

Faculty Senate Minutes
7 February 2024
Student Government Chambers (UC 225)

Senate Leadership in Attendance

Andy Milson, Chair
Jackie Fay, Vice Chair
Venkat Devarajan, Parliamentarian
Annie Nordberg, Treasurer
Kathryn Warren, Secretary

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

Adam Annaccone	College of Nursing and Health Innovation
Amy Austin	College of Liberal Arts
John Bayhi	Libraries
Karabi Bezboruah	Public Affairs and Planning
Kim Breuer	College of Liberal Arts
Lauren Brewer	College of Business
Jivas Chakravarthy	Accounting
Heather Charles	College of Science
Manfred Cuntz	Physics
Imre Demhardt	History
Carlos Donjuan	Art and Art History
Sarah El Sayed	Criminology and Criminal Justice
Julienne Greer	Theatre Arts and Dance
Doug Grisaffe	Marketing
Andy Hansz	Finance and Real Estate
Joowon Im	Landscape Architecture
Bai Hoang	Political Science
Darlene Hunter	School of Social Work
Penny Ingram	English
Song Jiang	Computer Science Engineering
Theresa Jorgensen	Math
Cindy Kilpatrick	College of Liberal Arts
Douglas Klahr	Architecture
Laura Kunkel	College of Nursing and Health Innovation
Catherine LaBrenz	Social Work
David Levine	College of Engineering
Qing Lin	Psychology
Rachael Mariboho	College of Liberal Arts
Frederick MacDonnell	Chemistry
Jessica McClean	Libraries
Jeff McGree	Management

Joyce Myers	College of Education
Kaci O'Donnell	College of Liberal Arts
Mark Pellegrino	Biology
Cindy Plonien	College of Nursing and Health Innovation
Nick Pollock	College of Science
Cheryl Prachyl	College of Business
Rhonda Prisby	Kinesiology
Stefan Romanoschi	Civil Engineering
De'An Roper	School of Social Work
Whitney Russell	Libraries
Amy Speier	Sociology and Anthropology
Chunke Su	Communication
Jodi Tommerdahl	Curriculum and Instruction
Nila Veerabathina	College of Science
Jingguo Wang	Information Systems and Operations Management
Richie White	College of Liberal Arts
Naoko Witzel	Linguistics
Yi Leaf Zhang	Educational Leadership and Policy Studies

Ex officio Members in Attendance

Jennifer Cowley, UTA President

Tamara Brown, UTA Provost

Shanna Banda, Assistant Vice Provost for Faculty Success

Daniela Pedraja, UTA Student Body President

Guests

John Fagg, Director of Athletics

**

Meeting called to order by Faculty Senate Chair Andy Milson at 2:31 pm

- Welcomes new senators: John Bayhi, Jessica McClean, Whitney Russell, representing the Libraries; Kaci O'Donnell, representing the College of Liberal Arts; and Heather Charles, representing the College of Science
- Sergio Espinosa, formerly the senator from Music, has accepted an appointment as the Associate Dean for Faculty Success in COLA
- December minutes approved by acclamation.

Presentation by Jitenga Knox and Jennifer Sutton, from the Employee Advisory Council (est. 2000)

- The EAC is a committee at the UT System level that represents staff across institutions; it meets 6 times a year (usually).
- Jitenga Knox and Jennifer Sutton are our two reps (there's one alternate); they are appointed by Jewel Washington, the VP of Talent, Culture, and Engagement.

- They would like to align staff and faculty to better advocate for UTA employees.
- The EAC offers a forum for communicating between employees, the Board of Regents (BOR), and the executive officers of UT System.
- Each term, the EAC can bring something to the BOR to propose on behalf of employees.
- We're hoping that discussion can drive some conversations.

Senator: What would you say are the top three concerns of the staff?

Jitenga Knox: Everyone's really curious about SB 17 and what we're doing as an institution to ensure those changes are in effect, but it's hard to say what the top issues this term are.

Jennifer Sutton: Issues of concern include staff burnout; mental health, having sick time (and having mental health covered under sick time); and staff retention.

