

Faculty Senate Minutes
6 March 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)

Ishfaq Ahmad	Computer Science Engineering
George Alexandrakis	Bioengineering
Adam Annaccone	College of Nursing and Health Innovation
Amy Austin	College of Liberal Arts
John Bayhi	Libraries
Karabi Bezboruah	Public Affairs and Planning
Alan Bowling	Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering
Kim Breuer	College of Liberal Arts
Lauren Brewer	College of Business
Heather Charles	College of Science
Manfred Cuntz	Physics
Imre Demhardt	History
Thomas Dombrowsky	College of Nursing and Health Innovation
Julienne Greer	Theatre Arts and Dance
Doug Grisaffe	Marketing
James Hansz	Finance and Real Estate
Bai Hoang	Political Science
Michael Holmes	College of Nursing and Health Innovation
Darlene Hunter	School of Social Work
Melynda Hutchings	College of Nursing and Health Innovation
Joowon Im	Landscape Architecture
Aimée Israel-Pelletier	Modern Languages
Song Jiang	Computer Science Engineering
Theresa Jorgensen	Math
Cindy Kilpatrick	College of Liberal Arts
Douglas Klahr	Architecture
Andrzej Korzeniowski	Math
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
Stephen Mattingly	Civil Engineering
Frederick MacDonnell	Chemistry
Jessica McClean	Libraries
Joyce Myers	College of Education
Kaci O'Donnell	College of Liberal Arts
Mark Pellegrino	Biology
Cheryl Prachyl	College of Business
Rhonda Prisby	Kinesiology
Stefan Romanoschi	Civil Engineering
De'An Roper	School of Social Work
Thomas Rusher	College of Architecture, Planning, and Public Affairs
Whitney Russell	Libraries
Donald Schuman	Social Work
Eli Shupe	Philosophy
Aaron Smallwood	Economics
Amy Speier	Sociology and Anthropology
Chunke Su	Communication
Jack Unzicker	Music
Regina Urban	Nursing
Nilakshi Veerabathina	College of Science
Jingguo Wang	Information Systems and Operations Management
Richie White	College of Liberal Arts
Naoko Witzel	Linguistics
Tim Wunder	College of Business
Yi Leaf Zhang	Educational Leadership and Policy Studies

Ex officio Members in Attendance

Tamara Brown, UTA Provost

Shanna Banda, Assistant Vice Provost for Faculty Success

Daniela Pedraja, UTA Student Body President

Guests

Bree Jimenez, substituting for Jodi Tommerdahl, Curriculum and Instruction

Lauren McLain, Staff Advisory Council

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Meeting called to order by Faculty Senate Chair Andy Milson at 2:30 pm

- February 7 minutes approved by acclamation.

Election of the Chair Elect for the Faculty Senate

- Four-year commitment
- Jackie Fay, Chair of Nominating Committee, introduces three candidates, who give short speeches

- Julienne Greer, Theatre and Theatre Arts
- Rhonda Prisby, Kinesiology
- Peggy Semingson, Linguistics and TESOL
- Rhonda Prisby is elected

Remarks from Shanna Banda, Assistant Vice Provost for Faculty Success

- Ann Hawkins starting on Monday, March 11, as Associate Vice Provost for Faculty Success
- Dr. Nali Kim's position, formerly in CRTLE, has been moved out of CRTLE and into the division of Faculty Success as the Director of Faculty Engagement. She will be responsible for onboarding faculty and working on faculty satisfaction.
- Next year's promotion dates have been posted on the Faculty Success website.
 - Deadlines for tenure-track faculty going up for promotion in the coming year: March 8: deadline for faculty to notify their chairs; March 15: Chairs notify Deans; March 22: Deans send the names to Faculty Success.
 - Tenure and Promotion workshop to be held April 3.
 - NTT promotion dates are set for September/October; there will be two workshops, November 13 and December 11.

Senator: Does the Gallup questionnaire fall under your department?

Shanna Banda: Academic HR and my department are working in tandem.

Senator: A question arose in my department. For the questions in the Gallup poll, the question about equipment—whose responsibility is it? For the next Gallup poll, there should be more clarity about who's responsible for what.

