

Faculty Senate Minutes

1 March 2023
Trinity Hall 104

Senate Leadership in Attendance

Jackie Fay, Chair

Andy Milson, Chair Elect

Venkat Devarajan, Parliamentarian

Kathryn Warren, Secretary

Senators in Attendance, followed by the unit they represent

(Department for TT, College or School for NTT)

Georgios Alexandrakis	Bioengineering
Amy Austin	College of Liberal Arts
Karabi Bezboruah	Public Affairs
Alan Bowling	Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering
Lauren Brewer	College of Business
Jivas Chakravarthy	Accounting
Wei Chen	Physics
Imre Demhardt	History
Sarah El Sayed	Criminology and Criminal Justice
Sergio Espinosa	Music
Julienne Greer	Theatre Arts and Dance
Doug Grisaffe	Marketing
Andy Hansz	Finance and Real Estate
Darlene Hunter	School of Social Work
Aimée Israel-Pelletier	Modern Languages
Song Jiang	Computer Science
Theresa Jorgensen	Math
Douglas Klahr	Architecture
Andrzej Korzeniowski	Math
David Levine	College of Engineering
Qing Lin	Psychology
Fred MacDonnell	Chemistry and Biochemistry
Steve Mattingly	Civil Engineering
Jeff McGee	Management
Joyce Myers	College of Education
Michael Nelson	Kinesiology
Anne Nordberg	Social Work
Taner Ozdil	Landscape Architecture
Mark Pellegrino	Biology
Cynthia Plonien	College of Nursing and Health Innovation
Nicholas Pollock	College of Science
Stefan Romanoschi	Civil Engineering

Aaron Smallwood	Economics
Amy Speier	Sociology and Anthropology
Christy Spivey	College of Business
Chunke Su	Communication
Amy Tigner	English
Margarita Treviño	College of Nursing and Health Innovation
Regina Urban	Nursing
Nilakshi Veerabathina	College of Science
Jeffrey Witzel	Linguistics
Ling Xu	Social Work
Yi Zhang	Education Leadership and Policy Studies

Ex officio Members in Attendance

Tamara Brown, UTA Provost

Guests

Minerva Cordero, Interim Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs

Edith Reed, Assistant Vice Provost for Academic Human Resources

Press

Wolf Islay, *Shorthorn*

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Call to order by Jackie Fay 2:32 pm

Remarks from Provost Tamara Brown

- Graduate school updates
 - Compensation change for doctoral and terminal MA students was announced over email on March 1 (includes expanded support for tuition and fees, 100%). Though we could now have a conversation about the amount of the increase, the next conversation is health insurance. That's what students and faculty have asked for.
 - Talking to Dean of Graduate School about what we can do to increase fellowships. That's another gap in terms of our ability to recruit top students. Graduate fellowships typically come from endowed donated dollars. Endowments earn interest at a rate of 4%. If we want to support graduate students around \$40-50K (with full tuition, stipends, health care, etc.), we can figure out how many millions of dollars are needed to yield the amount we want. Discussing strategies to interest donors in giving that amount. Funding only on central dollars (what we get from the state), it won't go that far.
- Increases for faculty salaries
 - Almost done. Calculations have been done, spreadsheets sent to Deans for final review. Deans should return spreadsheets this week. Can quickly upload those for the April paychecks.
 - Taking steps (e.g., setting salary floors, increasing promotional raises) to ensure these salary problems (getting so far from market) don't reemerge in the future

Senator: How will those salary increases be communicated to faculty members?

Provost Brown: They will get a memo from HR informing them of that, and then they'll see it on their paycheck.

Senator: For people eligible to be raised to 75% of market rate, do you have a ballpark number for how many people are affected, and are there hot spots across the University (particular colleges)?

Provost Brown: It's not more than 100, because the gaps are so large. We focused on closing that gap. As you can imagine, for NTT faculty, that gap was a lot larger. We have NTT faculty, full time, making \$35K a year. How do you bring *those* people – and there are significant numbers of them – up to the 75th percentile? So some people will have larger adjustments, and others will have smaller adjustments. (This is a ballpark, and it's not quite accurate; she didn't have her notes with her, and the salary adjustment plan has been through many iterations.) COLA and COS were the two colleges with the most discrepancies.