Remarks from Shanna Banda, Assistant Vice Provost for Faculty Success

- The Associate Vice Provost start date is March 11
- The Associate VP will focus on tenure-stream faculty success, and the Assistant VP (Shanna Banda) will focus on NTT faculty success
- Shanna Banda is setting up an advisory committee with the Faculty Senate committee for NTT faculty concerns.
- Teaching awards are in progress.

Senator: I was wondering if you had anything like a listening tour in the works. Specifically, my question is that if we have particular concerns that emerge from our departments or colleges that are under your purview, should we be approaching you directly? I'm curious about the channels of communication. The specific concern I wanted to raise is the matter of titles, NTT titles, and different requirements for titles. In our department, a lot of people are in a track but they're qualified to be in another track. Can I take that directly to you?

Shanna Banda: Yes, yes you may. That's a really great question. One of the things we're going to do when my colleague joins on March 11 (we're putting it on hold until she gets here so that we have a full team; also, Minerva is interim right now). Once everyone's in a permanent position, then we're definitely starting the tour through the different colleges and departments and meeting regularly with folks. Also similar to the way the Provost has office hours, we'll be setting up some of those initiatives so that we're approachable and available because we want to be a support for faculty. One of our priorities is promotion documents and workload documents.

Chair: Summer travel awards are available—please share this news with colleagues. The Senate needs to spend all its travel money.

Senator: Are Chairs eligible?

Chair: No, but stay tuned.

Committee Reports

Equity and Ethics, Theresa Jorgensen

- A faculty grievance is going through the process.
- The committee is encouraging faculty awards committees to act on the best practices guidelines they distributed to relevant people in the colleges. They are also working with Faculty Success to get a comprehensive list of awards and a contact person to distribute the document in a thorough way.
- Looking into a one-size-fits-all software to handle votes and elections. What does that software need to be able to do? Looking for input.

Tenure and Academic Freedom, Julienne Greer

- Working on consolidating some of the policies related to tenure and academic freedom and responsibilities. Some just need to be updated, others are related to SB 18. Working with Shelby Boseman.

Budget Liaison Committee (BLC), Imre Demhardt

- The new budget cycle is upon us. Central administration sent budget documents to all colleges and schools. Units should report back by March 5.
- The BLC met with the CFO last week. Any faculty input is needed by March 5.
- Has heard that most of the budget task forces have not met with their deans yet. PAC members, ex officio chairing the budget task force, please stay on top of that.
- Faculty have input on 10% of the budget, and there should be conversation about new faculty lines too. There is the possibility for meaningful input.
- Please keep the BLC informed.

Operating Procedures, Adam Annaccone

- Welcomes a new committee member, Kaci O'Donnell
- Stands at the ready for any new charges.

Academic Student Liaison Committee, Amy Speier

- The ASL committee was part of the wellness committee last fall. They have a health promotion they're doing for students. Can share info with us to share with students.
- Working on optional safety statement for syllabuses.

Chair: One of the other possible syllabus statements—the Texas AAUP sent out a suggested statement related to SB 17 indicating the carve-out for students and research. There are also AI statements out there. The ASL committee could work on those things, if the Senate agrees. Or the Senate could say we have enough statements in our syllabuses.

Amy Speier: Our committee didn't want to duplicate the work of groups already working on AI statements.

Shanna Banda: Yes, people are working on AI statements with Academic Affairs. There are some optional lines coming.

Chair: What about the SB 17 statement?

Senator: We had a discussion about that in our committee, Advocacy and Engagement. We were on the fence about what to do. We weren't aware the AAUP had a statement. We didn't want to poke the bear.

Senator: I do have a statement in my syllabus on SB 17, which I got from AAUP, and I'm happy to share it.

Faculty Development Committee, Annie Nordberg

- December was a light month for travel awards: 1 in CAPP, 1 in SSW, 3 from COLA, and 1 from COS that was not approved. Why not? The committee is getting applications from people who have research funding or start-up funding, though it's earmarked. But this fund is a fund of last resort, for people with no money. It would be different if a person had a start-up fund that didn't support travel. Start-up funds in different units have different restrictions.
- The total encumbered from December is \$3,490, leaving \$67,760 (from \$90K).
- January was a busy month. 2 from CONHI, 1 from ENGR, 1 from COED, 2 from CAPP 1 approved, 2 from SSW, 5 from COLA.
- That encumbered \$8,968, leaves us with \$58,792—will go till the end of August or until it's depleted.
- Aware amounts are being increased because \$750 doesn't go that far, we haven't been using all of the money in the fund, and, assuming the same rate of application, we won't. So, for travel undertaken in May, June, July, and August, \$1000 is being offered for domestic travel and \$1500 for international travel. (People who already applied for the former max, \$750, can apply for the difference.)

