



Meeting Minutes of the Staff Senate
February 12, 2018 9:30 – 11:30AM / Brownsville: Salon Cassia Room 2.402
(WebEx Locations in Harlingen: HCEBL 2.124 & Edinburg: EMSAC 1.102)

Minutes prepared by Monica Tovar, Staff Senate Secretary

- I. Call to Order, meeting started at 9:37 A.M., by Lisa Smith, Staff Senate President
- II. **Establishment of Quorum** – roll call was completed by Monica Tovar, Staff Senate Secretary

Members Present: Monica Tovar, Lisa Smith, Cynthia Farris, Michael Aldape, Jaime Villanueva, Leslie Jones, Lisa Pena, Javier Zambrano, Rebekah Sepulveda, Jesus Buitron, Krystal Marroquin, Veronica De La Garza, Gilberto Perez, Milton Hernandez, Dalyn Ruiz, Roberto Castro, Silverio Nieto, Carla Lopez, Nicole Englitsch

- III. **Approval of Minutes** – Motion to approval minutes as submitted by Rebekah Sepulveda, Motion was second by Krystal Marroquin

IV. New Business

a. Tuition and Fee Proposal - Rick Anderson

Out of all UT System Universities, UTRGV is 2 or 3rd Lowest. The proposal we are looking at shows 3-4% increase in tuition. Historically our tuition has been the lowest. Accommodations for special line items are difficult. Only new incoming freshmen will see the new rate. It takes 4 years to see the tuition increases. The University Of Texas Board Of Regents will hear tuition proposals from the institutions and they are expected to vote at the March 9th meeting.

Q&A: Rebekah Sepulveda, asked how did the committee determine the \$20 credit difference?

They looked at other UT System Institutes to come up with a basis.

Q&A: How is the institution as a whole looking at enrollment?

Graduate programs are looking at credit hours costs. We are expecting growth in Graduate Classes enrollment.

2 states Texas and Utah, have some of the fastest growing high school graduation rates. We need to continue to improve and work on retention. We all need to look at how do we keep students engaged, growing, and focused on staying here. We need to grow at a minimum of 1,000 students over the next few years. 2,000 would be better, but 1,000 will work.

Michael Aldape, wanted to add a comment: Is anyone looking at amounts of financial aid? PELL Grants have not been going up, and we need to help educate students about student loans and graduating with debt.

Q&A: Are we looking at what scholarships are available for each program? We need to pay more attention to how students are paying for school.

Rick Anderson responded with, Summer Pell Grants have been brought back for the summer. If students are eligible, then \$3,100 will be their contribution. We need to help students understand, taking on debt is okay only if you graduate, because when you graduate you can find that job to pay that debt.

Q&A: Rebekah Sepulveda asked, why only \$5 in transportation since it is just expected to increase?

Mr. Anderson response: It was decided that transportation is not a "Nice to have" it is necessary or a "need to have." It is essential, the \$5 fee allows for our growth and for students to have those accommodations.

The \$7 athletic fee was on the books in Brownsville (still on the books) so now it will be added across the board. This will allow room for other sports like football, which will need to go to a vote.

Q&A: Dr. Bailey's presentation, talked about everyone's job is to be recruiting students, but it didn't cover anything specific. What can we do to increase our numbers specifically? Is there any suggestions?

Mr. Anderson response: Soon it will be broken down by school and program, it is coming, but we can start looking at how we can keep more students.

Our tuition set is a good setup, get in take 15 hours and graduate.

Q&A: Does the proposal have a way of evaluating how retention is improving or met?

It will come to Deans, Department Heads, to look at freshmen retention rates. Some other schools look at Freshman and Sophomore retention rates. It could be looking the pre-nursing programs and if our school only has 30 slots for Nursing then maybe we need to add more Nursing slots.

b. Continuing Education Presentation - Jayshree Bhat

- I. Background information first, the Office of Continuing Education provides individuals the opportunity to enroll in courses for professional development, continuing education, test preparation and personal enrichment; to rollout continuing education programs for academic units, engage in professional engagement. We have a hands on approach so we can take back what we learned and apply it right away.

