



Brownsville, Edinburg, Harlingen

2024-2025 Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, December 10, 2024, 3:00–5:00 pm CST Via Zoom

Senators Present:

Folake Adelakun, Mataz Alcoutlabi, Michelle Alvarado, Elvia Ardalani, Bruno Arthur, Abdurrahman Atesin, George Atisa, Marzieh Ayati, Norma Beardwood-Roper, Erica Buchberger, Brent Campney, Ruth Crutchfield, Laurie De Leon, Marcus Farris, Fuat First, Christopher Gabler, Liliana Galindo, Joel Garza, Suad Ghaddar, James Gleason, Cynthia Lopez Guerrero, Jose Gutierrez, Marcela Hebbard, Servando Hinojosa, Joseph Hovey, Krista Jobson, Ulku Karabulut, Megan Keniry, Marisa Knox, Donald J. Lyles, Denise Longoria, Gladys Maestre, Salma Mahmood, Pedro Martinez, Randall Monty, Robert Moreira, Mohamadhosseini Noruzoliaee, Noushin Nouri, Jung-IL Oh, Tamer Oraby, Edna Orozco, George Padilla, Mahmoud Quweider, Monika Rabarison, Genaro Ramirez Correa, Ignacio Rodriguez, Margaret Rubi, Jack Ruelas, Igor Ryabov, Andrew Smith, Silvia Solis, Erwin Suazo, Mohammed Uddin, Vejoya Viren, Sarah Williams-Blangero, Cory Wimberly, Haiyan Zhou, Christian Zuniga

Guests Present:

Grant Benham, Robert Dearth, Roda Galang, Francisco Garcia, Caleb Gonzalez, Sylvia Gonzalez-Gorman, Giorgio Gotti, Sergey Grigorian, Daniel Hunter-Holly, Michael Lehker, Jocelyn Pineda, Alma Rodriguez, Cinthya Saavedra, Jessica Sanchez, Susamma Thomas, John VandeBerg, Jeff Ward

Senators Absent:

Punit Ahluwalia, Mounir Ben Ghalia, Veronica Castro, Sonia Chapa, Alexandre Couture Gagnon, Elizabeth Deven Hernandez, Jose Hernandez, Wanrong Hou, Lisa Longoria, Ferenc Moldovanyi, Cynthia Paccacerqua, Maysam Pournik, Belinda Rivas, Laura Seligman, Hooman Tabatabai-Mir, Ahmed Touhami

I. Meeting opened by Senator Solis our Parliamentarian at 3:00 PM.

II. Report of FS President -Senator Dr. Gabler

- a. Tasks charges, issues of privacy and retaliation – Farce.
- b. Departmental reorganization policy.
 - i. examples – COS and School of Medicine
 - ii. Lobby Dean's to understand where they are coming from or where they stand.

- iii. CLA updates? Please share.
- iv. COS – Second interview has happened, and they are close to making an offer.
- v. We will wait for official announcements.
- c. Faculty Exigency policy – similar to UT Austin
 - i. This may create bridges.
- d. Relief to date for affected faculty
 - i. COS faculty teaching in a program may **serve** on graduate committees in the program regardless of academic unit in which the faculty is appointed.
 - ii. COS faculty with relevant expertise can **mentor** grad students in any program regardless of academic unit in which the faculty is appointed.
 - iii. New old problem: Chemists outside SIBCS are not eligible for certain grant programs.
- e. Remove barriers to faculty research
 - i. Research policy committee report today
 - ii. UT FAC subcommittee for research: Infrastructure and personnel barriers to research. Dr. Gabler is leading.
 - a) Date collection effort in cooperative with AVC for Research Joan Bienvenue.
 - b) Will require efforts at UTRGV – collaborate with FSRPC
 - c) Let us be aware that this is coming up.
- f. Financial exigency policy
 - i. A last resort measure to stabilize finances during a financial crisis.
 - ii. When disaster strikes, the time to prepare has passed.
 - iii. HOP impact statement and draft policy language circulated.

III. Report of FS Secretary- Senator Dr. Ruth Crutchfield referenced the minutes from the previous meeting

- a. Andrew Smith motioned to accept the minutes as is.
- b. Norma Beardwood-Roper and Marcela Hubbard seconded.
- c. All were in favor, and none were opposed. Minutes were approved.

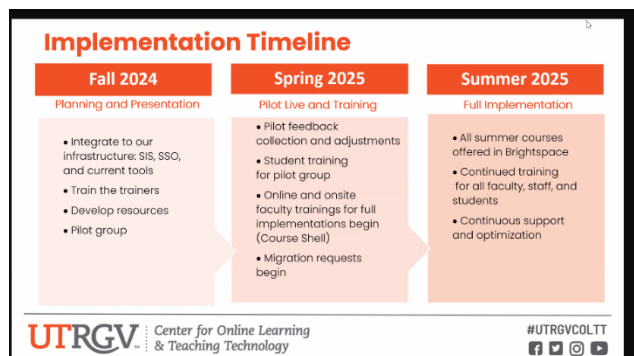
IV. Report of FS President Elect – Senator Dr. Williams-Blangero. Survey – Faculty satisfaction that will help contribute to the work of the faculty senate committee.

