



**2015-2016 Faculty Senate Orientation Session Minutes
October 23, 2015, 1:30-4:00 PM
HSHE 1.114, Edinburg Campus**

Minutes Prepared by Janette Garcia, UTPA Faculty Senate, Secretary

SENATORS PRESENT: Lilia Fuentes, Joe Lacher, Angela Scoggin, Sandra Hansmann, Dora Saavedra, Fidencio Mercado, Catherine Faver, Jeffrey McQuillen, Thomas White, Rosalva Resendiz, Michael Weaver, Ernesto Ramirez, Irina Armianu, Cory Wimberly, Margaret Graham, Andrew Anabila, James Boudreau, Sibin Wu, Mohammad Azarbajani, Mahmoud Quweider, Sanjeev Kumar, Immanuel Edinbarough, Micky (Dumitru) Caruntu, Lionel “Javier” Cavazos, Rosalinda Hernandez, Bobbette Morgan, Jacob Neumann, Robert Gilbert, Donald J. Lyles, Britt Claude Haraway, Frederick Darsow, Justin Writer, Daniel Hunter-Holly, Bailey Wang, Yasar Tasnif, Jameela Banu, Sheila Dooley, Maria “Miriam” Herrera, John Newman, Christopher Vitek, Yuanbing Mao, Eleftherios Gkioulekas, Ranadhir Roy, Jasang Yoon, James Hinthorne, Volker Quetschke, Nicolas Pereyra, Kath (Kathleen) Carter, Wendy Innis, Michelle Alvarado, Kelly Leu,

SENATORS ABSENT: Alexander Kazansky, Wilma Mealer, Brent Campney, David Anshen, Diana Dominguez, William Sokoloff, James Wenzel, Aziza Zembrani, Stephen Merino, Sam Sale, Mohammadali Zolfagharian, Wendy Lawrence-Fowler, Sandra Musanti, Irasema Gonzalez, Brian Warren, Matthew Terry, James Bullard, Arden Dingle, John Vandenberg

FACULTY SENATE OFFICE ASSISTANT III: Vanessa Ceballos

VISITORS(S): Havidán Rodríguez, Ala Qubbaj, Cynthia Brown, Janette Garcia, Sandra Tijerina, Marie Mora,

Meeting called to order at 1:35 pm.

I. Introduce and Acknowledge Constitution Committee Members

Past UTB Faculty Senate Chair Bobbette Morgan introduced the Constitution Committee members which consisted of members of the executive committees from the UTB and UTPA Faculty Senates. She informed the senate that the constitution committee had written the constitution, which had then been approved by the UTRGV Provost, President, and The University of Texas System Office of General Counsel (OGC).

II. Introduce and Acknowledge UTB and UTPA past FSEC (Faculty Senate Executive Committee) members

Past UTB Chair Morgan, and Past UTPA Chair Dora Saavedra introduced last year’s Executive Committee members from their respective campuses. Past Chair Morgan also discussed the HOP Review Committee, which was composed of four

faculty, and four staff (2 from each campus) who reviewed all of the proposed Handbook of Operating Procedures (HOP) policies (now ADM). Policies had been reviewed in batches, and shared with some faculty and staff for further input. Comments were reviewed by the UTRGV Provost and President and UT System OGC. In the absence of an official HOP, The University of Texas System Regents Rules are the official rules to be followed. One important role of the Faculty Senate will be to review relevant HOP policies.

III. Meet and Greet fellow Senators and invited guests

Past Chair Saavedra informed the senators that due to the room selection, the meet and greet will be held later in the meeting; and she discussed the costs (over \$100 charged) to reserve and setup meeting rooms. She also stated that they are reviewing available rooms on the different campuses for the November meeting.

IV. Describe Shared Governance Responsibilities

Past Chair Morgan informed the senate that she and Dr. Saavedra had recently attended The University of Texas System Faculty Advisory Council (UTSFAC). Two representatives from each institution attend. Representatives from each college also attend the Texas Council of Faculty Senates which include UT System, Texas A&M System, and other state and private institutions. These meetings provide opportunities to discuss common issues of concern.

Past Chair Saavedra provided an introduction to shared governance. She informed the senators that administrators at many levels from Provost Rodriguez to Chancellor McRaven all recognize that shared governance is essential. There are plans to hold a mini-conference on shared governance that will be critical for deans, chairs, and faculty to attend as Brownsville and Edinburg become a blended culture where faculty voices are actively solicited.

V. Review the Constitution and Provisos briefly

Past Chairs Morgan and Saavedra briefly reviewed the UTRGV Faculty Senate constitution and provisos which will be followed during these first years as a new senate. The constitution is a living document, and it is anticipated that there may be changes and edits suggested that can be decided by the new senate, including a review of keeping the departmental model or changing to a college model.

