

2021-2022 Faculty Senate Meeting Agenda
Tuesday, February 8, 2022, 3 pm – 5 pm CST Via Zoom

Community Agreement

The UTRGV Faculty Senate is brought together in the spirit of shared governance to move forward in a positive open manner for input that allows all stakeholders to speak regarding policy and process formation. To create a safe environment where everyone's opinions are valued and considered, let us observe the following:

- 1. Try to be on time to the meeting and actively participate*
- 2. Review the pre-reading materials to be discussed, and if you plan to comment have your thoughts organized in advance*
- 3. Assume positive intent, seek to understand, be inclusive, bring productive energy to discussions*
- 4. Only one person speaks at a time (use raise hand feature to be recognized)-chat is not part of the official record (will not be included in the minutes).*
- 5. Respect and acknowledge everyone's opinions, even if they differ from yours*
- 6. Confidentiality: some things shouldn't be repeated outside the meeting*

Senators Present: Khalid Aada, Jair J. Aguilar, Tony Aguirre, Stephanie Alvarez, Andrew Anabila, Sonja Arredondo, Jameela Banu, Sarah Blangero, Ben Brown, Lucia Carreon, Dumitru Caruntu, Joel H. Chirinos, Mircea Chipara, Cynthia Cripps, Amy Cummins, George Diaz, Louis Falk, A Fuat Firat, Christine Gerin, Rob Gilkerson, Jimmy Gonzales, Sergey Grigorian, Jonathan Guist, Tekla Hawkins, Marcela Hebbard, Sharon Helsley-Mcginley, Kip Austin Hinton, Michiyo Hirai, Ulku Karabulut, Hale Kaynak, Sanjeev Kumar, Dean Kyne, Kye-Hwan Lee, Karin Lewis, Qinyu Liao, Yu Liu, John Luna, Michael Machiorlatti, Mike Magee, Rachel Mann, Arnulfo Mar, Theresa Mata-Pistokache, Randall Monty, Nancy Nadeau, Cynthia Paccacerqua, Nilanjana Paul, Diana Paz, Emma Perez, Volker Quetschke, Abdullah Rahman, Padmanabhan Rengasamy, Sam Sale, Clarissa Salinas, Dana Shackelford, Andrea Schwarzbach, Owen Temby, Paul Valadez, Jorge Vidal, Vejoya Viren, Yingchen Yang, William Yaworsky, Soojin Yoo, Aziza Zembrani

Administrator: Vanessa Ceballos

Senators Absent: Grant Benham, Narayan Bhat, Rene Gonzalez, Fred Guerra, Hansheng (Jet) Lei, Salma Mahmood, Riccardo Pizzinato, Henry Reinhart, Miguel Salazar, Manuel Saldivar, Aaron Wilson

Guests: Bassent Abdelbary, Janna Arney, Bruno Arthur, Jonikka Charlton, Romeo Di Loreto, Michael Dobbs, Mike Hocker, Nausheen Jamal, Michael Mahaney, Monika Rabarison, Imelda Reyes, Margaret Rubi, Shawn Saladin, Paul Sale, Susamma Thomas, Christina Villalobos

- I. **Meeting Convened at 3:00 pm** – Welcome: Faculty Senate President Karin Lewis: FSEC continues to recognize concerns and impact of the ongoing pandemic. She reminds us to:
 - i. follow Robert's Rules of Order and Zoom etiquette guidelines
 - ii. mute microphones
 - iii. rename your zoom tile: guests add "*guest" to your name and senators to add your college/department/ title and/or leadership role in the Faculty Senate
 - iv. Parliamentarian, Volker Quetschke, will be monitoring the discussion
 - v. Secretary, Cynthia Cripps, will monitor the chat, guests or senators who wish their comments or questions be read aloud on the floor, direct message her
 - vi. the chat is an informal space and will not be included in the minutes
 - vii. Thank you for being here today

- II. **Report of FS Parliamentarian- Volker Quetschke**
 - a. Roberts Rules & Zoom guidelines reminder:

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- i. raise your hand and speak when you are recognized
- ii. you may speak twice (90 seconds each) on a topic
- iii. to make a motion, please submit a written statement in a direct message or an email to Volker Quetschke or Cynthia Cripps. It will then be displayed on the screen (floor) and discussed or moved upon as directed

III. Report of the FS Secretary - Cindy Cripps

- a. January 18, 2022 Minutes (pre-reading handout 2.)

Move to approve - Mickey Caruntu, seconded by - Aziza Zemrani

Approve: 39/43 (+2) 91%

Reject: 0

Abstain: 4/43 9%

The motion carries with 91% approval of January 18, 2022 minutes.

