

The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley

2016-2017 Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes

October 7, 2016

1:00 pm-2:00 pm, Lunch

2:00 pm-4:30 pm, Meeting

Harlingen Campus, HCEBL 1.100

Minutes prepared by Michelle Alvarado, UTRGV Faculty Senate, Secretary

SENATORS PRESENT: Alexander Kazansky, Andrew Anabila, Aziza Zemrani, Bobbette Morgan, Brent Campney, Britt Claude Haraway, Catherine Faver, Christopher Vitek, Cory Wimberly, David Anshen, Don Carlson, DongYop Oh, Dora Saavedra, Douglas Timmer, Eleftherios Gkioulekas, Ernesto Ramirez, Fidencio Mercado, Frederick Darsow, Jacob Neumann, Jameela Banu, James Boudreau, James Bullard, James Wenzel, Jasang Yoon, Jorge Vidal, Joe Lacher, John Newman, John VandeBerg, Jung-Il Oh, Justin Writer, Katherine Decker, Kathy (Kathleen) Carter, Kelly Leu, Lionel "Javier" Cavazos, Mahmoud Quweider, Margaret Graham, Marguerite Dewitt, Michael Weaver, Michelle Alvarado, Micky (Dumitru) Caruntu, Ranadhir Roy, Robert Gilbert, Rosalva Resendiz, Sam Sale, Sanjeev Kumar, Sheila Dooley, Sibin Wu, Volker Quetschke, Wendy Innis, Wendy Lawrence-Fowler, Wilma Mealer

SENATORS ABSENT: Arden Dingle, Bailey Wang, Brian Warren, Donald J. Lyles, Irasema Gonzalez, Jeffrey McQuillen, Kip Austin Hinton, Lilia A. Fuentes, Maria "Miriam" Herrera, Michelle Keck, Mohammadali Zolfagharian, Murat Karabulut, Nicolas Pereyra, Sandra Hansmann, Teresa Feria Arroyo, Yasar Tasnif, Yuanbing Mao

SENATORS ABSENT (EXCUSED): Irina Armianu, Rosalinda Hernandez

FACULTY SENATE OFFICE ASSISTANT III: Vanessa Ceballos

VISITOR(S):

Havidán Rodríguez	Office of the Provost
Lisa Smith	Office of the Provost
Jungseok Hu	Civil Engineering
Julissa Roman	E.A.C (Environmental Awareness Club) - Student
Alejandro Sánchez	La Unión de Chicanxs Hijxs de Aztlán- Student
Julissa Flores	Dean's Office
Francisco Flores	Student Organization
Michelle Zeager	School of Medicine
Javier A. Kypuros	CECS- Dean's Office
Robert Freeman	Mechanical Engineering
Rajiv Nambiar	Manufacturing & Industrial Engineering
Marsha Griffin	School of Medicine

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Constantine Tarawneh	Mechanical Engineering
Jesus Gonzalez	Manufacturing & Industrial Engineering
Immanuel Edinbarough	Manufacturing & Industrial Engineering
Amy Hay	History
Sean Visintainer	University Library
Yong Zhou	Electrical Engineering

I. Welcome/Introductions/Overview

- Meeting was convened at 2:01 pm by President Morgan. President welcomed senators and guests. Provided overview of agenda & format of presentations

II. Guests

- Senator Leu introduced new librarian, Head of Special Collections, Sean Visintainer
- Senator Faver introduced Jim Chapman from Sierra Club.
- Senator Vidal introduced James Markham-Hill from LNG NextDecade.
- Senator Haraway introduced Julissa Roman, student, from E.A.C (Environmental Awareness Club).
- Senator Vidal– introduced Dr. Alexander Domijan, Dean of Engineering.

