

**Faculty Senate Minutes**  
 2 April 2025  
 Student Government Chambers (UC 225)

**Senate Leadership in Attendance**

Andy Milson, Chair

Rhonda Prisby, Chair Elect

Adam Annaccone, Parliamentarian

Kathryn Warren, Secretary

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

Ishfaq Ahmad	Computer Science and Engineering
George Alexandrakis	Bioengineering
David Arditi	Sociology and Anthropology
Amy Austin	College of Liberal Arts
Linda Barasch	College of Engineering
Mahmoud Bayat	Architecture
Alan Bowling	Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering
Kim Breuer	College of Liberal Arts
Janet Burka	Libraries
Christopher Chambers-Ju	Political Science
Heather Charles	College of Science
Morgan Chivers	Libraries
Manfred Cuntz	Physics
Thomas Dombrowsky	College of Nursing and Health Innovation
Carlos Donjuan	Art and Art History
Ceil Flores	College of Nursing and Health Innovation
Andy Hansz	Finance and Real Estate
Yaowu Hao	Materials Science and Engineering
Darlene Hunter	School of Social Work
Joowon Im	Landscape Architecture
Penny Ingram	English
Aimée Israel-Pelletier	Modern Languages
Song Jiang	Computer Science Engineering
Theresa Jorgensen	Math
Carie Kapellusch	College of Liberal Arts
Vinayak Kaushal	College of Engineering
James Kelsay	Criminology and Criminal Justice
Cynthia Koomey	College of Nursing and Health Innovation
Andrzej Korzeniowski	Math
Laura Kunkel	College of Nursing and Health Innovation
Catherine LaBrenz	Social Work
Stephen Mattingly	Civil Engineering

Fred MacDonnell	Chemistry
Rachael Mariboho	College of Liberal Arts
Jessica McClean	Libraries
Hyejin Moon	Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering
Joyce Myers	College of Education
Kaci O'Donnell	College of Liberal Arts
Patti Parker	College of Nursing and Health Innovation
Liliana Pérez-Nordtvedt	Management
Alejandro Rodriguez	Public Affairs and Planning
De'An Roper	School of Social Work
Ritesh Saini	Marketing
Phillip Schroeder	Theatre Arts
Eli Shupe	Philosophy
Aaron Smallwood	Economics
Whitney Tholen	College of Science
Dan Trott	Kinesiology
Jack Unzicker	Music
Venu Varanasi	Graduate Nursing
Nilakshi Veerabathina	College of Science
Jingguo Wang	Information Systems and Operations Management
David Wetz	Electrical Engineering
Shelley Wigley	Communication
Naoko Witzel	Linguistics
Tim Wunder	College of Business
Xinbao Yu	Civil Engineering
Leaf Zhang	Educational Leadership and Policy Studies

**Senators Not in Attendance**, followed by the unit they represent  
(Department for TT, College or School for APT)

Imre Demhardt	History
Donna Firouzbakht	College of Architecture, Planning, and Public Affairs
Tom Graca	College of Business
Tom Hall	Accounting
Muhammad Huda	Physics
Andrew Hunt	Earth and Environmental Sciences
Aera Leboulluec	College of Engineering
Joohi Lee	Teacher and Administrator Preparation
Mark Pellegrino	Biology
Cindy Plonien	College of Nursing and Health Innovation
Cheryl Prachyl	College of Business
Don Schuman	School of Social Work
Gregory Turner	College of Engineering
Regina Urban	Undergraduate Nursing
Rachel Voth Schrag	Social Work

Shouyi Wang	Industrial, Manufacturing, and Systems Engineering
Logan Watts	Psychology
Richie White	College of Liberal Arts

### **Ex officio Members in Attendance**

Jennifer Cowley, UTA President

Tamara Brown, UTA Provost

### **Guests**

Shanna Banda, Division of Faculty Success

Jackie Fay, COACHE Survey Steering Committee Chair

Ann Hawkins, Division of Faculty Success

Andrew Hippisley, Academic Affairs

Renee Manworren, CONHI (subbing for Cindy Plonien)

Anne Nordberg, SSW

Holli Slater, SSW

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

March minutes approved by acclamation

**Chair's medallion and gavel** presented to Andy Milson by Jackie Fay, the previous Senate Chair, in recognition of his service and accomplishments, including revising the system for the Senate reapportionment that resulted in the largest Faculty Senate in UTA's history.