Senator: I know that in the spring the office of study abroad offers grants for faculty to do site visits. Could these funds be used in conjunction with those funds for faculty planning a site visit?

Annie Nordberg: I don't see why not, if they have leftover expenses.

Vice Chair: Yes, they can be used to top up where you have other money but not enough to cover your trip.

Senator: In your email, I saw that if you received an award from 2023-24, you can apply for the extra amount (\$250, but not \$1000). I applied for travel I did in May 2023 and got \$750. Can I now only apply for \$250 for a conference in May 2024?

Annie Nordberg: No. It's a new slate every financial year (September 1-August 31). And for the people who are *traveling this summer* (May, June, July, August 2024), those people are eligible for up to \$1000. If they've been awarded \$750 and still have uncovered expenses, they can apply for the extra.

Senator: Here's a typical situation that occurs in Physics: for instance, one could be awarded a certain dollar amount to do research with the James Webb telescope, and NASA has allocated money \$2000 to go to a conference to specifically present those kinds of results. But a faculty like me may have other research that is unfunded, and I'd like money to go to a conference to present that work. How does that work? I'm confused.

Annie Nordberg: You'd fill out the application, and if questions arise, I'll reach out to the faculty member and ask some pointed questions, like, "I see you have research dollars; is travel restricted?" If you have research money you can use toward travel, then you can't get these funds. But if you can't use it toward travel and don't have travel money, then we consider that a legitimate request.

Senator: My question was: there is money earmarked for travel to present a specific kind of research, but if someone wanted to present *different* research . . .

Annie Nordberg: Then you'd be eligible if you have no other means.

Senator: I'm thinking about the first situation. Essentially for me to travel I'm using what is allocated for me from the indirect costs I generate through my projects. That money, I can use for any number of things, so I should use it for those other things first, deplete it, and then come to you?

Annie Nordberg: Yes, you have to deplete your funds first. The fund is intended to support faculty who have the obligation to travel domestically and internationally, but they have no source of money or a pittance.

Senator: It's more a philosophical discussion. Why is this the only source of funding I have? Shouldn't the university pick up the tab for some of the travel, in a uniform fashion for everyone? Is it the same at other universities? Colleges have indirect costs. Why can't that be spent on faculty travel, instead of opening new faculty lines? Maybe the Senate can think about how we can approach leadership to discuss solutions.

Chair: We don't disagree with you. We've talked with the Provost and the VPRI about this. The university level funding went away some years ago, which was the impetus for this fund: to provide travel funding because the university wasn't picking it up anymore. So far we haven't gotten any traction on that.

Senator: If we do have grant money and travel is permissible, but when we write the budgets for grants, we have to be very specific, it's to go to this meeting and this location at this time. If I wanted to apply for funding for a completely different conference, would I just put that in the application and it would still be considered?

Annie Nordberg: Yes.

Chair: If you have research funding that covers specific travel, you can apply for Senate money to go to a different conference. You can also use Senate funds to go to all sorts of things, like summer institutes and pedagogy conferences or to pay online registration fees. The key is we'd like to spend this money. In our next budget, the plan is to raise the amount of the awards to \$1000-\$1500. We want to be able to show there's a demand for these funds. Or maybe there's a way the university can take some of these IDC costs and distribute them equitably.

Imre Demhardt with an addendum from the BLC: One of the eternal topics in meetings with the CFO is salary compression. My takeaway is: salary compression will stay with us, and have an influence on travel funds, too, because of health care costs for universities. I'd like to suggest Faculty Senate could form a group of people to figure out what other institutions, both in Texas and in other states, do so that health care costs don't eat up an ever increasing proportion of university funds. We need to address this problem.

