



Brownsville, Edinburg, Harlingen

2022-2023 Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, September 19, 2023, 3pm – 5pm CST Via Zoom and In-person

Senators Present: Mohamed Abdel Raheem, Jair J. Aguilar, Antonio Aguirre, Mataz Alcoutlabi, Michelle Alvarado, George Atisa, Roseann Bacha-Garza, Norma Beardwood-Roper, Benjamin Brown, Erica Buchberger, Mircea Chipara, Joel Chirinos, Ruth Crutchfield, Louis Falk, Marcus Farris, Fuat Firat, Christopher Gabler, Suad Ghaddar, James Gleason, Marcela Hebbard, Kip Austin Hinton, Wanrong Hou, Pauline Jojo, Kochurani Joseph, Megan Keniry, Marisa Knox, Kye-Hwan Lee, Cynthia Lopez Guerrero, Salma Mahmood, Pedro Martinez, Ferenc Moldovanyi, Randall Monty, Noushin Nouri, Tamer Oraby, Cynthia Paccacerqua, George Padilla, José Antonio Rodríguez, Clarissa Salinas, Laura Seligman, Thuy Vu, Aaron Wilson, Haiyan Zhou, Christian Zuniga (43)

Senators Online: Bruno Arthur, Sonia Chapa, Monica Garcia-Ramirez, Jonathan Guist, Elizabeth Hernandez, Ulku Karabulut, Sanjeev Kumar, Qinyu Liao, Monika Rabarison, Jack Ruelas, Owen Temby, Hooman Tabatabai-Mir (12)

Senators Absent: Jose E. Hernandez, Joseph Hovey, Krista Jobson, Jeong Kim, Dean Kyne, Denise Longoria, Gladys Maestre, Nancy Nadeau, Nilanjana Paul, Ricardo Pizzinato, Genaro Ramirez Herrera, Padmanabahn Rengasamy, Jeannean Ryman, Silvia Solis, Eloisa Tamez, Ahmed Touhami, Mohammed Uddin, Viren Vejaya, Sarah Williams-Blangero (19)

Guests

- I. **Meeting Called to Order at 3:13pm**
- II. **Report of FS Parliamentarian – Senator Falk**
- III. **Report of FS Secretary – Senator Monty**
 - a. Record keeping
 - i. Online database
 - b. Approval of May minutes
 - i. Motion to approve: Gabler, seconded by Falk
 - ii. Approve: **All**; Do not approve: None Abstain: None
 - iii. May minutes are approved.

IV. Guest Presentations

a. Provost Zayas

- i. Historic day, Faculty Senate meeting for the first time in vivo since spring 2020.
- ii. “I assume the position with humility ... my style is to enter the institution as a listener” Hopes to build a relationship of working together.
- iii. Priorities: faculty development and success, help faculty grow and advance their careers; my job is to help the deans succeed and the faculty they lead; looking for an [associate dean], and want to hire internally; student success goes hand-in-hand with faculty success, retention from Y1-->2Y, how do we continue to support 2Y and on, get our graduation and 4Y graduation rates up; moving towards a R1 classification; advance B3 mission, someday we'll be a binational institution, we have a much more porous human made border than what it might seem like from other's perspectives, “institute” implies a more closed system, really show that B3 is part of our character and institute; living bilingually, engaging with the community around us
- iv. Forming an advisory council (of faculty)
- v. Questions:
 1. Senator Wilson: Our dept is rewriting T&P. What is the purpose of the “exceeds expectations” in the T&P? It's clear in AR. There's no summa cum laude tenure. Would it be possible for someone not to get tenure for only “meeting” expectations?
 - a. Zayas: Meeting expectations is not shameful! If everyone “exceeds” expectations, then how do we define what's important, valued, and advancing careers and the field? What do we do with merit money if everyone “exceeds” expectations?
 - b. Paccacerqua: We've discussed this before, the univ. T&P committee decided they will not recommend exceeds/met in T&P, only T&P.
 - c. Zayas: We often evaluate our colleagues on what is valued in our fields. But we also have to keep in mind that impact can't be quantitatively evaluated.
 2. Firat: What kinds of measures can we expect to see for moving towards R1? More travel and research money?
 - a. Zayas: We will support the research to extent we can (seed grants). I do see that the travel allowance is something for us to think about more. If the budget can't expand, how can we make better decisions about using those funds. VP Saygin better for answering questions about graduate programs. We will need a humanities Phd(!), and I'd like to contextualize it in the RGV.