The titles and duties of the officers and executive committee were discussed, including their roles to set meeting dates, locations, and agendas, and the particular duties of each officer. The role of senators was also discussed. Communication with departments and colleges is important, both to inform faculty about senate and campus information, as well as to relay issues of concern to the senate. There will be many HOP policies to review, and all senators will be strongly encouraged to participate in subcommittees to review select policies. Senators are also responsible for nominating faculty and librarians to Academic Committees and Councils. The Senate will follow Roberts Rules of Order.

VI. Determine process (electronic, etc.) to elect Officers and Executive Committee Members

The method of elections for officers was discussed. Senator Weaver made a motion that there would be one week to submit nominations (self-nominations are allowed) by Friday October 30, 2015. Short biographies of each nominee will be sent to each senator, and nominees will be allowed to speak briefly at the November 6 meeting, after which elections for executive committee officers will be held. Motion was seconded by multiple senators. Motion passed.

VII. Administration Guest Speakers (Dr. Havidán Rodríguez, Dr. Ala Qubbaj, Dr. Cynthia Brown)

Dr. Havidán Rodríguez began his remarks by thanking the senators for their willingness to serve in this very important role representing their departments, colleges, and the university as a whole. He stated that he is always willing to meet with the senate to provide updates and to answer questions. In particular, he mentioned that Dr. Bailey asked that the senate provide recommendations for processes, issues, and challenges as we move forward. Dr. Rodríguez reviewed his academic career and participation with faculty senate in his different roles. There are currently 1,040 full time faculty, more than UTPA and UTB combined. There are searches for another 100 faculty, some to replace retiring faculty, and others for new positions. If a faculty search had previously been approved, but was unsuccessful, it can be re-advertised without needing to go through the approval process unless there are major changes to the job description. The School of Medicine received its first level of accreditation from LCME, and they have already received over 2,000 applications for 50 places. Two more levels of accreditation will be required which will be completed over the next several years. The School of Medicine building in Edinburg is scheduled for opening in early spring. There was recently a groundbreaking for the Science building in Edinburg, and there will be a new academic building in Brownsville. Two more buildings are planned, one each in Brownsville and Edinburg. There is close to three million dollars in funds available for buildings that had not previously been available. Both campuses are very short of space, and until additional land can be purchased, each campus will lease space. All deans were asked to complete a census for space needs for their colleges. An e-mail will be sent regarding promotions for lecturers. All decisions will be reviewed at the college level, and the final decision made at the provost level. There are currently searches underway for deans for the College of Fine Arts and the College of Engineering and Computer Science. Final candidates will be brought to campus before Thanksgiving and will be given the opportunity to meet with faculty and different groups at the University. Each college had a convocation. As had been announced at the College of Health Affairs and the College of Business and Entrepreneurship, the interim deans for those colleges have been named as deans. Both colleges need stability as they are undergoing accreditation. A similar process had taken place at UTPA for the College of Science and Engineering, and they are now completing a full search for a permanent dean. HOPS are going online fairly

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quickly, and he anticipates working with the Faculty Senate for their review. Dr. Rodríguez reminded the senate that faculty searches are a faculty-driven process and that faculty need to actively participate in the process and ensure the proper procedures are being followed. There will be two commencements this fall for UTRGV, both on December 19, 2015. They are currently developing the mace and the medallion. There will be approximately 650 graduates at each location. The first commencement will be at 10 am in Brownsville for the Colleges of Business, Liberal Arts, and Sciences. The second graduation will be at 5 pm in Hidalgo at the State Farm Arena for the Colleges of Education, Engineering, Fine Arts, and Health.

Transportation will be provided. There are currently close to 29,000 students enrolled.

In answers to questions, the deans' candidates will be at open forums, and all feedback is personally reviewed by the search committee and the provost. If faculty feel that shared governance is not fully operationalized at the department level, especially as it relates to faculty searches, they have the obligation to voice their concerns, and they have the right to view the job description. The Huron Salary Survey is reviewing faculty and staff salaries at UTRGV campuses and is now also reviewing salaries across the UT System at the request of the System. They met recently to review their preliminary report. Hopefully the final report will be completed before Thanksgiving. They know there are major issues and inequities across campuses. There is no single list for peer and aspirational institutions, although they are working on it. Recently in a review of faculty travel, they looked at other colleges with the same Carnegie classification and found that UTRGV at \$750 per faculty is fairly good compared to other universities. They recently doubled the money previously spent at UTPA and UTB combined to support graduate students which was raised to \$1.2 million. The decision to use Instructional Connections, which provides academic coaches especially for large online courses, is up to each department. UTRGV graduate students may apply to work as an academic coach. There are no plans from the Provost's office to discuss this in the senate. The problem of funding for TAs in the spring was recently solved. Some information for the University only provides the Edinburg address for those instances in which only one address is allowed, such as for financial aid. Workload credit for teaching on a distributed campus with different groups of students, travel, and extended office hours will need to be decided at the department and college level. Dr. Rodríguez has to justify each workload decision. There is flexibility in adjusting for research and scholarship. The workload policy should be on the website soon. As soon as there are elected officers, they will be given access to faculty and librarians e-mails so that the Faculty Senate may communicate with its constituents.

VIII. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 4:25 pm