Senator: What will happen after August?

Chair: We'll be in the new fiscal year, 24-25, and my plan is to offer \$1000 domestic, \$1500 international.

Vice Chair: Since the question came up about the chairs not being eligible, I wanted to explain why I made that decision. I had applications coming in from people from above the level of chair. Lots of administrators have faculty appointments. The language needed to be clarified. It made sense to exclude above the chair level because administrators are remunerated at higher levels than your average faculty member. But chairs are a diverse group in terms of their appointments, so it was a difficult decision to make. Some have A and P appointments, and some have workload adjustments. We had to go one way or the other, and a decision was made to align the eligibility with those people who serve on the Senate itself (everybody here). That's the group the travel fund serves. The fund has come under acute pressure because it's the only university-level fund, and we need to make decisions to protect it. We don't want to give the money to another office to be administered because we wanted to control, that way, who it goes to, the amounts that are given out, the eligibility, and other factors. I received a lot of disgruntled emails from chairs in COLA, and I promised the chairs that I'd do everything possible to advocate for them, and I have. I've talked to the Dean, the Provost, everybody I can think of to see if another fund can be set up to serve the chairs and by an office that can administer that fund more easily than we can since we don't represent the chairs. Andy and I will be setting up a meeting with Minerva and the incoming Associate Vice Provost for Faculty Success to press on that issue on behalf of the chairs. If you have chairs that are still feeling this, please let them know that we're advocating for them, trying to get them a full suite of support that is tailored toward the chairs.

Information Technology, Cindy Plonien

- On February 21, the Senate is sponsoring a brownbag with Deepika Chalemela to talk about Internet connectivity. She'll also have documents that apply to AI policy.
- Heather Charles is a new member of the committee.

Emeritus Review, Richie White

- Currently considering nominations for emeritus (anyone retiring by September 1, 2024). NTT members are eligible.
- The process has been streamlined this year.

Advocacy and Engagement, Penny Ingram

- We talked about the syllabus statement, as discussed.

- We wanted to think about how the chill of SB 17 has impacted recruitment. We learned there's a contact in TCE who can provide search committees with assistance in recruiting candidates for jobs and PhD programs.
- Going to set up a meeting with Jeff Jeter to try to get more of a relationship with the legislature.
- Many of us realize that our colleagues are still a little unclear about the carve-outs for teaching and research.

Senator: It's kind of hypocritical for TX universities to accept funding related to DEI work and for the same time to say it's not important. We need to think about what message we're sending. We want the money, but we don't want to recognize the importance of this, statewide.

Research Committee, Rhonda Prisby

- Last semester, we worked on generating a report on establishing a committee on research oversight. Report submitted to Dr. Miller (VPRI), who hasn't had the opportunity to look it over. We recommended that we do establish one, and we provided some potential goals and tasks for the committee, which would be a council of principal investigators that would meet with the VPRI on a regular basis.
- Working to draft bylaws for the committee. The bylaws will go to each of the colleges on campus. There will be a townhall.

Senator: An issue we have in the arts committee, is that we prefer to call it research or creative activity. I would encourage the discussions to begin to look at that aspect as well because if you establish anything—"Council of Researchers" reinforces the idea that we're here at Arlington Polytech, which is the impression a lot of us have: that those of us involved in creative activity are second-class citizens here because we don't bring in the big research dollars. This a moment to say no and to come up with a moniker that understands that this is a rich community.

Vice Chair: The Academy of Distinguished Scholars has come up before in light of what you just said. I recently noticed that the call for nominations for this academy comes out of the VPRI's office. I've discussed this with Minerva Cordero. Maybe it could be appropriate for the committee to work with her. If you look at the Academy of Distinguished Scholars, there's only three or four people outside of STEM fields in that academy at the moment. It's called something that's out of alignment with who's in it, and it's not called something that's reflecting all the kinds of work, and it's in the VPRI's office, which reinforces all of the above.