Senator: Regarding the policy about Fulbright Scholarships and FDLs—has there been an official announcement about whether someone who is granted a Fulbright automatically receives an FDL?

Shanna Banda: Let me follow up with Minerva Cordero on that.

Senator: There's some confusion about the time period for annual review. The date range is from September 1-August 31, correct? Or is it September 1-December 31?

Shanna Banda: It depends. For the Year 1 review, we leave it open until December 31 because you're in the first year. For Year 2, we do a year and a half. It also stays open until December, to give faculty enough time so that the review is meaningful. After that is when it starts cutting off at August 31.

Senator: For someone who's serving as a committee member (not a chair) on an MA or PhD graduate committee, does that count as teaching or service?

Shanna Banda: I would put it in service. Any committee membership, I'd put in service.

Senator: But on Digital Measures, that activity is recorded as teaching.

Shanna Banda: Let me get back to you on that. There may be some things we're fixing.

Chair: Being on a graduate committee usually counts under teaching, so the question would be how that fits into a faculty member's workload, and whether the person is getting any teaching credit for it. Maybe that's something that Ann Hawkins could help out with when she comes on board.

Senator: Our former dean insisted that if you're just a member, it's service and not teaching.

Vice Chair Jackie Fay on TCFS (Texas Council of Faculty Senates)

- TCFS is the largest faculty governance organization in the U.S.
- They heard presentations on and discussed SBs 17 and 18
- Talked about interim leadership, how long they should be in positions
- Learned a lot informally about what's happening at other campuses.

Chair: TCFS will be very active in monitoring what's happening during the next legislative session and providing faculty responses.

Senator: As far as the bills go, and other universities, how much of the changes you're hearing about are caused by SB 17, the law, and how much is caused by fear and faculty being scared and those kinds of issues?

Vice Chair: That came up. Part of what's difficult to do is collect data on the impact of the bills (e.g., what impact is SB 18 having on hiring?). We talked about whether the data collection could be qualitative or quantitative, and what the challenges of data collection would be. I also met with Brian Evans, the president of the Texas AAUP and the UT-Austin chapter of AAUP. That's an interesting route to explore as an individual (not as a faculty member) if you want to join that organization and learn more. More discussion is happening.

Senator: It was a faculty hiring thing, and now it doesn't sound like a faculty hiring thing. Graduations are getting canceled; it seems to be affecting just about everything (SB 17).

Chair: That was about shutting down DEI offices, so it affects staff more than faculty. We also can't require diversity statements in hiring.

Vice Chair: I think you're asking whether the bill is getting people to self-censor, and that's what it's hard to get data on.

Committee Reports

Tenure and Academic Freedom, Julianne Greer

- Shelby Boseman plans to get draft revisions of policies on faculty rights, academic freedom, and shared governance to the committee by the end of the week for review and feedback (a response to SB 18; some of the policies need to be revised).

Faculty Development Committee, Annie Nordberg

- 57 applications in the month of March: almost five times the usual number.
- The fund is not depleted yet, but with 57 applications in one month, it will be. If there are people in your units who need a travel award, now is the time.

Senator: Will this information go back to departments, so that it's clear which departments are supporting their faculty and which aren't?

Annie Nordberg: Yes. We're creating reports at the end of the year to be able to show who needs what and what that need is.

Chair: We'll normalize the data too because COLA represents about 25% of university faculty. Our proposal to the Provost is to continue next academic year to offer \$1000 domestic and \$1500 international.

NTT committee, Amy Austin

- The committee has circulated a proposal for a name change from NTT to APT (Academic Professional Track).
- Last May, under Nila Veerabathina's leadership, the Senate passed a motion to change the nomenclature referring to faculty not on the tenure track to something that doesn't start with "non."
- In a survey with options informed by research and the feedback offered at a faculty forum, the percentage of surveyed NTT faculty who voted for a name change either to PT (professional track) or APT (academic professional track) was 69%.
- The committee did more research and found out that other institutions (including Texas A&M) use APT, even though UT-Austin uses PT. PT was seen by many to be potentially confused with physical therapy, part-time.
- Looking for endorsement of the recommendation of this term from the Senate.
- The recommendation reads as follows:

