

# The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley<sup>TM</sup>

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## Staff Senate

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### Meeting Minutes

Thursday, November 21, 2024, 9:00 am – 11:00 am

### Teams

#### I. Call to Order – 9:03

Mirayda called the meeting to order at 9:03 AM, and Ricardo conducted the roll call, confirming the presence of senators and establishing a quorum.

#### II. Roll Call / Establishment of Quorum – 9:03

*Ricardo Lopez, Secretary*

23 present

#### III. Welcome & Introduction – 9:05

*Rolando initiated the approval of the October 2024 meeting minutes. Elizabeth moved to table the approval of the October 2024 meeting minutes, and Jake seconded the motion.*

#### IV. Guest Speakers

##### a. Chasse Conque, Vice President and Director

##### Athletics

Chasse provided a comprehensive update on the Athletics department, highlighting the academic achievements of student-athletes, community service rankings, and record revenues in ticket sales and corporate partnerships. He also discussed the move to the Southland Conference and various construction projects, including the new field house, practice gym, golf facility, and soccer track facility.

- i. **Academic Achievements:** Chasse highlighted the academic achievements of student-athletes, noting a cumulative GPA of 3.35, an all-time high for the department. He mentioned nearly 400 student-athletes representing 18 programs, including the new women's swim and dive team.

- ii. **Community Service:** Chasse emphasized the importance of community service, ranking 6th nationally among Division One schools. Activities included camps, clinics, school visits, hospital visits, and food pantry work,
- iii. **Record Revenues:** Chasse reported record revenues in ticket sales and corporate partnerships, surpassing \$23 million in funds raised philanthropically. He highlighted the strong support for the baseball program, which finished 39th in the country in attendance.
- iv. **Southland Conference:** Chasse discussed the move to the Southland Conference, which includes 12 institutions in Texas and Louisiana. The move has reduced travel time and costs, allowing student athletes to spend more time in the classroom and at home.
- v. **Construction Projects:** Chasse provided updates on various construction projects, including the new field house, practice gym, golf facility, and soccer track facility. He mentioned the significant investment of around \$160 million in these projects, which aim to modernize and enhance the university's athletic facilities.
- vi. **Football Program Developments:** Chasse detailed the progress of the football program, including the construction of the Vaquero's Performance Center and the expansion of Backer Stadium. He also discussed ticket pricing, the allocation of season tickets, and plans for tailgating and parking.
- vii. **Performance Center:** Chasse discussed the construction of the Vaquero's Performance Center, a 45,000 square foot facility that will house the football program's day-to-day operations, including coaches' offices, locker rooms, an academic success center, a weight room, sports medicine, and meeting space. The facility is expected to be completed by July, in time for the football season kickoff in August.
- viii. **Backer Stadium Expansion:** Chasse detailed the expansion of Backer Stadium, which will increase seating capacity to about 12,000. The field is being lowered to improve the vantage point for suite holders, and additional seating is being added in the end zones for students and the marching band.

- ix. **Ticket Pricing:** Chasse explained the ticket pricing strategy, which includes a range of prices to accommodate different budgets. Season tickets start at \$75, with higher prices for seats closer to the midfield. Faculty and staff can purchase tickets at a 20% discount in certain sections.
- x. **Season Tickets:** Chasse announced that season tickets have sold out, with 6,000 seats allocated to season ticket holders and a waitlist of about 2,800. The seat selection process will begin in the spring of 2025, with any remaining inventory offered to the general public.
- xi. **Tailgating and Parking:** Chasse outlined plans for tailgating and parking, including designated tailgating spots, a corporate tailgate zone, and a student tailgate zone. Parking will be available at Backer Stadium and nearby locations, with efforts to ensure sufficient parking within a reasonable walking distance.
- xii. **Faculty and Staff Appreciation Event:** Chasse announced a faculty and staff appreciation event on Monday night at the Fieldhouse, featuring a doubleheader with the women's and men's basketball teams. Faculty and staff can claim free tickets and receive a voucher for a hot dog combo.

b. *David Guerra*, Training Coordinator

Finance & Fiscal Reporting

- i. **Payroll and Tax Compliance Information:** David and Bee provided information on payroll schedules, W-2 consent procedures, direct deposit setup, and time entry resources. They emphasized the importance of timely submission of travel and business expense reimbursements to avoid tax implications.
- ii. **Payroll Schedules:** David shared the monthly and semi-monthly payroll schedules, highlighting important dates for timecard submissions and supervisor approvals. He emphasized the need to adhere to these schedules, especially around holidays.
- iii. **W-2 Consent:** David explained the W-2 consent procedures, encouraging employees to opt for electronic delivery of their W-2 forms for faster access. Instructions for opting in are available on PeopleSoft.

