

The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley™

**2019-2020
Faculty Senate Meeting V
Edinburg Academic Services Building (EACSB 1.104) and
Brownsville CEP Conference Room (BMAIN 2.306F) via ZOOM
Friday, November 8, 2019
2:00pm - 4:30pm
Minutes**

Minutes prepared by Ernesto Ramírez, UTRGV Faculty Senate, Secretary

Senators Present: Khalid Aada, Andrew Anabila, Elvia Ardalani, Sonja Arredondo, Bruno Arthur, Sandra Atkins, Stephanie Atkins Sharpe, Jameela Banu, Karl Berg, Dumitru Caruntu, Steve Chamberlain, Mircea Chipara, Cynthia Cripps, Amy Cummins, George Diaz, Raquel Estrada, Louis Falk, Zen Faulkes, Fuat Firat, Anahit Galstyan, Laura Gephart, Christine Gerin, Eleftherios Gkioulekas, Rene Gonzalez, Jonathan Guist, Sharon Helsley-Mcginley, Kip Austin Hinton, Elamin Ibrahim, Wendy Innis, Murat Karabulut, Hale Kaynak, Dean Kyne, Junfei Li, John Luna, Salma Mahmood, Rachel Mann, Arnulfo Mar, Theresa Mata-Pistokache, Nancy Nadeau, Charles Olney, Michael Persans, Volker Quetschke, Ernesto Ramirez, Andrea Schwarzbach, Laura Seligman, William Sokoloff, Jorge Vidal.

Senators Absent: Punit Ahluwala, Frederick Darsow, Elizabeth Deven-Hernandez, Miryam Espinosa-Dulanto, Mohammad Ibrahim Farooqi, Marcus Farris, Alejandro Garcia, Sunand Kallumadanda, Daejoon Kim, Dongchul Kim, Kye-Hwan Lee, Karin Lewis, Randall Monty, John Newman, Cynthia Paccacerqua, Candace Robledo, Miguel Salazar, Sam Sale, Clarissa Salinas, Denise Silcox, Samuel Snyder, Garry Soufrant, Owen Temby, John VandeBerg, Linda Williams, Randy Williamson, Yingchen Yang.

Senators Absent (Excused): Mark Dantzker, Margaret Graham, Irving Levinson, Abdullah Faiz Rahman, Michelle Zeager, Donald Jerry Lyles

Visitors(s): N/A

Past President: Dora E. Saavedra

Office Assistant III: Vanessa Ceballos

I. Faculty Senate President Quetschke convened the meeting at 2:07 p.m.

II. Report on the meeting of the Texas Council for Faculty Senates – President Elect Paccacerqua and Past President Saavedra reported on this meeting. President Elect Paccacerqua will send notes from her attendance to the FS. At the TCFS meeting, there was talk about the reorganization of the Core along the line of identifying meta-majors. A committee is organized at the state level for this work. THECB is now being led by a new person, Harrison Keller, since Dr. Paredes left the organization. The new THECB Commissioner’s vision is to stop “useless reporting.” TCFS needs to become proactive and work with his staff to identify and reduce these elements. For more information, see: <http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/about-us/board-commissioner/>

Interruption of Meeting: Technical issues halted meeting until 2:18 PM.

III. Sustainability Fellowship – A representative of the Sustainability Office made a presentation to the Senate. Forrest Sparks works with graduate fellows. One project he mentioned was a food initiative. At UTRGV about 44.2% of students are food insecure; about 44.4% of students are unaware of the food pantry on campus (only 20% of those who know it, use it). The focus has been on identifying why there is low use of the food pantry and how to improve that use. He suggested that Senators make our students aware of the Food Pantry and suggest that they take advantage of these services. It is important to normalize its use and remove the stigma that may be associated with seeking assistance at the Food Pantry. Senators can make other faculty in their units aware of this service.

To qualify, students only need to apply at the office. At the current time, there is a problem with limited resources to develop and distribute marketing materials. We need to share information with our students.

Interruption of Meeting: Technical issues halted meeting intermittently beginning at 2.41p.m.

III. Merit Pay and Salary Inversion/Compression Adjustments Discussion

Two weeks ago, the Faculty Senate Executive Committee was contacted by EVPAA McHatton and asked to suggest how the merit and compression/inversion funds should be distributed. There was a need for an immediate response (the next day); therefore, the FSEC had a discussion and suggested that 1% of the be allotted to address each of the issues. In other words, 1% for merit pay and 1% to address salary inversion/compression. The FSEC also suggested that merit be evenly distributed among those who qualify by meeting expectations, and then those **exceeding expectations** should get 40% more than the flat distribution. The compression

suggestion was to follow the previously used suggestions from two years ago. These were suggestions and the FSEC has not been provided the decision made by administration on the distribution of the merit pay and salary compression/inversion funds.