3. Seligman: Can you talk more about your plans for the seed grant program?
 - a. Zayas: I was disappointed that when you apply for one, you don't get feedback, only approved/not. We don't do that, and that's not right. Calibration among reviewers. Perhaps we're not getting reliability.
4. Hebbard: In the future, would NTT faculty be eligible for these funds?
 - a. Zayas: Yes, if they're doing research and if the work is to further field/career/program. Can't violate HOP, but we can think about changing the HOP.

V. Report of FS President — Senator Paccacerqua

- a. Agenda for this year's Senate
- b. Affirm that we're all here to make this a better place and grow our community, I will assume priorities that can be fixed. Might be critical a little bit.
- c. What I hope to accomplish in one year: structural problems that can be improved, questions about how the FSEC does/n't function, these can be normalized through the bylaws; right now, we have a constitution but not bylaws
- d. How to conduct elections and think about the terms of the senators?
- e. What do want our agendas to look like? Do we always want the President/Provost/etc. present and presenting at meetings?
- f. Come up with an agenda template.
- g. When do our admin, faculty, selves know when a document comes out of the FS? Knowing will prevent the circulation of documents that act as if they did come out of us.
- h. Engage in projects that facilitate us in shared faculty governance? What does shared faculty governance look like in our work with student success (and everything else)?
 - i. We are aware of concerns with faculty shared governance at the college level across campus. Some are more challenging than others. Top-down structure means faculty have less knowledge of and power in what happens. Learning from faculty and leaders from other institutions (AAUP).
 - ii. A lot of times we wait to be told where our authority lies, but we need to take the initiative.
 - iii. Committees set agendas for themselves.
- i. Faculty compensation, resources, general wellness.
 - i. Spaces for exercise and relax
 - ii. Compensation dwindling relative to purchase power
 - iii. Health insurance getting less value per dollar
 - iv. Bad furniture, must go to PT, that costs money, less research because we must spend time/money on PT; we need a committee to research and address that

- v. Service: need reference points for how much work different service is so that they can negotiate workload
- vi. We're always leaving things out knowingly because of our due dates
- vii. If merit is the only source of income increase we get, then we're going to find that it's not just the researchers that get us there, it's the teachers, curriculum writers, policy writers, it's the service work!
- viii. We need to have a frank conversation about who's really moving the university forward. We have to figure out how to compensate that difference.
- j. Survey of Harlingen faculty. We've forgotten about them. They lack resources: internet, food, space.
- k. Committees
 - i. Library committee has consistently given us reports, and we've ignored them.
 - ii. SB 17 & 18: Led by [Paccacerqua], Gabler, and Hinton
 - iii. I expect every senator to be involved with committees

VI. Report of President-elect — Senator Gabler

- a. I have the least experience, and what I'm doing is getting oriented
- b. PE should be someone who supports and learns from the President. I'm going to be the firefighter!
- c. First fire: SB18. We needed to have a response by September 1, and now we need to have a plan of what's been handed down to us by the state and implement it into the HOP.
- d. Second fire: SB17 is also on my agenda.
- e. Third fire: Shared governance, especially in the College of Science and School of Medicine. Make tangible and real ways that we can grow and *make real* the faculty's voice.

VII. Report of Past President — Senator Austin

- a. Apply for the external grants, even if you don't think you'll get them. If they don't give you feedback, ask for it (same for internal). That will communicate the demand and capacity we have for research. Same for travel funds.
- b. Use the IT ticket system, Facilities ticket system. Don't just absorb problems and stew about them and be angry. Report the problems!
- c. Use Microsoft Teams. It's the system that staff members use.
- d. TAMU expanding into the region after ignoring it for 100 years.

VIII. Old Business

- a. Paccacerqua: Library Committee
- b. Committee Reports
 - i. First: Can we get a list from the EC of what the standing and FS committees are and who is currently on them?
 - ii. Paccacerqua: Use the FS website!

IX. New Business

- a. Gabler: Motion to add discussion of faculty shared governance to open discussion.
 - i. Furat: Seconded
 - ii. Gabler: Friendly amendment: I will call an executive session.
 - iii. Approve: **All**; Do not approve: None Abstain: None
 - b. Paccacerqua: Bylaws proposal
 - i. Why develop bylaws about elections. Not knowing can lead to mistakes! We need elections to happen at the same time so that we can form an EC (and have conversations about what to do and what to plan).
 - ii. Terms of senators: currently begin/end May, but maybe shift to August to align with workloads.
 - c. SB18
 - i. Paccacerqua: UT System is drafting model policy for all UT schools; we had been looking at Texas Tech's model.
 - d. EXECUTIVE SESSION Faculty shared governance
- X. **Meeting adjourned**
- a. Motion to adjourn: Senator Gabler; Seconded: Senator Faulk
 - b. Meeting adjourned at **5:12pm**