

## Faculty Senate Minutes

31 August 2022

Trinity 104

### Senate Leadership in Attendance

Jackie Fay, Chair

Andy Milson, Chair Elect

Kathryn Warren, Secretary

**Senators in Attendance**, followed by the unit they represent  
(Department for TT, College or School for NTT)

Ishfaq Ahmad	Computer Science
Amy Austin	College of Liberal Arts
Karabi Bezboruah	Public Affairs
Lauren Brewer	College of Business
Alan Cannon	Information Systems and Operations Management
Fletcher Coleman	Art and Art History
Venkat Devarajan	Electrical Engineering
Sergio Espinosa	Music
Doug Grisaffe	Marketing
Andy Hansz	Finance and Real Estate
Darlene Hunter	School of Social Work
Aimee Israel-Pelletier	Modern Languages
Song Jiang	Computer Science
Theresa Jorgensen	Math
Vinayak Kaushal	College of Engineering
Un-Jung Kim	Earth and Environmental Sciences
Douglas Klahr	Architecture
Andrzej Korzeniowski	Math
David Levine	College of Engineering
Fred MacDonnell	Chemistry and Biochemistry
Steve Mattingly	Civil Engineering
Jeff McGee	Management
Joyce Myers	College of Education
Anne Nordberg	Social Work
Taner Ozdil	Landscape Architecture
Mark Pellegrino	Biology
Cindy Plonien	College of Nursing and Health Innovation
Cristina Salinas	History
Brent Sasley	Political Science
Ioannis Schizas	Electrical Engineering
Aaron Smallwood	Economics
Amy Speier	Sociology and Anthropology
Chunke Su	Communications

Amy Tigner	English
Margarita Treviño	College of Nursing and Health Innovation
Regina Urban	Nursing
Nilakshi Veerabathina	College of Science
Shouyi Wang	Industrial, Manufacturing, and Systems Engineering
Jeff Witzel	Linguistics
Ling Xu	Social Work

### **Ex officio Members in Attendance**

Jennifer Cowley, President  
 Tamara Brown, Provost  
 Teresa Nguyen, Student Body President

### **Guests**

Stephanie Cole, subbing for Imre Demhardt (History)  
 Shelley Smith, subbing for Amy Speier for part of the meeting (Sociology and Anthropology)  
 Toni Sol, Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs

### **Press**

Wolf Islay, Shorthorn

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### **Call to order by Jackie Fay 2:30 pm**

Welcome from Jackie and introduction of Executive Committee members

### **Remarks from President Jennifer Cowley**

- Student activity fair going on – thank you to UTA faculty for making it possible
- Art of Participatory Leadership workshop for senior university leadership (VPs and Deans) was held for three days the week before the semester began with Senate Chair, Jackie Fay, and Vice Chair, Andy Milson, also in attendance.
- Regents have asked her to put together a Strategic Plan, to be presented in May 2023
- Has had many discussions of future of DEI on campus
- Busy with hiring
  - Completed all but one of the leadership hires, with the VP for Development and Alumni Relations process still ongoing
  - Leadership team 40% women, 1/3 POC (people of color) – good progress on representation
- Has heard from UTA faculty and staff about all kinds of priorities (salaries, grad student funding) – some thoughts on money and priorities:
  - Money is being invested, but not in the way that it was initially thought the strategic fund money would be.
  - Kate Miller (VP for Research and Innovation) is working on early ideas and figuring out how to engage with the campus to make some decisions about how to spend the NRUF (National Research University Fund) money.

### Remarks from Provost Tamara Brown

- One month into her job, and she's been hard at work:
  - Meeting with a lot of people, getting excited and energized
  - "Commencement was amazing" – great to start early on with celebrations of student accomplishments, MAV Week activities (though she declined the invitation to ride a bull)
  - 42,000+ students registered for classes
  - Met with FacSen leadership at the retreat and on campus
  - Met with SAC (Staff Advisory Council)
  - Exciting orientation for new faculty, lots of energy
  - Viewing presentations of student work
- Her goal is to recognize and appreciate what we're doing and to support that work, to help us be even more excellent while working within constraints, with the resources available.
- She envisions a partnership with faculty to solve problems that confront us and seize the opportunities within our reach.

### Questions/Discussion

**Senator:** Question about the budget model the University has, which changed recently. It's still a little mysterious to us. Have you had time to become familiar with it, do you like it? The whole story.

