



Brownsville, Edinburg, Harlingen

## **2023-2024 Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes**

**Tuesday, November 7, 2023, 3:00–5:00pm CST Via Zoom**

### **Senators Present:**

Jair J. Aguilar, Antonio Aguirre, Mataz Alcoutlabi, Michelle Alvarado, Bruno Arthur, Roseann Bacha-Garza, Norma Beardwood-Roper, Ben Brown, Erica Buchberger, Joel Chirinos, Ruth Crutchfield, Laurie De Leon Escobedo, Louis Falk, Marcus Farris, Fuat Firat, Chris Gabler, Suad Ghaddar, Eleftherios Gkioulekas, James Gleason, Cynthia Lopez Guerrero, Jonathan Guist, Marcela Hebbard, José Esteban Hernandez, Kip Austin Hinton, Joseph D. Hovey, Krista Jobson, Pauline Jojo, Ulku Karabulut, Megan Keniry, Jeong Han Kim, Kye-Hwan Lee, Qinyu Liao, Denise Longoria, Lisa Longoria, Gladys Maestre, Salma Mahmood, Pedro Martinez, Ferenc Moldovanyi, Randall Monty, Nancy Nadeau, Noushin Nouri, Tamer Oraby, Cynthia Paccacerqua, George Padilla, Gina Gwen Palacios, Marisa Palacios Knox, Mahmoud K. Quweider, Monika Rabarison, Padmanabhan Rengasamy, José Antonio Rodriguez, Jack Ruelas, Jeannean Ryman, Clarissa Salinas, Laura Seligman, Silvia Patricia Solís, Owen Temby, Hooman Tabatabai-Mir, Ahmed Touhami, Jasim Uddin, Aaron Wilson, Haiyan Zhou, Christian Zuniga

### **Guests Present:**

John Blangero, Wen-Pin Chang, Jonikka Charlton, George Diaz, Joy Esquierdo, Giorgio Gotti, Michael Lehker, Dania Ochoa, Ala Qubbaj, Volker Quetschke, Alma Rodriguez, Paul Sharpe, Luis R. Torres-Hostos, Jeff Ward, Sarah Williams-Blangero

### **Senators Absent:**

Mohamed Abdel-Raheem, George Atisa, Sonia Chapa, Mircea Chipara, Elizabeth Deven-Hernandez, Wanrong Hou, Sanjeev Kumar, Dean Kyne, Nilanjana Paul, Ricardo Pizzinato, Genaro Ramirez-Correra, Viren Vejoya

### **Minutes:**

- I. Meeting Called to Order at 3:00pm**
- II. Report of FS Parliamentarian – Senator Falk**

- a. Meeting norms and expectations
  - i. If you don't have your name and guest/senator next to your name, you will be removed from the meeting.

### **III. Report of FS Secretary – Senator Monty**

- a. Approval of October 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: **Gabler**; Seconded: **Beardwood**
- c. **Approved: 44 Against: 1 Abstain: 3**

### **IV. Report of FS President — Senator Paccacerqua**

- a. UT FAC: UT system bought into more access in Coursera; Micro-credentialing; UTRGV is initiating a process to try and make sure that Faculty Senate is tied to this new initiative that's coming top-down from UT system and how we think of micro-credentialing as part of existing degree plans
- b. University Library: Build upon data from past faculty surveys to see what kinds of resources faculty need the library
- c. Council on Academic Freedom and Responsibility: Still working on this
- d. New/ongoing faculty concerns
  - i. Lack of clarity involving diverse merit policies embedded in
    - 1. Department annual review
    - 2. College level extraordinary merit
      - a. Some colleges/departments have policies on merit tied into their policies (that don't show up in other units)
    - 3. Distribution models (not necessarily a policy, but a framework for understanding merit-based increases in salaries)
      - a. One of the sources of confusion—aside from terminological and diversity across colleges—seems to be policy approval status and relation to other HOP/UT System policies
    - 4. Faculty senators: identify sources of confusion and bring them to the FS to fix before the next cycle
  - ii. Reimbursements
    - 1. Changes to faculty travel reimbursement
    - 2. Obstacles for using start-up funds
    - 3. Guest speakers are being asked to pay their travel expenses upfront for reimbursement
  - iii. NTT faculty review policies
    - 1. Not approved yet
    - 2. Must go through UTRGV Legal first, then can go to HOP committee
    - 3. NTT not a title, it's a reference to appointment types
  - iv. Use of Zoom recordings