IV. Report – President-Elect Kip Hinton – no report

V. Report - President Karin Lewis – (pre-reading handouts: 3.a. FAC agenda, 3.b. FAC_UT System White Paper on Shared Governance)

- a. FAC (Faculty Advisory Council) update from January 27, 28, 2022:
 - i. Helen Mohrmann (Chief Information Security Officer): presented on cybersecurity issues, specifically malware and phishing attacks can severely disrupt operations
 - ii. Archie Holmes: (Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs): discussed:
 1. Equitable student pathways (launched January 2022)
 2. Analytics consortium planned (faculty fellows for access to data)
 3. Diversifying faculty consortium planned (NSF grant supported) focused on Post Doc Program for STEM (modeled after: California, Maryland, and Texas A & M) to attract diverse faculty
 4. Review Hispanic Servings – What does it mean and how do we serve? (40-45% of students across UT system are Hispanic, and 7 of 8 institutions are majority minority institutions), beginning with the four UT institutions with “Excellencia” status. Looking at ways to accelerate success of minorities.
 5. Diversity equity and inclusion cross intuitional mentorship
 6. UT System offering more certificates and micro credentials. Task force for block grants for institutions for underrepresented graduates’ employment enhancement. “SkyPack” 4-week credentials to develop skills identified by TX Workforce Development data. “Stackable Credentials” being explored by UT System task force.
 7. Dr. Holmes’s visits and informal surveying of institutions regarding the impact of Covid revealed 2 primary learnings:
 - a. Mental health and well-being concerns across all faculty, staff, and students—how to address
 - b. Career trajectories—how will the pandemic impact careers and how to address equity
- b. FAC academic Affairs committee
 - i. Covid Legacy Project – drafting document and recommended best practices (seeking UT System endorsement for more support regarding concerns covid had on faculty productivity, teaching, reviews, inequitable impact of caregiving, etc.)

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- ii. Presented a motion to reaffirm 2016 FAC and UT Chancellor and approve white paper on shared governance. This is to reacquaint everyone (new and pre-existing) with this document.
 - 1. Shared governance related to UTRGV:
 - a. Update on Faculty Senate shared governance survey: the survey sample presented during FSEC would need to be adapted to fit UTRGV. It was tabled at the time and will need to be revisited. (* Amendment: This is in response to Senator Ulku Karabulut's inquiry for an update on creating a survey for UTRGV faculty to share their opinions regarding the work and perception of the Faculty Senate.)
 - b. Invitation of all faculty to all FS meetings
 - c. Do we keep track of participation of guests at FS meetings? - yes
- iii. Laura Chambers (Executive Director for Employee Benefits)- discussed student benefit (e.g., graduate assistant health insurance)
- c. Director and Chair Evaluation
 - i. FS, faculty, and Council of Chairs integrated feedback and evaluation survey is ready. The survey will be disseminated via the Provost Office (leveraging the current FPT assignments to ensure faculty are providing their evaluation of their current supervisor) and results will be managed by SAIR. Chairs will receive their results, as will their department faculty (aggregate of results for their specific department), and the deans will receive results for their colleges' chairs/directors. The provost will receive all results, as will Faculty Senate (in aggregate to consider themes and ways to address any opportunities for improvement). The Office of Faculty Success & Diversity will also receive aggregate results to inform decisions regarding opportunities for professional development and leadership enhancement.
 - ii. Next fall the administrator evaluation will be conducted (e.g., Deans, etc.).
- d. Department/unit budget disclosure update:
 - i. Kurt Martinez (Chair of Council of Chairs), Kip Austin Hinton, Karin Lewis and Janna Arney discussed the issue of budget transparency. They agreed that the Provost's office will generate reports (i.e., pie charts) for chairs to share with department faculty. It will illustrate general *fixed budget* and *discretionary items* for improved transparency

VI. Guest Presentations

- a. SOM Dean Mike Hocker (Dean of School of Medicine) - update on state of Covid pandemic in the RGV and at UTRGV
 - i. The early stages of covid – severe illness and mortality, etc., are behind us.
 - ii. Omicron variant – symptoms are milder and appears more as a cold. Highly contagious. It has peaked and is now on a decline in the RGV.
 - 1. Vaccination and boosters continue to be helpful. University is supporting the vaccinations and boosters.
 - 2. Need to learn as a society how to work safely with covid.
 - 3. Adapt, improvise, and overcome, but we need to move on with our lives and providing students with high quality education.
- b. Michael Dobbs (Chief)
 - i. Two years in the pandemic. 90% + of Texans have some immunity
 - ii. Vaccine is effective against omicron, although other variants may surface.
 - iii. Pandemics are not new to us. It was predicted and changes how medicine and healthcare is approached.
 - iv. People may be eligible for a 4th booster dose in the future (generally a booster should be administered about every 6 months).

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- v. Vaccines and boosters are available M - F 1 pm - 4:30 pm
UT Health Employee Health (Edinburg)
EREBL #58 1214 W Schunior (walk-ins welcome)
956-296-1731

UT Health Employee Health (Harlingen)
2106 Treasure hills Blvd #1.326 (walk-ins welcome)
956-296-1516

UT Health RGV Student Health (Brownsville) (accommodates: UTRGV students, faculty, staff, and their dependents)
Cortez Hall, suite 237 (please call for an appointment)
956-882-3896
- vi. Testing – if you answer yes to any of the daily screening questions complete the preliminary Covid -19 screening form. A covid-19 response team member will contact you.
- vii. Covid Response Team remains active and are the best resource to help make decisions. Each case is different, and they can provide guidance.
- viii. Use common sense, social distance, and take precautions when vaccination status is unknown
- ix. Home testing may reduce reported cases. Hospitalizations and Clinics will track cases.
- x. Hospital and medical staff are burnt out.