### President Cowley:

- The number one issue facing her as the new president is revenue management.
- Setting aside the budget model, the issue is there's not enough money coming in (it's fundamentally a revenue issue).
- Looking at revenue, our tuition strategy isn't aligned with our peers (though we do want to keep tuition affordable).
- There are also alignment issues with student credit hours.
- We are making changes to our investment strategies to generate more revenue (part of a long-term strategy).
- Re. budget models: she has worked with many different kinds of models, and there are pros and cons to all of them. The fundamental challenge we face is that our budget model moves money around, but the bottom line is that there isn't enough money.
- Right now we can pay for merit, but that's about it, which is not sustainable.
- John Davidson (CFO) is working with the Deans' Council and Provost Brown to look at the budget model and see whether there's an opportunity to simplify some of the pieces.

**Senator:** As you know, optics are very important, sometimes more than the message. There seems to be a disconnect between the [buzz](#) that the UT System is surpassing Harvard as the wealthiest university system in the nation, and then being told that there's no pot of gold. Can you explain to us what it takes to get money from UT System?

### President Cowley:

- In a way the comparison is not fair: Harvard is one small university, not a complex system with many different campuses.
- The good news is that we are getting some extra money from system (can't say how much).
- The fundamental problem is that the way the statue is written, the only thing they can give us money for is buildings. But that is not our number one priority in terms of needs.
- Indicates possibility of someone coming in to talk to Senate about budget.

**Senator:** Could you speak to the new strategic plan. I guess what I'm asking is, are we keeping portions of the old one? New administration, new plan, and then we all have to pivot.

**President Cowley:**

- Pieces will continue forward.
- We'll focus on student success.
- With new leadership, we'll be looking at what specific opportunities to pursue and what directions to go in.

**Senator:** COLA has been the ugly stepchild in this University, but at the same time I think we contribute quite a bit to this university. I wanted to talk about graduate education. When we were struggling to become an R1 we had to graduate 200 PhDs a year. We achieved this, but then supporting graduate students has kind of fallen off. I would love to brainstorm about ideas that would be beyond what we've traditionally done for graduate students.

**Provost Brown:**

- We all want to maintain our R1 status, but we want to think broader.
- Wants to figure out graduate student support –very important to her. It's a revenue question again.
- Would like to see doctoral production in COLA a lot higher than it is.
- Untapped opportunities (e.g., grants, partnerships between STEM and liberal arts, opportunities available to minority-serving institutions).
- Wants to explore preparing graduate students for next-career pathways beyond academia.

**Senator:** We can see the effects of climate change in front of our very eyes. As a university, we have some responsibility. What's your take on it? What do you think we can do at the university to address climate change?

**President Cowley:**

- [UTA won](#) the National Excellence in Sustainability Award from NACUBO (National Association of College and University Business Officers)
- Students in the last election voted in favor of establishing a green fee, which would go toward sustainability efforts. Fee hasn't yet been approved it because student fees for this year have been frozen, but we will think about what we can do with it going forward.
- Invites interested faculty to join in thinking about directions to go.

**Senator** (following up): But how about on a curriculum basis?

**Provost Brown:**

- Yes, there are proposals about course development in this area.
- Also ideas about inviting speakers.
- We want to position ourselves as thought-leaders in this space.

**President Cowley**, to Senators: Why are you serving on Faculty Senate? What's motivated you to be part of this group?

**Senator:** I feel I am a true representative of my colleagues in my department. I want to bring their thoughts to you. I will be for the first time able to express my faculty's issues very candidly.

**President Cowley:** I want to promote a culture of candor.

**Senator:** I am teaching faculty, non-tenure-track. NTT was not included in Senate until three years ago. When it was open to us, I wanted to be part of it, to bring issues facing NTT faculty to the table.

**Senator:** Faculty Senate is the place where I get information about what's going on at the University and then I can pass that on in my department. It's hard to know what's going on otherwise.

**Senator:** I didn't have a choice, but I was happy to join because I think my department represents unique challenges and opportunities – e.g., we have MFA students (terminal degree not PhD). Thinking about how to represent and advocate for junior faculty.

**Senator:** We serve an important role as liaisons, bridges, advocates. It's about connecting different silos on campus toward the same strategic goal. It comes down to communication.

**Senator:** I'm here because the day elections were held in my department, I wasn't there (ha ha). But I volunteered for a second term because I realized that we do work here. It's a sense of satisfaction, and we're trying to do what we think is best for our colleagues.

**President Cowley** closes by saying that she'll be here as much as she can and that she's committed to our success; Provost Brown will be at Senate consistently.