- a. Hiring review section of the survey refers to hiring and resources.
- b. Will be meeting with Dr. Bailey in January regarding faculty salaries.
- c. They will reconvene in January.
- d. The website is being updated to be more useful to faculty senate.

V. COLT – Francisco Garcia and Jessica Sanchez presented.

- a. Brightspace – pilot in spring 2025 and launch in Summer of 2025.
- b. Planning for migration process.
- c. Sharing support for faculty and students.
- d. Long term process that will begin in the summer of 2025.
- e. Question from Senator Beardwood-Roper – clarification regarding when Brightspace, Summer Session 1 and Summer module 2.
- f. Brightspace – Desire to Learn (D2L)
 - i. Enhanced learning experience
 - ii. Customizable and scalable

- iii. Support various learning styles
- iv. Integrate with other educational tools
- v. The Welcome page has courses on the left, announcements/widgets on the right.
- vi. Feature of BrightSpace
 - a) Content Creation
 1. Easy to use tools for creating and managing course content.
 - b) Assessment
 1. Quizzes
 2. assignments, and gradebook
 - c) Communication
 1. Discussion boards
 2. announcements
 3. messaging
 - d) Analytics
 1. Track student progress
 2. Track performance.
 - e) Benefits for Instructors
 1. Streamlined course management
 2. Time saving automation features
 3. Detailed insights into student performance
 4. Flexibility to adapt to different teaching methods.
 - f) Benefits for students
 1. Intuitive and engaging learning environments
 2. Access to resources anytime, anywhere
 3. Personalized learning paths
 4. Interactive tools for collaboration



Resources

Instructors

- Brightspace training (Online & F2F) starts first week of Feb
- Online resources and tutorials
- Brightspace Guided Training (Self-Paced)
- Brightspace Community

Students

- Brightspace training (Online & F2F) week before classes start
- Online resources and tutorials
- Brightspace Student Orientation (Self-Paced)
- Brightspace Community



Join the Brightspace Community

<https://community.d2l.com/brightspace>

Use your UTRGV email



g) Questions by senators –

1. Do we have super users that will be available in each college as we implement this new LMS.- Some schools have already started. Other schools will have access to the guided training. The best option is to join the community information page. Use your UTRGV email to access Brightspace. Yes. There will be champions for faculty.
2. If this isn't covered during the presentation, when will faculty be able to start TRANSITIONING/MIGRATING/CREATING their courses in Brightspace? Not training, but creating. I'd like to make sure I have plenty of time to create my Summer 1 course during the Spring semester. I.e., start working on it February onward:
<https://community.d2l.com/brightspace>
3. Spanish language is available in the elements of Brightspace.
4. While the range of student analytics are great, I also worry that too many analytics can compromise student privacy (an example: being able to see how long students are on a course page and an instructor making assumptions about their class participation). Will there be ways for instructors to limit some analytics on Brightspace? Analytics will be for teaching and learning for faculty for their own courses.

VI. Report from FS Research Policy Committee – Senator Sergey Grigorian

- a. Developed in 2021. Charge – advise on matters in research for the university. Provide wide dissemination of information for research.
- b. First point – identify issues in the faculty regarding research and how the issues may be rectified.
- c. Second point – provide feedback on both draft and impact statements.
- d. Document 1 was written in 2021- approved by faculty senate in August of 2021. This report outlined the main issues that faculty encountered during research and working on grants. This initiated meetings with university administration. When new research admin came in, Dr. Saygin, this document was provided to them so they can understand the issues the faculty were facing.
 - i. Dr. Saygin introduced some solutions
 - ii. Progress with IRB. Some issues are recurring. Reminders to the administration regarding the identified issues.
 - iii. HR policies issue faced by faculty involved in research were included in this report.
 - iv. Facilities issues were also reported.
 - v. Met with Dr. Saygin last year, emphasis placed on although there has been progress, there are still issues with research support staff, competence and expertise, approval compliance was prevalent in some divisions.

- vi. Insufficient funds for pilot studies or bridge funding.
- vii. Space issues
- viii. Deadlines – sponsored programs are willing to work with faculty. Some leeway with university deadlines.
- ix. Dr. Saygin is closely monitoring their dashboard. The interaction with the division of research has been rated at high satisfactory levels. If you have concerns, please report these in the surveys as well.
- x. Open recruitment process. Additional time and effort to advertise the position. HR came on board with the support of Dr. Saygin.
- xi. Meeting in April of 2024, Mr. Mike James and his HR team. Hiring and onboarding research staff.
- xii. Feedback for HOP Policies – Research units, clinical research, faculty development leave. The committee reviewed the policies and provided feedback. Not all recommendations were accepted, but some were accepted.
- xiii. Overall, this committee plays a vital role to effectively communicate with the UTRGV as UTRGV is moving towards R1 status.

e. Questions – Can we get the report? Yes. Who is the VCOBE committee member? Senator Bruno Arthur

VII. President Gabler – Restructuring Senate Standing Committees. Proposal – Eight committees total with a new conflict resolution group. The proposal is to make changes 1 through 8. See below.

