

The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley

Minutes of the Staff Senate

January 14, 2019 9:30 – 11:30AM

Salon Cassia 2.402/ Zoom: <https://utrgv.zoom.us/j/816857679>

I. Call to Order at 9:44 AM by Staff Senate President, Peter James Ehimika

II. Establishment of Quorum by Staff Senate Secretary, Monica Tovar 9:44

Staff Senators Present: David Marquez, Peter James Ehimika, Diana Ocanas, Monica Lisa Tovar, Andy Zuniga, Milagro (Millie) Hernandez, Alisha Michele Puentes, Luis Alcocer, Karen A. Dorado, Madahy Romero, Yvette C. Padilla, Jocelyn Foster, Rebekah Sepulveda, Jesus Alberto Buitron, Teresa Villarreal, Dalyn Posas Ruiz, Roberto Carlos Castro, Carla Renee Lopez, Isabel Saldana, Roberto R. Cantu, Nicole Englitsch, David Torres, Michael Aldape

III. Approval of Minutes - Motion to approve minutes was by Staff Senator, Jesus Buitron the motion was 2nd by Staff Senator Dalyn Ruiz

IV. New Business

a. University Police Department Update - Adan Cruz, Assistant Chief of Police

Highlights:

1. Almost fully staffed. Decrease in applicants, but we are **recruiting from local academies**. Openings that we have with new officers are being recruited right out of the local academies, but in addition to that, in previous years, we were hiring more experienced officers, some with 20 to 30 years on that we had previously retired from other police departments in the state. Those officers that we hired recently, give us a good base and a good group of officers to mentor, the younger officers that we're working on hiring now. Previous hiring of experienced officers have given the Department a good base of knowledge and experience to mentor younger officers.
2. We are working on implementing a **new staffing model** that we're implementing that gives us 12 hour shifts during the weekend where we can reduce the number of officers that we're using to cover the shifts that we're not using throw the week. So you should see an increase in uniformed officers in the interior of the campus during business hours Monday through Friday. It's going to give us the ability to put more officers on foot patrol and bike patrol.

The officers, we are getting them certified here shortly so between those two new programs, hopefully, we have a increased visibility and more presence in the interior of campus.

3. The other project that we are working on is the **Upgrade of cameras** on border fence for new building and behind facilities here in Brownsville. As you know, we are right on the border fence. We have issues sometimes along the fence and parking lot behind facilities. We're upgrading the cameras, to have newer technology that also has the ability to alert our dispatchers when someone goes into a little area that we have geo fences. Wherever there is movement within a

certain distance of that fence it alerts our dispatchers. It brightens up the screen we can see the people as they're approaching the fence. It gives us an ability to respond and also to notify Border Patrol whenever we have people coming in.

4. Another part to security is making suggestions and being present during the planning of new buildings. We'd like to make suggestions so that the buildings that are being made, as far as security, the access control and the classrooms fits the philosophy that we're pushing during **CRASE** trainings for example. A classroom that has maybe two doors, if we can reduce the classroom to only having one door that gives the class and the instructor, the ability to lock that door and hide in the corner in the event of an active shooter. Those are the little things that we can do; suggestions we can make that may not always thought of.
Small suggestions that can help with Active Shooter events and make it faster for staff to secure the rooms.
6. Another part of the security plan that we're implementing is an application called **Campus Shield** Campus Shield is an app. I don't know if anyone has seen the marketing push that we've been doing? In order to get more familiar with it, just go to the University Police website, under Services; its an app that you can download. It gives students the ability, with a push of a button, to call university police communication center and that will allow us to dispatch police. It gives them the ability to be tracked in case of an emergency, and we can track their phone and they can track the police office in route. You will see the two dots either moving towards each other or away from each other. We are really excited about this app, because unlike the blue phones where in an emergency you gotta stand by that phone to call police and just wait for someone to respond. With the app, you can stay mobile by walking towards help and you can see how help is walking towards you.
The tracking function can either be disabled or enabled by the person that's using the app; the app is voluntary, but we encourage as many people as we can to get on the app; that is our goal. Encourage everyone to make use of it; it is a good application. It should increase the safety of the campus.
7. **Trainings being offered this Spring that are being offered by our community engagement officers those trainings consist of:**
 - Civilian Response to Active Shooter Events (CRASE)
 - Campus Safety presentation
 - Personal Safety & Awareness
 - Alcohol Awareness presentation
 - Stalking Awareness presentation

These classes are going to be announced and advertised through the UTRGV Messenger.