Senator: You mentioned increasing the base salary for new people and increasing promotional raises, which is great, but in our department, the problem often is compression. Is there some idea of what to do for those people?

Provost Brown: That's a never-ending problem because the market changes, and so does cost of living. Minimum salaries inch up over time. Our goal is to gradually eat away at the compression issue with these kinds of strategies. We'll take another look in two years for potential adjustment in the third year, giving some time for the measures we put in place to mature, so that when we do this again, the gaps are smaller. It's an ongoing project. Everyone would like us to be at 100%, but there's always a choice to make about how to spend the money when you have limited dollars. We could spend the money internally, on current people, and keep the salaries at which we hire people low, or we could use the money to attract new faculty, paying competitive salaries. We'll always be faced with these decisions, and they're ours to make. It's an ongoing question we have to ask. Of course, the answer is usually that we have to do both. But how much progress, then, can we make on each front?

Senator: It's a matter of fairness when you have Assistant Professors hired at a higher rate than the Full Professors. How many years will it take till we reach a fair level?

Provost Brown: In general, Full Professors are closer to 100%, but it's uneven. This time, we had \$1 million. We will continue to have these conversations. This predicament didn't happen overnight, and the fix can't happen overnight, either.

- Dean searches update.
 - Searches completed and underway
 - COLA: Elizabeth Newman, accepted the position, lots of positive feedback.
 - CAPP, underway
 - COEd; their Dean (Teresa Doughty) accepted a position that starts in the middle of March.

- Social Work
- Libraries
- Process – has gotten lots of questions about how it all works.
 - Search committees get identified on the advice of the existing Dean.
 - A search firm conducts a listening session with faculty and staff in the college.
 - Kickoff meeting, confidentiality agreements are signed
 - Search firm, in conversation with the Provost, creates the “desired qualifications” section of the general profile.
 - The profile and the search committee are posted on the University’s Executive Search page.
 - The search firm gives the search committee a long short list.
 - Interviews are conducted over Zoom, and candidates for campus visits are decided on and invited to campus.
 - Can we review all the applications? No. Confidentiality is paramount.

Senator: In computer science we are only trying to hire faculty, but we have a DEI question. We’ve been asking every candidate; are we supposed to continue to do that?

Provost Brown: Good question. There’s a lot swirling in Austin. Our chancellor has said we’re going to pause. That memo has been misrepresented in the media. He said we’re going to pause proposing *new programs*, not things we’re already doing. Our normal processes for how we accomplish what we accomplish, we’re going to continue to do those processes. So yes, we can continue to do those things. However, one of the things we’ll likely do is our own internal review of how we’re doing what we’re doing to make sure we’re using best practices in that approach; that’s our own sort of due diligence. If you have questions about that, just ask, but we’re not stopping what we’re currently doing until we hear otherwise.

- Other legislative updates
 - Ending of Tenure Bill. The state of Texas is very invested in the state of its institutions of higher ed. and would not seek to un-do all of that momentum and investment. I think there are particular issues that legislators have, and those will become clear. It may be that the endpoint is that we have to make some refinements rather than that the endpoint is the wholesale removal of tenure. I hear people concerned about people who get tenure and stop being productive.
 - Our government relations team can educate legislators about these issues.

Senator: Why did our Chancellor even respond to the Governor’s memo (which didn’t say much of substance) with the pause on DEI?

Provost Brown: This is a political time. Certain statements have certain kinds of signals of cooperation, working together, and taking seriously the concerns raised by our legislators. Let’s resist being overly triggered by these. Most bills never go any further. Those that do go through will be dramatically revised.

- Promotion and tenure reviews happening now
- Our SACS report due March 15

- Budget hearings happen in March and conclude in April as we put recommendations forward for the next fiscal year.

Faculty Senate minutes from the February 1, 2023, meeting approved by acclamation.

Updates from Minerva Cordero, Interim Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs

She is learning how Faculty Affairs can serve as a resource for faculty support and well-being; she asks for our input and feedback.

