

The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley

2017-2018 Faculty Senate Minutes
Harlingen, HCEBL 1.100
Friday, September 22, 2017
2:00 pm- 4:30pm

Minutes prepared by Michelle Alvarado, UTRGV Faculty Senate, Secretary

SENATORS PRESENT: Michelle Alvarado, Andrew Anabila, David Anshen, Elvia Ardalani, Sonja Arredondo, Bruno Arthur, Jameela Banu, James Bullard, Kathy Carter, Micky Caruntu, Frederick Darsow, Arden Dingle, Frank Dirrigl, William Donner, Richard Edmonson, Raquel Estrada, Marcus Farris, Teresa Feria Arroyo, Lilia A. Fuentes, Anahit Galstyan, Eleftherios Gkioulekas, Margaret Graham, Saara Grizzell, Britt Haraway, Miriam Herrera, Kip Austin Hinton, Elamin Ibrahim, Murat Karabulut, Mark Kaswan, Sanjeev Kumar, Joe Lacher, Irving Levinson, Donald "Jerry" Lyles, Marcy McMahon Fidencio Mercado, Bobbette Morgan, Jung-II Oh, Dong Yop Oh, Cynthia Paccacerqua, Volker Quetschke, Ernesto Ramirez, Maria Romero-Ramirez, Dora Saavedra, Sam Sale, Andrea Schwarzbach, Laura Seligman, Douglas Timmer, John VandeBerg, Jorge Vidal, Christopher Vitek, Michael Weaver, James Wenzel, James Whittenberg, Justin Writer, Aziza Zemrani

SENATORS ABSENT: George Amorim, Don Carlson, Steve Chamberlain, Marsha Griffin, Hale Kaynak, Jacob Neumann, John Newman, Nicolas Pereyra, Rosalva Resendiz, Hilda Silva, Samuel Snyder, Yasar Tasnif, Annelyn Torres, Bailey Wang, Yingchen Yang, Jasang Yoon, Mohammadali Zolfagharian

EXCUSED ABSENCES: Gary Schneider

FACULTY SENATE OFFICE ASSISTANT III: Vanessa Ceballos

VISITOR(S): Karina Stiles-Cox, Patty McHatton, Cynthia Brown, Kristin Croyle, Maggie Hinojosa, Sofia Montes

I. Convene Meeting and Welcome

- a. President Saavedra convened meeting at 2:06 p.m. It is our first faculty senate meeting of the new academic year, and we currently have 71 senators.
- b. President Saavedra introduced the guests in attendance: Sofia Montes, University Registrar, Maggie Hinojosa, VP for Strategic Enrollment, Kristin Croyle, VP for Student Success, Patricia McHatton, Interim Provost, Ala Qubbaj, Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs and Diversity, Karina Stiles-Cox, Women Faculty Network President

II. State of the Senate Address- Past President Bobbette Morgan

State of the UTRGV Faculty Senate Address
Past President, Bobbette M. Morgan
September 22, 2017

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President Saavedra, Fellow Senators, and Guests:

It was an honor and a privilege to serve as the UTRGV Faculty Senate President from April 29, 2016- May 5, 2017. I especially want to thank the Faculty Senate Executive Committee for their support and commitment to the Senate:

President –Elect and Past President and current President: Dora Saavedra

Parliamentarian: Volker Quetschke

Secretary: Michelle Alvarado, who has done an outstanding job of keeping up with the minutes. And thank you to our College Representatives:

James Boudreau, VCOBE (He is now at Kennasaw University)

Wilma Mealer, COHA

Arden Dingle, SOM

Jerry Lyles, CFA

Raquel Estrada, University Library

Wendy Lawrence-Fowler, CECS

I thank you all for your professional commitment and personal investment of time to the Faculty Senate.

I also want to acknowledge Dr. Ala Qubbaj, Vice Provost of Faculty Affairs and Diversity whose office provides us with an half time secretary, Vanessa Ceballos, who also takes care of all of the paperwork for travel reimbursements, travel to meetings, and for lunches for the Faculty Senate several times during the year. Thank you, Vanessa and thank you Ala, for your on-going commitment and support of the Senate and all faculty. We appreciate all you do.