8. We also should be hosting a Women's **Personal Safety & Defense course (RAD)** this semester. There're some practical exercises involved. The ladies and gentlemen taking part get to practice on an officer dressed in red suit. It teaches you how to defend yourself and it let's you practice on an officer with pads on. It's challenging, but I think it's a good course to give young ladies and men the confidence in their ability to defend themselves and tips on how and when, in order to strike. It's a good way to practice and it's fun.

Question: You mentioned that it is a course for both men and women. Can you elaborate.

Response: We don't want to discourage young men from attending this course. It's open to both genders and we encourage anyone who's interested in attending the course, to attend. It's one of

those deals when you're having to fight off an attacker, it's good practice to be exposed to that kind of training and that kind of talk beforehand. It puts you in the right frame of mind. It keeps you thinking about what are you capable of doing. And that's always a good thing. That way, in the event that the worst happens, you're not totally caught off guard because you practiced a couple of times. At least you're prepared not that you are going to freeze, because we all freeze. It always come to a shock to you when someone strikes you, I promise you. Even for policemen, the first time someone hits your in the face, it's a shock. I promise you, but then you get over it quickly, and this is the things that this training comes in.

We just wanted to put this out there and make sure it's open doors.

Comments: Thank you for making sure it's open to all our students. An officer said at other Universities it's not open, and that is done intentionally. So, we appreciate you making sure that all of our students have the opportunity to learn these skills.

Response: Yes, it's out there and we're not going to be turning people away. A lot of these things we've been planning and talking about. It's really starting to come together for us. We think we're headed in the right direction. Chief and I are proud of our officers and the direction that we're heading in as a department. We are trying to have a little more of a presence on the interior campus and be engaged with the community, which is what it's all about. I encourage you all to approach our officers and talk to them. They really are a good bunch of people, promising group.

Comment/Questions: One of our colleagues, David, brought up some issues with traffic and we had questions regarding traffic control. We received a report at the beginning of the year on some changes that were happening with facilities regarding some traffic changes in Edinburg on campus. Some crosswalks were being removed due to some jaywalking, and I think some other incidents that happened. So can you talk a little bit about that and what you all are doing to increase safety for students and staff and faculty?

Response: Over the course of the last couple of years, I've been with the department, Chief Munguia, we're starting to see a trend where we are getting a lot of auto pedestrian accidents in the crosswalks. In order to address that issue a committee was formed, and I am not part of that committee. Assistant Chief Loya is on the committee with facilities and several others. Administrations have been looking at ways of how to address our students being struck and this is in the crosswalks, and this is because they are on foot or whether because they are on a bike. There's been some studies and it is being looked at, but since I am not part of that committee, we don't have that information now. I just want to let you know that it is happening, and they are looking at how they can address the issue, but it's not something that I can address any specifics. It is in the works and we are working on it.

Some of the options could consist of putting more safety measures, hard safety measures on our sidewalks, like a punch button. One of the has written for Unity Hall; they have to press a button and it's connected to the light, so it causes the light to go red and green. Others are doing away with some crosswalks all together and funneling traffic pedestrian traffic to certain sidewalks that we know are proven safe. So those are all the things that are being considered, right now.

Comment: David Marquez started with, first, thank you for your presentation, sir. thank you for your sacrifice, all the measures put in place and for more educational measures. Thank you for

sharing. I just wanted to ask if you have something that includes all those updates so we can share with our fellow staff back at our divisions, that would be great.