- iv. **Direct Deposit Setup:** David provided guidance on setting up direct deposit, including a user guide and video tutorial available on the payroll website. He emphasized the importance of verifying account information to ensure accurate deposits.
- v. **Time Entry Resources:** David discussed resources available for time entry, including user guides and videos for hourly, exempt, and non-exempt employees. He also mentioned the use of DocuSign for timecard modifications older than 90 days.
- vi. **Travel Reimbursements:** David and Bee stressed the importance of timely submission of travel and business expense reimbursements to avoid tax implications. Reimbursements submitted after 60 days may be treated as taxable income.

c. *Matthew Moncus*, EHS Program Manager

Environmental Health Safety & Risk Management

- i. **Personal Transportation Devices Policy:** Matthew discussed the policy on personal transportation devices, including bikes and scooters, on campus. He highlighted the need for increased signage, enforcement, and the construction of a hike and bike trail around the Edinburg campus to alleviate pedestrian traffic.
- ii. **Policy Overview:** Matthew outlined the policy on personal transportation devices, which includes bikes and scooters, both motorized and non-motorized. The policy specifies areas where these devices are not allowed, such as covered walkways and pedestrian bridges.
- iii. **Increased Signage:** Matthew mentioned efforts to increase signage around campus to inform students and staff about the policy. He acknowledged that existing signs are often overlooked by students riding at high speeds.
- iv. **Hike and Bike Trail:** Matthew discussed the construction of a hike and bike trail around the Edinburg campus, designed to provide a safe pathway for bikes and scooters, reducing interactions with pedestrian traffic on the Bronc Trail.
- v. **Charging Restrictions:** Matthew highlighted the prohibition of charging personal transportation devices inside buildings, particularly dorms, due to the fire risk

associated with lithium batteries. This measure aims to prevent potential fire hazards on campus.

- vi. **Enforcement and Culture:** Matthew emphasized the need for increased enforcement of the policy by the campus police and the importance of creating a culture of safety where students and staff feel comfortable addressing policy violations.

d. *Rachel Villarreal*, Clinical Associate Professor

Health & Biomedical Sciences

- i. **Healthy Living Tips:** Rachel provided tips for healthy living during the holiday season, emphasizing the importance of portion control, including fruits and vegetables in meals, and making healthier choices. She also discussed the benefits of the Mediterranean meal planning style and answered questions on various nutrition topics.
- ii. **Portion Control:** Rachel emphasized the importance of portion control during the holiday season to avoid weight gain. She recommended structuring plates with half fruits and vegetables, a quarter protein, and a quarter whole grains.
- iii. **Healthy Choices:** Rachel encouraged making healthier choices by including more fruits and vegetables in meals, choosing whole grains, and opting for lean proteins. She provided examples of balanced plates and meal ideas.

V. **Committee Reports**

a. *Jeremy San Miguel*, Communications Committee Chair

- i. **Halloween Costume Contest:** Gratitude expressed to participants for their spirit and support. Winners and submissions can be viewed on Instagram and Facebook; links were shared in the chat.
- ii. **Engagement Opportunities:** Staff were reminded of the "Gap Isita with the Senator" program for connecting with staff senators. Link provided in the chat.

b. *Yesenia Carter*, Constitutions & Elections Committee Chair

- i. **Automation Plans:** The committee is working on automating elections for the upcoming year to improve accessibility.



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## Staff Senate

- ii. **Acknowledgments:** Special recognition to Dina Lopez and Tim Odoms for their contributions; meetings are scheduled in the coming weeks.
  - iii. **Voting System Goals:** The goal is to enable voting through the UTRGV website, ensuring users can only vote within their divisions.
- c. *Omar Nedzelsky Jr., Business Processes & Staff Support Chair*
- i. **New Feedback Submissions:** The committee has received 12 new feedback submissions and will review them in a meeting next week. Updates will be shared at the December Staff Senate meeting.
  - ii. **Pending Feedback Responses:** Five feedback submissions from October's meeting are awaiting departmental responses and will also be shared in December
- d. *Krystal Marroquin, Staff Success Committee*
- i. No updates

## VI. Public Comments & Questions

*Dr. Mirayada Torres-Avila, Parliamentarian*

- a. **Updates and Announcements:**
- i. **IT Tech Days:** Kayla Buentello shared that IT Tech Days will take place tomorrow in Harlingen at the Rotunda from 11:00 AM to 1:00 PM.
  - ii. **Bravo Vaquero Reminder:** Cordelia Rasa encouraged staff to use the Bravo Vaquero platform to recognize colleagues for their good work and support.
- b. **Community Initiatives:**
- i. **Food and Toy Donations:** Carlos Ayala reminded attendees about ongoing food bank donations and Toys for Tots collection boxes located in Brownsville (Biab) and Edinburg (Southwick Hall).
  - ii. **Turkey Trot Event:** Carlos Ayala also highlighted the 40th Annual Turkey Trot happening in Brownsville, including a one-mile Gobble Run/Walk. More details are available through the senator website.

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c. **Library Extended Hours:**

- i. Lilibana Galindo announced extended library hours for finals week, running from December 4th to December 10th. A flyer with details has been shared.

d. **Upcoming Meetings:**

- i. **December Staff Senate Meeting:** Rolando Segovia confirmed a general meeting on December 5th to include last-minute presenters. Attendance is encouraged despite the busy December schedule.

**VII. Adjourn – 10:48**

Carlos Ayala moved to adjourn the Staff Senate general meeting for the month of November, and Omar Nedzelsky seconded the motion. Meeting adjourned at 10:48 by Dr. Mirayda Torres-Avila.

Prepared by Ricardo Lopez