

The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley

2018-2019 Faculty Senate Meeting IX

Edinburg: EACSB 1.104/Brownsville: BMAIN 2.306F (Zoom)

Friday, March 6, 2020

2:00pm - 4:30pm

Minutes

Minutes prepared by Raquel Estrada, UTRGV Faculty Senate, Parliamentarian

Senators Present: Aada Khalid, Bruno Arthur, Sandra Atkins, Stephanie Atkins Sharpe, Jameela Banu, Karl Berg, Dumitru Caruntu, Mircea Chipara, Cynthia Cripps, Amy Cummins, Mark Dantzker, Raquel Estrada, Louis Falk, Mohammad Ibrahim Farooqi, Zen Faulkes, Christine Gerin, Sharon Helsey- Mcginley, Rene Gonzalez, Margaret Graham, Kip Austin Hinton, Elamin Ibrahim, Dean Kyne, John Luna, Rachel Mann, Hale Kaynak, Kye-Hwan Lee, Irving Levinson, Junfei Li, Fuat Firat, Arnulfo Mar, Theresa Mata-Pistokache, Randall Monty, Cynthia Paccacerqua, Candace Robledo, Miguel Salazar, Andrea Schwarzbach, Laura Seligman, Denise Silcox, William Sokoloff, Owen Temby, John VandeBerg, Jorge Vidal, Yingchen Yang, Aziza Zemrani, Dora Saavedra, Elvia Ardalani, Elizabeth Deven-Zuniga, Wendy Innis, Michelle Zeager, Murat Karabulut, Nancy Nadeau.

Senators Absent: Punit Ahluwalia, Andrew Anabila, Steve Chamberlain, Frederick Darsow, George Diaz, Marcus Ferris, Alejandro Garcia, Laura Gephart, Sunand Kallumadanda, Daejoon Kim, Dongchul Kim, Donald Jerry Lyles, Salma Mahmood, John Newman, Charles Olney, Volker Quetschke, Abdullah Faiz Rahman, Sam Sale, Clarissa Salinas, Samuel Snyder, Garry Souffrant, Linda Williams, Randy Williamson, Soo Yoo.

Senators Absent (Excused): Sonja Arredondo, Myriam Espinosa-Dulanto, Anahit Galystan, Eleftherios Gkioulekas, Karin Lewis, Michael Persans

Visitor(s): Patricia McHatton, Selina Mireles

Past President: Dora E. Saavedra

Office Assistant III: Vanessa Ceballos

- I. Convene Meeting and Welcome Senators and Guests 2:05PM
- II. Action Item: Approval of Minutes
Do delayed electronic version.
All minutes we had vote for electronically two weeks ago passed.
- III. Guests:
 - a. Diane Sheppard – Chief Compliance Officer UTRGV (15 min)

Can't make it. Reschedule.
 - b. Louis Falk – Recruitment of Hearing Officers. (5 min)

Dean of Students Office is asking for hearing officers. When students are accused of something, they have the right to appeal. If it's not worked out between the faculty

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member, the student, and the Dean of Students Office Rights and Responsibilities, they have the right to appeal. They will have training and supply a UT System attorney.

Questions / Comments:

Q: How would you like to handle the applications nomination process?

A: Send an email to Dr. Douglas Stoves or Faculty Senate.

Q: Why? Is it because someone stepped down?

A: There is a regular call for them. They have basically run out since last training and they need more people. They want to get a big enough group together to last a while because someone from UT System comes and gives the training.

Q: Do you want senate members?

A: Any faculty.

IV. Announcements/reports

a. Volker Quetschke – FAC

Faculty Advisory Council (FAC) – Every Faculty Senate of the UT System institutions sends two participants to total of three meetings a year to UT system where the Faculty Senates of UT system meet to take note of issues, problems, and hope to bring white papers or suggestions for new policies forward.

Last meeting was kind of inaugural. The first of two meetings in Spring. The most notable part was the UT System faculty advisory council has a new subcommittee, currently ad hoc committee about research. FAC has three standing committees: Academic Affairs, Health Affairs, and Shared Governance. There is wide support among FAC members to make the ad hoc committee into a standing committee. It needs a year or so to go into effect to have a Research Committee. The idea of research committee is to strengthen input at the UT System level on research, collaborations, and having a different input chain to get this done. President Quetschke is part of this committee although not in leading role. He is there because everyone with interest in research is more than welcome to participate.

