

President's Report

Chris Gabler
Faculty Senate President
Faculty Senate Meeting
8 April 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.**
 - 4/8: Revised budgets should be ready for review, seeking updates & meetings
- 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
- PARC membership plans adjusted based on proportions of TTF vs PF
- Formal PARC charter (written description, rules, charge, procedures) has been fully drafted;
 - Charter will be reviewed by FSEC, shared with Senate for floor discussion, revisions, and potential vote at our May meeting

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
- CLA has been reorganized without any change to the process; Poli Sci, Public Affairs, Sociology (others?) impacted
- March & April meetings with Prov Zayas were canceled and not rescheduled

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?
- TEAC in HOP ADM 06-503 revisions are impactful here.

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 3/4, then 3/28, extension to 3/31
- Feedback survey was shared with Senators & all faculty in Feb, closed in March
- Survey responses were reviewed by FSEC and FS Rules and Governance Committee
- Report from FS Rules & Governance Cmte & floor discussion of findings at 3/11 FS meeting
- FS special session on 3/25 to discuss, revise, and vote on FS feedback
- Emergency vote on revised FS feedback, overall approval of proposed HOP revisions

Final Results: Faculty Senate Vote on Feedback re: Proposed Revisions to HOP ADM 06-503 and 06-504

From Faculty Senate <faculty.senate@utrgv.edu>

Date Fri 4/4/2025 10:24 AM

To UTRGV_Faculty Senate <UTRGV_facultysenate@utrgv.onmicrosoft.com>

 1 attachment (2 MB)

FS Emergency HOP Poll Final Results.pdf;

Dear Senators,

Please find attached the final results from our Faculty Senate emergency poll on the feedback we would provide to the OVPFA regarding their proposed revisions to HOP ADM 06-503 and 06-504.

Only one additional ballot was cast since I wrote my analysis of the preliminary results on Monday afternoon (56 vs. 55 ballots submitted), therefore I do not provide any additional analysis or discussion here because the results are essentially unchanged, except for the fact that they are now officially final.

To summarize our results:

1. All of the 18 proposed individual text revisions were overwhelmingly approved (generally over 90% approve).
2. Both revised policy documents were approved on merit grounds (80% approve, 11% reject, 9% abstain for 06-503 and 79% approve, 13% reject, 9% abstain for 06-504).
3. Both revised policy documents were approved on procedural grounds (68% approve, 21% reject, 11% abstain for both).

Thank you all again for your time and attention to this matter, and for your prompt work and flexibility that allowed us to accommodate the relatively short window to provide feedback to the OVPFA.

We will discuss our next steps at our forthcoming April Faculty Senate regular meeting.

Sincerely, on behalf of the FSEC,
Chris Gabler
Faculty Senate President

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 REALLY IMPORTANT:** Discouraging prospects related to research funding, state funding, federal support, & overall economic outlook.
- Floor discussion & revisions of draft language at 3/25 FS special session
- Revised document shared with FS; discussion & potential vote today

Part 2:

SB 37 & Higher Ed Legislation

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

Bills of Concern - SB 37

Consolidates all power at a public community college, university, or health institution in the governing board. It's a state government takeover of public universities and health institutions. (Community College Boards of Trustees are locally elected.)

- **Curriculum**

- Empowers a governing board to manage and oversee the curriculum
- Prohibits core curriculum courses, which are required for Associate and Bachelors degrees, from endorsing specific public policies, ideologies, or legislation
- Removes faculty oversight in the curriculum

- **New Investigative Unit**

- Creates new investigative unit, the "Office of Excellence in Higher Education" concerning academic discourse to receive complaints and refer findings to the Attorney General.

- **Institutional Governance**

- Empowers a governing board to overturn any institutional decision
- Empowers the governing board to hire and evaluate the performance of all administrators at an institution
- Requires the president to appoint at least half of the Faculty Senators as well as the Faculty Senate President and the other two officer positions
- Prohibits faculty from being involved in grievances or faculty discipline processes

Impacts on campuses?

SB 37 Summary & Text

Summary

- <https://capitol.texas.gov/BillLookup/History.aspx?LegSess=89R&Bill=SB37>
- <https://legiscan.com/TX/bill/SB37/2025>

Text

- <https://capitol.texas.gov/tlodocs/89R/billtext/html/SB00037I.htm>
- <https://capitol.texas.gov/tlodocs/89R/billtext/pdf/SB00037I.pdf>

Bills of Concern

- **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 1489 (Bettencourt)**
 - Requires Faculty Senates to 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. May not conduct an investigation. All meetings are public, and all votes recorded. Institution shall make decisions on degree and curriculum matters under direction of the institution's governing board.
- **HB 2548 (Harris)**
 - Bans teaching of dozens of topics related to gender, racism, ethnicity, equity, and social justice in any course required for a program or degree requirement. Faculty teaching electives on these topics won't have the elective counted in workload, merit raises, or promotion
- **SB 2614 (Creighton)**
 - Amends SB 17 (88th Session) to ban "DEI" in academic course instruction offered by a medical or dental unit.
- **HB 281 (Tepper) / SB 757 (Middleton)**
 - Defunds / discontinues academic programs if the median salaries do not exceed student loan debt 2 years (BS), 3 years (MS), and 5 years (doctoral) after graduation.
- **HB 1705 (Shofner) / SB 530 (Sparks) & HB 1870 (Leo-Wilson) / SB 1322 (Hagenbuch)**
 - Removes the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools as the sole accrediting agency for public and private colleges and universities (except for law and medical schools).
- **HB 1830 (Shaheen)**
 - Bans all future offerings of tenure.

Executive Orders Impacting Higher Education



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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: Committee Reports

Committee Reports

- Who: all FS Standing Committees and select University Committees
- What: Prepare a summary of report of your committee's work and accomplishments completed during the 2024-2025 academic year.
- When: Submit report **by April 29** to faculty.senate@utrgv.edu.
- Why: We care about progress and accountability.

Committee Report Details

- Use the committee report form or use any reasonable format.
- Include the following information:
 - Committee name and purpose
 - Committee chair and members (with departments/colleges)
 - List of meeting dates
 - List of issues committee addressed related to its purpose
 - Summary of discussions on each topic
 - Summary of motions or recommendations approved, with vote totals (if available)

Details accompanying Committee Reports

- With your submission (in the email) please indicate the following:
 - Name of committee member who will present the report and answer questions during the last Faculty Senate meeting
 - If you will be sharing a slide presentation
 - If there is any other information the FSEC should know about the report or the committee's work

Final Regular FS Meeting of 2024-25

- Our 9th & final regular meeting will be held:
 - On Tuesday, May 6, from 3:00-5:00 pm
 - In-person
 - On Brownsville campus in Salon Cassia (BMAIN 2.402)
- Zoom option available, but please come in person if possible.
 - Photographer will take a group photo.
- Casual reception to follow at Chris' home
 - 6:00-8:00 pm
 - 520 Acacia Lake Dr., Brownsville, TX 78521