1. Contact FSEC with thoughts as we develop bylaws
- v. Use of other electronic communication tools
  1. Contact FSEC with thoughts as we develop bylaws
  2. Faculty do not use Messenger (eg); effort is to make communication more efficient between offices and faculty
  3. Contact FSEC about any other issues from this report
- e. Firat: Business faculty are asking what happened to EBSCO (Academic Search Complete and Business Search Complete)
  - i. Paccacerqua: Plan is to come up with a systematic tool to get that kind of feedback from faculty; either rely on senators or ask faculty directly
  - ii. Falk: Need to back up to approve October minutes [see section III.a of this document]
    1. Gabler: Clarification about attendance and meeting hosting
  - iii. Monty: UT System got rid of EBSCO; we now use GALE; we are the only UT System school that did not pick up EBSCO on our own; Trying to fill in the gaps, need to hear feedback/complaints from faculty
  - iv. Gabler: We need to come up with a unified plan/approach, do faculty/departments contact the library directly, or does the FS do it together?
  - v. Beardwood: Clarification about “GALE”
  - vi. Solis: Requests clarification on what we should do, re library and databases. Through FS? Dean? Directly to library?
  - vii. Paccacerqua: Senators go back to department and tell them that FS is working on getting feedback from faculty to bring to the library. We want to build that questionnaire based on surveys that already exist. ALSO, faculty should communicate their concerns to the standing library committee and librarians. Each department has a library liaison.

**V. Report of FS President-elect – Senator Gabler**

- a. Academic Freedom & Responsibility committee: chairs Gabler & Buchberger
  - i. Still don’t have guiding document for SB18
  - ii. In the meantime, we should begin working on language we want to see in the draft
  - iii. There is an interest among other Texas schools for a tans-system effort to address political interference in academic matters/governance/funding
  - iv. We’ve gathered evidence and statements from faculty who have experienced this firsthand

**VI. Report of FS Past-president – Senator Hinton**

- a. Reminder: Attend at least one commencement ceremony

**VII. Guest Presentations:**

- a. George Díaz, Director, Center for Mexican American Studies
  - i. Roots in social justice and civil rights movements; CMAS open to everyone on the university; Partner with PSJA ISD; UTRGV >90% students identify as Hispanic

- ii. CMAS would like to partner with other programs/departments
- iii. Partnering with athletics to bring Lorena Ramírez for a panel discussion
- iv. Currently don't have CMAS facilities at Brownsville; we work out of B3
- v. Paccacerqua: CMAS champions could be a way to locate CMAS on different campuses
- vi. Gabler: are there any gaps/areas/topics CMAS is looking to fill?
- vii. Díaz: STEAM, since most of CMAS are Liberal Arts; promote our events and partner with you on your events

### **VIII. Old Business**

- a. Bylaws on Elections and Terms
  - i. Gabler: We've been working on the language of this document. The voting draft is coming soon.
  - ii. Gabler: We have new Senators coming in and voting on the EC and then doing work over the summer. Those are not optimal conditions. Proposal: New FS should come in May but not begin terms until September. This will work better with workload.
  - iii. Paccacerqua: New process would have Senators running the elections. Can we read that so that we can vote on it in December.
  - iv. Falk: Is there anything about eligibility in this document?
    - 1. Gabler: That's in the constitution.
    - 2. Paccacerqua: Bylaws add to the constitution.
  - v. Buchberger: What happens if nobody is elected? Do we need a mechanism in the bylaws for that?
  - vi. Paccacerqua: If there are no nominees, maybe set up a new date?
  - vii. Falk: At some point, they have to put someone up.
  - viii.
- b. 2023-2024 AY Faculty Senate Committees, Councils, and Working Groups

### **IX. New Business**

- a. Rengasamy: Questions about SOM senator elections
  - i. Paccacerqua: SOM was over-represented in FS (based on current rules), so we stopped running elections and FSEC decided to let extra terms expire
- b. New Committees Break-Out Rooms for Chair, Vice-Chair selection, Subcommittee organization (if any) and tentative meeting calendar for the year
  - i. Motion to adjourn general meeting and move to breakout rooms: **Gabler**; Seconded: **Falk**
  - ii. [guests leave]
  - iii. Paccacerqua: Go to the committee you've signed up for or the one you'd like to join; Reviews all committees and their charges
  - iv. Monty: send committee rosters as an addendum to this meeting

### **X. Meeting adjourned**

- a. Motion to adjourn: **Gabler**; Seconded: **Falk**
- b. Meeting adjourned at **4:30pm**; closed at **5:20pm**
- c. Next meeting:

- i. In invite, provide instructions for how guests should identify themselves
- ii. During meeting, change names of participants
- iii. Why do some senators identify themselves as guests
- iv. Is everyone getting the emails