We are a group of 75 faculty elected by our 1365 peers, recognized by the administration as the official voice of the faculty. Our responsibility is not taken lightly. We need to be actively involved in decisions affecting all faculty. According to the American Association of University Professors the primary responsibility of the faculty is curriculum, subject matter, methods of instruction, research, faculty status, and those aspects of student life which relate to the educational process. This is what we have focused on over the last year.

The White Paper, developed under Dr. Saavedra in the first six months of our existence as a university and a senate, was a guide as we moved into the first full year as the UTRGV Faculty Senate.

Mark Kaswan and Linda Matthews served as our representatives on the Strategic Planning Committee. The Plan is now complete, and our work has now been given direction. Thank you to Mark and Linda for representing us so well.

In reviewing last year's activities, you will see that we took on a broad range of issues:

July 2016- White Paper completed and shared with President Guy Bailey and Provost Havidán Rodríguez

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September 2016- Proposal for an Ombudsman presented to Senate. Motion made and passed in support of an Ombudsman position being established at UTRGV. The not so good news was that our graduate student enrollment was down by 16% fall semester.

October 2016- Guest speakers were invited to discuss UTRGV MOU with NextDecade Liquid Natural Gas and the Sierra Club. Faculty and students spoke on both sides of the issue as well as presenters from the organizations involved. This presented a lively discussion and an opportunity for us all to learn, when all was done a resolution to rescind the MOU failed. The good thing is that the administration became very aware of our concerns.

November 2016- The President and Provost shared with us that salary compression and inversion was being studied. The administration is working through the budget to identify funding and establish caps.

The Blue Ribbon Committee was approved and established last November, and members were: myself as Chair, Dora Saavedra, Marie Mora, Ala Quabbaj, Dean McHatton, Dean Block, Dean Diaz, and Dean Grewal. Thank you to all of you who served. This is an excellent model to keep in mind as we move forward. Dora and Marie did a tremendous amount of work on all of the policies preparing them for the committee's review. Thank you for all of the hours and effort invested in this so all faculty can benefit from clearer policies.

December 2016- Proposal for a Sanctuary University was brought forward. This occurred on the same day that the Governor of the State of Texas, Greg Abbott declared that Sanctuary Cities would lose funding. Students, faculty and administrators voiced concerns. We passed a resolution declaring ourselves to be a welcoming and an all- inclusive campus.

February 3, 2017- UTRGV was placed on probation by our accrediting agency SACSCOC. This actually occurred a few days after the December Senate meeting. The administration is working to determine what needs to be done and take care of these issues before next fall. The Faculty Senate Executive Committee was informed by the President the day after the SACS action was announced. This came as a surprise to all of us.

The Senate viewed part of the documentary film on "Starving the Beast". This shows how nationally higher education is under attack by political factions and the way this is playing out by reduced funding across the board for institutions of higher education. It is not just us. We need to speak to all stakeholders about this trend.

February 17, 2017- Updates were presented by Provost Rodríguez and by Deputy Provost Cynthia Brown on progress on the White Paper, equity salary adjustments, compression and inversion of salary study, SACSCOCs, graduate enrollment and the budget for next two academic years. Actions by the legislature were not supportive of institutions of higher education. We will not know until the session ends how that will effect UTRGV.

March 31, 2017- Rick Anderson, Vice President for Finance and Administration, reported that four new buses will be purchased for next year. Deputy Provost Cynthia Brown reported on SACSCOC.

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IT is “scrubbing” the websites to make sure that all sites have current and consistent information. We have been asked not to change anything.

Ala Qubbaj, Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs and Diversity announced that we will have 99 faculty positions filled by the end of April.

May 5, 2017- President Bailey spoke to us about the budget and pointed out that higher education was not doing well with the legislature and we should expect a cut of about 4 %. We now know the cut was actually 12% when all was said and done. Our increased enrollment, has helped off-set some of the problems created by the financial cut. The legislature also gave back funds for our School of Medicine that had been gutted during the legislative session.

In May Provost Rodríguez shared a copy of the Huron Report with faculty. Adjustments to salaries should appear in our October pay checks. Approximately \$3 million has been identified for this. The Faculty Senate Presidency passed to Dr. Dora Saavedra and Elections were conducted to fill the open officer positions.

