

President's Report

Chris Gabler
Faculty Senate President
Faculty Senate Meeting
11 March 2025

Part 1:

Updates on Senate Priorities

Priorities

- Faculty salary
- Workload policy
- Grievance policy
- Departmental reorganization policy
 - Help affected faculty
- Remove research barriers
- Financial exigency policy

Faculty Salaries

- Invited Pres. Bailey, held discussion, & shared UT System budget analyses in October meeting
- Follow up correspondence & data sharing, informal November meeting
- Planned meeting with Bailey in December, postponed to January
- Gabler and Williams-Blangero met with Pres Bailey on January 16 to discuss faculty salaries, emphasizing problems of compression and inversion.
- Gabler met with Prov Zayas 1/24 and discussed new compensation programs.
- Feb 5: Gabler and Williams-Blangero met with Bailey, Zayas, and Marcela Deleon, Director Business Analytics & Academic Strategy
- Budget revisions to allocate a percentage of the total budget to faculty salary inversion and compression adjustments are in progress.
- Prov Zayas announcing new compensation packages and incentives.

Revise Workload Policy

- Strong support from Office of the Provost and VPFA
- HOP changes being developed by VPFA
- HOP impact statement for workload policy being considered.
- No new updates.

Reform Grievance Policy

- Ombuds update
- Faculty Peer Conflict Resolution Group
 - Committee concept discussed on Senate floor in November
 - Details developed by FSEC
 - Committee details (purpose, membership, selection process, confidentiality safeguards) discussed, revised on Senate floor in December
- Voted to approve in Jan
- Revisit proportions of TTF vs PF
- Need to complete formal written description, rules, and charge of this committee and vote to approve

Departmental Reorganization Policy

- COS, CLA Dean search updates. New Dean selections are promising here.
- Financial exigency policy *can* be a bridge for this issue. Major progress on exigency policy.
- Prov Zayas canceled Feb 13 meeting with FSEC to discuss Dean selection process, not yet rescheduled
- **WE MISSED THE BOAT:** CLA has been reorganized without any change to the process; Poli Sci, Public Affairs, Sociology?

Departmental Reorganization Policy

Relief to date for affected faculty

- COS faculty teaching in a program may serve on graduate committees in the program regardless of academic unit in which the faculty is appointed.
- COS faculty with relevant expertise can mentor grad students in any program regardless of academic unit in which the faculty is appointed.
- Seeking resolution for Chemists outside SIBCS not eligible for grants that requires a chemistry program (e.g., nominal appointments). Use of secondary appointments in SIBC with no associated salary discussed with Dr. Zayas.
- What is happening to impacted CLA faculty?
- What challenges are arising, what solutions are in place or being proposed?

Remove Barriers to Faculty Research

- Research Policy Committee report, discussion at December FS meeting
- UT FAC Research Committee: Infrastructure and Personnel Barriers to Research
 - Data collection effort in cooperation with AVC for Research Joan Bienvenue
 - Will require efforts at UTRGV (collaborate with FSRPC?)
 - Will use UTS resources and personnel for this data gathering
- UT FAC Research Committee met with AVC Bienvenue on Feb 13
- UT FAC RC met with Bienvenue and Eric Solberg (AVC for Health Affairs) on Mar 11
 - Mainly discussed bigger fish of federal executive orders (e.g., NIH IDC rates) and state legislature (e.g., new DEI laws) and how they impact research

HOP changes re: Faculty evaluations

- Draft revisions to HOP ADM 06-503 and 06-504 were shared with Senate leadership by VPFA
 - 06-503: Tenure-Track Faculty Appointments, Evaluations, and Reappointments
 - 06-504: Tenured Faculty Evaluation
- Redline documents shared with Senators and faculty in Jan/Feb
- Faculty Senate feedback deadline was March 4
- Responses were given to FSEC and FS Rules and Governance Committee for careful analysis and feedback
- Report today from FS Rules & Governance Cmte, floor discussion on findings
- Forthcoming special session to discuss and vote on the FS response to the proposed revisions (we will pick a date later this meeting)

Financial Exigency Policy

- Produced draft policy (based on UT Austin policy) that ensures faculty involvement in the review process to develop recommendations for actions in the event that faculty lines are reduced for financial exigency or academic reasons.
- HOP impact statement and draft policy language were circulated to Senators in December but discussion was limited
- Voted to approve impact statement in January
- Policy language & Impact Statement shared with Bailey
- Impact Statement sent to Samantha Allen via Angie Coronado to initiate formal review by HOP Committee
- **IT'S IMPORTANT:** Lots of unknowns related to research funding and funding of special programs.
- **PROPOSAL:** Take 20 min to discuss, potentially vote on the draft language at our forthcoming special session on HOP changes

Part 2:

Legislation & EOs re: Higher Ed



Dan Patrick

Lieutenant Governor of Texas
President of the Senate

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
Wednesday, January 29, 2025

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Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick Announces First Round of Top 40 Priority Bills for the 2025 Legislative Session

AUSTIN - Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick issued this statement today upon announcing the first round of his top 40 priority bills for the 89th regular legislative session:

"Thousands of bills are filed by Texas senators each session. Traditionally, bill numbers 1 through 20 have indicated the Lt. Governor's priorities for the Senate. In 2017, I increased the number of priority bills to 30. This year, I am increasing the number of priority bills to 40.

