

Faculty Senate Minutes
3 April 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)

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
Jivas Chakravarthy	Accounting
Heather Charles	College of Science
Manfred Cuntz	Physics
Imre Demhardt	History
Thomas Dombrowsky	College of Nursing and Health Innovation
Sarah El Sayed	Criminology and Criminal Justice
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
Joowon Im	Landscape Architecture
Penny Ingram	English
Song Jiang	Computer Science Engineering
Theresa Jorgensen	Math
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
Jessica McClean	Libraries

Jeff McGee	Management
Joyce Myers	College of Education
Kaci O'Donnell	College of Liberal Arts
Mark Pellegrino	Biology
Cindy Plonien	College of Nursing and Health Innovation
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
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

Ex officio Members in Attendance

Jennifer Cowley, UTA President

Tamara Brown, UTA Provost

Minerva Cordero, Vice Provost for Faculty Success

Ann Hawkins, Associate Vice Provost for Faculty Success

Shanna Banda, Assistant Vice Provost for Faculty Success

Guests

Sara Pezzoni, Libraries

Nick Viator, Assistant Vice President of Strategic Initiatives

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

- March 6 minutes approved by acclamation.

Election of the Secretary, Treasurer, and Parliamentarian

- Jackie Fay, Chair of Nominating Committee, introduces candidates; candidates for the one contested position give short speeches
 - Secretary: Kathryn Warren, English (COLA APT); runs unopposed and is elected
 - Treasurer: Whitney Russell, Libraries; runs unopposed and is elected
 - Parliamentarian
 - Adam Annaccone, Clinical Assistant Prof. in Kinesiology (CONHI APT), Athletic Training

- Nila Veerabathina, Professor of Instruction in Physics (COS APT)
- Adam Annaccone is elected Parliamentarian.

Remarks from Minerva Cordero, Vice Provost for Faculty Success

- Introduces Shanna Banda, Assistant Vice Provost for Faculty Success, and Ann Hawkins, Associate Vice Provost for Faculty Success
 - Faculty Success website will be updated to reflect their division of labor
 - Ideas and suggestions welcome

Senator: Are there updates on tenure and promotion results from last year (numbers)?

Minerva Cordero: The process has been completed, and individuals are in the process of being notified, and she will have the exact numbers for the next meeting. FDL numbers will be forthcoming as well.

Chair: Reminder to vote on bylaws revision (sent over email) and to RSVP for the Senate reception.

Committee Reports

Faculty Development Committee, Annie Nordberg

- Almost four times the usual number of applications in the month of February because the maximums were raised.
- 45 travel awards given in total (7 CONHI, 8 COE, 1 COBA, 2 COEd, 2 CAPP, 3 SSW, 15 COLA, 7 COS) for the month of February, encumbering \$48,026, leaving the fund with just under \$11,000 in the travel award fund.
- Reviewing March applications now, and there are \$27,000 in asks. Awards will be gone through by date of application, and the committee will see how many awards the remaining funds can cover.
- The lion's share of travel awards goes to COLA.

Senator: Will the funds be exhausted after the March awards?

Annie Nordberg: Yes. But if a person's date of travel is the fall semester or later, they can apply.

Senator: Could that budget be increased?

Annie Nordberg: One of the reasons we had such a run is because we increased the amount of the awards. The maximum had been \$750; it was increased to \$1000 (domestic) and \$1500 (international). More than half the budget was encumbered in the month of February.

Senator: Do Canada and Mexico count as domestic or international?

Annie Nordberg: International.

Senator: Will the amounts stay higher next year?

Annie Nordberg: That's what we anticipate.

Senator: What's going on with the \$844 given to CAPP for two awards?

Annie Nordberg: People ask for all sorts of amounts. Often, people are applying for what's left over in their budgets after they get funding from other sources.

Chair: In the Faculty Senate budget we submitted to the Provost, we again asked for \$90,000 for travel awards, with the understanding that the maximum amounts of the awards will be higher (\$1000, \$1500). If this month's experience is any guide, the funds will be depleted quickly.