Edith Reed, Assistant Vice Provost for Academic Talent and Culture

She is attending in order to share a live presentation from Academic Impressions, a system the Office of Talent, Culture, and Inclusion recently purchased for the campus community. It's a professional development platform for individuals in higher education at various stages in their careers. Colleagues from Academic Impressions are going to go through a demonstration to show what it can do.

Senator: While they're setting it up, I have a question about the name change. What is the relationship between HR and TCI? Are they parallel organizations, is one part of the other . . . ?

Edith Reed: HR is incorporated into the office of TCI (Talent, Culture, and Inclusion). You still have your benefits office, compensation, inclusion and belonging, and academic talent and culture. It's a little different from HR as we traditionally know it, but it's a new and improved HR. The industry as a whole is going more toward "inclusion" and "culture," and UTA is leading the way.

Senator: Is Academic Human Resources involved with hiring faculty? I wasn't aware that there was a division in the hiring. We were moving someone from a staff position to an NTT position, and we were dealing with the wrong half of HR. It might be useful to explain to everyone that in the hiring process is different for staff and faculty. We just didn't know.

Edith Reed: Academic Talent and Culture handles all of the faculty postings (TT, NTT); if there's a conversion from staff to faculty, that happens in my office too. But a faculty member would go to Benefits for benefits; to Benefits to discuss retirement. We're working on posting some processes.

Chair Elect Andy Milson [covering other agenda items while Academic Impressions Teams presentation gets set up]

- Institutional strategic planning committee has been launched.
- Jackie Fay and Andy Milson (Senate Chair and Chair Elect) are the faculty reps.
- Process
 - Monthly meetings from now through July.
 - Next academic year, quarterly meetings.

- Strategic plan has five themes: People and Culture, Student Success, Alumni and Community Engagement, Research and Innovation, Finance and Infrastructure. Now we are putting the meat on the bones, identifying priorities and drawing up budgets.
- Soliciting feedback from faculty at large, so they want to be sure they're getting our feedback as the plan is being written, but they don't want to pester us with surveys.
- After the strategic plan next meeting, they'll be able to tell us more about where things are going with a particular theme.
- In the meantime, look at [the strategic planning website](#); look at the way the areas are defined. In particular, we want to make sure the things you think are priorities are being written into the plan and are being budgeted for as priorities.
- Last year was the listening phase. This next year is the stage of actually writing the plan. As the President says, "A dream without a plan is just a wish"— that's not what we want.
- People have asked, why a new strategic plan? New administration, new priorities. The old plan is being sunsetted, but some of those priorities could reappear. Elements of the old strategic plan might be incorporated to this new one.

Academic Impressions presentation (on Teams)

- It provides professional development opportunities specific for higher education
- Est. over 20 years ago
- Trainings, in person or online
- AI does research in eight primary areas in higher ed: Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, Enrollment Management, DEI, Leadership Development, Advancement and Alumni Affairs, Title IX, Supervision
- Anyone at UTA has access to these materials.
- Membership gives you thousands of hours of free resources: articles, bootcamps, trainings
- Faculty Development and Leadership Curriculum – supports faculty to build interpersonal leadership skills
- Early-Career, Mid-Career, Adjunct/Alt-Ac Faculty
- Live events coming up, one on Leading Change is coming up
- There are also video courses on publishing academic books, being a research leader
- Newsletter: Mid-Career Mentor
- Training for Department Chairs and Deans; short-form trainings, bootcamps, in-person conferences
- Additional resources are available at an additional cost. But you can log in using your UTA email and access a lot of material that the TCI office has already paid for.
- Coaching – they will match us with coaches who fit us.

Committee Reports

Sergio Espinosa, Ad Hoc Committee on DEI

- About to start activities for the year. Instead of working on independent DEI projects, they wanted to offer the TCI office the opportunity to work with them and align with their priorities. But the TCI office is in the process of selecting an Assistant Vice Provost for inclusion and belonging; they will revisit the question of collaboration then.

Lauren Brewer, Academic and Student Liaison Committee

- Online proctoring issues brought to their attention; going to start addressing that.