Given the responses from the Faculty Forum and the Surveys, the Faculty Senate NTT Ad-hoc committee recommends that the nomenclature for Non-Tenure Track Faculty be changed to Academic Professional Track Faculty. This new nomenclature better reflects the impact our NTT faculty have on UTA's continued success. This change would only apply to the overall classification of full-time faculty who are not on the tenure track. Responsibilities and specific titles, such as clinical professor, professor of practice, and professor of instruction will remain the same. The new nomenclature reflects the impact of UTA's NTT faculty that extends far beyond the classroom and includes scholars, mentors, colleagues, and leaders, whose dedication helps students, the university, and surrounding communities thrive. This change in nomenclature focuses on the impact that NTT faculty have on UTA's continued success and eliminates the negative connotation the "non" currently holds. Thank you for your consideration.

Chair: The recommendation on the floor is that the nomenclature be changed from NTT to APT.

Senator: I have a concern about this proposal, namely that the academic part makes it too easily conflated with research professional track. And thinking also about how we're represented outside the university to the media: when someone is described as an "academic professional track person," it sounds as if it's a counterpoint to "teaching professional track." I'm happy with any of the other proposals, but I think "academic professional track" is misleading.

Chair: One thing to remember, particularly with external relations, is this doesn't affect the titles people hold. If I were in the media, I'd use my title as "Professor of History," and people who hold titles of "Assistant Professor of Instruction," and so forth, typically use that title, professionally. Maybe that helps with that concern.

Senator: I've been thinking about the informational value in these titles.

Chair: NTT is usually an inward-facing way of separating various tracks and groups of faculty.

Amy Austin: There was discussion about teaching track, but many faculty who are not on the tenure track do research, so they were opposed to being pigeonholed as teaching. And there is division, but this one stood out.

Voice vote taken; the motion passes.

Amy Austin: April 19 will be our second faculty forum for APT faculty, sponsored by the Division of Faculty Success.

Senator: Do we have any idea about a timeline for when this nomenclature will come into effect and when the HOP will need to be changed?

Chair: The proposal says Fall 2024. We'll begin by using that term in our verbal interactions, and all of our documents will be revised over the next year.

Shanna Banda: Yes, we're in the process of looking at the HOP for a variety of reasons, and we've asked for some different edits. Some of this could be changed over the summer, but there's no timeline to get it done by September 1.

Chair: Another change will be to make sure the titles people hold reflect the work they're doing (and the pay they should be receiving). We'll also be reviewing people's titles; this is something Shanna's working on, to make sure that titles get aligned across colleges.

Senator: Is it all right to distribute the proposal?

Vice Chair: Yes. I'll add that at TCFS it became clear that "NTT" is outdated.

Senator: For our APT faculty, there were many years when they couldn't get promoted, so is there still a minimum time at rank, even though there was this long period when they couldn't get promoted at all?

Chair: The department bylaws and tenure and promotion policies will determine that.

Budget Liaison Committee (BLC), Imre Demhardt

- Meeting with John Davidson. Immediate problem: severely short in enrollment of international students. This is a problem because they pay more than local students. This threatens the immediate budget.
- Benefits cost: medical insurance is the big problem. It's constantly growing. If the university has to pay more, you also have to pay more. More and more of what is going to you will be handed over to insurance. We can't change it at the UTA level, but it would be important to address it at the UT System level. It's not sustainable.

Chair: All of our system universities are going to be pinched by this, but there's little that one university can do on its own.

Senator: Is this regional or national? Are all universities in the same boat?

Imre Demhardt: The steep increase from 28-36% is something where Texas is a frontrunner. Others (Arkansas, North Carolina) started out in 30, 31, 32%, and they managed to stay there. We should investigate what they are doing differently. It seems to be more aggravated in Texas.

Senator: I've looked at the marketplace, and our insurance is equivalent to some of the options on the marketplace that are far less expensive than what we're paying. Why doesn't the UT System have more negotiating power?

Imre Demhardt: At the moment, it's impossible to have people negotiate on their own. UTA can't let you do this.