Presentation- Lifelong learning, that can help offer an opportunity to work smarter, not harder. (video was created by students, graduate students helped create) <http://www.utrgv.edu/ce/index.htm>

- TEST Preparation classes - prep courses for college admission like GRE, LSAT, and more
- Professional development Programs - Certified programs, continuing education hours, and more
- Non-credit certificate program /career changers - no educational prerequisites, professional that are interested in changing careers, and just have questions.

- Personal Enrichment, are new hobbies, and new skill sets that we are interested in.
- Customize & Corporate Training - some of our UTRGV faculty have the expertise and can present
- CE Registration - formal admissions is not necessary, on our website, you can click on the link, and register on-line.

UTRGV employees can qualify for 10% discount when departments pay for employee to attend trainings (IDT with Intern department transfer of fund)

Follow us on social media: Facebook, twitter, YouTube, and LinkedIn

Website: <http://www.utrgv.edu/ce/index.htm>

Questions:

Q&A: Nicole Englitsch asked to clarify the on the discount. Do employees qualify only if department pays for courses? Yes, when we charge departments with an IDT we don't have to charge the 10% business fees.

Q&A: Question for Harlingen, Rose Rodriguez, the GRE Test Pre Courses, are they only offered 2x a year? Will there be changes or another session added? They are only offered 2 x a year based on the demand.

Q&A: Dalyn do you have plans to offer courses for the younger market?

We do have a small group already. We also have an elementary program to start a coding course, to promote computer science.

In the summer, there are other courses available.

Q&A: Do you have offer discounts for Alumni?

Not yet, but we are looking at ways to help start offering those type of discounts.

Q&A: For the flyers, is there information anywhere else?

Visitor center, says these flyers are very helpful. If we have these electronically or on-line we can print as many as needed.

Q&A: Nicole Englitsch asked, do you reach out to faculty, but do you also reach out to staff to teach?

Sometimes, we do have staff with some expertise that do help us teach some of the courses. And currently we have a couple already on board.

c. The Power of Orange: UTRGV Gives 2018 - Ellen Donovan Director of Annual Giving

- I. Ellen Donovan, formally started or launched the Power of Orange.

Site has now formally launched www.utrgv.edu/orange

- 700 Alumni that work for UTRGV, it would be great to get all of them excited about donating. Every gift is used to help our students.
- This helps improve the lives of students, and people we work with.
- Areas of greatest need is an area for the President can decide if it is needed, such as for students to attend conferences to present or
- Our goal is to get 300 donors, this is participants that can help us to show UT System how many staff participants we have.
- Soft deadline is February 23-25th, so we can make a big announcement at Homecoming, but we will not turn gifts away and we can accept gifts until January 2019.
- <https://www.givecampus.com/schools/UniversityofTexasRioGrandeValley>

d. UTRGV Distinguished or Excellence Staff Awards Proposal

I. Monica Tovar and Cynthia Farris – UTRGV Employee Awards

After extensive research, we reviewed awards for other UT System universities and some outside the system and the state. We condensed the ones with similar qualities, and added a few new areas that could be equally important and should be highlighted. Things to remember, this is a draft summary of awards, we need your input for a creative name of the award, prizes and criteria. This pool of winners can then be used a source of candidates to nominate for the UT System Employee Awards.

- a. **Entry Level Award** – This award would be for New Hires, Classified and Administrative/Professional staff members working less than 2 -5 years.

Criteria: This award would be for an employee that demonstrates the spirit of team work, respectful to others, initiative, reliability, quality of work, shared innovative ideas to the department or UTRGV.

Awards: Winners could range 2-5 per year. Prizes can be a variety of UTRGV SWAG, plaque or trophy, and maybe a free parking pass for the year.

- b. **Mid-Level Award** - This award would be for an outstanding employee, Classified or Administrative/Professional staff members working less than 5+ years.

Criteria: Building up from the previous award, (not to lose any of those qualities), an employee with unique skills, exceptional performance, leader by example or motivation, professional, willingness to collaborate with other departments, and demonstrates efficiency or using resources wisely

Awards: Winners in this group could be 3-5 per year. The prizes can include a trophy or plaque, UTRGV parking permit for the year, and a Food Service Gift Certificate for campus eateries.

- c. **Team/Departmental Award** – This can be a People’s Choice award, where students and staff can vote.

