



2017-2018 Faculty Senate Minutes
Meeting VI
TSTC University Center Auditorium (Room 136)
2424 Boxwood, Harlingen, Texas 78550
Friday, December 8, 2017
2:00 pm- 4:30pm

Minutes prepared by Michelle Alvarado, UTRGV Faculty Senate, Secretary

SENATORS PRESENT: Michelle Alvarado, Andrew Anabila, Elvia Ardalani, Sonja Arredondo, James Bullard, Dumitru (Micky) Caruntu, Steve Chamberlain, Arden Dingle, Richard Edmonson, Raquel Estrada, Anahit Galstyan, Eleftherios Gkioulekas, Margaret Graham, Britt Claude Haraway, Kip Austin Hinton, Elamin Ibrahim, Murat Karabulut, Mark Kaswan, Hale Kaynak, Sanjeev Kumar, Bobbette Morgan, DongYop Oh, Cynthia Paccacerqua, Ernesto Ramirez, Candace Robledo, Maria Romero-Ramirez, Dora Saavedra, Sam Sale, Laura Seligman, Yasar Tasnif, Douglas Timmer, John VandeBerg, Michael Weaver, James Wenzel, James Whittenberg, Michelle Zeager, Aziza Zemrani

SENATORS ABSENT: George Amorim, David Anshen, Jameela Banu, Frederick Darsow, Frank Dirrigl, William Donner, Ibrahim Farooqi, Marcus Farris, Teresa Feria Arroyo, Maria "Miriam" Herrera, Wendy Innis, Sunand Kallumadanda, Irving Levinson, Donald "Jerry" Lyles, Marci McMahon, Jacob Neumann, John Newman, Jung-Il Oh, Nicolas Pereyra, Volker Quetschke, Mahmoud Quweider, Gary Schneider, Hilda Silva, Samuel Snyder, Garry Souffrant, Annelyn Torres-Reveron, Bailey Wang, Justin Writer, Yingchen Yang, Mohammadali Zolfagharian

EXCUSED ABSENCES: Bruno Arthur, Don Carlson, Kathy (Kathleen) Carter, Lilia A. Fuentes, Saara Grizzell, Sharon Helsley-Mcginley, Fidencio Mercado, Rosalva Resendiz, Andrea Schwarzbach, Jorge Vidal, Christopher Vitek, Jasang Yoon

FACULTY SENATE OFFICE ASSISTANT III: Vanessa Ceballos

VISTOR(S): Karin Lewis, Ala Qubbaj, Cynthia Brown, Guy Bailey, Patricia McHatton

Convene Meeting and Welcome Senators and Guests

- a. President Saavedra welcomed Senators. An official meeting was not convened since we did not have quorum. The informal part of meeting began at 2:08 p.m.
- b. President Saavedra introduced and welcomed UTRGV President Bailey to the meeting.

II. Guest Updates: Dr. Guy Bailey, UTRGV President

1. Provided an update on SACS/COC findings. He sent an e-mail to the campus community explaining the findings of the report. UTRGV was cleared by the SACS/COC committee regarding the findings in the original report; however, we will still on probation because SACS/COC want to see the financial audit report from the 2016-2017 budget. The SACS/COC committee will not meet until December 2018, and the final audit report does not become available until February 2018. Dr. Bailey spoke at a local radio station the morning the findings were released to explain the findings to the community. He stated a YouTube video was created to inform and reassure current and future students that our academic programs are not impacted by the probationary status and the University is still accredited.
2. A discussion ensued on several topics. A question was asked: Has the probationary status impacted our student enrollment? Response: There is a concern that graduate enrollment has declined and the President assured us that the issue was being addressed by the Graduate Office. Other questions on:
 - a. the benefits of and criteria for becoming an emerging research institution;
 - b. the health care district tax and the possibility of partnering with a county hospital; and
 - c. the feasibility study on the football program were also raised.

Response: These three issues are still being discussed.

3. Dr. Bailey was asked how the leadership can improve faculty morale and the climate on campus. He was also asked if he supports Interim Provost McHatton's idea of conducting a survey to address the climate issues on campus. He stated the Interim Provost has his full support to address the climate and faculty morale on campus. It was shared with Dr. Bailey that the climate in Brownsville differs from the Edinburg campus. The concerns there are the perception that more resources are being allotted to Edinburg and fewer classes are offered in Brownville. He stated he would need to investigate the issue and find out what is happening. He stated that the Student Government Association President shared the same concern. Dr. Bailey noted he has seen empty classrooms during the day in Brownsville.

Dr. Patty McHatton, Interim Provost

Classroom space – A study will be conducted in spring to determine if we are using space efficiently and effectively assigning classes.

- i. Course Scheduling Work Group

Senator Timmer provided an update. The Committee will meet Monday. There will be no more immediate changes and a survey

will be distributed to students and faculty department chairs, who oversee scheduling, for their feedback.

ii. Meeting with FSEC members & Other Updates

- a. Quality of feedback from chairs – There is a need to train chairs and Dr. Ala Qubbaj has been asked to develop a professional training program for chairs. Departments will be encouraged to establish their Annual Review committees in spring, so the committee members can attend a training on how to provide feedback to their colleagues.
- b. Advising issues – There is a concern that information is not being shared with all involved in advising. The Advising Center has moved to college specific advisors. She will meet with Dr. Kristin Croyle, VP for Student Success, to discuss advising issues.
- c. Dr. McHatton will also meet in early spring with college deans and department chairs to discuss issues such as lack of communication and shared governance. Senators shared that there is not a lot of communication between department chairs and their faculty in some departments.

iii. Workload Policy

The UT System Board of Regents approved a new workload policy and guidelines for campuses developing their local policies. Interim Provost McHatton expressed the need to explore how we can do things differently and figure out how we can do it. How can we differentiate the work of faculty in a way that is fair to all faculty?