Information Technology, Cheryl Prachyl

- OIT is working on improving the wifi with a focus on outdoors, and then in the classrooms.
- Regarding the concern about OIT tracking and collecting data: they can tell in real time who's using what and where, but they're not really collecting or storing data.
- Artificial Intelligence: AI.uta.edu: lots of resources about what AI is and how to use it, etc.
- Texas Department of Informational Resources has additional AI resources.
- Concern about AI and privacy: if faculty uses ChatGPT to write a memo about a student's grade, for instance, that's a FERPA concern.
- AI detectors are unreliable.

Social Committee, Lauren Brewer

- Faculty Senate reception: May 1, 4-6pm
- Quentin Scott, who represents the Libraries on the Staff Advisory Council, where he serves as the Chair of Belonging and Engagement, announced a Faculty Staff Mixer
 - During spring break, March 13, 9-11am, outside Bluebonnet
 - Short talk from Jewel Washington
 - Spirit Day in Bluebonnet Hall, Fuzzy's Tacos

Honors College Ad Hoc Committee, Jackie Fay

- Recommendations will be sent over email imminently
- Preview
 - Forming a standing faculty council to work with the Honors Dean to ensure faculty involvement, maybe integrated into committee structure of Faculty Senate
 - Reverse articulation agreements so that transfer students can apply more Honors credits
 - Aligning Honors mission with Strategic Plan 2030
 - Providing a larger physical space that includes classrooms
 - Laboratory for innovation for teaching curriculum
 - More interaction with fellowship/scholarship office
 - Advising multiple pathways for students to enter the Honors College
 - Recommendations on contracting courses and Honors-specific courses

Senator: I work with about 10 students every semester. There's a wide variety of writing skills, but people should be able to write an error-free sentence. We've lost sight of the importance of writing, and there should be a writing exercise before anyone is admitted into the Honors College.

Senator: When a student is applying to the Honors College, I think the standard is that students supply letters of recommendation. How does that work? I had a student who wanted me to give a letter to her, and I'm waiting for a link from the Honors College.

Senator: That happened to me too. The email with a link eventually arrived.

Daniela Pedraja, Student Body President

- There is a Student Senate resolution currently in circulation that requests a credit by exam policy so that if a student were to fail a class, they would be able to take an exam after the fact and then get credit for the course. She compares this to taking an exam prior to the class and getting credit for the class.
- If the resolution does pass through the Student Senate, it would be routed to the Faculty Senate.
- Asks for any thoughts or feedback.

Chair: Would that be a grade replacement, then? That would probably go through the Undergraduate Assembly and not us.

Senator: With the idea that that's a grade replacement policy—the University is currently implementing a new grade replacement policy that all students will be seeing in action next year. Something for the Student Senate to be aware of.

Chair on Budget Oversight Process

A few years back, the Senate developed a process to allow for transparency and faculty input into the process of deans creating their budgets. We're looking at revising that process and, potentially, adding the revision into the HOP. This comes up in part because we've had a changeover in many deans since the process began, and some of them have asked where it's outlined in the HOP. We want the process to be meaningful.

Step 1: Preparing for the Budget Process

- Each unit will have a budget taskforce (hereafter “taskforce”) consisting of the unit’s **PAC** representative and **all the senators (small and large units?)**. The Dean will then appoint three additional faculty members.
- A unit’s PAC representative therefore should encourage the Dean to appoint a mix of faculty members with and without prior budget experience to serve on the unit’s budget taskforce, thereby establishing a modicum of experience going forward.
- This composition could be augmented to make sure that those who themselves have budgets to oversee (Associate Deans, Program Directors) are present and that there is a mix of TT and NTT faculty involved otherwise. The taskforce’s composition should be established by Oct. 15th and should be accompanied by the previous year’s unit budget. The PAC will obtain and distribute the previous year’s budget (this is public information).
- The Chair of Faculty Senate will inform the Provost of the membership of each taskforce.
- The taskforce members should **convene at least once before the end of fall semester** to discuss the process and lay a groundwork of understanding about the budget and budgeting process.