NTT committee, Amy Austin

- New member, John Bayhi
- Priority: to finalize change of nomenclature (Professional Track, Academic Professional Track)
- Working with the AVP, Shanna Banda, on documents for promotion and workload
- Serving as Shanna Banda's initial advisory board; meeting with her next Wednesday

Social Committee, Lauren Brewer

- Spring reception will be May 1, 4-6pm in this building
- Invitations will go out in early March

- Suggestions and recommendations for appreciation items?

Ad hoc committee on Honors College, Jackie Fay

- Charge: to write a report for the Provost with recommendations for what faculty would like the Honors College to be. Visited Honors College to gather data and information on designated courses and contracts, how to apply to the Honors College, etc.
- Working on report on peer programs
- Meeting coming up
- Deadline might be moved up; may have to run the report by the Senate via email before the next meeting.

Chair's Announcements

- Call for nominations (and self-nominations) for Chair Elect of Senate; this election will be held at the March meeting. Each candidate will give a 2-minute talk.
- Secretary, treasurer, and parliamentarian: elections in April meeting

Senator: How long are the terms?

Chair: Two years. Except for Chair Elect, which is four.

Reminders:

- “Can I Trust the UTA Wi-Fi?” virtual brownbag on February 21 with Deepika Chalemela
- March virtual brownbag with librarians talking about open access publishing
- April: Amber Smallwood on microcredentials; she will soon be announcing summer opportunities

Senator: Is the Chair's report confidential?

Chair: No. It's public.

Shanna Banda: Plug for the Faculty Success Newsletter. The emeritus announcement and information about microcredentialing are published in it.

Remarks from President Cowley

- Strategic plan
 - Getting ready to roll out strategic plan: UTA 2030: Shared Dreams, Bright Future.
 - University-wide kickoff March 5, 2-4 pm at Brazos Park. Next month, will go through strategic plan in more detail with Senate.
- Research money
 - Some from system for RISE 100
 - \$13 million from this year we aren't spending on new faculty; what to do with it?
 - Phase 3 of the RISE 100 program, for NTT research faculty and seed funding for research faculty (5 CONHI, 5 ENGR, 5 COS), plus additional 10 positions part of an open call that any college can submit a proposal for. Research track faculty are fully self-supporting. This is really seed funding for an initial period. Now there are about 25 full-time research faculty. This will about

double the research faculty. Great opportunity to ramp up. This is one-time money. Using dollars available today.

- Post-doc program. Hire between 8 and 15 postdocs per year for two-year postdocs for three consecutive cohorts. Call will be open in next few weeks. There will be five years of funding, and then the money will be exhausted. It's temporary money. Details will be finalized soon.
 - As part of the call, there will be an application (what's your plan, how will you mentor)

Senator: Will postdocs apply or faculty members apply for them?

President: Faculty will apply. The idea for this first round is that you already have someone you want to hire. In future years, you could explain what your recruitment plan for a post-doc would be.

Senator: What is the length of the term for the post-doc?

President: Two years, and the proposed compensation is \$55,000 a year.

Senator: Can we hire our own PhD?

President: You could propose that.

Senator: Are the positions all in person, or are there options to have them remote?

Provost: We'd consider that on a case by case basis.

President: There's nothing that says it can't be remote.

Vice Chair: I know why the compensation is what it is, but it's just an observation that it is \$12,000 higher than the floor for full-time faculty, which is rather difficult for some faculty to hear. Down the road, that sort of disparity is maybe difficult to hear about.

Provost: You're saying the rate that we've proposed for post-docs is higher than the salaries for tenure-stream hires?

Vice Chair: Not tenure stream.

Provost: Non-tenure track.

Vice Chair: We can understand why that is.

President: Low 50s is generally an acceptable level for a postdoc. We wanted to make sure that we'd be competitive. Most of the postdocs are likely to be in STEM fields. But we recognize that in some fields, the going rate for a postdoc would be substantially lower. But we didn't want to have different levels of pay.

Senator: You're also comparing 9 and 12-month contracts.

President: The anticipated start date will be this summer.

