

The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley

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Staff Senate

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, April 24, 2025, 9:00 am – 11:00 am

Teams

I. Call to Order – 9:03

Mirayda Torres-Avila, Parliamentarian

Meeting to order.

II. Roll Call / Establishment of Quorum – 9:04

Ricardo Lopez, Secretary

23 present

III. Welcome & Introduction – 9:05

Rolando Segovia, Staff Senate President

Rolando welcomed everyone to the staff Senate general meeting for April. Minutes for February and March was approved.

IV. Guest Speakers

a. *Richard Burrows*, Director of UTRGV Arts

College of Fine Arts

Richard Burrows from the College of Fine Arts introduced himself, sharing his background and experiences in arts administration and his vision for UTRGV Arts. He highlighted the 10-year celebration of the Performing Arts Complex and discussed the new division within the College of Fine Arts.

- i. UTRGV Arts Initiatives:** Richard explained that UTRGV Arts oversees the management of rehearsal spaces and performance schedules across Fine Arts disciplines, including dance, music, theater, visual arts, and creative writing. He highlighted ongoing efforts to consolidate and coordinate these departments to deliver more cohesive presentations and exhibitions. Emphasizing community engagement, Richard stressed the importance of making the arts accessible and welcoming to the

broader Rio Grande Valley, particularly its youth. Additionally, he introduced the development of invitational programs aimed at bringing Fine Arts experts to campus to enrich cultural experiences for students and the community alike.

- ii. **Upcoming Events and Programs:** Richard Burrows announced a dynamic 2025–2026 arts season featuring international flutist Daniel Pardo in October, performing with a range of flutes including Chinese, Peruvian, and Egyptian. December will bring the debut holiday program by Mariachi Mariposas, an all-female mariachi ensemble. In February, Texas Poet Laureate Carmen Tafuya will engage with GEAR UP students during Festiva through storytelling and readings. April's highlight is a collaborative performance of *Handel's Messiah* by the Valley Symphony Orchestra and UTRGV Arts, ending with a community sing-along. In May, the Bruce Wood Dance company from Dallas will showcase their acclaimed athletic performances. Finally, during the 4th of July, UTRGV will present *25 Postcards from the Border*, a multimedia project set for Edinburg and Brownsville, with the goal of inclusion in the national America 250 celebration.
- iii. **Strategic Reorganization of UTRGV Arts Programming:** UTRGV Arts is restructuring its programming to reduce redundancy and improve efficiency by introducing themed categories: *Invitational Programs* will bring external arts experts to campus; *Community Collaborations* will foster partnerships with local cultural organizations; *Collections* will unify visual exhibitions and Festiva under a single brand; and *Vaquero Arts Engage* will focus on arts outreach and recruitment for 7th–12th grade students.
- iv. **Questions for Richard Burrows:** Dr. Richard Burrows emphasized that arts events foster self-discovery by helping individuals recognize their connections and differences with the performances they experience. He encouraged everyone to attend, even without prior familiarity, as these events offer valuable opportunities to form opinions and share experiences. Looking ahead, he envisions UTRGV as a cultural hub that elevates South Texas as an artistic destination, showcasing the rich cultural ties between the Rio Grande Valley and Mexico.

b. *Hector Guerrero*, HR Business Partner

Human Resources & Talent Development

Hector Conano from Human Resources provided an overview of the annual evaluations process, including the timeline, evaluation period, and the roles of employees, supervisors, and reviewers. He also addressed common questions and concerns about the evaluation process.

- i. **Annual Evaluations Overview:** Hector Guerrero outlined the annual evaluation timeline, highlighting the May 31, 2025, deadline for evaluations covering the period from May 1, 2024, to April 30, 2025. He clarified the roles of employees, supervisors, and reviewers, stressing the importance of clear communication and providing specific examples for accurate assessments. Additionally, he announced the availability of detailed training sessions beginning the same day and offered departmental training upon request.
- ii. **Questions and Answers on Evaluations:** Hector clarified that evaluations should exclude periods when employees were on leave, such as FMLA, and emphasized the importance of providing specific examples to justify high ratings (4s and 5s) for fairness and accuracy. He explained that while evaluations with scores of 3.0 or higher may qualify for merit raises, other factors also influence final decisions. Additionally, he noted that detailed training sessions on the evaluation process are available, including departmental training upon request.
- iii. **Closing Remarks:** Thank you to all who support and uplift student employees. Your participation helps ensure the success of this celebration and affirms the vital role students play in our campus operations.

V. **Committee Reports**

a. *Cristina Rodriguez*, Communications Committee Co-Chair

- i. **Graduation:** An announcement was made that staff employees graduating should send their photos for promotion on social media platforms, with a deadline for

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submission by next Friday.

- b. *Yesenia Carter*, Constitutions & Elections Committee Chair.
 - i. Eligible employees are encouraged to participate in upcoming nominations and elections and highlighted the ongoing development of a semi-automated process for the next fiscal year.
- c. *Omar Nedzelsky*, Business Processes & Staff Support Chair
 - i. No announcements made.
- d. *Krystal Marroquin*, Staff Success Committee
 - i. Krystal Marroquin shared updates from the Staff Success Committee, including the success of the April 12th baseball game tabling session and preparations for the upcoming year and retreat.

VI. Public Comments & Questions

Dr. Mirayda Torres-Avila, Parliamentarian

a. Updates and Announcements:

- i. Dina Lopez announced that additional parking spaces for veterans closer to buildings on both campuses have been approved, supported by students and Congressman Vicente Gonzalez.
- ii. Irma highlighted an upcoming overview session for Microsoft 365, including copilot, scheduled by UT system for all UT institutions, and encouraged attendance.
- iii. Victoria raised concerns about the availability of evening or online courses for non-traditional students, and Rolando suggested reaching out to the graduate help desk for assistance.

VII. Adjourn – 10:13

Jake Gonzalez motioned to adjourn the Staff Senate general meeting for the month of April, and Yesenia Carter seconded the motion. Meeting adjourned at 10:13 by Dr. Mirayda Torres-Avila.

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Prepared by Ricardo Lopez