOM) to Dr. Saygin: Do you have an internal bridge funding mechanism that is also transparent?
 - i Yes, this is very important to maintain research levels. To this point, this has been happening mostly through email. Research office is looking at ways to better track and quantify this process
- d. Question from Senator Zuniga (CEP) to Dr. Dobbs: What health benefits/services do enrolled students have access to through student health services?
 - i General medical care, referrals to outside specialists, formal physical exams, some prescription medications, immunizations, women's wellness clinics, nutritional counseling
- e. Question from Senator Alvarez (CLA) to Dr. Saygin: Are graduate student support programs being looked at? Such as health insurance, increasing stipends, etc.?
 - i Funding data from all programs is being pulled to see what is being done currently and establish funding amounts going forward that will ensure graduate programs and healthy and competitive.
- f. Question from Senator Hebbard (CLA) to Dr. Saygin: Regarding the faculty survey, lecturers were not included in list of choices for "What is your position?" Why not and what role do NTT lecturers play in the institution's research goals?
 - i Not an intentional exclusion. Dr. Saygin values feedback from all faculty.
 - ii Follow up question: with the new NTT policy that is being formulated, will it be possible to include research in NTT workloads?
 - 1 Response from Dr. Arney: This is a department level decision. Can include this but not require it.
- g. Question from Senator Chipara (COS) regarding start-ups, core research facilities and resources and what are we going to do to distinguish UTRGV in research?
 - i Research division is looking at ideas for developing core facilities and equipment that can potentially be used by different disciplines to serve more faculty. Regarding distinguishing UTRGV in research – conversations ongoing with deans and eventually faculty to flesh out these ideas.

VIII. Committee reports

- a. Jorge Vidal, Non-Tenure-Track Policy Committee
 - i The charge of the committee is to develop a HOP policy for reviewing, reappointing, and promoting NTT faculty. They are working with the Annual Review committee to be sure policies are aligned. Also looking at comparisons to peer institutions. The committee is proposing to align time periods for promotion with contract lengths (3 years). A question was raised about the School of Medicine where there are a lot of 1-year appointments. To this point the focus has been on 3-year appointments but the SOM needs to be included and a committee member from SOM should be added to represent those faculty.
- b. President-Elect Cynthia Paccacerqua: Submission of committee reports

- i Importance of submitting reports for the FS to be sure the senate is following up on the work of the committees and the work is not being done in vain. Committee report forms are found on the Faculty Senate website.

IX. Old Business

- a. FAC statement on tenure in response to political pressures arising towards universities around tenure. UT Austin put out their own statement and became a lightning rod for political attacks which prompted the FAC statement in support.
- b. Tenure & Promotions Committee policy changes
 - i The university T&P committee is recommending some changes to procedure of committee. These were brought to FS and then forwarded to administration for vetting. The recommendation is for senators to now send these proposed changes to faculty in our departments for feedback in preparation for a potential vote at the next meeting.
- c. Spring 2022 Resolution on Academic Freedom
 - i There were two versions of a resolution put forward on the issue of academic freedom and tenure. The two versions were quite different and need to be combined into one cohesive statement. FS President will share w/ FS so that we can review the different versions and discuss at the next meeting
- d. AAUP at UTRGV
 - i FS is not a labor union. It is an integral part of the governing structure of the university but is not a union. AAUP is the relevant professional organization for people interested in this. However, Texas is a right to work state and as such, we cannot collectively bargain by law. So, an AAUP chapter at UTRGV would not function as a union in terms of collective bargaining. However, AAUP members do have access to a number of benefits.

X. New Business

- a. There is a form on the FS website to use for submitting new business for the senate.
- b. Question from Senator Falk: What is happening with the chair evaluation survey?
 - i Understanding of FS President Hinton is that they should be ready anytime now. They are going through a process to ensure anonymity but should be ready.

XVI. Motion to adjourn made by Past-President Karin Lewis, seconded by Senator Karabulut – **meeting adjourned at 4:59pm**