

Staff Senate General Meeting Minutes

Date: January 22, 2026

Time: 9:00 AM

Location: Teams

1. Call to Order

Meeting called to order by Jake Gonzalez at 9:03 AM.

2. Roll Call / Attendance

Roll call conducted by Ricardo Lopez. Senators responded “aye” verbally or in chat.

21 Senators Present

Quorum established.

3. Approval of November 2025 Minutes

Motion: Table November 2025 meeting minutes – *Francine Perez*

Second to approve: *Matthew Lerma*

Vote: Approved (ayes in chat; no noted opposition)

November 2025 meeting minutes were tabled.

4. Guest Speakers

Emilia Trevino – Student Employment

- Presented on National Student Employee Appreciation Week.
- Encouraged supervisors to nominate student employees for recognition.
- Nominations will be recognized during the award ceremony in April.
- Deadline to submit Student Employee of the Year nominations: February 9.
- Deadline for National Student Employment nominations: February 6.
- Introduced opportunity for national-level nominations through the National Student Employment Association.
- Noted that Student Employee of the Year recipients receive a \$300 scholarship.
- Students may also nominate supervisors for Supervisor of the Year.
- Emphasized that nominations are reviewed blindly by a committee.

Q&A:

- Departments may nominate multiple students; nominations are blind-reviewed.
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David Hovar – University Marketing and Communications (UMC)

- Presented overview of Viva Engage, UTRGV’s internal communications platform (formerly Yammer).
- Explained Viva Engage’s integration within Microsoft Teams.
- Highlighted official communities:
 - All Campus
 - Faculty and Staff
 - Students
- Encouraged employees to actively contribute announcements and updates.
- Noted Viva Engage will replace the UTRGV Announcements Teams channel.
- Reviewed posting guidelines aligned with FERPA and HIPAA standards.
- Shared use of Ready UTRGV emergency preparedness resources.
- Demonstrated posting announcements and tracking engagement analytics.

Additional Announcements:

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- Promoted the UTRGV 10th Anniversary website (utrgv.edu/10) and available branding assets.
 - Encouraged participation in Orange Fridays to promote school spirit.
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Vianney Abrego – Marketing Director, Dining Services (Chartwells)

- Presented updates on faculty and staff meal plans:
 - 25-block and 40-block plans available via payroll deduction.
 - Meals priced under \$10 for all-you-can-eat dining.
- Dining Dollars promotion:
 - Purchase \$300 and receive \$50 bonus (valid through February 13).
 - Dining Dollars usable across all campuses and dining locations.
- Brownsville updates:
 - Absurd Bird new breakfast offerings
 - Sunrose Coffee permanent and pop-up locations
 - Costa Coffee self-serve machines expanding locations
- Edinburg updates:
 - Launch of Abuela’s Mesa in the Student Union
 - Updates to Revolution Noodle and Valley Harvest
- Announced upcoming Smoking Thursday at Vaquero Dining Hall.
- Shared plans to expand dining and concession options for baseball season.

Q&A Highlights:

- Dining Dollars expire at the end of the spring semester.
 - Dining Dollars can be used at dining halls and retail locations across campuses.
 - Harlingen campus dining expansion will depend on traffic and demand.
 - Additional meal block options exist (110, 160, 220 blocks).
 - Meal plans currently do not extend into summer due to limited dining hall operations.
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5. Committee Reports

Communications Committee

- No updates provided.
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Constitution and Elections Committee – Matthew Lerma

- No updates at this time.
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Business Processes and Staff Support Committee – Carlos Ayala

- No new updates due to holiday period.
 - Committee continues to follow up on previously submitted items.
 - Staff encouraged to continue submitting feedback and suggestions.
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Staff Success Committee – Estela De La Garza

- No formal updates.
 - Announced upcoming communications regarding **Employee Appreciation Week** participation.
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6. Public Comment / Open Q&A

Irma Hermida

- Shared update regarding new ADA Title II Web Accessibility Rule.
- Rule applies to all public universities and covers digital content dating back to April 2024.
- Compliance deadline: April 2026.
- University coordinating efforts across IT, HR, UMC, COLTT, and Accessibility Services.
- Training and guidance materials forthcoming.

Estela De La Garza

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- Announced UTRGV's successful Carnegie Community Engagement Reclassification.
 - Recognition reflects institutional commitment to community engagement.
 - Classification valid through 2032.
 - Expressed appreciation to staff, faculty, and students for contributions.
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7. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn: *Graciela Abrego*

Second: *Manuel Vidal*

Vote: Approved

Meeting adjourned at 9:58 AM.