Several questions and issues arose about the Health Affairs Division and the relationship between the faculty in that division who were formerly under Academic Affairs.

- What is the recommendation for this on HA since this request was from the EVPAA? Will the EVPHA respond to these suggestions? Will Health Affairs consult also with the FSEC? or will they decide this issue internally? Comment: The Deans have made suggestions to the EVPHA and there will be a downward address, issue of raises will be taken down to the faculty.
- The information was supposed to be sent to the deans on Monday; however, the FSEC has no knowledge yet if that has been done. Clarification is whether the SON, SSW, CHP will follow what AA will be doing or will the Health Affairs Division follow a separate process? Comment: HA will not follow AA.
- What will be the process in place? The faculty will have a voice in place for determining the distribution. The AA consulted with FSEC; will HA consult with their faculty? Comments: It is not enough that Deans are consulted. Transparency should exist, but that is the SOM Dean's concern here.
- For SOM, is there a plan for merit? Is it the same as for other Health Affairs faculty? No, HA will not consult now with FSEC, but it may be something to do in the future.

The discussion moved toward the differences between meets and exceeds expectations and how these differences are valued monetarily.

Question: Does 40% come to a real difference (between the two categories)? For some it is not, for some it is too much. There are reasons for the wide range of views and conservative approach (to allotting funds) is partially attributable to the perceptions involved in the evaluation process that leads to these different categories of meeting and exceeding expectations. Also, we do not have enough money to allocate and to consider more differentiation between the categories. We may need more funding for appropriate salary levels, and we should have input into the budget to address merit pay and salary inversion/compression.

IV. The College of Liberal Arts (CLA) recently sent bylaws to faculty for a vote. The FSEC asked Dean Diaz to hold back on the vote to give the faculty time to review and improve the bylaws. CLA are concerned that they are receiving a ballot on an issue that had not been on the "front burner" since 2017, according to email records. In July 2017, the Dean forwarded a draft of bylaws to send to chairs for feedback. Faculty were to email a response to Bryan Smith. Not every chair did this. CLA faculty perceive that the College is not being open and sharing information with its faculty in a timely manner. Therefore, if a vote is to be taken, the faculty

need to be provided context and the opportunity to respond with their comments. A vote is premature.

V. Policy updates from the Blue-Ribbon Committee:

- ADM 06-502 Annual Faculty Evaluation– This policy has been reviewed to ensure the inclusion of Non-Tenure Track (Lecturers, etc.) faculty in the policy. What are some expectations we can put together about this? We need to start with defining the reasons (“Why”) changes are needed before we move forward. We (all faculty) need equity in the annual evaluation standards for fair application across the board.
- NTT faculty need to look over this document (ADM 06-502) and provide input to the BRC. This input is needed by Friday the 22nd. We need to send an email to remind all senators to send this to all faculty in their departments to obtain written feedback. Discussion ensued about the procedures and the differences that exist among colleges and the concern over the student evaluation percentages as a result of neutral category.
- ADM 06-New policy on Lecturer promotion will be sent to faculty as well for feedback.
- ADM 06-111 Faculty Grievance Senators are asked to review the documents on Blackboard and to provide comments back to the BRC representatives Saavedra, Quetschke, and/or Lewis (Senator and WFN Chair).

President Quetschke noted that in the Blue-Ribbon committee meeting that the issue of departmental guidelines for workload and annual evaluation was considered. He inquired at this meeting how many workload documents have been uploaded or sent to academic affairs from either colleges or departments; the number was zero. We are not tasked as FS to address this issue, only that we should be mindful that the formerly named Workload Committee will be curating departmental and college level by laws and workload policies for reference by ourselves as we adapt and create these documents for our own use.

6a.

All Other Business (AOB).

The Fort Brown graduation location was not ideal, previous graduations were impacted by weather. However, there was no consultation with the faculty about a venue. It was changed and announced without feedback from faculty. This change is unequitable, and it only allows for a limited number of students’ guests. It is also 35 miles from the campus. The action (to move graduation) is disrespectful of our students. To change the traditional venue, limit the number of guests per graduate, and not to involve the students in the decision-making is problematic. Action: The FSEC can send a message to the administration concerning this change and the perceived lack of transparency in making the decision to change venues.

According to SACS/COC, we have two areas where we may not be compliant. This is a good report. One is in the area of finances, and it has to do with the fiscal year in Texas and the time period in which the audit is available (February). This issue is out of our control. It is a great preliminary report. (Note: The second item was not mentioned.)

The meeting was adjourned at 4:27 p.m.

The next meeting will be on December 6, 2019.