### **Shanna Banda, Assistant Vice Provost for Faculty Success**

- Grant through UT System on student experience project; event on April 7 at 1pm in Library Parlor; launching campaign called Three to Thrive; information will be in FAN
- CRTLE faculty showcase, a celebration of teaching excellence on Thursday, April 17, 4-6:30; appetizers and adult beverages (info in the FAN)
- April 22 is the Spring Faculty and Associates Awards Banquet, celebrating excellence for research, service, and teaching across the university. 4pm doors, 4:30 program; in Rio Grande (UC)
- Texas Academic Leadership Academy (TALA), 3-4 person cohort, a way to engage in leadership across the state; entrance deadline is April 18; three in-person events and monthly seminars; Ann Hawkins has the application information for TALA.

### **Andrew Hippisley, Academic Affairs**

- New initiative, a mission-aligned way of thinking of program review: does the program equip the students to be successful in the next step of their lives, whether that's going to graduate school or entering the workforce? Special attention to entering the workforce. Every college is involved.
- Academic Affairs created student ROI metrics to understand wages after 1 year, 5 years, 10 years, and manageable debt. Created thresholds for the metrics, and in every college there's at least one program that falls below the thresholds.

- Have spent last two months or so meeting with Chairs, Deans, and Associate Deans to go through the metrics, explain what they mean, and brainstorm about what programs can do differently to address the challenges the metrics raise.
- Scale of problem: 52 programs fall short on at least one metric, which is a big proportion of our degree programs. There are four metrics. Some fail in more than one. Those are the “priority action” programs. With the others, there’s something that can be done better.
- Kind of conversation: sometimes only one metric is troubling, e.g., students are carrying too much debt. Question is what can the program do that is in the program’s control (there’s a lot that’s out of the program’s control). Theme has been “can we shorten their time to degree?” Part of that is up to the student, but programs can cut down on the number of credit hours, comparing their program to benchmark programs and aspirational programs. Can we make more use of the summer? If it’s an MA program, can we combine the BA and the MA (accelerated pathway)?
- Other discussions: some programs can have earnings problems. What is a both/and intervention that the program can do, pursuing both the content of the degree and career readiness? Can part of the path to graduation include career preparation?
- How can faculty prepare to answer the question what 8-10 jobs could I get if I do your degree? We can find out from employers what else made that student attractive so that faculty can freely discuss with students what makes them more marketable.
- Plan: all 52 programs will submit an action plan by the end of April. At the end of the summer, the plan will start to be executed. Resources can be found and marshalled to help each program figure out how to execute its plan.

**Senator:** Have you thought about lowering the tuition? That way students will have less debt.

**President:** Our Blaze Forward program is targeted at students who have less ability to pay; currently 49% of our students do not pay any tuition and fees; the expansion of Blaze Forward will mean 60-65% will not. Debt is going down, so in a way we are reducing the amount of costs for our students, including four years in a row of flat tuition. Doing what we can on our side to control costs.

**Senator:** I believe in a previous meeting you’d mentioned that we are subsidizing for every undergraduate student \$1000 in research. Why are our undergraduate students subsidizing our research?

**President:** If you think about this as a pyramid, you have graduate students that you’re funding. That money doesn’t come out of thin air. It’s coming out of undergraduate tuition and state subsidies in the form of formula funding and research funds and so forth. In order for us to support our doctoral programs in particular, it takes subsidies from our undergraduate programs. That’s the way the business model works. We could lower undergraduate tuition, but that means we wouldn’t have a source of funding to support your time and research or our graduate students. It’s a delicate balancing act to say what are our priorities as a research institution and how do we carefully balance our overall affordability with the outcomes for our students and our institution.

**Senator:** Thinking about the factors each unit can and cannot control—we (SSW) are a unit that generates more than what we take, but that goes into funding other units. We also have two

priority area programs because of that debt-to-earnings ratio. I know that tuition isn't set by us, but since we're generating surplus, couldn't that money be—*shouldn't* it be—repurposed into scholarships to reduce our students' debt, especially given the number of graduate students we have who may not be eligible for Blaze Forward? That would reduce a lot of our students' debt, especially at the master's level.