Senator: If we want to travel in the next academic year, are the applications open?

Chair: If you know you're traveling in November, and you want to apply for \$1000, go ahead and put your application in. It won't get reviewed until September, but you'll be in the queue.

Annie Nordberg: We need to put up a notice that says that if your travel date is up until August 31, we can no longer consider those applications, but travel after August 31 will be considered in September. To circle back to the question of whether we asked for more money: we weren't sure, based on our pace of awards, that we'd use the \$90,000. We increased the award to spend more of the money, and now with more evidence, we realized maybe we could have used more.

Research Committee, Rhonda Prisby

- Worked on drafting bylaws for a university-wide research committee. The draft has been submitted to Andy Milson for the Senate to review and provide input.
- The first individuals elected to the committee will finalize the rules and regulations.

Chair: The idea is to have a university-wide body that can provide advice and communicate with the VPRI. A lot of other R1 universities have these. An endorsement from the Senate would be helpful. I can then send that on to Dr. Miller (the VPRI), Dr. Brown, and Dr. Cowley to let them know this is what the research committee has done this year.

Senate endorses the draft bylaws.

Advocacy and Engagement, Michael Holmes

- Going to meet with Jeff Jeter (VP of Government Relations) to figure out how to have more insight into the upcoming legislative session, to engage in meaningful ways and have more impact.

NTT committee, Amy Austin

- We can start using the term APT instead of NTT.
- **Provost Brown** adds: Legal affairs is currently in the process of making the appropriate edits to university policies to reflect that change.

- **Chair** adds: The policy changes will start at the university level; colleges and departments will follow.
- Division of Faculty Success sponsoring another faculty forum for APT faculty in the spring: Friday, April 19, 12-1, SEIR 294. There will be an option to join online; lunch will be provided for those who attend in person.

Chair: One clarification: the change is in the broad nomenclature used to refer to faculty not on the tenure track; it doesn't mean that individual titles are changing. But there is work that needs to be done in making sure that faculty have the correct titles and the correct pay to go with those titles.

Honors College Ad Hoc Committee, Jackie Fay

- We describe our process in the report (that was distributed ahead of time): the research, peer reports on R1 university Honors programs/colleges, and so forth.
- Thanks the Provost and the Honors College staff and asks the Senate to endorse the report.

There are no comments or questions; the Senate endorses the report.

Whitney Russell (Libraries) announcement: The current institutional repository for theses, dissertations, etc., is migrating into a new system, and that system—MavMatrix—is technically live. The Libraries will be sending out an email to give more information about what the website will be and what kind of content can be added to it. It's where the archival materials will be moving as well. MA theses and PhD dissertations submitted this May will be submitted in this new system. There have been workshops throughout the spring to prepare students.

Senator: I used to be able to go on and get dissertations submitted within a particular time frame; can I still do that?

Whitney Russell: Yes. We're working to migrate the dissertations from our current platform, but that system isn't completed yet.

Senator: Will this include undergraduate Honors students?

Whitney Russell: There is a place to submit undergraduate Honors research, yes.

Academic Student Liaison Committee, Amy Speier

- Met with Extension and Extended Campus on Monday.

Chair goes over housekeeping related to next year's Senate membership.

Remarks from Provost Brown

- Update on salary study.
 - Closing in on decisions about how to approach it.
 - Met last week with a representative group from Senate for input and direction; met with Council of Deans earlier today, who affirmed the Senate group's input.
 - Goal: to have changes applied sooner rather than later.