Remarks from the Provost

- Memo about the postdocs will go out next week, probably.
- Department bylaws. Plan is to provide departments with a document with sample department bylaws from another university as a guideline. This might be a matter of updating bylaws or, for some departments, starting from scratch.
 - Due date will probably be end of semester.
 - Flow: agreed upon draft that faculty have met, talked about, and approved; then the proposed bylaws go to the Provost for suggestions and revisions.
- Salary study. \$1.4 million this year (there was \$1 million last year) to allocate. Will be talking with PAC leadership and share with Senate as a whole. Process last time was here are the options; what say you? Of course there's never enough, so there will be some choices to make.
 - There was a request previously to look at adjunct salaries. The problem with doing that is we don't have a consistent way of reporting how we're paying adjuncts, so we don't have the data to run a salary study, so what's put into the system might say \$15,000, but it's not clear whether that's to teach one course or three, or to develop a course; it's just a flat number. There isn't consistency within colleges either. To look at the data in a systematic way, there needs to be a structure for gathering it.
 - Want to get it done within the current semester.
- Another challenge area is workload reporting. Difficult to have accurate time and effort reporting and to run accurate cost analyses that would guide decisions. For example, for people with grants, they enter same workload allocation into DM, but there's a grant that's paying for part of that time. We have people in fulltime administrative roles, but what's in DM is 100% faculty. Have to get more accurate from year to year about what comprises what a person is working on. If someone buys out of something, it has to be reflected in the workload.

President: The result is that we're underreporting our research expenditures. When we compare ourselves to our national peers, we should be higher, but when we can't report accurately, it has an impact on how we're perceived as a national research university. It also has implications when we're trying to calculate how much money departments should have to operate. We can't tell how much money is an instructional expense if we don't have accurate reporting on how faculty are spending their workload. As we work on improving our budgeting processes, we need accurate data to be able to understand what's happening at a department level. It will be a shift, and an adjustment, but then it gets easier.

Senator: Will this mean that there will be a fifth column? Teaching, research, service, administration, and grants?

President: Not necessarily. The grants could be research, but those are details to be sorted out, with how much the workload is on institutional funding versus other sources of funding.

Senator: Are you suggesting subcategories within those three or four pillars?

Provost: Let's say you're working on a grant that you got during the academic year, and you're devoting 50% of your time to the grant during the 9-month academic year, but what we put in DM as your workload is that you're teaching and doing service and other research. Those percentages haven't changed in terms of the workload, but if you're devoting 50% of your time working on your grant, it shouldn't still show your teaching as 40%. That was last year, before you got the grant. The workload you'd put in would be 50% research. We're trying to make it more accurate about how you're spending your time.

Senator: Based on my recollection, those percentages are being reported to the chair, so when a chair learns about the grant, the chair should adjust the workload.

President: We just need an accurate reporting of what actually happened during the year by the end of the year.

Senator: What happens if you carry the same workload and a grant, but you're going over the 100%?

Provost: But why would it be an overload?

Senator: I'm non NTT, I have 80%, 20% service, and a grant. So it's just how NTT ends up being a lot of time.

President: All these details will be worked out. If you're compensated 120%, that's fine. We're trying to get what your 100% workload is and how that's allocated. The Provost has a whole team.

Provost: We just want an accurate record of how you actually spent your time. Right now it's just a rollover of whatever it was, regardless of what may have changed.

Senator: Are you saying that faculty who teach 4 classes (80%), they're still teaching 4 classes, but that might be 60% of their workload?

President: No. It could be that your service workload gets adjusted. The other alternative is that it's an overload. It depends on the individual situation.

Senator: But the system doesn't allow for over 100%.

President: We've got to work it out. This is a preview.

Senator: We had some faculty ask us to bring up the issues around the bomb threat. There were issues about the notifications when they're teaching; they're not looking at their phone. People asked about whether there could be an alert on the computer screen? It would have been nice for services afterward for students (counseling). Do we have safety committees?

Provost: A general alert that goes off in all rooms is a good idea. In touring the academic rooms, I've noticed a PA system we used to use. We don't have that anymore.

President: With the classroom technology modernization process, one of the challenges is that all the classrooms have different technology, so there's no way to do what you're asking today. First step is to modernize the classrooms. We do have an emergency operations center and an emergency team that works through all of these issues; we can bring that team in to talk to Senate and provide feedback. There are emergencies of all kinds. We're looking for building coordinators, someone in every building trained on emergency responses.