First joint meeting with Employee Advisory Council. Had an hour for concerns and needs where we need to collaborate. It was identified that a lot of the problem's faculty face such as employment and climate related are shared by Employment Advisory Council. At leadership level the officers will meet and discuss possible actions. There were discussions on how to move forward.

Council of Library Directors of UT System shared about ongoing progress and process of how to negotiate with publishing houses going forward. We heard the same at last Senate meeting. As faculty, we should have an interest and see if we can help in any way moving forward.

Affordable Learning taskforce got a report about ongoing work in affordable learning/OAR at the UT system level. People are looking into what needs to be done to

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replace textbooks with OAR textbooks. Essentially, the same thing Art is doing on our campus just at system wide level.

President Quetschke is co-chair of the Academic Affairs Council. They are moving forward pressing issues for academic faculty quality. Faculty quality with focus on faculty retention. To help retention or motivate retention committee will start sending out emails to departments to figure out what retention is, what it means, and used and employed at the health and university campuses. Also, if possible, what is the cost for hiring. This is affecting academic affairs campuses but also affects health campuses. Academic campuses might be moderately expensive, but if you try to hire medical faculty, you are talking about more factors between three and seven compared to academic salaries and hiring packages are extremely expensive. Committee is doing this to point out to UT System institutions that retention pays off. This is in early stages, figuring out what is going on and what this might cost.

Questions / Comments:

Q: For the faculty advisory council when it comes to retention what are the outcomes? What is the purpose of having this discussion? What are we looking for?

A: Outcomes will be along the lines of what the faculty advisory council did. It will end up a white paper like report with recommendation to send to the Chancellor and to the Vice Chancellor Stephen Leslie. Also, all universities in the UT System and departments and colleges can use and reference it. It will be a well sourced and documented report. Hopefully it can be used and will be useful for discussion about hiring, how to spend money, and how to direct the future of universities.

Q: This recommendation will go to the administration, like our administration here?

A: It will go to the administration of UT System and hopefully respective FAC member on that meeting will tell the Senate and distribute it to the local campuses.

b. Cynthia Paccacerqua – TCFS

Texas Council of Faculty Senates (TCFS) met in Austin for Spring meeting. One panel dedicated to the use, utility, and importance of resources available for faculty and universities when they have a chapter of the American Association of University Professors. Discussion about the logic behind having one of these chapters and why it might be beneficial.

New leadership in Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB). Gave presentation, philosophy, how he was going to lead, looking into some type of innovative change. Idea of meta majors is something he is going to try to leave behind. Whatever work has been done will be reviewed and probably stay intact, but they are not moving forward in developing anymore of those fields.

He wants us to rethink how we evaluate our successes in Texas in terms of public higher education. Can we think about success of higher education in Texas and measure it without reducing it to graduation rates? He is interested in studying statistics of people who don't graduate but might have certain hours and what happens

to them professionally.

Questions / Concerns / Comments:

C: New commissioner of THECB is very reasonable or appears to be very reasonable. He is working closely with faculty groups to basically implement things that will make our lives easier administration and faculty and be more realistic metrics.

C: He comes from the academic field and knows what universities are going through.

C: Seemed genuinely interested in what faculty think.

c. Volker Quetschke – Blue Ribbon Committee and policy on free speech.

Sent out free speech policy questionnaire with deadline for comments of February 25th. Senators have seen the current version of the Free Speech policy. Deadline to submit to UT System and Board of Regents is so short that it will not completely run through faculty senate. Current version is back at Karen Adams office to put final touches on it and improve it as much as possible based on the comments. There will not be required two senate meetings to have two readings, deliberation, and maybe round of comments. The idea is once something gets submitted to UT System that the Faculty Senate will take up that version as the final suggestion. It is already official but continue work on it. Have a reading, collect comments, make improvements, have a vote, send it back to academic affairs at the president's office. We will go the regular expected way to this, but there is no time to follow due process because there was not enough time to get it done regularly.