Response: yes, that would be great to get help to promote our initiatives that PD is implementing.

Question: Can you tell us a little bit more about the app? That's really interesting. What was the name of the app?

Response: The name of the app is 911 Shield; it's an app that we use. It's over the counter app that we purchased. It's a proven platform. A lot of universities across the country have been using it, Florida and all over the country. I guess, the appeal of the app was one it's low cost, it works out to \$1 per student/per year. It's a GPS based app. It's on more than one plane; lets say if you're in a two or three story building, it's going to show you on a blip within the confines of that building. This app uses multiple access points to where it can narrow down your location on the second, third, or fourth floor, within in 30 feet. Because its on your phone and the app is accessing the wireless access points on that floor. So that was a big deal because if someone's hurt and needs help, at lease our dispatcher can narrow it down to the floor number that way we don't have to be search floor by floor. If they are on the fifth floor, we can hit straight to that floor, so that's another advantage to the app.

Another is that you can opt out or opt in of it. It's not something that's automatically done you're out. You have to go in there and download it. So it's up to the person, but we highly encourage everyone to make use of it because the more people that are on the app, the more as a community, we're going to benefit from it.

The part that is real interesting is when you're on the computer screen and you see someone that's called in and you see that little blip on that campus map and the direction they're walking and also the PD can be tracked. You can see the direction they're walking and it gives them an idea of what direction to walk because if you are in trouble, you feel insecure or feel someone's following you, the last thing you want to do is just stay put. It's just part of the technology on your phone.

Another motivation to acquire this app was that the emergency phones that we had were old technology. They're expensive to replace; some of the blue phones were based on technology that is not even out there anymore. We had technology that was already ready to be replaced and phones are capable of doing that. Some phones were just falling down by themselves, so replacing old technology and for the safety of others. The ability to respond and the ability to know where to respond at this cost was some of the things that came into play for this to happen. We are just hoping everyone can take advantage.

Comment: From using the app, you can also share your route with family not in the UTRGV community so they can see where you are as well.

ZOOM Comment From Maria Elena Hernandez to Everyone: 10:01 AM

App info: utrgv.edu/campusshield. KVEO, KGBT, and KRGV each featured a story about the app. There's also a video about it on the UTRGV YouTube channel.

So definitely encourage everybody to get the app and encourage the people around you, your constituents that you represent and the students that your work with. It has a lot of features and it is user friendly.

Comment: So something I'm hearing right now is NOT to press the emergency button unless it's an actual emergency because it will call the cops.

Response: Yes, once you press the button you won't be able to stop it. Another feature is this application has geo fencing. In other words, it will work and it will dial our dispatch center the University Police Dispatch Center if you're on campus or if you are on our busses on our shuttles the routes to the other campuses are geo fenced.

So when you press that emergency button that 911 call is going to go to Campus Police. However, if you're outside that geo fence, let's say at the Sunrise Mall or you're somewhere else outside of the campus, the 911 call is going to go to the local police department. That's where it would normally go to because you are outside our geo fence.

If you're in an event outside of school, you're just going about your business, but as a habit you press that button, you're still going to get the police service, but it's going to go directly to the police department that has jurisdiction in that area. That's how this app works.

Question: In my department, we normally have students that go abroad or go away to other places of the United States. If they have the app and they are in Spain or somewhere else, and they click the emergency button does it go somewhere or does the app work internationally?

Response: Yes, you know we did talk about that, and I'm going to have to get back to you on the details, but they're there. That was one of the advantages of the app that it was operation abroad. How it is going to link up, I can't recall, but the answer to the question, it's not disabled just because you left the country.

Comment: Thank you for being here, and please take back to the rest of the team, just how much we appreciate your time, your efforts, sacrifices. We know it can't be easy for you all to do it very well. I was very happy to hear all the practice measures that you're going to be bringing forward all those educational sessions, to be sure to prevent things from occurring is better than addressing them after they happen. So hopefully, we'll continue to hear about more of those educational opportunities for students, staff and faculty, how they can keep themselves safe.