Criteria: In addition to criteria listed previously, we are looking for a department that demonstrates collaboration within the department to increase productivity and efficiency. A department that demonstrates outstanding services or improved customer satisfaction to enhance the image of UTRGV, overall morale is positive, and provides examples of customer satisfaction, project or event.

Awards: UTRGV SWAG and lunch with president

- d. **Higher Level** – Supervisors/Managers

Criteria: In addition to qualities previously mentioned, this category also needs to demonstrate a positive overall morale in their department, exceptional performance and professionalism. Examples of good customer service, strong leadership, participates in committees, and does presentations.

Awards: UTRGV SWAG, trophy or plaque, lunch with president.

There is a common practice among the UT System Universities to award monetary award to their winners. We do not have a budget established for these awards. We can create a budget, we can review other options for payouts, but this needs to be developed before proposing it to administration for approval.

A copy of this document will be shared will be emailed to Staff Senators after the meeting. Your input will be helpful.

e. Regent’s Outstanding Employee Award Committee Updates

- I. Lisa Smith - Thank you for everyone in the committee

All Senators - Wednesday, we sent nominees to Doug Arney we have 6 nominees (it was a minimum of 4) and 1 of those can qualify for the UT System winner.

Chancellor retirement, the ceremony is May, once they have submitted the names to UT System, an announcement will be released.

We can recognize our 6 at UTRGV level with President or during the Service Awards presentation. This needs more discussion.

We have talked about recognizing the 6 or all 57 nominees, but nothing final has been decided. Nominees could be recognized during the service award ceremonies, or separately with a private reception with the President. More discussion is needed.

We can ask what the other UT Institution do for their nominations.

f. Noteworthy Announcements

I. Cynthia Farris - Question from Harlingen Rosemary Rodriguez can we get the WebEx link for staff to participate?

It does not allow for people to ask questions, and control the sounds. It has been considered and discussed previously, but it is not a reliable way to participate. We want everyone to ask questions. This can be discussed and revisited again.

II. Student Senate Chair - Chief Justice Announcement, from Brian Villanueva, looking for a faculty staff member to serve on committee, with a 3 year term. (see his message below)

My name is Bryan Villanueva and I am the Chief Justice of the Judicial Branch for the Student Government Association. We are currently looking to fill our Faculty/Staff Associate Justice position for our branch. The term for this position is 3 years. These are some of the responsibilities for all Judicial Branch members including the Faculty/Staff Associate Justices:

- The Supreme Court will have original jurisdiction to hear and rule on cases involving the SGA Constitution, Bylaws, and the constitutionality of statutory enactments when so requested in writing by a student.
- Hear and rule on appeals from plaintiffs on complaints against the SGA and/or its officers,
- Hear and rule on appeals from plaintiffs regarding an election decision of the Office of the Dean of Students.
- Render, upon request, a written interpretation of any part of the SGA Constitution or the Bylaws.

All Justices are required to attend meetings, which occur every 2 weeks on Friday, from 12:00 p.m-1:00 p.m.

If you are interested, or know someone who may be, please contact me and I will be able to provide further details including instructions on how to access our application.

We are very appreciative for this opportunity to work closely with with our members of the university faculty/staff.

Contact Information: Bryan Villanueva, Chief Justice, Student Government Association
(956) 882-5111 bryan.villanueva01@utrgv.edu

- Chair Senate, would like to meet and discuss to work together, such as the Power of Orange, this would be good to share with students to help get the word out. Contact: Carol.flores01@utrgv.edu - Senate Chair

- Veronica De La Garza, shared Tuesday starts Early voting 11:30 AM - 1:00 PM (2 weeks)
- March 24th , bi-national 10K run
- Carla Lopez asked if there is a place on our staff senate website for the Service Award Nominees?
- Sharing names with Patrick. To add them to I am UTRGV or Unsung Heros could also be a possibility.

- V. Committee Reports – committee chairs, please meet with your committees at this time and review any items that you would like to present to the committee.
- a. All committees will deliver updates on their most recent meeting(s) and developments.
 - I. Business Processes and Procedures
 - I. Communications – One Institution, One Voice
 - II. Constitution and Elections
 - III. Professional Development
 - IV. Staff Relations, Retention, and Morale
 - V. University Development and Events

VI. Public Comments & Questions - NA

VII. Pending Items

- a. There are no pending items.

VIII. Meeting adjourned at 11:42 Am