

The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley

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Staff Senate

Staff Senate General Meeting Minutes

Date: July 24, 2025

Time: 9:03 AM

Location: Teams

1) Call to Order

- Meeting called to order by **Mirayda Torres-Avila**. Roll was called; senators responded “aye” verbally or in chat. **Quorum established.**

2) Roll Call / Attendance

- Roll call conducted by Ricardo Lopez; 27 senators present.
- **Guests/Speakers:**
 - **Dr. Aamir Ahmad**, Assistant Professor of Orthopedic Surgery; Head Team Physician, UTRGV Athletics
 - **Dr. Bob Schenck**, Sports Medicine (guest/fellowship leadership)
 - **Chasse Conque**, Vice President/Director of Athletics
 - **Coach Travis Bush**, Head Football Coach
 - **Dr. William Miller**, Dean, School of Optometry

3) Approval of Previous Minutes

- **Motion:** Approve **May 2025** and **June 2025** minutes — **Krystal Chappell**
- **Second:** **Mirayda Torres-Avila**
- **Vote:** Approved (ayes in chat; no noted opposition)

4) Reports / Guest Presentations

4.1 UTRGV Sports Medicine & Concussion Protocols — **Dr. Aamir Ahmad (with Dr. Bob Schenck)**

- Introductions and background; expansion of sports medicine and fellowship leadership.
- Coverage plan: multiple physicians at all home games; travel coverage for road games.

- **Concussion management:** NCAA D-I protocol; baseline testing for all athletes; trained sideline team; medical spotter halts play for suspected head/neck injuries; return-to-play only after protocol milestones are met.
- Outlook (5–10 years): build premier sports medicine program in Texas; launch Ambulatory Surgery Center; expand research, fellows, and national profile.

4.2 Athletics / Football Program Updates — Chasse Conque & Coach Travis Bush

- Training camp begins **July 30–31**; ~25 practices leading to the **Aug 30** season opener.
- Camp practices on campus (generally closed to public); potential limited public activity depending on stadium construction.
- **Culture & success metrics:** focus on daily improvement, academics, community engagement; wins expected to follow culture.
- **Recruiting:** balance roster with upperclassmen; continue recruiting the Valley; camps held and strong local HS engagement.
- **NIL:** compete appropriately at FCS level; steward donor/corporate support; recruit student-athletes who value education & competition.
- **Community/Staff support:** keep excitement high; continued campus partnership is essential.

Key Operations & Ticketing Notes (Athletics)

- **Aug 1:** major game-day information push.
- **rallythevalley.com** becomes game-day central (parking, tailgating, themes, tickets).
- **Stadium:** capacity near **12,000** with added south-end seating; **25%** reserved for students.
- **Season tickets & premium seating:** sold out (multi-year for suites/club).
- **Single-game inventory:** possible limited Friday releases from unused visiting-team allotments.
- **Students:** claim tickets weekly (Mon–Fri) for Saturday games.
- **Homecoming: October 25.**
- Athletics notes ~**400–500** staff working each home game; broad campus collaboration.

4.3 School of Optometry — Dean William Miller

- Background and team building; networking with local optometrists/ophthalmologists.

The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley

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Staff Senate

- **Accreditation timeline:** Stage 1 achieved; **Stage 2 Feb 2026** (decision ~May); site visit within six months; **first class Fall 2027**.
- **Cohort & hiring:** **40 students** per class; plan to hire **~21 faculty** plus administrators.
- **Clinic & site:** intent to house school & public clinic at the **McAllen Monitor Building (Jackson Ave.)** with ~22–25 exam rooms; integrate UT Health RGV Vision Center under school umbrella.
- **Curriculum:** team-based learning; robust board-prep; emphasis on community health (diabetes, hypertension, low vision, sports vision).
- **Tuition:** state-competitive (lower than UIW; slightly lower than UH; aligned with SOM/School of Podiatric Medicine).
- **Workforce need:** Valley has fewer optometrists per capita vs. Texas; goal to keep grads local.
- **Q&A highlights:**
 - **Halos after cataract surgery:** can be edema-related (often resolves) or lens-related (may persist; follow up with surgeon if prolonged).
 - **Floaters:** unrelated to contact lens wear; typical age-related vitreous changes; monitor as indicated.

5) Old Business

- None noted beyond approval of May/June minutes.

6) New Business

- Agenda proceeded directly to guest presentations and athletics logistics; no separate motions recorded.

7) Announcements

- **Football opener:** August 30.
- **Aug 1** communications drop for game-day info.
- **Homecoming:** October 25.
- Student ticket claim process begins each Monday of game week.

8) Public Comment / Open Q&A (selected)

- Training camp public access: generally **closed**; potential limited public event TBD.

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Staff Senate

- Staff volunteer opportunities: **TBD**; athletics to inform campus if needs arise.

9) Adjournment

- Meeting Adjourned at 11:09 AM.

Decisions

- **Approved:** May 2025 & June 2025 meeting minutes (motion Chappell; second Torres-Avila).

Action Items

- **Athletics:** Publish comprehensive game-day information by **Aug 1**; announce weekly student-ticket claim process; communicate any limited single-game ticket availability (unused visitor allotment) on Fridays of home weeks.
- **Senate Communications (optional):** Share student ticketing steps & Homecoming date with constituents when official comms post.
- **Optometry:** Continue accreditation steps toward Stage 2 (Feb 2026), hiring, and facility planning at McAllen Monitor Building; engage community partners for externship sites.