**President:** A critical question is about cross-subsidization of academic programs and how money gets allocated. We're not in a position to set tuition based on actual costs to students per program, although we do charge differential tuition in many areas to help address a portion of that cross-subsidization. A key challenge is at the master's level because our students are bringing debt from their undergraduate educations. While we've done a good job of trying to address undergraduate affordability, we expect most of our master's students to be self-pay. As a country, the cost of graduate education has gotten too expensive for many disciplines, and our disciplines have not been responsive to the credit hours required for credential. Do programs really need to be two years long? In many cases the costs are too high given the outcomes in terms of the salaries that are earned. We all have to work on it together. We'll do what we can to raise more money and help control tuition costs. It's a practical reality that there's no way to charge the explicit cost/real cost for each program.

**Senator:** We fight every summer to get summer classes taught, and we're told it's not in the budget.

**President:** That's a good conversation to have with the Provost. Summers are not treated like regular semesters, so the budgets are usually whatever dollars are left over, but we need to change our mindset and some of our funding to say that summers and winters are going to be a priority in helping students to cross the finish line.

**Senator:** What's the point of a university? Why don't our kids go to vocational schools if career and money are the main thing?

**Andrew Hippisley:** To me it's definitely both/and. You're not going to get an education in linguistics at a vocational school. But if while you're doing linguistics you're teaching them something else, like learning Python or Tableau, those students will be better prepared. If we can get this right, we preserve what the academy is all about.

**Senator:** Students need specific classes to be trained appropriately for the career they want to pursue (e.g., being a speech-language pathologist). Given the limited number of faculty, course offerings, and time, what do you do? You can't have every single student take every single class. That adds more credit hours. We have to give them critical thinking skills and teach them how they can apply them; that, I thought, was the beauty of university and what you don't get at a vocational school. If they want to become a speech-language pathologist, they'll have to get a master's, and if they want to learn Python or AR, they can get that through Coursera.

**Andrew Hippisley:** We have a resource. Teresea Madden, in the President's office, has a wonderful program, all these kinds of certifications, like Python, in a package. There's a tool that tells not only where our students are going with a BA in linguistics (for example), but asking of

employers at the kinds of positions they're getting: "what else besides a BA in linguistics would get a student this job?" And it could be Project Management or some other certification, which the Linguistics Department doesn't have to do. That can be outsourced to another part of the university. This is a new way of thinking, embedding badges and microcredentials, all these hard skills, but faculty in the departments don't have to learn the skills first or hire for them. We already have that.

**President:** We're not asking you to prepare students for every single possible career outcome, but to pick a handful of jobs that require a college degree and help students prepare for those. We need to be able to articulate what we're preparing our students for when they graduate. Especially in liberal arts, you teach a lot of transferable skills; our students need more explicit knowledge about how to take those transferable skills and put them to use.

**Senator:** I guess my question is why do they need to go to university if they can just get these microcredentials?

**President:** You believe there's value in what you're teaching; how do you make that value more explicit and helping students translate that? And then, how do you add microcredentials or whatever else you think is needed for the jobs your students are most likely to get?

There was a time in the United States when having a college degree was a pathway to a middle class, but we're not there anymore. How are we going to adapt? Our students are coming to us, largely from low-income households, with the expectation that they will have a career when they graduate. And whether we like it, or don't like it, they're spending a lot of time and resources to be here. We need to be able to deliver on an outcome for them. Unfortunately, we're not doing that for enough of our graduates. That's the goal of this: to give all you the opportunity to be thoughtful about all this and to come back with ways that we can adapt our curriculum and make use of career services and other services across campus to help create better outcomes for our students.

### **Jackie Fay, COACHE Survey Steering Committee Chair**

- Survey closes on Monday, April 7; little time left
- 56.7% is UTA's current response rate; completion rate is 48.1%; doing 15% better than the cohort average (33%)
- When we compare ourselves to ourselves in 2021, we don't have that completion rate
- College of Business very close to its response rates in 2021
- College of Science and CAPPa far away from their 2021 rates

### **Remarks from the Provost**

- Minors and certificates: Andrew Hippius has been working to come up with a more effective way to do program review so that something happens after the site review team leaves: a conversation about what was said and how to address it, developing a list of action steps and periodic reviews. A problem with the current system is that we're reviewing programs often in a one-off (e.g., a department's PhD program gets reviewed one year, the BS the next); looking for ways to bundle and review all programs in a given department at one time, including majors, minors, and certificates.

