

The University of Texas at Tyler  
Office of the Faculty Senate

Thursday January 16, 2024

12:30-1:50 p.m.

Hybrid Meeting

<https://uttyler.zoom.us/rec/share/PpGMEFLx3PJRutn3vJCRAuB8OJzOrSOfdyRVhbhx2pkzZGk31eqj1B0EK74DsPXZ.cVHkXo-lugELx9vY>

Faculty Senate

	Class of 2025	Class of 2026	Class of 2027
<b>At Large</b>	Nelson Fumo*	Dominick Fazarro*	Kevin Gosselin*
<b>CAS</b>	Vacant	Kenneth Bryant*	Katrin Kellner
<b>Soules College of Business</b>	Vivek Pandey*	Brent Beal	Marwan Al-Sharmi
<b>CEP</b>	Forrest Kaiser*	Ramona Grad	Gina Doepker*
<b>COE</b>	Chung Goh*	Aaditya Khanal	Ali Ghorshi*
<b>SON</b>	Dixie Rose	Gina Dudley	Michelle Nelson*
<b>COP</b>	Ayman Hamouda	Santosh Aryal	Farah Deba*
<b>Library</b>	Nicholas Bambach	Michael Skinner*	Esmeralda Rodgers
<b>SHP</b>	Jessica Escareno	Ahmed Abdelal	Arturo Arce-Esquivel*
<b>SOM</b>	James Menard	Pierre Neuenschwander	Sujitha Nandimandalam

\*means member was in attendance

Senate Executive Officers 2024-2025

Joshua Banta* President	Yanira Oliveras* President-Elect
Amentahru Walhrab* Past President	Catherine Ross* Parliamentarian
Dixie Rose Secretary	Pierre Neuenschwander Treasurer

**In Person Attendance:** YonJoo Cho, Gwen Williams, Gracy Buentello, Christine Forisha, LouAnn Berman, Colleen Swain, Poonam Kumar, Danny Morris, Stephanie Fenter, David Barron, Isai Ramirez, Rick Helfers, Natalia Snider, Colin Snider

**Zoom Attendance:** Sonia Hernandez, Kim Nimon, Sonia Hernandez, Lynn Harris, Bruce Bettinger, Joyce Pitts, Tanya Schlemmer, Jon Seal, Elizabeth Lee, Tammy Cowart, Heshium Lawrence, Dana Gorbett, Melissa Gabel, Jon Seal, Lauren Kirby, Cori Kallenberger, Karen Walker, Cielo Hernandez, Sarah Sass, Sarah Bowdin, Kerry Bonilla, Cindy Davis, Sonja Morale,

Loretta Owen, Kevin James, Matthew Kelly, Corrinne Warren, Karan Singh, Mary Logan, Angela Nunez, Kerrie Anne Ambort-Clark, Cory Sills, Emily Battle, Dana Gorbett, Jamie Wilks, Ryan Menard, Stephen Myers, Danielle Bailey, Elizabeth Lisot-Nelson,

### **12:30 Welcome and Call to Order, Dr. Josh Banta**

#### **Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes**

- Minutes were approved
- Reminder to sign in either on the sign in sheets or in the chat on zoom

#### **12:35 Provost Updates Dr. Amir Mirmiran**

- Enrollment data – breaking record over 9,800 students in the spring
- Retention highest from fall to spring almost 92%
- Retention Undergraduate 91%
- Retention Graduate 91.3%
- Library – just in the fall – came from 340,000 open education resources (OER) saved student about \$340,000.
- e-text books available – fall semester saved students almost \$900K
- Thank the faculty – encourage faculty to use OER and ebooks when possible
- AI grants – awarded 6 projects –
- Hope that faculty awarded the AI grant to share with campus community
- It will be at the pogrom level – not about creating on new program solely focused on AI but rather how we can integrate AI in our curriculum to benefit students and prepare them for the future.
- AI tutoring – IT colleagues will help with that – looking for opportunities to expand
- “Uber for Tutor” – hoping to implement
- Committee on leadership training – working on it – Shared representatives who serve and looking to develop a full leadership training – additional information will be shared in February.
- Question - about the grant using OER – will those include computer software in the future? There is cost involved in creating/developing software that would;  
Response - Anything that’s required, textbooks or computer, should be part of the grant
- Question - all students have access to Copilot through Microsoft. I’ve also had to started using ChatGPT – make you aware that there is limitation to free AI tools.  
Response from Isai Ramirez - no additional cost for Microsoft Copilot. No extra cost but we do pay for it. There are other AI tools but be cautious. There are are guidelines to use ChatGPT. We don’t have a contractual agreement with ChatGPT so we don’t have the protection like we do with Copilot.
- Question - I’ve been using ChatGPT, is that a violation? Response from Isai Ramirez - no violation. Search for the AI guide – precautions to take – no confidential data.

