



Brownsville, Edinburg, Harlingen

2023-2024 Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, May 7, 2024, 3:00–5:00pm CST Brownsville Salon Cassia and via Zoom

Senators Present:

Mohamed Abdel-Raheem, Jair J. Aguilar, Antonio Aguirre, Michelle Alvarado, Bruno Arthur, Roseann Bacha-Garza, Norma Beardwood-Roper, Ben Brown, Erica Buchberger, Sonia Chapa, Joel Chirinos, Ruth Crutchfield, Laurie De Leon-Escobedo, Louis Falk, Christopher Gabler, Suad Ghaddar, Jimmy Gleason, Marcela Hebbard, José Esteban Hernandez, Kip Austin Hinton, Krista Jobson, Ulku Karabulut, Megan Keniry, Marisa Palacios Knox, Qinyu Liao, Cynthia Lopez Guerrero, Randall Monty, Nancy Nadeau, Noushin Nouri, Cynthia Paccacerqua, George Padilla, Mahmoud K. Quweider, Monika Rabarison, Genaro Ramirez-Correra, Padmanabhan Rengasamy, José Antonio Rodriguez, Jeannean Ryman, Silvia Patricia Solís, Owen Temby, Sarah Williams-Blangero

Guests Present:

John Blangero, Jonikka Charlton, Romeo Di Loreto, Arno Forst, Georgio Gotti, José Gutiérrez, Susan Hurley-Glowa, Sandra Musanti, Cinthya Saavedra, Laura Saenz, Luz Maria Silva, Luis Zayas

Senators Absent:

Mataz Alcoutlabi, George Atisa, Mircea Chipara, Elizabeth Deven-Hernandez, Marcus Farris, Fuat Firat, Jonathan Guist, José Esteban Hernandez, Wanrong Hou, Joseph D. Hovey, Pauline Jojo, Jeong Han Kim, Sanjeev Kumar, Dean Kyne, Kye-Hwan Lee, Denise Longoria, Lisa Longoria, Gladys Maestre, Salma Mahmood, Pedro Martinez, Ferenc Moldovanyi, Tamer Oraby, Nilanjana Paul, Ricardo Pizzinato, Jack Ruelas, Clarissa Salinas, Laura Seligman, Hooman Tabatabai-Mir, Eloisa Tamez, Ahmed Touhami, Mohammed Uddin, Vejoya Viren, Aaron Wilson, Haiyan Zhou, Christian Zuniga

Minutes:

I. Meeting Called to Order at 3:03pm

II. **Report of FS Parliamentarian – Senator Falk**

- a. Introduction
- b. Robert's Rules

III. **Guest Speaker – UTRGV President Dr. Guy Bailey**

- a. Look at the PowerPoint we sent out earlier today
- b. Applying for Emerging Research status; On track to meet R1 status by 2030
 - i. More money to compensation
- c. Space issue in Brownsville
 - i. Announcements coming soon
 - ii. Negotiations with procuring TSC space ongoing
- d. Board of Regents meeting starting this week
 - i. Optometry program, starts 2027
 - ii. Housing on Edinburg campus (building that brings income)
- e. SB 17 & 18
 - i. Legislative hearings coming up in May
 - ii. System chancellors will handle that; doesn't anticipate problems
- f. Hinton: Is there a timeline for the use of Majestic Theater in Downtown Brownsville
 - i. GB: Timeline a matter of getting the materials and workers in place; A lot of these projects are managed at the system level, but we've gotten approval to move some of these local projects forward in a timelier manner
- g. Paccacerqua: Timeline for emerging research status this year?
 - i. GB: Still need to determine number of graduating PhDs; we wouldn't apply if we weren't sure we'd get it done

IV. **Report of FS Secretary – Senator Monty**

- a. Elections
- b. Approval of April minutes
- c. Motion to approve: Gabler; Seconded: Knox
- d. Approved: by majority Against: XX Abstain: XX**

V. **Report of FS President — Senator Paccacerqua**

- a. We appreciate the UTRGV President keeping open the communication w/ faculty
- b. Texas Governor has asked us to (a) respect free speech and (b) target protestors. We could use some guidance from administration as to how to meet both of those objectives.
- c. UTRGV President charged faculty with learning about the role of faculty and universities, of what we can and can't do, implementation of DEI and new T&P policies
- d. Push towards emerging research R1 status, but we're getting complaints about what the faculty's role and abilities will be during those times; what are the roles of the faculty committees (working w/ Dr. Saygin); instability with summer funds and teaching, money for research work, hard to plan successfully