Blue Ribbon Committee (BRC) is not really an official committee just a recommending deliberative meeting of interested parties. The committee will now make more transparent what it does with suggestions. When the committee asks for comments for a policy and you as a senator or faculty member sends in a comment, the committee will collect them and either implement if easily justifiable or if they don't implement, say why the blue ribbon committee decided not to follow this recommendation and give justification. It will not preempt the deliberative process in the Senate or Academic Affairs Executive Council.

Tenure and Promotion - The current proposal draft said committee members that already have participated once, cannot vote a second time but can participate in the discussion. It was pointed out this is not professional conduct. If you recuse yourself, you recuse yourself completely. The BRC group decided to make this strict one vote one discussion. After that, the person is asked to recuse themselves to abstain from further commenting or discussion. That does not preclude being asked for expert opinions or answers but no discussion, no voting.

d. Volker Quetschke – Report on FSEC meeting with Dr. Janna Arney with respect to Student Success

Faculty Senate Executive Committee met with President Bailey and had follow-up meeting with Dr. Janna Arney. Informational meeting with Dr. Bailey about Student Success moving under the Office of the President. Purpose of meeting was to be aware

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and help faculty if there were questions and assure move had nothing to do with ill feelings and avoid having gossip. No real explanation as to why the move happened.

Follow up meeting 2 weeks after with Dr. Janna Arney. FSEC was asked for and provided feedback, advise, observations regarding what might be obstacles for student success.

Questions / Comments:

Q: Explain move and why?

A: Change was Student Success moves from Academic Affairs to President's Office. Wants to have direct oversight of Student Success.

C: Past President Saavedra had different perception of meeting. Move intended to increase retention. Only way to generate revenue is to increase recruitment and retention. Voiced concern on quality as possible recruitment of students who are not TSI cleared perhaps in effort to help generate revenue. Assured quality would not be affected. FSEC participation in follow-up meeting likely due to insisting on being consulted on student retention.

C: We were doing well but not well enough to keep up with the funding level and more needs to be done to keep funding at the same level.

C: We should have been consulted as a faculty senate in advance. This is exact type of thing faculty do. We are teachers. We are being left out of retention efforts. To move these administrative roles without our consultation is ridiculous.

C: Quality does not need to be compromised in efforts to retain students.

C: UTRGV organizational chart now has two individuals reporting directly to the President. Faculty member expressed surprise and dismay because those two individuals are the auditor and new athletic director. Anybody else noticed the organizational chart seems to have changed? Cannot verify because don't keep up with these changes.

V. Business

a. Discussion about FPT controversial "workload tracking materials" submission.

Submission asks for research progress since last year but does not call it that. It actually asks for research done in AY 2020. A lot of faculty members are anxious and afraid and saying they can't report about AY 2020 results because that ends at the end of August and a lot of work is going to be done in summer. People are afraid they give pre-annual evaluation reports without having done the work for it. This is not the biggest problem. The biggest problem is directly under this question being "Now please tell us your workload percentages that you want to have for the coming year."

Suggestion: What we should do is change the text on top of it and, if possible, break it into two, maybe for next year. At least change the text of the description so that people know why they have to report this.

Discussion ensured.

Dr. McHatton Response:

Clarify intent so everybody understands the intent and seek advice on how to make it clear. The purpose of asking to identify workload percentages is for an accounting measure and not as an evaluation measure. It is an accounting measure because what we are doing is taking funds and reallocating them to the research account and specifically to the institutional and supported research.

At the beginning of the year, in Fall, we will allot whatever percentage and remove from your regular salary and put it in this account. It does not impact you as you are going to get paid the same no matter what. Whether you meet the stuff or don't meet the stuff your salary is your salary. We are just taking this amount and setting it in discipline. At the end of the academic year, we have to provide an accounting should those funds remain in that account. Did we deliver what we said we were going to deliver, or do we need to make an adjustment and move monies back.

All we want to know is for nine-month salary were you able to complete what you said you were going to do. If you didn't, that is okay because maybe you did something else. In essence, was your percentage commensurate with what you accomplished. We need to know so that we can reallocate funds.