## **Office of Sponsored Programs Lisa Bush, Director and Associate Vice President for Research**

- Update – a lot of things have changed since March, a lot of restructure at the office of sponsored programs & research. After the tragic loss of Dr. Anna, we restructured. If you have any questions who handles, please reach out.
- Sponsored Programs
  - Angela – post
  - Matthew – pre
  - Audrey – contracts & agreements
  - This team can help you from the submitting to managing the grant through the lifecycle of the grant.
  - Human Research Projection Program – Corrie Warren IRB
  - Newly created - Animal & Biosafety Research Program – led by Dr. Amy Tvinnereim – she has served in many capacities related to this work.
  - Research Compliance still intact – all compliance is handle within the same department – Posting a position for to lead the dept.
  - Staff is growing. Double staff in Sponsored programs. IRB has hired new staff. Working on set up a meet & greet because we have so many new faces. We want to visit colleges, build relationships with our research faculty and answer any questions we might have.
- Research Updates (\$)
  - Academic campus \$5,49639 research expenditures (\$1.1 million increase)
  - HSC - \$23,691,252 – decrease of \$4.5 million) – no reason no panic.
  - Research expenditures decreased by \$3.4 Million
  - Actual awards – active externally funded award
  - Academic campus – 125 – increase by 10
  - HSC – 281 – increase by 81
  - Funded Awards – they increase by 91 funded in one year – combined 406 awards
  - A lot of great work going on.
  - Congrats on those that received funding
  - If you are interested, let us know, we are happy to help.
- Other Updates
  - Updated STARs award process for Spring 2025 – use to recruit or retain STEM faculty – only can be used for equipment or lab
  - We get a significant amount of funds. The funds are internally distributed. The process has been streamlined. Fall & spring

- Question - Is it possible to add to job positing that the position is **eligible** for STAR awards. We need to work with chairs & deans to use this as a recruiting team.  
Response - we must be cautious that it's clear that the position is eligible and not guaranteed.
- Comment - this would attract – great recruitment tool
- Comment - we loss good candidates due to the salary, this might be a way to attract
- Question - do you know if the awards and fund received by new faculty? Response - we are looking at what is being submitted and what's being funded. We are still collecting data in Cayuse
- Question - how many students are involved? How many students are benefiting in research? Response - we can run that type of report. I might need help
- Junior faculty research mentoring program in development for Fall 2025.
  - Some concerns/frustrations from junior faculty re: research
  - Mentoring with Houston to create a version locally that we can roll out.
  - Jr faculty are excited about this.
- Spring –
  - Updating website
  - Creating a distribution list related to research – volunteer – you can choose to receive or not receive the emails – there are often funding opportunities that are in a short timeline, trying to find a way to communicate quick
  - Active PI will automatically included in the list
  - Quality Improvement Survey – would like to send out the research community, what are we doing well, what we can improve, how can we better support you? It will come out late Spring.
  - Paused East Texas research conference for 2025 – due to restructuring – Lyceum, 3M Thesis and Grad School research Day & SOM Research Day will still be celebrated – in April
  - Question - you have team members at all campus – any sort of division of which team members are at each campus? Response - Based on availability – regardless of where they house, they service all the campus 100%.
    - Sponsored programs – main campus
    - IRB housed downtown next to the new SOM building
    - Animal – out of the HSC
    - Research compliance – depend on availability of space
    - We don't have 2 separate staff – one staff that serves
- Comment from Kouider Mokhtar - I'm in the process of updating The Faculty Development Leave application. A call for Fall 2025 proposals will be issued in February.

**Community Engagement and Special Events Brittany Childs**, Executive Director of Community Engagement & Special Events and Jessi Reel – Director of Community Engagement

- What we do and how we can help
  - Conduit of external organization & the university
  - What does the community need, what resources do we have?
  - We serve the entire campus
  - If you have any community projects that you wish to have and don't know where to go, come to us.
  - Here to serve you – we can get you connected
- Discount programs – working on discounts for faculty, staff & students
- Data – collect community engagement data & share your stories - we are working to be the clearing house and share all that's going on.
- Community engagement – collaboration between UTT and larger communities for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a content of partnership & reciprocity. What are we getting out it? What is the partner getting out of it?
- We are launching a survey – all to faculty & staff – tell us what you are doing in the community engagement space.
  - Qualtrics to be distributed next week, Spring 2025 ongoing data collection & analysis
  - Summer 2025 – data distributed
- We are not asking you to do anything new – we just want to know what you are currently doing. We are going to share it. It will help us tell your story.
- It will open next week but will be left open for a few months so faculty can complete at their convenience.
- Question - I work with some local high school students, will that count? Response - yes, as long as it's mutually beneficial. When in doubt, submit it.
- Comment - Community engagement & recruitment would like to know that. I'm excited about this. It will help us with recruitment
- Comment - Your college readiness program would be very beneficial.