#### **Remarks from Toni Sol, Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs**

- T&P update: Dossiers getting submitted tomorrow, 49 in total, 32 for full, 17 for tenure. Some people taking the extra COVID year. Probably on the low end of people coming up for tenure. More in future years.
- Great news for annual evaluations: the 5 course eval questions will now be imported automatically into Digital Measures (DM). You still have to upload the full PDF with the comments, but they're working on getting that automated as well.
- Annual review trainings on the DM website coming up; Samantha Moore is managing the database and doing the trainings.
- Third-year review trainings coming up

- New, shorter ACUE (Association of College and University Educators) class (4 modules, 2 months), coming up in spring: Fostering a Culture of Belonging (microaggressions, what they are, how to identify and stand up for people); Chairs and Associate Deans will be asked to take it first, and then there will be room for about 50 faculty for the first round.
- [Leadership academy](#) starting to recruit for spring, application due 10/31. (Lots of instruction on budgets!) Will meet every other Friday morning in the spring.
- CRTLE has [a series](#) on how to reclaim the joy in teaching.

## Questions/Discussion

**Senator:** Are you aware that the retire management portfolio is not working? The place where we control the amount of money we put into our 403Bs – faculty are reporting they don't have access to it.

**Vice Provost Sol** will talk to Jewel Washington about it.

**Senator:** There's HR and then Academic HR. (I was looking for the phased retirement policy and I couldn't find it on the HR website.) Edith Reed is in charge of Academic HR.

**Vice Provost Sol:** We've always had phased retirement (you give up your tenure but you have a contract and you teach half time and get half pay).

**Senator:** Is there phased retirement for clinical faculty?

**Vice Provost Sol:** No – but you can negotiate your teaching load. Phased retirement is for tenure-stream faculty.

**Chair:** What's going on with the sick leave banking? Where are we with the process? Is it operational, that you can donate your sick leave into a leave pool that supports parental/family leave?

**Vice Provost Sol:** If you need leave, you can apply for it; she will talk to Regular HR about donating leave.

**Vice Chair:** For those of us doing CPE (Comprehensive Performance Evaluation, a.k.a. post-tenure review), does it work the same way as tenure review?

**Vice Provost Sol:** Yes. It gets launched November 1 or 2 and goes through committees that way. But the statement is optional, and you don't need a peer review.

## Orientation to Senate (Jackie Fay and Andy Milson)

- Nature of Senate: we represent faculty, review and weigh in on policy. Contrast to UG Assembly and G Assembly – they pass resolutions to do with curriculum, but we do not.
- Membership: Andy is in charge of roster
  - The Senate is made up of 47 TT Senators and 15 NTT Senators at present, with 10 elections pending to fill spots and replace some Senators whose terms have ended.

- For TT, each department is represented; for NTT elections done at college/school level
- Two-year term, 9/1-8/31
- Term limits: 3 terms, 6 years
- Explanation of officers and roles, including those unique to Senate:
  - TCOFS (Texas Council of Faculty Senate) Representative, Mike Nelson
  - [FAC](#) (Faculty Advisory Council) – an advisory group for UT System Jackie Fay, Andy Milson, Mike Nelson (alternate)
- Meetings
  - Eight a year. Meetings for 2022-23 are 8/31/22, 9/28/22, 11/2/22, 12/7/22, 2/1/23, 3/1/23, 3/29/23, 5/3/23.
  - We follow Robert’s Rules of Order with the help of a Parliamentarian (seat vacant at present).
- Committees:
  - 4 elected, all four open to both TT and NTT Senators
    - Executive Committee (officers)
    - Presidential Advisory Committee, meets once a month. Includes Executive Committee + 1 rep from each college or school. In executive session. 2 hour meetings, 1 hour with President and Provost. Works over the summer. Works closely with upper administration, interesting opportunity.
    - Committee on Equity and Ethics –discusses agenda items determined by the Executive Committee. Discussed over several meetings, follow through with administration, collaborative, report back to Senate.
    - Committee on Tenure and Academic Freedom – deals with the nominations to the University committee on T&P; issues that come up to do with tenure and academic freedom run through and by that committee.
  - Standing Committees (appointed – a questionnaire will be sent to canvas Senators for interests)
    - Academic and Student Liaison Committee
    - Budget Liaison Committee
    - Information Technology and Information Security Committee
    - Operating Procedures Committee
    - Special Projects Committee
  - Ad Hoc committees
    - Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee
    - Research Committee
    - Non-Tenure Track Faculty Issues Committee

Breakout groups in colleges/units to elect members to the three statutory committees.  
Preliminary election results:

### **PAC**

Annie Nordberg (SSW)  
Amy Speier (COLA)  
Tanner Ozdil (CAPP)  
Jeff McGee (COB)  
Ishfaq Ahmad (COE)

Fred MacDonnell (COS)  
 Margarita Treviño (CONHI)  
 Joyce Myers (COEd)