- We are taking a look at what's happening with minors and certificates. We've gathered 7 years of data, the number of students that have graduated in particular minors and certificates from AY 2017-23. What should we do with programs where single digits of students graduate in a 7-year period? Should we close them? A similar picture emerges at the graduate level.
- Idea is to sunset the low-producing; refine the existing; and develop new, state of the art programs to meet current needs.
- In the Texas Legislature, the House and Senate are targeting minors and certificates and updating the Texas education code to say there ought to be a review process.
  - Mandating review process every four years for minors and certificates (except for those newly opened)
  - To avoid consolidation or elimination, undergraduate programs must meet one of the following criteria:
    - At least 10 students must have completed the program in the two years before the review; or
    - At least 5 students must be enrolled and have completed the program in the same timeframe.
  - For graduate programs, at least three students must have been enrolled and completed the program in the two years prior to the review.
  - Must be industry involvement as we are reviewing minors and certificates so that we're making sure there's a value add for doing them.
- We have a lot of minors and certificates that are low-producing and fall below the threshold currently being discussed in the legislature. So we need to devise a review process for reviewing minors and certificates.

**Senator:** My department is one of those that has just nine minors in that two-year period, but we're told not to spend our energy recruiting for our minors but for our majors because recruiting minors doesn't help within the current budget model. It feels like the tables are being turned because we've been forced to deemphasize them—and now we might lose them.

**Provost:** There's a budget aspect to this situation, but the focus of this legislation is about the goal of the minors and improving outcomes for our students. Two very different things. So if you think about the philosophy minor and the specific courses that have been chosen, curated for the enhancement that you're pointing out, the question becomes: how do we review it and show that that enhancement is actually happening?

**Senator:** Our department has the largest salary return for our majors in the College of Liberal Arts, so I don't think we need to justify our value, even in capitalistic terms, but I would hate to see our minor cut because we don't have students, when the reason we don't have students is something internal to the university's budget model in terms of our minor.

**President:** Let me clarify; that may be a bit of a misperception. You're rewarded based on SCH production. It doesn't matter whether it's a major, a minor, but there is a weighting associated with lower-division v. upper-division and the discipline itself.

**Senator:** My understanding is we get more in terms of our SCHs when those students are philosophy majors?

**President:** There is a weighting versus if it's your headcount versus a service course; certainly we could get you more information about how that flows. It's not that there's not a value associated with students taking your classes as a minor.

**Senator:** It's good to have students take our classes, but I thought that the number of students who declare our minor doesn't affect the resources our department receives.

**President:** There's some low-hanging fruit, things that we can do, particularly for minors that are on the cusp. You can audit and see how many people have already completed the equivalent of the minor but just not declared it. We'll work on the numbers part. What you should know is that this is coming, and we'll be telling you more about what the new rules will be when this passes in the legislature.

**Senator:** It would be good for the university to really invest in these minors so they can grow. Because I think those numbers reflect a lack of investment.

**Provost:** That may be. I don't want to be overly reductive and say that's the case in every instance. There is some nuance. Much in the same way we've approached the gainful employment, we've approached program by program so that we're being specific. The reasons might be different in different places, but this is coming. Apart from that, we do need a review process for minors and certificates. So one question I have is if there are ideas you have about what we ought to be thinking about as we review them. I'd welcome that feedback.

**Senator:** I'm in the College of Nursing, and I teach some of these certificates. My question is where do the numbers come from, because what I see with my students isn't consistent with what I see in this data. My students are online students; they're not coming to campus.

**Provost:** We have a number of students who start out but don't finish. Or some don't declare it. There are some of those misses. The College might look at how those programs are structured; the AO programs are different.

**Senator:** The issue of declaring is really important. Might a strategy be that units have an opportunity to market those minors? If we all had a more robust approach, those numbers might shift.

**Provost:** This is an opportunity to pay more attention to what's being offered and the value-add. You'll be hearing from us soon about a process. More to come.

**President:** The proposed legislation doesn't say that tomorrow we end minors; it's directing universities to come up with a process to review minors.

**Senator:** It worries me that industry is making these decisions because a lot of industry came from academia (e.g., Google).