Senator: Possible there should be multiple response processes.

Senator: How would this interface with the business continuity plans (BCPs)? Is there coordination between the units that handle the BCPs and the emergency operations center?

President: Yes. It's the scale of the emergency. The bomb threat doesn't trigger the BCP. That would kick in with a tornado and damage to a building, for example. We have a new emergency manager on campus who's been holding workshops with leadership on campus and is continuing to roll that out; the building coordinators is just one example. It would be good to bring her in to talk about that. Student Government wants to talk about why they didn't get a snow day on the first day of class. (5am is the latest by which we'd notify on snow days.)

Senator: I am kind of curious. A lot of my students are parents. Because these local school districts closed, they didn't have someone to take care of their children. Since we are a group of people with diverse backgrounds and our students aren't always traditional, it's not just is it dangerous for us to get there; it's also our children. Secondly, some of the buildings weren't open until 11.

Provost: Parents were taken into consideration. The notification came in at 7pm, so we were trying to give as much advance notice as possible. One outcome could have been not opening because of parents. We didn't decide on that, but I don't want you to think that was because parents weren't taken into consideration.

Senator: Does the university have a subsidized childcare system for days like this?

President: We do have long-term childcare, but not short term. On these snow days, students make a choice. Either they stay home with their kid, or they bring the child to class; for faculty, it's the same decision. It's important to understand that the school district and the university have separate criteria. The frostbite risk for our students wasn't sufficient to consider cancelation. The school district has a separate set of factors around safety that are different from ours. Having the first class day launch is an important consideration. We talked about going remote, but I felt strongly that the first day of class shouldn't start remote.

Senator: Faculty in my department have questions about April 8 and the eclipse.

President: Stay tuned. This is on the list of issues to resolve. You will have plenty of advance notice.

Senator: Even canceling classes for two hours would work.

President: Some cancelation is under consideration.

Senator: I teach in the Studio Arts center. Our parking lot is kind of small, and there are always official vehicles parked there. The people who drive them park across the street in the church lot because they think it's free. Then they walk across the street and get in their UTA vehicle and go where they need to go. The lot only has maybe 40-50 spots, and usually 6-10 spots are taken by official UTA vehicles (Lot 27). I was wondering if we could ask them to park somewhere else so that students who pay to park there can find a spot. It's becoming an issue.

President: We're in conversations with the church to buy the parking lot across the street from there.

Senator: The solar eclipse isn't just about the 4-5 minutes. Students, faculty, and staff would like to get onto telescopes and get protective glasses, so I would recommend canceling classes that entire day. And I also want to say: we could get clouded out.

President: That's why we have this university-wide activity meeting to talk about all the activities leading up, all the programming, all the schoolchildren coming to campus. There's a lot of work that's coming up. Would be great to brief Faculty Senate on this. There's also nine World Cups coming, and we have to figure out how we're going to handle all the people coming to Arlington for that.

Senator: It was announced recently that Fort Worth is moving to standard-based grades. I don't know what that means for us locally, but it does seem like more and more school districts are going that route. Has there been discussion about how we'll handle that when those students start coming into our programs?

President: There are many different grading systems that our students bring in. Our enrollment team has a holistic admissions model that works with many different forms and formats and looks at several different factors. They're already dealing with this. They know how to evaluate whether someone is admissible or not. Our admission standards are based on whether a student is ready for college-level work (not based on top 1% and so forth, though that matters for scholarships). We have a brand new VP of enrollment management (she comes most immediately from Virginia Tech) who will help us modernize our enrollment systems, and she has great experience thinking through complex issues of evaluating admissibility.

Senator: We're representing the Libraries here for the very first time today, but we're still classified as staff when it comes to the salary study, so we're curious if the Libraries will be on the list for potential salary adjustments.

President: There's a separate salary study for staff. In last year's staff adjustments, that included library positions, and certain positions did get salary adjustments. There's a different timeline for the comprehensive staff salary study. It's more complicated than it is for faculty. We're going through a process of grouping titles and simplifying some of that staff structure to make it easier to make fair comparisons. \$1 million has been allocated for staff salary adjustments.

Meeting adjourned 4:55 pm

Next meeting: March 6, 2024