"Senators like having a low bill number since it shows their bill is a priority of the Lt. Governor and has a high probability of passage. These bills represent the will of the conservative majority of Texans, and many will pass with bipartisan support. Just because a bill is not included in the top 40 does not mean it is not a priority for me or the Senate. There will be hundreds of bills that pass the Senate, all of which are important to Texas.

"Many other priorities are included in our state budget, such as border security funding, hiring more state troopers for the Department of Public Safety, and enhancing statewide disaster response with new equipment and more personnel.

"Over the last four years, the Texas Senate held the line, fighting back against President Biden's disastrous agenda. Now, with President Trump back in office, Texas has a friend in the White House. The Texas Senate will continue to lead as the preeminent legislative body in America by passing our bold, conservative agenda, helping President Trump deliver on his promise of making America great again."

Lt. Gov. Patrick's Priority Bills:

Senate Bill 1 – Senate's Budget for Texas
Senate Bill 2 – Providing School Choice

Senate Bill 3 – Banning THC in Texas
Senate Bill 4 – Increasing the Homestead Exemption to \$140,000 (\$150,000 for seniors)
Senate Bill 5 – Combatting Alzheimer's – Establishing DPRIT (Dementia Prevention & Research Institute of Texas)
Senate Bill 6 – Increasing Texas' Electric Grid Reliability
Senate Bill 7 – Increasing Investments in Texas' Water Supply
Senate Bill 8 – Requiring Local Law Enforcement to Assist the Federal Government's Deportation Efforts
Senate Bill 9 – Reforming Bail – Keeping Violent Criminals Off Our Streets
Senate Bill 10 – Placing the Ten Commandments in School
Senate Bill 11 – Protecting the Freedom to Pray in School
Senate Bill 12 – Establishing a Parental Bill of Rights in Public Education
Senate Bill 13 – Guarding Against Inappropriate Books in Public Schools
Senate Bill 14 – Texas DOGE – Improving Government Efficiency
Senate Bill 15 – Removing Barriers to Affordable Housing
Senate Bill 16 – Stopping Non-Citizens from Voting
Senate Bill 17 – Stopping Foreign Adversaries' Land Grabs
Senate Bill 18 – Stopping Drag Time Story Hour
Senate Bill 19 – Stopping Taxpayer Dollars for Lobbyists
Senate Bill 20 – Stopping AI Child Pornography
Senate Bill 21 – Establishing the Texas Bitcoin Reserve
Senate Bill 22 – Establishing Texas as America's Film Capital
Senate Bill 23 – Removing the Cap on the Rainy Day Fund to Secure Texas' Long-term Financial Future
Senate Bill 24 – Educating Texas Students on the Horrors of Communism
Senate Bill 25 – Making Texas Healthy Again

Senate Priority Bills 26 through 40 ... coming soon.

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No 26-40 yet, as of noon today.

Texas Higher Ed Legislation Watch List

Credit: Dr. Brian Evans, Texas AAUP

Blog: <https://aaup-texas.org/blog/f/higher-ed-bills-in-the-2025-texas-legislature>

- [HB 2311](#) SB17 extended
- [HB 1830](#) SB18 extended, no future tenure
- [HB 2548](#) Bans teaching many topics
- [HB 2339](#) Bans courses & programs in LGBTQ+ or DEI studies
- [SB 1489](#) Constrains Faculty Senates
- [SB 452](#) BOR appoints chairs, deans
- [SB 530](#) / [HB 1705](#) & [SB 1322](#) / [HB 1870](#) remove SACS as sole accreditor
- [HB 281](#) / [SB 757](#) Removes programs based on graduate salaries
- [HB 173](#) and [HB 1381](#) Bans funding from certain countries

HB 2311

- **Freedom to learn, teach, and research**
- [HB 2311](#) (Harrison) alters SB 17 from the last Legislative session.
- In the last Legislative session, SB 17 prohibits certain diversity, equity, and inclusion programs and practices at public colleges and universities.
- [HB 2311](#) removes several exemptions in SB 17 including academic course instruction and scholarly research and creative works.
- *More on this (and other bills) from Dr. Brian Evans today!*

HB 1830

- **Tenure**
- [HB 1830](#) (Shaheen) bans future offerings of tenure
- Similar intent as the original version of SB 18 from the previous Legislative session

HB 2548

- **Freedom to learn**
- [HB 2548](#) (Harris) bans the teaching of dozens of topics related to gender, racism, ethnicity, equity, and social justice in any course required for a program or degree requirement.
- Bans faculty from being required to teach these topics (**Chris thinks*).
- Banned topics include those in contemporary American society related to critical theory, whiteness, systemic racism, institutional racism, anti-racism, microaggressions, etc., and differential treatment of any individual or group of individuals based on race or ethnicity.
- Also banned are topics related to the idea that racially neutral or colorblind laws, policies, or institutions perpetuate oppression, injustice, race-based privilege, etc., and that a student is biased on account of the student's race or sex.