Step 2: Constructing the Budget

- The Provost will meet with the PAC shortly after the budget packets are distributed and before the first unit budget hearing so that priorities may be shared. This will establish a level of transparency and facilitate faculty understanding regarding how the budget is prepared and determined.
- The **Dean will meet with their unit's taskforce before Feb. 1st** to assist in identifying budget priorities, supporting transparency, and developing faculty understanding regarding how the unit budget is prepared and determined through reallocation of existing budget to support unit priorities. The Dean should actively listen to the priorities of the taskforce.
- After the Dean has drafted the tentative budget, the **Dean will again meet with the taskforce** for meaningful and substantive faculty feedback regarding the priorities addressed and assessing for gaps and strengths in the draft budget. This should occur **no later than February 15th**.
- In the final submitted budget, the **Dean will include a brief statement of how faculty were specifically and meaningfully included** in the budgeting process such as identifying priorities, targeting development, and soliciting feedback. **Faculty involved in the taskforce meetings will provide narrative feedback about the process** and include suggestions for improvement in future budget processes.

Step 3: Sharing the Budget

- The **Dean will hold a public budget hearing**, open to all faculty and staff of the unit, including spreadsheets of the budget and a budget narrative explaining the strategic budget priorities in clear, non-technical language.
- There will be a representative from each unit's taskforce at their **unit's budget hearing**. This person will be elected by the taskforce.
- Thus, the Dean of the unit will be accompanied by two other faculty at the budget hearing: (1) The Chair of the Senate, and (2) The duly selected taskforce representative. It is expected that these two will attend as observers only.

Step 4: Feedback

- After completion of all the unit budget hearings, each PAC representative should collect all feedback from taskforce members for presentation and **discussion with the Provost at a PAC meeting.**

Proposed departures from how things are currently done:

- We'd eliminate the Budget Liaison Committee and have the President's Advisory Council serve in that role. That group would need to have a good understanding of how budgets work, and they would be responsible for assembling their budget taskforces.
- One possibility for the taskforces: maybe all Senators, from every college, might be involved in the process. All Senators could meet with the dean to hear about the budget process.
- Timeline change: there could be a meeting in the fall to orient the group to what budgets look like and what decisions need to be made so that people can be informed earlier in the process.

Imre Demhardt, Chair of the Budget Liaison Committee: Having been involved with the Budget Liaison Committee (BLC) for four years, I've found that the structural problem was that there are the budget taskforces in the colleges, but there is no institutional link up to the BLC. De facto, it didn't work that the PAC member for each college should inform the BLC. Based on these experiences, my recommendation is having a continuous budget faculty institution at the college level that meets before, during, and after the budget process. And out of that grassroots level body, two or three could become ex officio members of the new BLC. This would make it unnecessary to go through a PAC representative. I don't think the plate of a PAC representative is so empty that they want extra work. The two options are either to centralize everything with the PAC or thoroughly reforming from the budget taskforces up to the BLC. At the moment it isn't functioning as well as it could.

Chair: I appreciate the experience you've had on this committee. I think what we're talking about is fairly similar. [See slides above.] The suggestion that there be a college-level taskforce that's ongoing is a good one, and that could exist within this framework, with the PAC member essentially being the chair of that group. That person would be tasked with making sure that this process happens.

This would be in the fall, that this reform would happen. Step 2 would be constructing the budget. We're getting the worksheets from the Provost's office, and I can get those out to the senators in the college so that everyone's aware of what's going on in your college. We'll figure out what dates work for the deans to meet with their unit's taskforce, once beforehand and then again in mid-February or so. The dean already is supposed to include a brief statement of how faculty are involved. I'm not sure how many of them are doing that regularly. And then have the faculty involved in the taskforces give feedback to the PAC member about how it went this time. Then in our PAC meeting, we can talk with the Provost and President about what is and isn't working in order to move the process along each and every year.

Step 3: This is one thing some colleges do and others don't, but that we think is valuable: for the dean to hold a public budget hearing for their college. We think that's a good thing to do for transparency's sake. (Deans will review this proposal before it becomes policy.) I'd like your feedback.