III. Presentations/Reports

A. Presentations

1. Provost Havidán Rodríguez

- Wanted to be at FS meeting to participate in the discussion regarding NextDecade MOU with LNG. Stated that shared governance & academic freedom played in the signing of the MOU with NextDecade. Looks forward to having an engaging & collegial conversation on this matter

Provost Rodriguez highlighted a few issues:

- Goal today is not to favor or oppose MOU with NextDecade
- College of Engineering faculty have the right to academic freedom to develop programs for their students and faculty.
- Resist or censors intellectual freedom or academic freedom
- Question was posted why was MOU signed with College of Engineering and no other colleges? Many MOUs are signed from other departments. College of Engineering pursued this one MOU. MOU not initiated by university administrators. MOUs are usually derived from a faculty; therefore, departments, schools and university play a role in developing MOUs. College of Engineering requested a MOU and administration checked that it met guidelines and policies. Stated that based on academic

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freedom, we cannot censor College of Engineering programs and research, it can lead to other censorship of college's future programs/ must support academic freedom. Each department has a right what to develop research and program ideas. College of Engineering have the right to express their academic freedom to grow academic programs & research initiatives. Thanked Faculty Senate for engaging this conversation.

2. Committee on NextDecade MOU

- Committee members: Senator Faver, Senator Haraway, Senator Vidal

Invited Speakers:

Jim Chapman, Sierra Club

- Community organizations oppose LNG NextDecade and building of terminal at Laguna Vista.
- Reasons: concerns about safety, accidents can happen, effects on environment, economic (2011 TAM study documented profit from economic tours and beach), shrimping and commercial/recreational fishing
- Concern for health issues
- Concern of volatile compounds discharge
- Consequences – global temperature rises/ more extreme weather
- University wants to prepare students and encourages educate in renewable energy and making communities more sustainable

James Markham-Hill, Next Decade – LNG Company

- Shared pursuit of creating opportunities with industry & academia
- It's not the role of university to assess project
- It's the role of the federal agencies to oversee the processes
- MOU can create partnerships
- Can share expertise of company staff with students such as environmental work as well as engineering opportunities
- Safety is top priority from design, construction to operations and transport
- Core commitments: safety, environmental responsibility, economic development good neighbor
- Working with partners and community to maximizing benefits
- bring partners with technology and science to university students
- creating partnerships right and with responsibility

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- liquefied natural gas is odorless & non-toxic, not flammable, is not explosive, does not pose a contamination risk
- Wants to address concerns and potential risks to have responsible project
- Constructed on 1000 acres in Brownsville set aside for industrial development
- Economic benefits \$20 billion investment and jobs
- Rio Grande LNG is largest proposed private investment in Texas

Engineering students: Cassandra Lozano & Francisco Flores

- Great opportunity for engineering students to intern with company and possible future career opportunities
- Passionate about RGV and wants to experience working with engineering opportunities
- Many engineering students leave RGV because there are no full-time jobs in engineering or internships and LNG NextDecade can provide those opportunities
- Working with LNG can provide “hands-on” experience and first hand opportunities

Julissa Roman, E.A.C (Environmental Awareness Club) & Alejandro Sánchez, La Unión de Chicanxs Hijxs de Aztlán

- South Padre Island and Laguna Vista voted against LNG NextDecade
- Concern of RGV residents – local business, tourism, shrimping and fishing industry, increases pollution
- Concerns that vegetation and native plants have been destroyed
- Preparing students for future to research and use renewable energy
- Want voice in investments and decision making was made without shared governance
- Students formed coalition to express concerns about lack of shared governance
- MOU a violation of academic freedom without Faculty Senate and student’s input and need to have democratic process
- Brownsville residents do not support MOU with LNG Next Decade

Committee report from Catherine Faver

- Members: Senators Haraway, Vidal, Hinton, and Resendiz
- It is not a consensus document. The document reflects different voices and representatives for each side of the issue. Explained the process

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and shared document to develop report on LNG NextDecade. The community may interpret that we are partnering with LNG NextDecade. Question was raised why did we go into partnership while project is being reviewed? The timing of the project was not beneficial in the view of the community. The formulation of MOU's process may need some scrutinizing especially if the university community is the spirit of shared governance. One of the concerns is that the MOU places university on "one side" when we have two sides to consider. There is concern if the project is not approved what does it mean for students?