HB 2339

- **Freedom to learn**
- [HB 2339](#) (Harrison) forbids public colleges and universities from offering a course, certificate, or degree program (1) in lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer studies or (2) diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- Penalties for an employee include leave without pay for one year on the first violation and dismissal on the second violation. For any violation, the employee may not be hired at a public college or university in Texas.

SB 1489

- **Shared governance**
- [SB 1489](#) (Bettencourt) requires that Faculty Senates must be authorized by the Board of Regents.
- Members are elected by the General Faculty or Colleges and Schools. A Faculty Senate is advisory only, reports to President, and may not conduct an investigation. All meetings are public meetings, and all votes recorded. Institution shall make the decisions on degree and curriculum matters under the direction of the institution's governing board.

SB 452

- **Shared governance**
- [SB 452](#) (Middleton) gives Boards of Regents and Boards of Trustees the sole authority to appoint heads of academic departments.
- This overrides shared governance between the faculty and the administration of the college or university.

SB 530 / HB 1705 & SB 1322 / HB 1870

- **Freedom to teach and shared governance**
- SB 530 / HB 1705 (Sparks / Shofner) and SB 1322 / HB 1870 (Hagenbush / Leo-Wilson) remove the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) as the sole accrediting agency for public and private colleges and universities (except for law and medical schools).
- SACS evaluates the procedures and policies to ensure freedom to teach and shared governance.
- SACS evaluation criteria currently include consideration of factors related to DEI.

HB 281 / SB 757

- **Freedom to learn, due process, tenure & shared governance**
- HB 281 / SB 757 (Tepper / Middleton) defunds / discontinues academic programs if the median salaries do not sufficiently exceed student loan debt 2 years (BS), 3 years (MS), or 5 years (doctoral) after graduation.
- *What if there is an economic downturn?* Large portions of programs could be in violation of this law.

HB 173 & HB 1381

- **Freedom to learn, teach, and research**
- HB 173 (Capriglione) and HB 1381 (Virdell) forbid public colleges and universities from accepting funding from certain countries or entities.
- In HB 173, countries are China, Iran, North Korea, Russia, and states that the US Government says sponsors terrorism.
- In HB 1381, countries are those on the US Government's watch list or US Government's list of countries violating the International Religious Freedom Act.

Executive Orders Impacting Higher Education



President Trump's Executive Orders (EOs) and Executive Actions Impacting Higher Education

Note: This is not an exhaustive list but rather the EOs and executive actions that impact higher education. The list will be updated regularly.

EOs and Executive Actions Related to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)

Ending Illegal Discrimination and Restoring Merit-Based Opportunity (01/21/25)

The EO directs all federal agencies to end DEI preferences, mandates, policies, programs, and activities. It revokes EO 11246, which has required federal contractors to have affirmative action plans since 1965. The EO directs the Attorney General and Secretary of Education to issue guidance to state and local educational agencies and institutions of higher education that receive federal funds or participate in the Title IV federal student loan assistance program on "the measures and practices required to comply with *Students for Fair Admissions, Inc. v. President and Fellows of Harvard College*." The EO also mandates investigations of institutions with endowments of at least \$1 billion.

Ending Radical and Wasteful Government DEI Programs and Preferencing (01/20/25)

The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) director, assisted by the attorney general and the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) director, must end all discriminatory programs, including DEI and "diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility" (DEIA) mandates, policies, programs, preferences, and activities in the federal government, under whatever name they appear (including in relation to "environmental justice").

Initial Rescissions of Harmful Executive Orders and Actions (01/20/25)

This broad EO rescinds 78 EOs from the Biden administration, including those aimed at increasing equity and economic opportunity for underrepresented students, Tribal Colleges and Universities, and Hispanic-Serving Institutions. The EO also pulls back EO 14124 (2024), which established a White House initiative to increase

<https://www.acenet.edu/Documents/Trump-EO-Summary-012325.pdf>

Part 3:



Keep calm and carry on, but take no guff

- Federal grants and loans being ended, then suspended, then not
- Removal of CDC health-related information removed, challenged, then restored
- Federal staff fired, then rehired, planned firings not happening
- IDC capped at 15%, then challenged, then blocked
- Much talk about ED being abolished, EO written but not signed, some universities singled out, but ED remains (for now)
- Obey the law, but be vocal, stand up for your rights, and...

Do not comply in advance.

We need more active and visible approaches

- Informational Town Halls
 - Faculty, staff, students, public citizens, lawmakers, **media**
 - English and Spanish
 - Why do we need the freedom to learn, teach, and do research?
 - Why is tenure important?
 - Why is shared governance important?
 - Ultimately, why is higher education both important and valuable for everyday people, especially in the RGV?
- What else? We're the leaders, let's lead. Everyone come up with one other way – visible or not – that we can actively do something.