Because I think, preventing disease is better than rescuing. Thanks for bring that information, hopefully it remains a priority, with the Department.

One other thing, we did have an event, in preparation, we had an Active Shooter Drill. Right after graduation and finals. I think it went well. We learned, which is the whole point of having drills like that. We learned about ourselves and our officer's ability to respond. We also learned how our partners were going to respond and some of the things, some of the policies that they may have may not limit the response but may affect how they respond due to EMS being a private contractor and how their insurances don't cover them to go into HOT ZONES. We may have to adjust by forming teams to bring people out of a HOT ZONE or WARM ZONE to where they can have a triage and causality collection point versus expecting the paramedics to be rushing into the buildings for the active shooter. All those things come up all those things we're addressing and they are going to affect how we respond. Now also we're working on the next Active Shooter Drill and it's going to take place December 2019 on Brownsville Campus, and we will be alternating campuses every year. It's an ongoing project. It's never ending training is continuous.

It's an idea, but right now we're focusing on Brownsville. We need to depend on our local partners to respond for some situations and Campus PD will need to pick up from where they left off. Because part of the problem is also training your partners in the community to respond and it's something that we can consider but right now that's not in the works or it's not planned. The plan is to be doing in on the Brownsville Campus in December 2019.

Question: Have you all thought about doing an Active Shooter Drill at any of the remote sites for UTRGV? You spoke about hot zones, and we have a building in Rio Grande City that could be considered a hot zone or in Harlingen with the VA next or at the island, have you thought about doing something similar on a smaller scale at those sights?

Yes, you bring up a good point, and it's a point that I just talked about. The points you bring up is something that was kind of addressed on the fringes with the School of Medicine last week. School of Medicine has a clinic and sometimes they have problems. You know, a patient gets upset or gets in their lobby. Well, luckily, they have the local Police Department right across the street from the clinic. I've made contact with the chief of police and Mrs. Linda Nelson made contact with the chief so it's the same kind of scenario where our response time is going to be 20-30 minutes to get somewhere. We have to count on our local partners to be the first response so that we can arrive on scene.

For example, Laguna Beach, local PD is going to respond; they are going to be the initial contact there, but when we arrive, we will pick up the case where they left of, if necessary, and we will do our part.

Obviously for remote locations we need to count on our law enforcement partners in the area that have jurisdiction for that place to be the first responders.

So just to recap on a few things, please download the app; it's easy to download. It's going to be very useful. You can share it with your family members and we can learn more about it on the UTRGV YouTube Channel. The police will be sending us some of the updates from their talking points so if didn't catch certain things, be on the lookout for those. We will also have them in our minutes. And lastly, participate in the trainings. Sometimes the trainings will come up on the human resources website. We definitely encourage you to participate and make sure you know how to make yourself safe, and the people around you are safe and you are not just a bystander, but you have been an active member of your community. So try to do one this semester.

b. Human Resources Update - Cristina Chavez, Assoc. Director for Compensation & Talent Acquisition

A short overview for the merit, and I know Mike was on the agenda, but he couldn't make it. So we had our merit; all of the information was sent out late November and December. On our faculty side we had 867, eligible in order to manage on the staff side we had 1629 all together. We had 79% of faculty and staff that were eligible for merit and were awarded. Then we looked at those not eligible, the majority of the ones not eligible were the ones that did not meet the attendance timeframe. The ones that were hired on the staff side December 1 of 2017 or later on the faculty side September 1, 2017 or later.

We awarded the minimum merit for a full-time staff or faculty member was \$1,000 an average of 2% was given, but taking into consideration those minimum payments of \$1,000 average merit though was paid 2.8%. Notification letters were sent out on 12/14/18; as of that date everyone should have been notified on what their merit was and then the first payment was made January 3, 2019.

That's just a quick summary, do you have any questions?

Question: Can you tell us a little bit about how the increase in may have moved some people into a different tax bracket and how that could have had impact.