Step 4: At one of our PAC meetings after the process, we'd have a discussion about the budget process, the taskforce process, and whether it needs some revisions. With some new deans arriving and the addition of the librarians to the Senate, we have a good plan for next year to institute this process.

Announcements from Chair and from Floor:

- Senate swag, including T-shirts, is available for the taking
- Award for Outstanding Service to the Faculty Senate will be given for the first time this spring. There have been a few nominees, but more will be accepted (self-nominations are welcome) through the end of the day (March 6).
- Next month, elections for treasurer, secretary, and parliamentarian will be held. Anyone who wants to run should let Jackie know. There are stipends for all the positions. The Parliamentarian will serve as the TCFS representative. One meeting will be in Austin and one might be in San Antonio.
- Virtual brownbags coming up: March 20 with librarians on Open Access, and in April from Amber Smallwood on microcredentialing.
- The deadline for submitting Emeritus nominations is March 18.
- From **Daniela Pedraja, Student Body President**: Re. microcredentialing: Daniela and the Student Body Vice President serve as representatives on the UT System Student Advisory Council, and they authored a recommendation to the System on microcredentialing. If you have any feedback on the rollout of microcredentialing, please pass that along to her. Also, Daniela, who is nearing the end of her term as Study Body President, was elected Chair of the Student Advisory Council of the UT System.
- Classes will be canceled between 1 and 2pm on Monday, April 8.

Remarks from Provost Brown

- Timeline for faculty salary study
 - In the process of reviewing the data with a group that's representative of the Senate
 - Group will provide guidance for how to make the allocations of \$1.4 million
 - Faculty group will meet with Provost toward the end of the month. Based on the feedback, a decision will be made and communicated to the Senate.
 - The data was run separately for tenure-stream and NTT faculty so that we can look at those groups separately.
 - The hope is that whatever increases are decided on will be applied during the month of May.

Senator: How are you evaluating for the different people, what are you using for your statistics?

Provost: We are using databases available by discipline that indicate market rate for salaries and are running that against our faculty and their salaries. E.g., a new assistant professor at an R1 in X discipline, the average is A, then we figure out how many of our professors are not at A and what the magnitude of the gaps is. It's position by position, which is why it takes a while. That list of decisions for increases is circulated to deans to make sure we're not increasing someone for whom the gap is performance related. (There are very few of those.)

Senator: What you said will certainly better the situation for some faculty on campus. Can you share whether anything is in the pipeline to address the problem of rising health care costs on the university? An ever-increasing percentage of salary is going toward benefits. Is there something at the UT System level to address this?

Provost: As we're looking at where increases can be made, it's not with a consideration of benefits. This process is a consideration of salary. We have a merit process that adjusts those salaries up, but there is not a pool of funds given by the state (which happens in some states, but not Texas) to take into consideration benefits increases. The salary increases are benefits-agnostic. These are base salary increases. As we think about what we allocate, benefits does come off of that, but not a consideration of anticipated increases that we would see year by year and that we are seeing—we're not doing that part. We increase salaries, and whatever that margin is, there's some portion of that that gets consumed by benefits. From \$1 million, ballpark estimate, probably the amount that would go to base salary is about \$700-something. We are not factoring in anticipated healthcare cost increases. Those units where people's salaries come from have to pay those increases over time. We're aware that healthcare costs keep increasing. But there isn't a set-aside.

Senator: High inflation over the last three years has caused our living expenses (food, housing, insurance costs) to increase substantially, a reasonable estimate is probably in the 17-20% range for cumulative increases in expenses across the past three years. For example, Social Security payments have been increased cumulatively by 17.8% over the past three years. I don't believe faculty at UTA have had similar upward salary adjustments, meaning we are all effectively falling behind financially. Are there any plans to address salary levels specifically with cost of living and inflation in mind?

Provost: The increases that we're doing are incrementally doing just that. Unfortunately, we don't have the resources to do that for all employees all at the same time. There is no allocation from the state we receive to address healthcare costs, for example. Our ability to address that with the resources we have is limited. But I hear what you're saying. We are increasing salaries as much as we can within the resources we have. The problem you point out isn't just ours; it's all of higher education. We're well aware. And these measures are designed to help. Do they match one for one? No, they don't. And we don't have the resources to match one for one.