Dave Levine, Information Technology and Information Security Committee

- Timecard Plus is going along; have met with Timecard Plus. If you have questions or complaints, contact Dave Levine.
- They've contacted OIT about what people using prohibited devices made in China should do.

Imre Demhardt, Budget Liaison Committee

- They've met with the financial officer and have an upcoming meeting with Provost.

Taner Ozdil, Special Projects

- Emeritus call is out (email with form sent today). If you are planning to nominate your faculty peers, please do so this month. Committee will be called to action later this month.

Jackie Fay, Chairs' Report

- TCOFS (all public universities in the state) in Austin last weekend (see appended Chairs' Report slides)
- Email and infographic on higher education and the legislature; please forward that to faculty in our units.

Douglas Klahr, Operating Procedures

- Committee has been revising the bylaws to bring them in line with the HOP and reflect the Faculty Senate reapportionment plan approved at the meeting in November.
- Two suggested issues to consider
 - Should we have a treasurer? Only one other UT System school has a treasurer (UT-Tyler).
 - Should we include representatives of academic librarians on the senate? Only one other UT System school does so (UT-Rio Grande Valley) – so if they don't feel a need for that, why should we? It's up for discussion though.

Senator: Do we *have* money?

Chair: Yes. If we had a treasurer, that person could make an annual report of how our money is spent. (The TCOFS has this.)

Senator: Do we have a bank account?

Chair: No, the money is managed through Sahara at UTA, and NaKesha Brown helps us in administering that fund. Andy and I would like to move toward more transparency about how we spend our money.

The aim is at the next Senate meeting, you'll be sent the bylaws ahead of that meeting, and there will be a lot of changes. We wanted to give you a heads up that when you get that in your inboxes, it's going to take some time to read it and come prepared to comment on it. Hopefully we'll hold the vote at the last meeting of the semester.

Chair-Elect: We could also use help from someone who can write an algebraic equation that makes clear what we mean with the order of operations involved in calculating the reapportionment. It would be beautiful to put a nice, clean formula in the bylaws that can tell future readers how to figure out how many representatives each college gets.

Chair: There is also an ad hoc committee that has been working on revisions to the emeritus policy in light of a motion passed by the Senate in April (to make emeritus status available to full-time NTT faculty); another aim is to put some minimum guidelines in there. That will also be sent around. Heads up: kind of a lot of homework next time.

Nila Veerabathina, NTT Faculty Concerns

- This committee is bringing a motion to the Senate.
- History and perspective: In the university, we have two types of positions. The tenure track and the teaching faculty. In the past, teaching track faculty were always hired either as Lecturers or Senior Lecturers, but there was no track. (Sometimes there were promotions, but there was no genuine track with a built-in promotion process.) Back in 2013 or 2014, about ten years back, UT System said we should have a track for teaching faculty as well, so some UTA colleges were early adopters, and they adopted this promotion system (across various NTT tracks). Later on, other colleges also adopted the new system, and now almost every college and school in the university uses it, so there's a track for teaching faculty.
- This process is similar, if not exactly, to what exists on the tenure track. (Putting together a dossier, getting recommendation letters, student evaluations, etc.) A promotion committee considers the dossier. So this track was established, and a promotion system is now in place. We have a track, just like the tenure track. We don't have tenure, but at least there's a track. This is well defined and accepted.
- The umbrella title – “nontenure track” – starts with non, so it has negative connotations. Also, it doesn't reflect what we actually do, because in the past there was no track, but now there's a track, yet we're still calling it nontenure track, so it's not the right reflection of what we do, and it's also not very inclusive. Unanimously, our committee passed a motion we are now bringing to Senate.
- UT Austin has already changed their umbrella name from NTT to “professional track.”
- Motion: “We recommend that the NTT title be changed to better reflect the activities of these faculty and current trends in higher education.”

Senator: So what would the new title be?

Nila Veerabathina: We are not suggesting a particular name yet.

Senator: Do we need UT System approval?

Nila Veerabathina: I'm not sure.