### **Equity and Ethics**

Darlene Hunter (SSW)  
 Jeff Witzel (COLA)  
 Douglas Klahr (CAPPa)  
 Doug Grisaffe (COB)  
 Vinayak (Vinny) Kaushal (COE)  
 Theresa Jorgensen (COS)  
 Regina Urban (CONHI)  
 Jodi Tommerdahl (COEd)

### **Tenure and Academic Freedom**

Ling Xu (SSW)  
 Aimee Israel-Pelletier (COLA)  
 Karabi Bezboruah (CAPPa)  
 Aaron Smallwood (COB)  
 Mark Pellegrino (COS)  
 Mike Nelson (CONHI)  
 Stefan Romanoschi (COE)  
 Leaf Zhang (COEd)

- Selected Recent Faculty Senate Accomplishments
  - COACHE faculty job satisfaction survey (ongoing)
  - FDL policies (ongoing)
  - Revision of Emeritus policy (ongoing)
  - Faculty Ombuds (ongoing)
  - Biannual Vision Statement
  - Extending travel support to FT NTT faculty members
  - Academy of Distinguished Service Leaders
  - University T&P committee and processes
  - Faculty participation in college-level budget processes
  - Established the Open Faculty Forum
  - Faculty Workload Guidelines (input)
  - Senate expansion to FT NTT faculty members
  - Expansion of Academy of Distinguished Teachers to FT NTT faculty members (input)
- Scope of Influence
  - UTA leadership – President’s Advisory Committee (PAC)
  - UTA committees, e.g.
  - College Budget hearings
  - University Promotion and Tenure Committee
  - Institutional Audit Committee
  - Compliance Committee



- IT Executive Board
- Undergraduate Assembly
- HOP Committee
- Holiday Committee
- Athletic Council
- Space and Resource Allocation Committee
- Various Covid-19 committees and task forces
- UT System
- Faculty Advisory Council (FAC) and committees
- Texas Council of Faculty Senates (TCOFS)
- Senator duties and responsibilities
  - Attend senate meetings (typically four per semester)
  - Serve on one or more senate committees
  - Serve as an interface between your unit's faculty and the Senate
  - Seek input from your unit on issues to bring to the senate
  - Report senate actions back to your unit (department or college, depending) at faculty meetings and/or by email or Teams
    - Give senate report at faculty meetings on a regular basis
    - Seek input during faculty meetings
    - Keep notes from senate meetings and email to your constituents
    - Develop a form to solicit input and feedback
    - Have open office hours for faculty chats
    - For NTT Senators: creating a Team can be a good way to communicate with Senators you represent outside of your department
  - Be an advocate for your unit to the senate and university leadership
- Benefits of Senate Service
  - Awesome T-shirts ☺
  - Fulfill university service duties
  - Influence university policies and procedures
  - Stay informed of university business
  - Communicate directly with president, provost, and other university leaders
  - Inform and influence university and system leadership
  - Represent the faculty in the media
  - Develop leadership and organizational skills
- Planning priorities (developed by PAC and shared with President and Provost) – a work in progress – your input is welcomed and needed
  - What funding items do faculty want to talk more about?
    - Faculty salaries
    - Strategic funding initiative
    - Graduate student support
    - New budget model
  - What should DEI look like at UTA?
  - Who are the faculty?
    - Increasing numbers of tenure stream faculty
    - Diversifying the faculty body
    - NTT title study

- How do we better support and appreciate faculty?
  - Ombuds
  - Faculty development leave program
  - Travel funding
  - Recognition for milestones (e.g. length of employment)
- Who are our students and how do we support them?
  - Faculty involvement in setting admissions and enrollment criteria
  - Online education—where is it going?
  - Undergraduate and graduate students—what should the balance be?
  - Accessibility and research excellence
- What should the future campus look like?
  - Campus master plan
  - Deferred maintenance and updates

### **Chair's Report (Jackie Fay)**

- Leadership searches over the summer, very busy
- Provost very positive and supportive of ombuds proposal (position would be held by a faculty member with training and course releases – independent mediator)
- COACHE
  - Presented committee reports from COACHE survey to President and Provost
    - Faculty compensation
    - Graduate student retention
    - Institutional research support
    - Promotion to full professor
    - Faculty retention
  - Ongoing work on other COACHE areas (climate for URM [underrepresented minority] faculty, climate for NTT faculty, family and parental support)
  - There will be infographics on each of the subcommittee reports
  - Steering committee will meet again in a week

### **Election of Parliamentarian**

Uncontested, Venkat Devarajan is elected.

**Adjourned at 4:32 pm**

**Next Meeting: September 28, 2022**