Response: I don't know anything about individual taxation, then I'd rather not speak on behalf of that or whatever happened to anybody's individual taxes.

You can locate your paycheck stubs from before and now and compare how the individual amounts might have changed. You can now do this in PeopleSoft. First tabs when you get into PeopleSoft.

Question: I didn't get a letter directly. It was forwarded to me. Should I have gotten a letter?

Response: The letters were given to Division Heads and some were setup with mail merge to automatically be delivered. Some may have been given individual letters, everyone's was different. The main thing was that there was communication that was given to you in regard to what your amount was and the effective date.

If no more questions on merit I can move one to recruitment and staffing.

I talked to Peter a little bit earlier about what's going on the recruitment stopping side right now. We actually have 45 staff positions posted we have 137 we are actively working on. Those are closed for interviews right now. So while we still have the hiring freeze going on, there is still recruitment going there. There is still different jobs that are being hired for and if there is a vacancy that is created in a department, the departments really need to go ahead and submit the hiring freeze request form. The form is still in place and then it will get evaluated at the different levels. It'll get evaluated in HR, it'll get evaluated at the division level and then it needs to get forwarded to the president. The main thing is that you need to show the institutional need and how it impacts our enrollment with that position. This is only needed for positions that are institutionally funded; if your are funded through grants those just go ahead and do the hiring. For some requests, and then we can go ahead and start. There are selected areas and positions based on the funding that are exempt.

Do we have any questions in the room or in Zoom?

Question: I know this has come up so I want to ask briefly about this, just so that way you can explain or touch on it. Someone has asked if there are people that are hired and paid federally? People paid out federally funded accounts.

Response: Well, that is happening to people on grants. Those people will be paid, but the reimbursements will be delayed. Nobody's on the grants are directly impacted here; it's

going to impact your work. If you're working with USDA you're working within certain areas, then yes, your work is going to be impacted.

Thank you so much Ms. Chavez; we appreciate you coming in and taking some time to give us an update about these really important topics. We know that they get mentioned very often and people talk about them. So it's great to have you all here providing clarification and just shining a light on these issues and updates. So thank you very much. Email Cristina Chavez, and she will address or it will get forwarded directly through HR Partners.

Also, grant funded jobs, please make sure to contact HR early on to discuss jobs that need to be grants and posted so work can start early on. When they are writing the grant, if the grant is going to include staff positions because we run into this a lot, especially 9/01. Coming up that you have a grant that gets funded in August, and it says you can start using the money effective 09/01, but no position has been established. We haven't talked about a job description, so there is a chance to go ahead and get that discussed and approved and put in place early on. Please go ahead and encourage everybody to do that early on.

She's covering all topics, if anyone has any other questions that come up, they can email. Who should they send this email to particularly about merit because they have individual questions that come up.

For individual questions, they can go ahead and contact me(kristina.chavez@utrgv.edu)and then depending on what we see what the reason might be, we'll go ahead and distribute to different areas because the merit; it can be straight forward because of start dates or it could be disciplinary action or evaluation issue. And that would be handled through our HR Business Partners. I can facilitate the discussion.

c. Noteworthy Announcements - All Senators

1. This is Jocelyn Foster, Innovations Committee, I would like to speak on the canned food drive going on right now. We have brought in some canned food items and other items. Yvette has spoken with the food pantry and Rebecca K. Gadson, Dean of Students and Associate Vice President for Student Life, and she just wanted to say thank you so much for your commitment to a sister student food pantry. If anyone has any other canned food items or any other items off the list or anyone in your office has anything. I'm happy to come pick them up. If you want to just email me or call me, I will come to your office and I will get them. We're just happy that we can have your support and also today, we'd love to take a picture of all of us with the items so that we can post it to Facebook and then that helps our Innovation Committee too. We can also show that we are helping other departments and also helping our students, which is the most important thing to all of us in our jobs.
2. Carla Lopez those who want to sign up to participate in the drawing of free registrations for the McAllen Marathon you still have time.
3. David Torres from Edinburg Campus Data Center, added they started one for the projects that was discussed during the Parking Presentation already. Why they decided to do it on the first day of classes? I don't know, but they already started and I think the parking lots, open, but, just wanted to share that with you guys.