Senator: For example, take prices at the grocery store. A manufacturer might increase their prices to bring in more revenue. Have you thought about increasing tuition to increase revenue to pay faculty in a way that keeps up with inflation?

Provost: Yes. The difference between public higher education and other sectors is that we're not able to make those decisions independently. The state has told us that the condition of getting funding is that cannot raise tuition or fees for two years. That was the string. That cuts off certain revenue streams. I'm hoping for a different outcome in the next legislative session.

Senator: Is the idea behind these increases to go toward cost of living, or is this looking and adjusting for fair market?

Provost: This is market value, not cost of living. We will have done this for two years, so it's going to be a while before we do it again. It was clear that we needed to address salary issues, but this will not be an annual adjustment. It will be a while before we do this again. We'll be shifting to other priorities. But the things we're putting in place with salaries will help us not to fall behind quite as much. Last time we established some salary minimums. We increased

promotional raises. These things should provide natural increases at appropriate times. The hope is that these built-in elements will help over time so that when we have our next opportunity for adjustment, the magnitude of the gap won't be as large. I know it doesn't keep pace. But we're doing what we can with the resources we have.

Senator: The new administration (the Cowley administration) has been wonderful, but one thing that was missing in the last administration and is still opaque is growth in administration. We all see weekly a new VP for something or another, and they may very well be necessary, but at the same time, we're going backwards with salary. If the pie is only so big, there has to be a proportionate administration, and we never got any transparency with the last administration, and so if you could speak to that, we would welcome that.

Provost: I appreciate the question. The current budget model we have says, using round numbers, that 45% of SCH-driven revenue is at Central Administration, and 55% flows through to academic colleges. That split has been in place for some time. I'm not sure why that wasn't shared.

Senator: Is there any national data for context? In isolation, I don't know what that means.

Provost: Setting the budget model that we have was done with the support of a consultant who was supposed to have been doing that very thing, helping to set ours in alignment with what is done nationally. I can ask our CFO to talk about this benchmarking in greater depth with Senate so that you'll have a context for those numbers.

Senator: That would be appreciated.

Vice Chair: In the past we would ask the question of what portion was dedicated to faculty salaries, and in the past, it wasn't answered, but John Davidson has answered that question.

Provost: My impression is that we're right on the money. If you think about central administration, of the 45% that goes there, what is the relative percentage that's going to each of those areas—that's a nuanced question, but John Davidson could answer it. We can revisit that.

Senator: It's the third rail, and people don't feel comfortable talking about it, and it's probably the kind of thing that's discussed in the hallway. There has to be a philosophy behind growing administration, and part of that is dealing with growing regulatory concerns and other missions of the university, but of course every dollar spent there is not necessarily going toward the primary mission. So, people who are involved in the primary mission are very concerned about that.

Provost: I hear that. The issue we have is that there's not enough money in the model to begin with. A part of it is clarity about the 45/55 split. But then there's the revenue side that isn't big enough. How much more revenue we'd need to have in order for us to have more of what we need, I don't know.

Senator: Having served both as a faculty and as an administration member, I'd like to add some nuance to this conversation and encourage us not to view the 45% as a monolithic budget for Administration, because I know that there are parts (that fall under central administration) that are extremely stretched and directly affect the students' experience. For example, at this morning's strategic plan meeting, Ashely Purgason said that, currently, the Division of Student Success can only serve 8% of the students that come to them for assistance. So it isn't Faculty v. Admin, because admin covers a lot of different levels, and the announcements about a new VP—I almost think we should get announcements about when we hire a new teaching coach (for a minimal salary, probably) to help with all of our students. Administration is very complex at a university this large.

Provost: Ashley's area covers advising, and we need advisors to do ever more, but they're among the group that's lowest paid. We have a number of student-facing units full of staff on the lower end of pay that count as central administration. Thank you for giving a concrete example.