Over the 2016-2017 academic year we reviewed, revised, and approved approximately 24 policies that will be added to the Handbook of Operating Procedures. That represents a tremendous investment of time and effort by all of us.

I am proud of our work during the 2016-2017 academic year. We have all tried our best to do what is right and what is best for the faculty we represent. We have had excellent and informed discussions on many issues. We have established very positive working relationships with our deans through the Blue Ribbon Committee, and kept lines of communication open with our administration.

It is our job, each of us, to represent the UTRGV Faculty Senate. This is a big job. We are now a big institution with over 1365 faculty. We have been selected to represent the faculty in our departments---not our own views, but all the members of our departments.

As President I often wondered if we identified the most pressing issues. I also am concerned about how we are viewed and how we view ourselves. Some faculty think things are bad, some feel things are going well, and who is right? I think it is like the parable about the three blind men describing an elephant. One has ahold of the tail and says an elephant is like a rope, one is touching a leg and says no, the elephant is like a strong tree, and one is touching the side of the elephant and says no, it is vast and higher than he can reach. They all are right, but none really understand what a whole elephant is like.

As a fairly new Faculty Senate we have experienced many growing pains, we are not what we used to be, we don't do things like we used to, and we all need to learn to work together. I know Dr. Dora Saavedra, as our Faculty Senate President, will lead us through this third year as a Faculty Senate with strength and commitment. She will help us all get this “elephant” into sharp focus, and together we will support her in those efforts.

I appreciate this opportunity to address the Senate and say thank you for the opportunity to serve. Now I'll turn it over to Dora.

Dr. Bobbette M. Morgan
UTRGV Faculty Senate President, 2016-2017

Presented September 22, 2017
UTRGV Faculty Senate
Harlingen, Texas

President Saavedra recognized Morgan for her hard work and service.

III. UTRGV Faculty Senate Introduction to Shared Governance Documents

This item will be discussed at the next meeting.

IV. Guest Updates:

- a. Dr. Cynthia Brown, Deputy Provost
 - Update – Curriculum meetings for undergraduate and graduate level have begun. On September 7, UTRGV submitted monitor report to SACSCOC. We will have a special committee visit the campus on October 16th-19th and there will be a mock committee visiting campus on October 27th. The mock committee mirrors the actual SACSCOC committee and we expect probing questions by mock team so we can prepare for the actual visit. The executive team met today with Dr. Bailey to discuss the upcoming SACS visit.
- b. Dr. Kristin Croyle, VP for Student Success
 - i. Update – There was a Student Success Kickoff and will share student success data and power point. There was a student success summit hosted by UT System. The leadership teams will take ideas back to colleges to implement the ideas discussed at the summit.
 - ii. At UTRGV, student success teams have been established with the College of Robert C. Vackar College of Business & Entrepreneurship, College of Health Affairs and Liberal Arts. The student success teams are comprised of the Associate Dean of College, faculty, staff, and advisors. The purpose of the student success teams is to increase student pass rate in freshmen courses and increase graduation rate. Colleges are developing new ideas that impact student success by creating agreements between student and institution to help students graduate within a 4-year frame. Will share the framework with faculty senate.
 - iii. The Advising Center has been reorganized. Advisors are assigned to colleges and will be college specific.
 - iv. Will be reporting to the state very soon regarding curriculum assessment. Departments need to work on student learning outcomes.
 - v. UTRGV is collaborating with Harlingen to establish an early college high school. Will start as a small class and will be offer classes in Harlingen in the upcoming years.