- e. UTRGV sold a building, at the last minute the department that was running and renting the building lost that funding stream, we need to talk about how these things can be avoided
 - f. Another department had a grant proposal pulled at the last minute, a lot of work from the faculty, community, and discipline, and all the time was lost; that issue was resolved, so hopefully it doesn't happen again
 - g. Complaints from administrators about not getting responses about why projects aren't being advanced
 - h. Another program lost research area because of a soccer field. The decision was made (it sounds like) a long time ago, but faculty weren't told in advance so there wasn't an opportunity for response.
 - i. Can't work at an individual complaint level; need interdisciplinary faculty committees to study these problems university wide.
 - j. FS research policy committee charged with research needs of faculty... what happened with that?
 - k. No point in having a FS and holding votes if we don't hold ourselves accountable and follow up on their charges
 - l. Thank you for allowing me to serve; thank you for Senator Nadeau for her service
- VI. **Report of FS President-elect – Senator Gabler**
- a. Thank you FS President Paccacerqua
 - b. Thank you SB 18 committee
 - i. We accomplished a lot!
 - ii. Passed out revisions, which went up to the US System level, shared them with the Associate Vice Chancellor
 - iii. Met with University Lawyer Karen Adams, Chief of Staff for the President Samantha Allen, Senior Vice President of Governmental and Community Relations Veronica Gonzales
 - iv. UT System leaning towards a system-wide policy that incorporates all of the changes made at each institution
 - c. Shared Governance (what appears to be)
 - i. School of Medicine
 - 1. Helping them reconstitute their Faculty Assembly Executive Committee
 - ii. College of Science:
 - 1. Identifying the real tangible ways that faculty have been impacted
 - 2. Chemists sent all over the place!
 - 3. Develop new policy to work with the incoming COS Dean to avoid those kinds of things happening again
 - d. Rising Authoritarianism
 - i. Here in Texas; Governor told legislators and administrators to “keep an eye on” faculty senates
 - ii. We need to be aware of that!

- iii. We have reason and history to believe that the Texas Legislature will continue to promote things like SB 17 & 18, to continue to attack free speech and tenure; We're in the eye of the Texas Governor and Attorney General
- iv. We will have the most strength as a cohesive and united Senate, UTRGV faculty, UT system, and other faculty senates from across Texas
- v. I'm having a party! This evening, after this meeting! (It's a school night.)
- vi. We have some folks here from Political Science, symbolizing a reunification.

VII. Report of FS Past-president – Senator Hinton

- a. Thanks everyone. Bye!

VIII. Guest Speaker:

- a. Dr. Jonikka Charlton
 - i. I'll meet regularly with FS leadership; Faculty are a very important part of student success
 - ii. Good news about what retentions looks like right now
 - iii. We lost a "remarkable number" of Fall 2020 cohort; that's where we'll get our four-year graduation rate from; those students that were resilient and stayed on stayed on the rest of the way
 - iv. Office of Pre-Professional Development
 - 1. Nested within Student Success
 - 2. A lot of different academic pathways to health professions and Medical School (not just Bio/Chem)
 - v. We do a lot of work w/ faculty related to teaching and learning support; CTE is a way to assist faculty; Peer collaborative learning through the Writing Center and Learning Center; Biology and Social Work faculty
 - vi. LMS: We're in the final stages of contract negotiations (every lawyer in every place must be involved); Thanks Senators Guerrero and Mann!
 - 1. **Not changing** LMS for Fall 24
 - 2. When we release the name, we'll provide details about implementation, but we must talk a lot about training and course conversions
 - 3. Students must go into different course shells for each class, which doesn't always lead to the best student experience
 - 4. There's a strong desire to have conversations and support and institutional and departmental levels
 - vii. Hinton: Can you give us a hint about the LMS?
 - 1. JC: Can't, but I can say that it will be much fewer clicks. The energy you want to put into your classes is intellectual energy, not clicking. Not everyone will be happy, but please know we took faculty feedback seriously.
 - viii. Faulk: Timeline for full faculty adoption?
 - 1. JC: Don't have that information yet, but we will send it to faculty as soon as we have it.

IX. Academic Committees and Councils Reports

- a. External Awards Committee – Dr. John Blangero
- b. Faculty Development Council – Dr. Sandra Musanti
- c. Faculty Research Council – Dr. Susan Hurley-Glowa
- d. *General Education Committee – TBD (Zoom)*
- e. Graduate Committee – Dr. Laura Saenz
- f. Undergraduate Committee – Dr. Marcela Hebbard
- g. University Library Committee – Dr. Andres Amado (Zoom)
- h. University Tenure and Promotion Committee – Dr. Louis Falk

X. Faculty Senate Committees – TBD

XI. New Business:

- a. Nadeau: Nurse's Week!
- b. Group photo

XII. EXECUTIVE SESSION

XIII. Faculty Senate Elections:

- a. Nominate officers for next year
 - i. No quorum
 - ii. Floor nominations
 - iii. Solicit additional nominees online
 - iv. Vote online in the coming weeks
- b. President-elect
 - i. Nominated: Sarah Blangero
- c. Secretary
 - i. Nominated: Owen Temby
- d. Parliamentarian
 - i. Nominated: Silvia Solis

XIV. Meeting adjourned

- a. Motion to adjourn: **Monty**; Seconded: **Crutchfield**
- b. Meeting adjourned at **5:11pm**; closed at **5:11pm**
- c. Next meeting:
 - i. September 10, 2024