4. Roberto Castro, we are working on a commercial, a advertising campaign for My Journey for the Super Bowl. Talking to students, alumni about what it mead for them to graduate. We are looking for stories like the student that ride his bike everyday to school. There are students like this in our school and it would be good to share their stories.

Can you tell us about how to invite them to participate in which department to refer them to?

We are, marketing communications. Once we have our commercial radio goal we're going to send that invite and we're going to push it through social media. On our YouTube via social media, and that's what, that's how we're going to be promoted.

V. Pending Items

- a. People's Choice- Who would you like to hear from?

For upcoming, who would you like to hear from? Email staffsenate@utrgv.edu you can do so anonymously or directly.

- b. Enrollment, registration ends Thursday. Please make sure your students are registered and setup for classes. So today is the first day of classes for the spring semester, if you have student employees, please ask your student employees if they are registered for classes. If you have cousins, nieces, nephews', children, who are attending the University, please ask them, and make sure that they're registered and enrolled in classes. If not, they have up until Thursday to get registered.

We want you to know recruiting students, retaining them and keeping them at the university is in all of our job description, not just those strategic enrollment. So please make sure that the people who we have within our reach that we're doing our due diligence and making sure that they're set up for classes this semester.

VI. Public Comments & Questions

- a. Click here for audio of January's [Zoom](https://utrgv.zoom.us/j/816857679) meeting: <https://utrgv.zoom.us/j/816857679>

- b. Hi this is Jocelyn, with alumni relations again, and I'm doing my own personal little Alumni Relations spiel. We have new decals. Please contact us and we send them to you. In Alumni Relations, we're really trying to increase awareness of our legacy alumni. So that means anyone from our legacy institutions, whether it be any of the Pan Am institutions, and Brownsville, the two institutions they have UTB/TSC.

All of those people are alumni and I know a lot of people who work at the University. Our alumni as well, and we have new UTRGV Alumni decals and we just want everyone to know that everyone is a UTRGV alumni.

So if you have anyone in your department who would like a decal for their car or just really anywhere they would like to plaster it you know all over the Rio Grand Valley. We would love to give them to you. So anybody instead of Senate or anyone listening on zoom. If you would like a decal please contact us and alumni relations. We're happy to send them to you via campus mail or

even stopped by talk to your department, anything like that. We're just trying to get the message out there because a lot of people will let us know.

Everyone is an alum and through Alumni Relations, we'd really like to reach out and talk to all of the people that you know need our assistance or just have questions about the university. So please, just let us know if you'd like a decal and we can get them to you in the mail or we can bring them by.

c. From Maria Elena Hernandez to Everyone: 10:35 AM

In case you didn't know, the UTRGV News and Internal Communications has a new website (utrgv.edu/newsroom) and is on Facebook (facebook.com/newsroomutrgv), Twitter ([@utrgvnewsroom](https://twitter.com/utrgvnewsroom)), and Instagram ([@utrgvnewsroom](https://www.instagram.com/utrgvnewsroom)). We share news like the UTRGVPD CampusShield and more.

Motion to close this session of Staff Senate meeting and move to close session was Teresa Villarreal and seconded by Jesus Buitron.

VII. Committee Reports- Closed Working Group Session

a. Semester Goal Setting Break Out Session

b. All committees will deliver updates on their most recent meeting(s) and developments.

I. Processes & Infrastructure - Mr. Nick Dubberly & Ms. Monica Tovar

II. Staff Success - Ms. Carla Lopez & Ms. Karen Dorado

III. Innovation - Ms. Yvette Padilla & Ms. Veronica De La Garza

IV. Constitution - Ms. Alisha Puentes & Ms. Teresa Villarreal

c. Committee Goal Updates