Chair: At least three other campuses have already done it. UTSA has “fixed-term track”; UT Austin has “professional track faculty.” UT Dallas has done a title conversion, but I'm not sure what the overall nomenclature is. The term “NTT” isn't a title, it's nomenclature. We have also

discussed a title conversion; that has been undertaken by those three campuses as well. That's slightly different; it goes through all the faculty titles (lecturer, senior lecturer, assistant professor of instruction, etc.) to make sure the individuals are working under the correct title, and if not, changing them. That's a separate but related issue. But right now we do have a motion on the table.

Senator: I polled the NTT faculty in COLA very informally, and a small percentage replied, but overall, they were either in favor or they didn't care either way (they thought we had bigger fish to fry as NTT faculty). There is some controversy over what the title would be, and there's a desire to be consulted before a decision is made. Another term that got suggested was CTR – clinical, teaching, and research faculty – but then we realized that's way too close to CRT (it was even flipped in one of the discussions). So that would be not so great. That's the feedback I got.

Parliamentarian: The discussion you all had was in committee, right?

Nila Veerabathina: Yes, but I met with some faculty in the College of Science as well. The majority of them don't like the term "nontenure track," some didn't care, but there was nobody who was opposed to changing it altogether.

Parliamentarian: In that case, do we need this motion? It sounds like you're all in agreement that the term should be changed, but the more important question is what you want to change it to. That would be a different motion.

Nila Veerabathina: Once we pass this motion from Senate, we can move it through channels (Faculty Affairs, and so on).

Senator: Do we even need to vote on this? Perhaps there could be a committee to work on this. It sounds like you're asking for a committee to explore and make recommendations.

Nila Veerabathina: Our recommendation is that we all agree about changing the term, or not. Then we can think about what we change it to.

Senator: The question is really what are the policies and procedures, and what are the next steps? Does it have to go to someone else? If we voted that NTT faculty has their name changed, do we as a committee have the ability to rename ourselves, or does it go to someone else (not us) who makes those decisions?

Chair: Yes, it goes to someone else. Senate is advisory, and it doesn't have legislative force. We do have significant advisory capacity. The motion from the committee is great; it's built-in advice. We would then pass that motion on the Provost's office or Faculty Affairs and see what a plan would look like to put the recommendation into effect.

Senator: I don't understand why we need a change. The distinction between NTT and TT faculty is very clear. NTT is teaching based, and TT is research based. If you change the professional term, in the future we won't know the difference.

Senator: I think we need to be really careful when we talk about “NTT.” It’s not a title, don’t even say title. It’s a term. It gets very confusing. We went through a title reorganization in 2019, and so we need to be very clear about what we’re doing because people get confused and excited. This is the *umbrella term*.

Chair: Yes, we do want to make sure we keep what we’re talking about clear.

Senator: To the question about why we need the change, I’m sort of of the same mind. As a senator representing COLA NTT faculty, I will do what COLA NTT faculty want me to do, but my thinking is we’re inside a system that really is based on tenure, and the fact of the matter is that there are faculty who don’t have access to those protections, and we’re known as nontenure-track faculty, so the distinction really isn’t between teaching and research. I mean, I do less teaching than some of my TT colleagues in my department, so that’s not the distinction I see. The distinction I see is that some people have access to tenure, and some people don’t, and I’m a little concerned with going away from that term because when different campuses in Texas or in the country use different terms to refer to this group of faculty, it can be unclear what we’re talking about. So, when we want to identify issues that are shared across the board, but here people are called NTT faculty and there they’re called professional track and there they’re called CTR, it just, you know, language gives us the ability to name things and talk about things and unite categories, and so I worry about that fragmentation. And language change takes some time, so it’s one thing if everybody’s doing it and we all get on board and call ourselves the same thing, but I think that we need to be careful in jumping to a new term.

Senator: I think switching names can be a slippery slope, but I think the term “non” implies something as negative, as less important. But teaching faculty, which NTT are, are just as important as research faculty; after all, 51% of the income to this university is because of teaching. And we teach the majority of the students. We have the same level of expertise as research faculty. But the term “non-tenure track” implies that we’re lesser than TT faculty, which is nowhere near the truth. It may seem like semantics, but there’s the idea out there that NTT are less valuable than TT faculty, so that’s where I wish there were some names you’d come with because I think “professional track” doesn’t really quite fit. I’d be fine with something like “teaching track.” I do think that a name change is a good idea, but you have to be careful with what name you change it to.