- Senator Haraway stated we need time to engage community and faculty (all colleges). The committee report was rushed to develop and need to have open dialogue. Referred to the Strategic Planning that community engagement and sustainability are our core values for the university. We need to listen to our community. The community's perception is that UTRGV is siding with industry. We need to educate on sustainability awareness to students and local community.

Questions from Faculty Senate & Guests

Senator Marguerite Dewitt

- Concern about the MOU process and had it occurred with similar stakeholders. This can be an opportunity for the School of Medicine. SOM

President Morgan

- Acknowledged Faculty Senate needs to continue looking into the process of developing MOUs.

Senator Vidal

- Senator Vidal invited Dr. Domijan, Dean of Engineering, to issue a few comments. The Dean stated he wants career opportunities for College of Engineering students as well as construction and environmental jobs. The industry will be positively affected and is open to collaborating with other departments such as School of Medicine. The three principles for College of Engineering are Compassion (compassion for our students), community (doing right for your community) and technology (sustainability). The purpose of agreement: not favoring one technology but delivering educational opportunities

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Amy Hay, Department of History and Environmental Coordinator

- Dr. Hay raised several questions. If it's a great opportunity with LNG NextDecade why isn't the MOU on the UTRGV website? Why is it our students are publicizing Dr. Bailey's phone number to get information on the LNG partnership? Why are we having this discussion NOW? MOU has been signed. We need to have a discussion on this partnership. As an environmental historian, she asked what are the demographics of the communities and where are these industries situated? Is this good for our community?

Michelle Zeager, School of Medicine

- As a pediatric environmental health specialist, she is very concerned about this issue. She found out by a phone call about issue in the paper. Dr. Zeager recommends that someone from School of Medicine be included to discuss health issues and how the process for liquification impacts children's health.

Senator Anshen

- Questioned what kind of jobs will be created -low vs high paying careers.

Senator Kazansky

- Questioned why we have signed MOU right now? Do we want to support this project?

Wanda Reyes, PR representative with LNG and resident of Rio Grande Valley

- Stated she did all the research for this project over 2 years and stated we need industry in the Rio Grande Valley. Many students have to leave the RGV to find opportunities. We need to develop partnerships that will have a global impact.

Senator Caruntu

- Good opportunity to get into game and if it's not us, it will be Texas A&M. For the College of Engineering it is a good opportunity for all to work together and we can work with others to address concerns.

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Senator Haraway

- Should we withdraw from MOU to engage community and other colleges?

Senator Decker

- Supports student opportunities. It is also okay to agree and disagree on environmental issue. We need to have further discussion on MOU process and perhaps more faculty involvement in the process.

Senator Keck

- We should focus on MOU process. More colleges should have had input in the development and process. Shared governance did not happen.

Provost Rodriguez

- The MOU process is same process that was used for all other MOUs. No check or money was received in exchange for the MOU. The College of Engineering initiated the request to develop MOU. Many other departments initiate and sign MOUs. We do not publish all MOUs because there are so many & too many to publish on website. Can we involve other departments in this MOU partnership? The answer is yes.
- This MOU was initiated by one college, the College of Engineering. He is open to ideas & feedback regarding the MOU process. MOUs are signed on a regular basis and the NextDecade MOU process underwent the same process that is used for all other MOUs.

Motion by Senator Haraway

Senator Haraway moved that the Senate endorse the Resolution asking the Administration to rescind the MOU. It was seconded by Senator Faver. Discussion ensued on the topic. Senator Saavedra called the question. A vote was taken on the motion. The motion failed (see vote tallies below).

Vote

- Yes – 16 – in support of termination of MOU with LNG
- No – 18 - do not support resolution and termination of MOU with LNG
- Abstention: 6



Quorum was lost at 4:32 p.m. President Morgan suspended the rest of the agenda until the next meeting. Friendly motion by Senator Saavedra to withdraw motion. President Morgan acknowledged the work conduct by the committee.

President Morgan adjourned the meeting at 4:34 p.m. by President Morgan