UTRGV follows the CDC guidelines:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/quarantine-isolation.html>

- c. Provost Janna Arney - update:
 - i. Chair evaluation mock-ups are being set designed and the timeline for implementation is March 2022.
 - ii. Dissemination of the department budget information: Finance and Administration Team is working on mock-ups to present to the chairs after which they will come back to the FS
 - iii. Faculty leave – absence of the policy – sub-committee is researching and working on a mock-up.
 - iv. Recommendations on Evaluation - update: issues fall into four areas
 - 1. Student: How do we help students understand their roll in course evaluation process? How can we better prepare students to do the evaluations? Do they understand how the evaluations are used? Getting student feedback before the evaluations open, will give us a better idea of their understanding of the course evaluation and process. We could better define the categories and modify the language, so students know the importance of their responses. CTE, Student Affairs, Student Success will work and educate with student groups regarding course evaluations.
 - 2. Department guidelines: Much of the concerns expressed in the December 2021 faculty annual evaluation survey, concerned the department guidelines. There will be department policy revisions but also creation of “Best Practices” document on department guidelines.
 - 3. Peer observation for Annual evaluations: Each department has a form for peer evaluation
 - 4. FPT: Team is ready to tweak and help adjust the form before launching for the fall 2022 evaluation. It isn’t as user friendly as it could be, but we can customize it to meet our needs.

Faculty Comment: Course evaluations are too highly regarded. They should be a smaller part of the overall evaluation of faculty. Course evaluations, as they are currently, do not reflect the quality of teaching they are receiving in the classroom. They seem to be a “consumer satisfaction” evaluation.

Dr. Arney: One measure is never the *only* measure; it is important to evaluate the course/faculty member as a whole. Creating guidelines for evaluation makes sense until they are applied and that is where we learn. Then there needs to be a loop back to amend and clarify as needed. It is important that we incorporate a review cycle to improve the cycle. These changes to the policy need to be addressed while they are fresh, and not postponed. This review and the amendments at the department level gives context to the levels of review following the immediate department/unit and college.

- There is continued discussion regarding evaluation of faculty minorities, especially women of color when course evaluations are being used for annual review.
- Suggestion and discussion to invite evaluators (specialists in teaching from outside a discipline to observe and give faculty feedback on their teaching. There are more teachers and researchers with underlying disabilities that are not being considered within the evaluation process. Maybe reach out to Adela Valdez, Associate Dean of Diversity, Inclusion, and Health Equity and CTE for further discussion regarding what resources are available for faculty.

Course evaluation questions – five are standard (even at other universities) and more can be added and possibly by department/unit.

VII. Old Business

- a. Emmy Perez & Stephanie Alvarez-Ethnic & Gender Studies proposal overview
 - i. Center for Mexican American Studies - Black Lives Matter Taskforce: Graduation Requirement Proposal
 1. History:
 - a. First proposed at UTPA in 2013 – SGA passed a resolution endorsing the requirement that all students must take 1 course in Ethnic or Gender Studies in order to graduate
 - b. Faculty took the request to Curriculum Committee where it did not pass by the margin of 1 vote
 2. Students would select from a list of upper and lower-level courses that fulfill this requirement
 3. It will not add hours to degree plan. The one course can come from the core, the major, or minor, high school dual enrollment courses, or transfer courses may meet the criteria.
 4. Timeline: colleges may start to implement this requirement as soon as fall 2022 and no later than 2026

Motion by Fuat Firat: I move that we adopt the proposal as a FS recommendation. Seconded by Jair Aguilar

“All students at UTRGV must take a course in Ethnic or Gender Studies to graduate.”

Discussion: Stephanie and Emmy provided more information and answer questions.

Approve: 29/45 (+4) 64%

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Reject: 8/45 18 %

Abstain: 8/45 18%

Motion carries with 64% approval.

VIII. FS Committee reports/motions discussion – none

IX. New Business

Motion: Fuat Firat: I move that the Faculty Senate develop a resolution against laws and policies impinging on academic freedoms of teaching different subjects or having varied discussions in higher education.

Louis Falk calls the question, second by Sharon Helsley-Mcginley.

Approval: 36/42 +4= 85%

Reject:

Abstain: 6/42= 14%

The motion carries with 85% approval.

X. Next meeting date: Tuesday, March 8, 2022 (3 pm-5 pm) via Zoom

XI. Motion to adjourn: Louis Falk, second by Nancy Nadeau: Meeting adjourned (5:02 pm)

*[*Amendment (V. b. ii. 1. a.) requested by Ulku Karabulut and added by Cynthia Cripps 3/8/2022]*