**Kathryn Lake, Chief Strategy Officer**

- Refresh strategic plan
- One of Dr. Philley's ask was to look at our strategic plan, which was created after the merge. The plan was very large. We heard from the campus community that we didn't want to go through a whole new strategic plan.
- Met with anyone that had ownership of any sort of project under the existing plan.
- 168 – it was massive – Through 100s of meetings with stakeholders, we narrowed down – simply articulate our mission.
- We were very cognizant of what the external landscape looks like right now. Higher ed is going through a lot of changes. Last year, over 100 higher ed institutions that closed. We must in a real way to differentiate us from the rest, and not just in East Texas but also nationwide.
- Reflects the campus community and external input and to laser focus on student success

- 5 to 3 priorities
- 22 to 8 goals
- Anything that's not in the plan doesn't mean that we are no longer a priority. We are attempting to identify what is going to differentiate us in the marketplace.
- Priority – Student success
  - Every student not only completes their degree but is prepared to thrive. Previous plan focused on retention, now we want to focus on retention and degree
  - Instead of focusing on increasing enrollment to 15K in 2027, our priority is that the students that we have here succeed. If we get really, really good at that, the growth will happen.
  - Goals - what do students need to complete their degrees? Are students thriving? Do they have what they want? We hear that they want more engagement, more spaces for them to gather. 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of library, food trucks. How can we constantly communicate with them? Who are they? How do the needs evolve?
  - Prepare students for the workforce. – we want every employer to be fighting for our students.
- Teaching Excellence
  - We have an incredible faculty - # of teaching awards
  - Comments from students and how professors encourage them
  - We are known for teaching excellence – we want to be recognized worldwide/nationwide for our
  - How do we share best practices?
  - How do we evolve our teaching practices?
  - We need to make this a priority.
- Goals
  - The activities need to come from you. What do you need in form of support to achieve these?
  - Connect main campus & HSC – what does the health center needs right now – implement that and use that to improve our programs.
  - Strengthen research infrastructure – Lisa is working on this – fixing challenges we have faced. Pulling resources together so anyone conducting research is appropriate supported.
  - Support research that enriches our students & services our community
- Priority – Serve east Texas
  - Looks 2 ways – obvious – serve our community, goal – Tyler is a university town. Tie UT Tyler and the community.
  - Operational excellence – internal excellence – making sure that all of our functions, customer services within our organization – how can we get better at serving, remove friction from our operations.
  - Example – the process from application to graduate – where are the more points of friction, how can we make things better?

- From faculty, what are the processes that add friction to our work?
- Chair – what do I need to know?
- Make processes easier & collaboratively
- Question - how we make our brand more prominent in our community? In East Texas with 3 front doors? Response - We have to be honest about our finance – administration want to be transparent about where we are- we are going to be fiscal responsible.
- Question - How are we going to use funds that are used? Response - Marketing – translating
- Comment - Our students often come to campus to learn and leave. Work on the culture of our commuters. When we push for teaching, we sometimes put research “on hold” – We need to reach out to schools – happy to help local schools and collaborate – good; Response - Lake – took off the research expenditure target – that does not mean pull back on. We don’t want to put pressure to double research expenditure by 2027 – each college/dept brings unique strengths – take stock of what we are – lean into everyone’s individual strengths.
- Question - Does the university hold a "State of the University" event that shares the accomplishments of the university to the community? Response - great idea. Share her info. Wishes to continue the communication.

#### **Information Technology Isai Ramirez, Vice President, Chief Information Officer**

- Announcing a new tech assessment process – piloted in fall – now live. Encourage & require
- Campus news – training, another one on the 23 & 30<sup>th</sup> – if cannot attend, Isai can forward the presentation

#### **Senate Updates & Discussion, Dr. Josh Banta**

- See attached PowerPoint
- Introduced – Yanira Oliveras
- Ad-hoc committee on teaching – ideas contact Oliveras - We will start small and will present ideas
- New elections – university committees for 2025-2026
- Administration partners with the FS to populate & run those committees (FS President – in charge)
- Elections must be held to populate committees – reach to Dr. Banta if you don’t hear about committee elections in your college.
- Accessibility - committee working on it – enhanced campus maps and help ease getting around campus.
- City of Tyler – bus service – micro transit with an app on your phone. Share this information with students. Free to students, faculty & staff
- Shuttles – interested in how many students lack cars?

- Dr. Banta is interested in learning more about students who are struggling to get to class due to transportation from north center & main campus. wants anecdotes about transportation. Comment – Yes, I always have students who can't make it to my class on time from their previous class. I am in the art complex - we used to have a shuttle that went regularly back and forth and that helped. There isn't enough parking anyway, so we need a shuttle again.

### **1:56 Adjournment**