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- vi. Question was asked if advisors can be located in colleges. There is no room or space for advisors in colleges. If a college has space for advisors, talk to Kristin.
 - vii. Wants to establish an academic and inclusion/belonging think group. The purpose is to explore how to develop a sense of belonging for students.
 1. Are faculty being nice to me? Poses a challenge for online classes
 2. Faculty interested in serving on think group – Senator Herrera and Senator Zemrani
- c. Dr. Ala Qubbaj, Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs and Diversity
- i. Thanked Senator Morgan for her service and amount of work dedicated and co-chairing provost search. Will host faculty colloquium programs in the fall and spring semester. Will be 2 per semester.
 - ii. Will establish a UTRGV Academy of Distinguished Teachers similar to the UTs system. Fifty UTRGV faculty have received the Board of Regents awards.
 - iii. Hired a Fellow from creative writing program to establish a writing center.
 - iv. Faculty travel support program gave over 200 awards last year and for this year will increase amount from \$600 to \$800.
 - v. Established programs to support mid-career faculty and lecturers. One-third of faculty are lecturers and are eligible to apply to faculty travel support program.
 - vi. Internal and external awards were presented to faculty and were recognized in publication. UTRGV is committed to enhancing and strengthening academic leadership especially at the department chair level.
- d. Dr. Maggie Hinojosa, VP for Strategic Enrollment
- i. Maggie Hinojosa provided update on the possibility of scheduling MWF classes. This fall we have an increase in enrollment and an increase in semester credit hours which is based how the university receives funding.
 - ii. Feedback on scheduling MWF classes
The university is exploring and discussing the possibility of shifting the MW class schedule to MWF class starting in the 2018 fall semester. This will allow students to move in to residence halls and participate in Vaquero round up and student convocation. There is a possibility we may have to shift summer I schedule as well.

Discussion ensued.

The following are points and concerns raised during discussion:

- Will this affect designated study days
- May give faculty extra time to grade during summer school
- Will be starting 3 days earlier so we will pick up Labor Day
- May have to shift labs that are offered on Fridays
- May be problematic for graduate counseling students because they start practicum hours after their summer classes end
- Faculty contracts start September 1st
- Was noted that STC schedules classes four days and seen as our competitors
- Cuts into faculty's research time

Maggie Hinojosa stated that the proposed MWF scheduling chart is a draft. She added that we need to create 3 hours blocks on Friday in order serve students. Students need more choices and sections to graduate in a timely manner. It was shared that the math department offers classes and labs on Fridays. It was suggested to look at how UTB used to schedule MWF, 50 minute classes to determine the feasibility of the MWF classes. Question was asked whether it was core classes or advanced classes that sections are not available. Maggie stated we need a scheduling working group to determine how we are scheduling courses. Concern was raised that faculty use Fridays to research. Maggie requested to send her documents that track how many hours are being tracked for research by faculty. It was noted that the need for more classes and faculty is real issue and we need to diagnose the problem. We need to look at pedagogical issues to determine if students processing the material and need to look at the “why” of the proposed change. Question was asked if there will be a town hall to receive feedback from faculty.

Interim Provost McHatton stated we need to look at the “why” of the proposed change. She stated that the proposed MWF schedule change is not a done deal and will address issue at the next AAEC meeting. She added we need to look at scheduling and look at pedagogical needs of students. We have to have this discussion. We are not a one size fits all and we may look at things differently. Likes the idea of establishing a work group to examine the issue. Work group needs to be constituted by faculty in order to have deep conversations on this issue

V. Special “Listening and Dialogue Session” with Interim Provost Patty McHatton (approximately 40-45 minutes)

- a. President Saavedra introduced the Interim Provost McHatton. It was determined we would have an open session with the Provost.
- b. Interim Provost McHatton stated we are here for students and it is important the work we do supports our students. Request for proposal addressing initiatives for the Strategic Plan are out and are not just strictly for research but for developing programs as well. Need to assess the Chair climate and asked the Chairs to develop a short tem plan for increasing graduate enrollment and graduation. Wants to develop a task force with graduate coordinators, who recruit students for graduate programs, to identify solutions and welcomes wants feedback on ways to increase graduate enrollment. The travel processes have been streamlined to shorten the time for reimbursements.
- c. President Saavedra will recognize Senators to provide feedback for Interim Provost McHatton. The following are items were shared and discussed with the Interim Provost.
 - i. Concern for new travel policy
 - ii. MWF proposed scheduling
 - iii. Faculty Portfolio Tool
 - iv. Tenure and Promotion Guidelines

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- v. Summer work or service with no compensation
- vi. Curriculum vita as prepared by FPT
- vii. Post tenure review guidelines
- viii. Human resources does not recognize graduate students if they are not enrolled in classes and who conduct research
- ix. Increasing workload and service
- x. Need to have continuity in the TNP process
- xi. Need faculty input in scheduling workload and class schedules

President Saavedra thanked Interim Provost McHatton for attending the meeting and listening to our concern and questions.

VI. Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 4:45 p.m.