Nila Veerabathina: We talked about teaching track, because it is a teaching track, but we have different kinds of faculty.

Senator: One suggestion? “Tenure-free faculty”!

Senator: Could we consider a motion to table this until we can discuss it with faculty in our departments?

Senator moves to table the motion; the motion to table is seconded.

Senator: For the first motion, I'm concerned about creating a jungle of new terms across the universities. If we do postpone this vote, could Senate leadership get a Texas-wide agreement on a term for NTT?

Chair: I think that would be quite a challenge. There's a lot of campuses within the system. It would be challenging to bring all those campuses into agreement. I would be cautious about pausing what we do in light of getting the entire state on board.

Senator: The motion is just that the name be changed?

Chair: Yes.

Senator: And the motion to table.

Motion to table – setting the motion aside for future consideration – carries.

Nila Veerabathina: I think it's a good idea for everyone to go back and talk to our faculty.

Senator: May I make a suggestion? Yours is a small committee of NTT faculty. Do you want to do an informal survey of all NTT faculty at the University? Obviously, there is some objection, so you want to get a sense. I may be speaking out of turn, but I think the TT faculty don't have a big opinion on this. We want to do what you want. I think. Right? So it would be good if you could consult your constituents, and then come up with a name.

Nila Veerabathina: Maybe we could do it more formally, for documentation purposes.

Senator: How many NTT faculty are there? What is the percentage?

Chair: NTT/TT ratio is roughly 40/60 or so, for full-time faculty. (We might be talking more broadly, though.) In any case, that would be the group we'd be surveying. Thank you to Nila for bringing this forward, because this did surface a really important issue. Please go back to your units and ask faculty in your units for their views on this because we will come back to it at the next meeting. In the meantime, Nila and I will touch base with Minerva to see if we can do something with a survey so that we can get a broader set of data.

Senator: Could we get a summary of the discussion of the problem to present to our constituencies? I'm concerned that if I present, I might distort the facts.

Senator: If we could have it before tomorrow, which is when my department is meeting.

Chair: We'll work on it as soon as we can. It might take a little bit of time.

Meeting Adjourned 4:38 pm

Next Meeting: March 29, 2023

Chairs' Report

Faculty Senate Meeting

March 1, 2023

Jacqueline Fay, Chair

Andy Milson, Chair Elect



Faculty Senate

- 50 year anniversary celebration (and senate appreciation reception)—May 1, 5.30-7.00pm
 - Senate history intern
 - Faculty ombuds proposal update
 - Strategic planning committee
 - Ongoing leadership searches
 - Shared Governance Budget Oversight Process
 - Texas Council of Faculty Senates Meeting, 24-25 February, Austin
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- Senate social hour—after the meeting at JR Bentley’s
 - **CHAT WITH THE CHAIRS** every Monday of the semester 1-2pm in Trinity 102. Any faculty member can stop by to talk

- [COACHE](#)
 - Further work
 - Institutional research support
 - Ongoing
 - Climate for NTT faculty
 - Started
 - Family and parental support
 - Infographics underway
 - Promotion to full professor
 - Climate for URM faculty
 - Steering committee meeting biweekly
 - ERIC meeting biweekly



Faculty Senate

Texas Council of Faculty Senates Meeting

Embassy Suites Arboretum, Austin
February 24-25, 2023



The Role of Shared Governance in the Current Climate

James Hallmark, Vice Chancellor
of Academic Affairs, Texas A&M
University System

John Hayek, Vice Chancellor for
Academic and Health Affairs,
Texas State University System

Storm Clouds on the Horizon: Responding to Threats to Higher Education in Texas

Jeff Blodgett, President, and
Brian Evans, Vice President,
Texas AAUP Conference

<https://aauputaustin.files.wordpress.com/2023/02/texas-aaup-presentation-at-tcfs-meeting-02-24-2023.pptx>

Speakers at TCOFS



Harrison Keller, Commissioner of the Texas
Higher Education Coordinating Board