Timing of asking for this in March is in part because it needs to be reviewed and at this time you have a good sense of what you will be able to accomplish. You are making an educated projection. If there is a better way to explain help us to do that so that it is clear.

Further Discussion / Comments

C: People concern that what is written will be used in annual review.

Q: Workload policy was supposed to be how you allocate time. That was how you would be reviewed. Teaching load determined by how much time spent on research, service and so on. This seems like a different explanation. Why would we have two different divisions of our percentages?

A: Workload policy is how you make determination on what counts for what. What we are talking about is documentation of workload effort. That is just documentation of workload effort.

C: It seems this document is duplicating and generating more confusion when negotiating new teaching load for new academic year. Information should be judged on finished activities. Have this kind of documents when cycle is completed, to have full answers and results and be able to discuss with real numbers.

R-Dr. McHatton: Reality is we are reallocating the research funding from an accounting perspective and we have to monitor. We have to have something in place to indicate this is where this money is going and can confirm this money was

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appropriately allocated to research. No one is evaluating the quality of research. Part of what we thought would be a really good thing of this is it forces chairs to meet individually with every single faculty member and have conversations. It is a tool not evaluation.

R-President Quetschke: What Dr. McHatton said is right. It should be emphasized on that page, the numbers you put in for percentages here should come out after negotiation with your chair because it does not happen across the board. This puts pressure on faculty if they are not informed that they are need to work with their chair to devise the percentages.

R-Dr. Mireles: There is a guide sheet that was developed and available online. It has screenshots of what you are supposed to do if you are the dean, chair, or faculty member so you can see ahead of time. This would be a good place to put philosophical statement and any information you think would be better to communicate and articulate this way.

Also, documents related to workload effort were signed, sealed, and delivered in March and should have been utilized last year. Biggest difference is in the platform, mode of doing this. Workload initiative being engaged through FTP does not talk to evaluation part even though both are utilizing digital measures.

C: This is additional administrative work put on shoulders of faculty whose time is increasingly being taken by such administrative workload.

R: It is the need for pushing work to faculty that could have been done by staff and we are notoriously short staffed.

C: Arrangement of percentages for next academic year should be based on annual review results from the year prior so that it is based on completed work and not on speculation of completed work.

C-Dr. McHatton: Next year when you get this whatever got filled in on what you were going to do will automatically populate. Then it is a question of yes, I completed what I was going to do, or modify to what was completed.

R: I believe what the faculty are saying is next year, we should not get this.

R-Dr. McHatton: We must do this. Since we are trying to become a research intensive institution, we need to demonstrate expenditure of research funds at a particular level. Institutionally supported research is research.

C: Faculty are reluctant to say too much about how much research they do. The procedure is working against research.

- b. Discussion and possible resolution on lacking Shared Government in Division of Health Affairs and Division of Research, Graduate Studies & New Program Development – See draft on blackboard.

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Discussion ensued. Senator Falk moves to accept with changes being talked about.

Summarize changes: removal of actual numbers stating that the faculty senate participates in academic affairs executive council and that we request participation without stating numbers in the health division and in the research division.

Motion: Senator Falk

2nd: Senator Berg

Vote: Motion passes unanimously.

COVID-19 update – Dr. McHatton

The institution has been working to develop a contingency plan and academic continuity plan. Plans to last three weeks. Other units are working on other areas should we find ourselves in a situation in which the coronavirus comes to this area. At Academic Affairs Leadership meeting participants engaged in discussion around what are the things we need to think about and put in place should we have to deliver face to face instruction in some other manner.

Why are we developing this plan? It is important to put in place because right now it is the coronavirus but at some point it might be another reason. Work to develop academic continuity plan is essential as well as making everyone familiar with the precautions and preventive measures.

What to do if something happens? We are looking at our capacity from a student and faculty perspective with regard to access to high speed internet, equipment, etc. What does the institution need to have available if we have to go to that space? Do faculty and students have the ability or skill set to access the electronic tools that we will be using? The electronic tools as far as the institution is concerned are Blackboard, Collaborate, Zoom, and Panopto. IT has confirmed platforms have capacity for all UTRGV users. How to maintain communication? Also, looking at how to support adjuncts and research infrastructure. We have animals. How do we make sure they are taken care of? Asking faculty not to send emails to students to avoid panic. Dr. McHatton's office is working on communication to go out to faculty. Similar email for students.