- Reminder about what happened with last year's salary adjustments, structural elements that would increase salaries over time and keep salary gaps from widening again. Last year's adjustments did the following:
 - Created salary minimums
 - Overall floor of \$43,500 (applied to 36 people)
 - \$60K for Assistant Professors
 - \$70K for Associate Professors
 - Ensured all salaries were at the following percentages of market medians, according to rank and discipline, which increased some faculty salaries
 - Full Professors, Associate Professors, and APT faculty to 75% of market median
 - Assistant Professors to 90% of market median
 - Increased promotional increases
- This time, the available fund for salary adjustments is \$1.4 million. Two options were put before the faculty committee, and the faculty and the Council of Deans opted for a plan that would:
 - Ensure all salaries are at the following percentages of market medians, according to rank and discipline, which will increase some faculty salaries
 - Assistant Professors, 90%
 - Associate Professors, 80% (up 5% from last year)
 - Full Professors and APT faculty, 75%
 - Raise the minimum salary floor from \$43,500 to \$45,000. Raises will be capped at about \$12,000 to stay within budget.
- Some people increased last time will be increased again because market median has risen.
- Another salary adjustment like this will not happen again for some time. The structures put in place will have some time to work through the system. In about three years, will look at faculty data again.

Senator: Just to clarify, if it goes through and the APT minimum goes through, could those faculty receive a raise and a market adjustment?

Provost Brown: If anyone is being paid below \$45K, those individuals will be adjusted to \$45K. And then we'll look at where that falls in terms of market data.

Senator: Can you explain what the data was that was used to establish the median and what the 75% means?

Provost Brown: The data comes from a national database of R1 universities, CUPA HR. We compared our salaries at each rank to other R1s. Generally speaking, what's considered as a target is whatever the market median is. We're trying to be in the middle of the pack with our R1 peers. The gaps that we have are large enough that we cannot, with a one-time increase, bring everyone to exactly the median. We're getting closer. That's what's meant by 75%; it's 75% of the median.

Senator: Could say that your target is 25% below the median?

President Cowley: The top half of the AAU institutions, with much bigger budgets, naturally are going to pay higher than we are. Let's say \$100,000 is the median. Every discipline has a different range. The gap is going to vary by institution, rank, and who participates in the survey. We're targeting 75% of the median, but that doesn't mean it's 25%.

Provost Brown: We want to get everybody as close to the median as possible. But there was a big gap, for everybody. How close can we bring everybody?

Senator: Do we faculty have access to the market median data?

Provost Brown: No. Those databases have rules and protections against distribution. We are informed by them, but we cannot distribute them.

President Cowley: Your department chairs and deans are getting that information so that you can hire at close to market rates. If you want to, you can go to the TCE office and look at the information on a screen, but they can't give it to you.

Senator: The understanding is that for the next three years there won't be any further action on the compensation study; will this leave some room for merit raises over the next few years?

President Cowley: We're trying to accomplish two things. For the last two years we've done staff and faculty salary adjustments at the same time. In the future, we'd like to rotate market adjustment years, with faculty alternating with staff on a rotating basis. We always want to do merit every year. But this year, the FAFSA debacle created a huge problem for enrollment. Our goal is to hold budgets flat, have merit, and cover health care cost increases next year, but we're not on track. Merit is the first thing in the budget, but it will depend on what enrollment looks like. Today, the first financial aid packages are getting put together. But there will be errors (because the federal government has made mistakes with the FAFSAs).

Senator: Speaking of admissions, I was told by one of my colleagues that there is confusion about where letters of recommendation for potential graduate students should be sent. We don't have an online system that gathers letters, and the lack of clarity has made some applicants say they're not coming. This isn't just for MA admissions; it's for PhD as well. Is there a way to solve this?

Provost Brown: On March 18, the fix for that was launched with a new website, Apply UTA, powered by a new CRM slate being implemented for graduate programs.

Senator: If a student applied before March 18, what should they do?

Provost Brown: I can check into that. Going forward, though, the problem should be fixed.

Senator: In some departments, there's a wide range of salaries at the same level. I think we should look at fairness more than comparing to a national average. To justify such a big discrepancy in salaries, maybe something needs to be studied. There's been an effort to increase

the salaries of new hires to the point where new hires have higher starting salaries than people who've worked here for 25 years. This is bad for morale. I read that in 2019, Fort Worth and Arlington were in the top 5 cities in the United States for increases in cost of living. The rumor that it's cheap to live in Texas is probably not true anymore.

