

Staff Senate General Meeting Minutes

Date: October 23, 2025

Time: 9:03 AM

Location: Teams

1. Call to Order

Meeting called to order by Omar Nedzelsky at 9:03 AM.

2. Roll Call / Attendance

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

26 senators present.

Quorum established.

3. Approval of September 2025 Minutes

Motion: Approve minutes – *Graciela Abrego*

Second to approve: *Dina Lopez*

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

4. Guest Speakers

Kristina Chavez – Associate Vice President for Human Resources

The University of Texas
Rio Grande Valley™
.....
Staff Senate

- Provided update on the 3% merit pool for qualifying faculty and staff.
- Merit adjustments will take effect November 1 and appear in December paychecks.
- Reviewed merit eligibility criteria:
 - Continuous employment since Nov. 1
 - Completion of all compliance trainings, performance evaluations, and conflict of interest reporting by Oct. 8
 - No disciplinary actions
- HR is reviewing merit files; divisions will distribute letters early November.
- Compared merit programs across UT institutions:
 - Some institutions offered no merit this year
 - Some institutions offered one-time payments
 - Merit increases systemwide range from 2%–4%, placing UTRGV as competitive
- Acknowledged collaboration across campus to ensure training completion.

Grecia Galvan – Assistant Director for Governmental Relations

- Provided overview of the Governmental Relations office and its work with local, state, and federal officials.
- Discussed Vaquero Viernes, a community-building spirit event.
- Next Vaquero Viernes scheduled for October 24, 11:30 AM–1:00 PM, at the E-Bridge Center in Brownsville.

The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley™

Staff Senate

- Participation includes students, staff, faculty, and local officials.
- Event aims to promote university pride and community engagement.

Luis Guzman – General Manager, Dining Services

- Introduced the Voice Division Initiative Survey; faculty and staff encouraged to participate.
- Reviewed faculty and staff meal plans available at the Edinburg campus.
- Brownsville promotion: purchase \$100 in dining dollars, receive an additional \$25 bonus.
- Shared updates on:
 - Taquiza Tuesdays (Brownsville)
 - Smoking Thursdays (Edinburg)
- Provided overview of football stadium concessions, partnerships with local vendors, and student-led Cattle Dr. BBQ Club.
- Invited departments to reach out for catering discussions.

5. Committee Reports

Communications Committee – Chair: Dina Lopez

- Halloween door decorating contest entries due October 29.
- Homecoming photos requested for social media sharing.

Constitution and Elections Committee – Co-Chair: Matthew Lerma

- First committee meeting scheduled for November 5.
 - No further updates.
-

Business Processes and Staff Support Committee – Chair: Carlos Ayala

Two new feedback submissions:

1. Wellness Release Time Proposal
 - Suggestion modeled after Texas A&M’s wellness program.
 - Committee will forward feedback to HR Benefits for review.
 2. Vaquero Express Bus Timing Concern
 - Concern regarding Weslaco-to-Edinburg 5 PM departure leaving immediately at 5 PM.
 - Issue will be reviewed next committee meeting.
-

Staff Success Committee – Representative: Manuel Vidal

- No updates.
-

6. Announcements

- IT Tech Days:
 - Edinburg: Nov 5
 - Brownsville: Nov 11

The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley™

Staff Senate

- SECC reminders: Donations close soon; employees encouraged to log steps for Fall Into Fitness.
- Professional Development Day on November 5, with staff- and faculty-led sessions across campuses.
- Graduate Fairs:
 - Brownsville: Nov 4
 - Edinburg: Nov 13
- Lotería Night Fundraiser benefiting AHEC patients; donations and prize contributions welcome.
- Burning of the Letters Homecoming Event on October 24.

7. Public Comment / Open Q&A

Open discussion included general questions for presenters and additional departmental announcements.

8. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn: *Matthew Lerma*

Second: Ediel Garza

Meeting adjourned at 9:55 AM.