Questions / Comments

C: Some departments like COLTT have reached out to selected members they know have the skills and identified them to help others should they need it.

Q: Question related to travel. It seems unclear what to do if you have trip in near future and travel office seems confused too. When asked if trip can go through approval process, they said I don't know. Travel office does not seem to have answer on what to do.

R: If travel approved, you are good to go. Travel is being reviewed and if you are planning to go to hotspot it will come up and stopped. One point in email that went

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out, is recommendation of travel insurance. Read fine print to ensure coverage. If booking own travel, you need to make decision as to whether you want to take the risk or not. Travel is looked at as it is put in. They look at reports daily and are working with health department to determine likelihood of concern and risk.

C: If you have any questions, send them to your Dean or Dr. McHatton. They will forward to Doug Arney. He is leading this effort.

c. Resolution on SOM – Senator Fuat

Resolution not ready.

d. Transparency in Budget affairs – sub-committee to investigate best practices and status in other UT System members. Chair Owen Tembi.

Budget committee is compiling list of questions and will forward to someone who can help answer these questions. Focus on three main areas: 1.) Implications of budget deficit. 2.) Funding of the School of Medicine. 3.) Report on steep decline of faculty salaries.

Current year projected deficit of 22.1 million is down from 25 million the previous year. How does UTRGV pay for expenses over revenue? Does UTRGV maintain debt?

Dr. Bailey has indicated in presentation to UTRGV faculty that the School of Medicine is funded separately from the rest of the university. What are sources of funding? Is the medical school and hospitals and clinics being funded by formula funding for weighted student credit hours from other colleges? How has UTRGV paid for the decline in special budget items allocated to the medical school?

Total faculty salaries dropped from 83.5 million in 2017 to 69.8 million in 2019 recovering just about a million in the last year or for this current year. The decline appears to have occurred in every college except Health Affairs and School of Medicine. Did pay really go down 17%? Does this represent actual decline in faculty salary? What led to this change? Were some expenses shifted elsewhere in the budget, so it just looks like it went down? Are there other forms of faculty compensation that have risen to offset this apparent decline?

e. Constitution Committee Status Report. Chair C. Paccacerqua.

Committee is stalled. Working on document relying on different constitutions. First page introduces concepts. Who are we? Basic introduction of the function of faculty in governance and decision making in the university and providing basic reference to law. Important to have available so faculty understand where the source of authority of faculty comes from.

Proposing to create new position of communication secretary. Function of this position is to make sure the information that comes through the Faculty Senate Executive

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Committee makes it back to faculty senators who can then transmit to faculty in their departments.

Questions / Comments

Q: Different options for faculty to vote on? Different formulation of senate?

A: Proposing to have different representation structure so elections are at the college level. Proportional relationship between size of college. Number of faculty determines number of representatives.

C: You are going to propose for house model instead of senate model.

C: Instead of reducing representation of faculty increase representation of faculty. Let college decide representation. Don't make one size fits all. Senator does not feel represented by someone in other departments other than by own department.

C: Current constitution under which we operate does not have way to remove people for absences or delineate what are excused absences and what are not excused absences. This is one thing that really needs to be fixed.

C: School of Medicine has all committee meeting after 5pm. They begin at 5:30pm and run through 7:30pm. If you continue to schedule meetings on Friday afternoons, it is going to be an issue moving forward for School of Medicine.

C: School of Medicine expressed concerns they feel bad about so many departments not being represented at these meetings.

f. Teaching and Teaching Evaluation – sub-committee chair Dr. Caruntu.

Faculty in the Teaching Evaluation committee are also in the Course Evaluation committee chaired by Dr. Mireles and in the Teaching Excellence committee, chaired by Dr. McHatton. No committee meeting since last report. Plan to wrap up with document on work done by late April or early May. Senator Falk will present statistics to committee regarding teaching evaluations. Final document will have specific recommendations when it comes to student evaluations or peer observations and course evaluations. Dr. Mireles will try implement changes that are recommended. Dr. McHatton will help with changes they would like to make.

VI. AOB

VII. Adjournment 4:30PM