Provost Brown: It's still true that it's less expensive to live in Texas than it is to live in some places, but not in comparison to others. It's context dependent. As for differences in salaries for people at the same rank: there are a lot of reasons salaries differ. One is performance. As we apply these increases to faculty, these lists will be sent to deans to review to make sure we're not erasing performance-based differences in salary. Some of it is different level of accomplishment. For example, engineering: the faculty who are in the National Academy of Engineers will have higher salaries than other professors. Those reasons for discrepancies aren't uniform across all the faculty.

Senator: It's logical that someone in the National Academy of Engineers would be paid a lot more. But performance is difficult to evaluate. Everything now depends on what the dean says, but we're working for the university, not the dean.

President Cowley: Your points are well taken. With this action and focusing on the bottom of the scale, the range between the top and the bottom will shrink. The biggest change this time is for associate professors. TCE is also looking at some performance evaluation work.

Senator: Performance isn't just scholarly work. It includes teaching and service as well.

Senator: I have a question about wage disparities within colleges, like between Assistant Clinical Professors and lead teachers of large clinical courses making the same salary as clinical faculty that have, maybe, 8 students compared to 200, as well as the administrative obligation that goes along with being lead faculty to do annual reviews for 15-20 employees. Has that ever been looked at?

Provost Brown: Those decisions are made within colleges, in conversation with deans. What I hope will help with that is the work that we're doing this year, as part of updating tenure and promotion guidelines, to clarify each category or type of faculty and what the expectations are of each, so at least there's some consistency. I hope to bring some clarity to different faculty titles and roles and how they contribute, which can inform conversations about compensation within colleges.

Senator: I have a question about standards between groups doing the same job. For example, a clinical and a tenured professor. If, across a multiyear period, the clinical professor is outperforming the tenure-track professor in terms of publication (balancing that work with 4/4 teaching loads and service), how do you compensate for that?

President Cowley: Each individual has a specific job they've been hired for. You're being measured on the workload assigned to that job. If your workload assignment is a 4/4 workload and service, that's what you're being measured on. In that example you've been given, I'd expect a high merit raise in the categories of work you've been assigned. Whereas the tenure-track

person would get a low merit raise. Over time, the NTT person's salary may eventually pass the TT person's salary.

Senator: I've gone through the data, so when I'm comparing, I'm comparing apples to apples. There is not a single NTT professor surpassing a TT professor.

President Cowley: To that I would say, what does the market data tell us about the range of salaries by rank for people in those positions?

President Cowley: If all goes well, letters about salary adjustments will go out at the beginning of May and will impact the May cycle. The adjustments will appear on May 31 paychecks. That's the goal, but it's tight. Somewhere in the range of 10-15% of faculty will be impacted.

Remarks from President Cowley

- Discussion of recent events at UT-Austin reported on in the Texas Tribune. Some context to better understand the situation:
 - Campuses need to certify that they're in compliance with SB 17.
 - The legislature has concerns that campuses are not in compliance and is calling hearings in May that will require university presidents and others to speak to compliance.
 - Perceptions about what people thought was going to happen: that universities would eliminate many positions and save money.
 - Universities have been asked to deliver a report (due mid-April) about how many positions were eliminated and how much money was saved. But in many cases people were reassigned to other responsibilities.
 - After May hearings, the legislature may give direction to do something differently to comply with SB 17.

Senator: Being an AAPI and Hispanic-serving institution and having students seek us out for that, what can we do to support our students and ensure they're protected? Some program officers don't want to work with Texas institutions because we can't implement certain kinds of initiatives.

President Cowley: Last week was the Hispanic Serving Research Universities summit here on campus, and this was one of the issues discussed: how can we advocate for Hispanic Serving Institutions in ways that are compliant with the legislation? We are meeting with federal agencies to go up the chain and make it clear that we can take advantage of those programs. Federal agencies and foundations alike want to find ways to partner with faculty and support our institution.

(Further discussion followed.)