President Saavedra thanked Interim Provost McHatton for listening and for having a problem-solving perspective.

iv. Q and A

- a. Faculty are experiencing issues with the evaluation process (the faculty portfolio tool). Interim Provost McHatton asked for our patience to get through the process so we can improve it.
- b. Administrators and faculty can work together to address leadership issues at the college and departmental levels. President Bailey stated he supported Interim Provost McHatton making appropriate changes. Data can be provided by Faculty Senate, if needed.
- c. A Senator expressed concern about the lack of resources that University has at its disposal to meet the goal of becoming an emerging research University.

Dr. Ala Qubbaj, Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs and Diversity

- a. Training for chairs is being developed. His office will create a Chair Task Force to provide training and support for chairs who may not have the skills to lead. The Graduate Task Force is addressing the issue of graduate enrollment. The Chair of this task force is Senator Graham. There are currently 90 faculty searches being conducted. New faculty orientations will occur on January 11 & 12, 2018. Faculty, who received external awards or grants have been notified. Teaching, Service, and Research Excellence awards will be going out for Tenured and Non-Tenured Track Faculty. There is a \$5,000 award. A Staff Award was created by the UT System Board. Up to 4 staff members can be nominated by UTRGV. The deadline is December 23, 2017, and this is a \$10,000 award. On January 17 & 18, 2018, staff will be recognized on campus for their service. The Distinguished Faculty Colloquium held two sessions in the fall. The Center for Teaching Excellence (CTE) Teaching Learning Symposium is scheduled for February 16, 2018.
- b. The Faculty travel fund will be given to match the department's travel award. Question: what if departments do not have funding to match the award? Response: The Chair needs to let Dr. Qubbaj's Office know that they don't have funding to match. It was stated the problem of finding money to support professional development has been an issue for a long time. The Interim Provost stated funding for faculty travel has decreased nationwide. It was asked if there are any restrictions on what faculty can apply for these funds. Response: There are no restrictions.

President Saavedra thanked Dr. Qubbaj for his service.

Other administrative updates

- i. Dr. Cynthia Brown, Deputy Provost
SACS/COC probation will not impact our programs. New program submissions have been sent to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB). We will have 10 new programs starting in Fall 2018. There is work on developing 4 doctoral programs which will be submitted to the THECB in 2019.
- ii. Dr. Kristin Croyle, VP Student Success – Dr. Croyle was not present; therefore, there were no updates from Student Success.
- iii. Senator Graham, Chair of the Graduate Task Force. There are 14 representatives serving on the work group, 2 representatives from each

college. The task force is addressing obstacles that coordinators may encounter to improve graduate education.

- III. Action Item: Approval of Minutes – Since we did not have quorum, no vote was taken on the following minutes.
 - a. May 5, 2017 meeting (with corrections)
 - b. November 17, 2017 meeting
- IV. Action Item: Motions- Mark Kaswan - No votes were taken since we did not have a quorum.
 - a. Motion on Faculty Senate Roster
 - b. Motion on Constitutional Revision Committee
- V. Old Business:
 - a. Report on Administrator Evaluation Committee Progress.
A Committee is working on developing the survey tool.
 - b. HOP Policies: No actions taken.
 - 1. ADM 06-101 Faculty Role in Shared Governance
 - 2. ADM 06-304 Academic Committees and Councils (new number)
 - 3. ADM 06-502 Annual Faculty Evaluation
 - 4. ADM 06-505 Faculty Tenure and Promotion
- VI. New Business:
 - a. Faculty Senate Strategic Plan Presentation Committee Formation – Senator Kaswan
Senator Kaswan was selected by Faculty Senate Executive Committee to be the representative to the Strategic Plan Committee. The Strategic Plan was approved by the UT System Board of Regents and formally launched at the fall convocation. There was a campus wide call for program proposals that can support the Strategic Plan. Forty-two proposals were received from groups of faculty and students. The Faculty Senate can play an important role in the implementation of the Strategic Plan. Senator Kaswan is asking for volunteers to serve on a Faculty Senate Strategic Planning committee. Interested individuals should E-mail Senator Kaswan if interested serving on this committee. This committee will brainstorm ways in which the Faculty Senate can be involved in presenting and implementing the Strategic Plan.
 - b. Community Engagement Initiative – Was not discussed.
 - c. Faculty Senate *Update* newsletter: Volunteers were sought to help with the Faculty Senate *Update* newsletter.
 - d. Senator Recommended Initiatives: Not discussed
 - e. Shared Governance Awards: We will approach Dr. Qubbaj's office to

The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley

ask for funding to purchase plaques for whatever administrator or administrators who are selected as exemplars of shared governance.

- f. H-E-B rotation issue (WebEx): There is a need to discuss where the Faculty Senate meets each month. We have a \$3000 budget to reimburse Senators for travel and to pay for Officer's travel to meetings of the Texas Council of Faculty Senates and other meetings to the UT System FAC. We also use the budget to pay for room set up charges.
- g. Dream Center – This item was not discussed.
- h. Provost's Search Update – Senator Morgan
The search committee met with the search firm this week and reviewed the top 12 candidates who met all criteria. The search committee will reduce the list to 8 candidates by December 20th and 21st. The search committee will be conducting "airport" interviews using Zoom. The campus interviews will occur either late January or early February. The search committee will send Dr. Bailey 3-5 unranked names of candidates who may be invited for a campus visit. At this time, the names on the list cannot be released.

VII. Adjournment - The meeting was adjourned at 4:38 p.m.