Senator: I get the feeling that many of these issues that we talk about amongst ourselves, there's enough transparency. Where it trails off mysteriously is, how do we influence the legislators to give us extra money? UTA's Government Relations team seems mostly to be putting out fires, like if there's a threat from the legislature to close something down, they intervene. What seems to be missing is proactivity, asking for more money. How are we going to fund ourselves better and keep our faculty? I don't know where that magic happens. It seems mysterious.

Provost: I don't pretend to understand all the elements of state budgeting. Part of the equation is political. I assure you, we're asking for money all the time. Last year we asked for money for new things (like a performing arts center) as well as deferred maintenance.

Senator: Why do you think they say no? Does the legislature not have a high enough opinion of higher ed?

Provost: In this past legislative session, higher education was a focus, and a lot of money was given to support higher education. We will not be the focus at every session. There are other aspects of the state that will become the area of focus.

Provost's Remarks, continued:

- A RISE 100 memo recently went out. Here's the relevant information:
 - Doing well moving forward with RISE 100 program, and many hires have been authorized.
 - Out of the gate, 11 positions that close the student/faculty ratio gap were authorized in programs where the gaps were biggest.
 - 10 target of excellence lines were authorized; these move slowly because they involve building relationships and courting. Committee has recommended 6 for the Provost's approval; pursuing some, gathering information about others.
 - Clusters (brain health and two others) with 4 lines each in areas of existing strength.
 - Phase 2:
 - Additional cluster proposals; brief proposals asked for on the front end.
 - Individual hires

- Research NTT faculty, 15 authorized
- Postdocs, call issued
- Challenge will be units' ability to carry all of this out (how many searches at one time is possible?).

Senator: Can you speak to what impact women's reproductive rights have had on the searches in general? I'm concerned about faculty members wanting to come to a state that's hostile toward women's reproductive rights.

Provost: That has come up, and it's having the impact you would imagine. So it's incumbent upon all of us to be thinking about what the messaging we need to have as we're recruiting people to apply and answering their questions so that they're assured of the kind of university we are and the supports we provide and the values we have here. The things that happen at the state level matter, but we live at the local level. What's swirling at the state level doesn't necessarily represent the lived reality at every campus. How do we message our values and the supports that we provide, in ways that help faculty appraise the opportunity we would offer, as opposed to some other university in Texas, where that experience may look very different? I've experienced this as I've been hiring Deans. I get these kinds of questions. There is a chilling effect of this legislation. People are worried. How will my work be appraised? How will I be supported?

Senator: But then going back to reproductive rights, what does a university do? Locally, we can be supportive, but at the end of the day, you go to a hospital, not to your classroom to get an abortion.

Provost: Certainly. The things at that level matter. There will be some people, for that reason, who won't come. My hope is that won't be true for all candidates. How do we then convey other benefits of being at our university despite those laws that are passed? We have to comply with the law. But that's not the whole story. Our success in hiring gives me some hope there would be folks who'd want to come to UTA despite those laws being passed. How do we attract them?

Senator: A follow-on comment in the name of ideological diversity. It may also work that the flip side of that coin is that some people might want to come to Texas because of things that have been happening. You can decrease some people's propensity to come at the same time you increase other, potentially good people's interest in coming.

Provost: We need our enrollment to increase by 1.6% in order to cover merit and healthcare increases. So if we increase by 1.6%, that's all we can cover. Clearly, we want more than just that. But that's the increase we need. We're currently down 2.3% year over year. And so we've got to close that enrollment gap. We're optimistic that we're going to be able to shrink that gap, but one of the challenges making that difficult is FAFSA delay. There's no FAFSA yet, so families don't have any idea of the financial aid they're going to get, so they're delaying their decisions. The longer that takes, the harder it's going to be to fill that gap. The new form was going to be released in November/December; it's currently hopefully April. We're ready to make decisions as soon as FAFSA comes in, but April is pretty late, and it's *maybe* April, at that.

Another challenge is we have a decline of 2000 international applications over this time last year. We are working hard to yield. We have a team headed to India later this month to do in-country admissions on the spot. The decline in international applications is not just us. It does matter for our bottom line. Whatever you can do to help with enrollment, please do. The goal is to do a merit increase. How big that will be, we can't tell right now.

Meeting adjourned 5:00 pm

Next meeting: April 3, 2024