- Governor Abbott issued an executive order around anti-Semitism, following a definition supplied by the state, that requires universities to modify their rules of conduct so that students can be punished for engaging in activities or speech that fall under the definition of anti-Semitism. Compliance required within 90 days.

- Challenge: universities are also required to uphold free speech, which can include hate speech.
- Anticipating modification to student code of conduct to include the definition of anti-Semitism and a reorganization of consequences related to violations of the student code of conduct.
- Working on principles of civility in the code of conduct.
- Coordinated effort across state.

(Further discussion followed.)

Senator: Is this directed only to students, not to faculty and staff?

President Cowley: It's directed toward student activity and the student code of conduct (protests, etc.).

- Strategic Plan: UTA 2030: Shared Dreams, Bright Future
- Assistant Vice President of Strategic Initiatives, Nick Viator
- Started with dreams and aspirations for UTA
- Key goal: all of us working together
- Core values
 - Collaboration
 - Community of belonging
 - Excellence
 - Innovation
 - Integrity
- Student success: how to create vibrant learning environment
 - Ensuring students are career-ready (skill development; partnerships; employer collaborations, as with Lockheed Martin; collaborations with educational institutions, as with school districts like Aledo ISD)
 - Optimizing student experiences on mobile devices (Canvas, MyMav on devices)
- Research and innovation
- Community impact (e.g., Texas Manufacturing Assistance Center recently engaged in a project with the Arlington Economic Development Corporation [EDC], which is providing funding to UTA so that we can help support local businesses, like Indian Rubber, by supplying expertise)
- Collaborating with HSIs on two goals
 - Increase the number of Hispanic faculty by 20%
 - Double the number of Hispanic doctoral students (for reference, only 0.5% of UTA undergraduate students going on to earn the doctorate in 10 years; our peers at aspirational institutions have a number above 1%)
 - To get there, will increase the budget for undergraduate research and work with colleges to get grants to support undergraduate research
 - Will create a postdoc program with other HSIUs, a consortium that would participate in an exchange of students and help move them into faculty roles
- Collaborating with others

- Research park at UTA; city wants job creation; potential of creating an innovation district together.
- People and Culture
 - Employee resource groups, e.g., Disability Network, International Employee Network; affinity groups being proposed as well.
 - Supporting employees—create an employee emergency fund as for students. Fund is seeded. Part of fundraising campaign.
- Senators can be plan ambassadors, sharing news in our departments

Senator: What about benchmarking?

President Cowley: There are public metrics on the website, like research expenditures and number of TT faculty (roughly 10 of those). All the divisions for each theme are developing sub-measures. Outcomes are most important. Some are readily measured; others more difficult. How do we measure where students are six months after graduation? We need to figure out how to develop those measures using data that is available.

Chair: My plan is to host a series of Faculty Senate brownbags around these topics in the strategic plan so that faculty can meet some of the people working on these issues. An early one will be around enrollment and enrollment management. (Let Andy know about topics you want to hear about.)

Senator: That 0.5% number—are the numbers collected just for PhDs, or doctorates of all kinds?

President Cowley: The number comes from the NSF. I'd have to check on that. Many students, their aspiration is to achieve a BA, and that's it. They're not contemplating graduate study. We all have a role to play in talking about the value of graduate education. There's no reason our students should be going to graduate school at a lower rate.

Senator: I'm glad the research recommendations aren't overly specific, since we don't know what will change in the next six years.

President Cowley: We did keep the prior strategic plan's research themes. There have been lots of focus groups and steering committees that have shaped where we are today. There's more information on the website: uta.edu/UTA2030

Announcement from Minerva Cordero:

30 people received notices of being given tenure and promotion to associate; 13 were promoted to full.

President Cowley: We've just hired our first Target of Excellence hire. Press release coming out this week. First acceptance of regular faculty position as part of RISE program too. Things are rolling along, and Phase 2 proposals are being evaluated.

Meeting adjourned 5:00 pm

Next meeting: May 1, 2024