Update: Proposed structural changes

- 1. Council on Academic Freedom and Responsibility
 - Absorb Ad Hoc SB 17 Implementation Working Group
- 2. Education Policy Committee
- 3. Faculty Welfare Committee
- 4. Faculty Rules and Governance Committee
 - Absorb Ad Hoc General Faculty Review Policies Working Group
- 5. Research Policy Committee – **report today**
- 6. Technology-Enhanced Education Oversight Committee
- 7. **Ad Hoc** Faculty Salaries & Resources **Working Group Committee**
- 8. Ad Hoc Harlingen Faculty Survey Working Group – **report next time**
- 9. **NEW** Faculty grievance support/conflict resolution group

Revised Standing Committee overview

- Senators are expected to serve on one FS Standing Committee
- 73 Senators / 7 committees = ~10 (6-14) members per committee
- Larger committees
 - 1. Council on Academic Freedom and Responsibility
 - 2. Faculty Rules and Governance Committee
 - 3. Research Policy Committee
 - 4. Faculty grievance support/conflict resolution group
 - Minor time commitment, open to non-Senators
 - Doesn't count as required Standing Committee

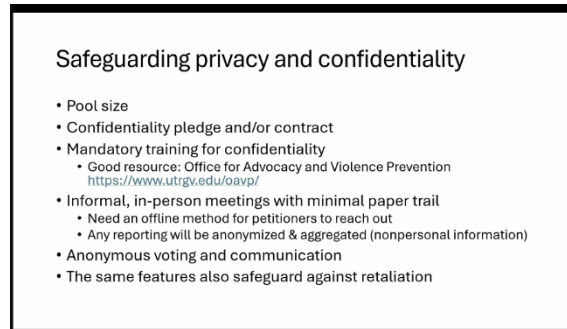
- a. Senator Fuat Firat moves to accept Committee changes 1-8. Senator Smith seconds
- i. Discussion: Do members of the FSEC have/need to be members of these committees? Yes.
 - ii. How are the faculty not in the senate, able to serve in those committees? Ex officio members. If there is a relevant expert, yes, they can self-nominate by emailing the faculty senate or be nominated.
 - iii. Who do we contact again with our preferences as to which committee to serve in: Please send to faculty.senate@utrgv.edu.
 - iv. Dr. Nouri asks if the Senate needs a replacement for her in the Senate during the spring semester while on FDL? Yes.
 - v. Question – Signing waivers with publishers – R1 Ex. Plus One, Springer Nature, to support open access. Dr. Gabler report UT systems advisory council is pursuing by Negotiating better fee rate reductions for UT systems. Tabled till new business.
 - vi. Senator Solis called for a vote. All were in favor, none were opposed.

VII. President Gabler – Conflict Resolution Group Proposal

<p>Purpose and Expectations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide advice regarding problems or conflict resolution • Provide mediation for conflict resolution <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborate with faculty ombuds • Provide support and information to address faculty problems <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the correct offices to petition, people to ask, rules to consider? • Provide an anonymous channel to the ombuds or other parties • Provide advice and support if a formal grievance is filed (procedural, etc.) 	<p>Membership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12-15 members • 1-year terms, renewable for up to 3 years <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mandatory gap year after a 3-year term • Qualifications <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All faculty, including non-tenure track, but confirmed by senate (or FSEC) • Maximum 50% administrative load <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Petitioners will have oversight over advisor selection if concerned about • Representation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every college • All ranks • TT, professional faculty, clinical faculty, lecturers, other NTT titles
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- a. Anonymity
- b. Full formal grievance – Group will navigate.
- c. Name: PARCC – Peer Advising to Resolve Conflicts Confidentiality
- d. Committee for Conflict Resolution and Grievance Avoidance
- e. Comments- PARCC – Senator Crutchfield stated that the PARCC could also be viewed as Wait and work on this aspect – it can have two meanings. Senator Smith states to keep in mind maintaining the balance between senators and non-senators. Confirmation of membership should be for the entire rather than the executive committee. President Gabler provided some strengths to this aspect of voting. It could be a quick and concise process. Senator Hebbard- In addition to the selection process, keep in mind the rank of tenure and professional ranks.

- f. We can now create a final document on this committee for now.



IX. New business.

- Exigency Policy – Time constraints regarding discussion for this are at hand now. President Gabler requests for all senators to send comments to the executive committee. Faculty members present, please email your senators your comments.
- Annual reviews – Any rank can evaluate tenure and associate or full professor. This is not the case. Even for annual reviews, equal or higher rank can evaluate.
- Senator Oraby – Agreement between UT regents with publishers for publication costs. Ex: PlusOne – personal funds being used. R1 culture there is more to do in this aspect. This is in the works! Task for Research policy committee.
- Senator Fuat Firat – Colleagues have been sharing with me their concerns regarding the status of dreamer students with incoming government policies. What are we planning to do regarding this issue or how are we preparing for the protection of the dreamers as the FS. Ask Karen Adams for counsel regarding this.

X. President Gabler motioned to adjourn. Senator Fuat Firat seconded and all were in favor.

Meeting adjourned at 5:02 PM.