**Provost:** It's not that industry is deciding. It's that if you're putting together a certificate that you hope will help your students land a particular job, check with industry first, perhaps via advisory boards.

**Senator:** This list of minors and certificates doesn't take into account when they were created. Some of them on the short end haven't been around for seven years. We're putting a lot of emphasis on ROI when it comes to degrees, but I think universities are here to educate people and make them full citizens who can participate in a democracy. That's what universities have always been there for. And increasingly we're facing these kinds of vocational demands. So if we're going to focus on ROI with *majors*, then why does it matter for minors? The minors in my department are budget neutral. They don't cost anything. They help with SCHs and help the courses to make. But what is the point of saying "it's gotta be about getting a job," because that doesn't seem to me to be the mission of any university.

**President:** Legislatively, this is about a perception that there's too much "woke ideology" in the curriculum and that when you teach a minor in, say, Women and Gender Studies, that has no value, and we should stop doing that. That's the view of people who have testified about this at higher education hearings. Some of what you see from a legislative perspective is to say there should be a process, and you should be able to justify, why you have this minor, why it's relevant. If no one's taking it, you shouldn't be offering it. The legislature is saying they want to make sure we have thought through and have a process for evaluating what we see as valuable for enhancing students' education. The positive is that this gives control to universities with some requirements around how many people have to graduate. From my perspective, that's the least intrusive solution to address this concern around the nature and the content of the minors that we're teaching.

**Senator:** But they haven't passed it yet. We shouldn't comply in advance. Doing so is a big risk. Some of the programs we'd want to defend (e.g., Women and Gender Studies) are important programs that we could make arguments for, but those arguments wouldn't get through.

**President:** No one is proposing closing programs at this point. Your Provost is trying to be proactive and tell you what's coming, because this bill, it's part of SB 37, will pass. So we have to have acute attention to and awareness of because we're going to be expected to comply with it. It's important that the Provost be talking about these issues before they come requirements.

**Provost:** If this passes as it's proposed, there will now be a cost to every minor because it will be a cost to the evaluation.

### Updates from President Cowley

- Bills were due last week in the legislature; we have a good idea of what's been referred to committees and where the priorities are.
- Budget front, more optimistic
  - Placeholders put into the budget for: funding for UTA West, North Texas Water Institute, biomanufacturing, artificial intelligence; doesn't mean they'll all be funded, but if the item isn't in as a placeholder, unlikely it will get in.

- They took away all the institutional enhancement funding at the beginning of the legislative session; this is a good thing. We get about \$2.4 million in institutional enhancement, but the amount universities get is random (big variation). They've taken all those funds, \$23 million, and put it into a pot, and the House proposing to grant it under a performance formula. Iterations we've seen would be a net positive to the university; we might get 4-5x as much as we used to. Would be a fairer way to distribute funds across institutions.
- Once both chambers adopt the appropriations bills, it will go to a conference committee in May and they will sort out what gets funded.
- Formula funding, the big question mark and our largest source of funding, won't be decided until after policy issues are resolved.
- Feeling pretty good on financial front.
- Workforce funds being established for geothermal energy, nuclear energy, film workforce, and healthcare. If a mix make it through the pipeline, those sources of funding would help us.
- SB 37, Higher Education Oversight Bill
  - Filed March 13; heard March 20. The President and Provost met with Faculty Senate leadership to offer comments and feedback. Shared those with System and a number of legislators; we believe comments are being incorporated into a substitute bill. Will come out and get heard very soon (potentially today/tomorrow).
  - SB 37 is likely to incorporate other bills. Topics that are in the bill now:
    - Governance of Faculty Senates: initial language is very troubling; have pushed hard on this to ensure appropriate shared governance
    - Minors, role of minors and how we approve them
    - Hiring of senior administrators and tenured faculty and the Board's role in that
    - Core curriculum and how it's handled
- Other bills being watched:
  - Research Security Bill that will echo spring executive order; likely to result in a discontinuation of programs we offer in China
  - Antisemitism bill related to a student code of conduct that will look like what we've already done in response to governor's spring executive order
  - Bill on remote work on college campuses; focusing on student facing services and making those in person
  - Bill around residency status and immigration status re. qualifying for in-state tuition
  - Bill around duties of tenured faculties; makes more explicit the role of research and teaching; could be cause of revocation of tenure (consistent with what we already do, making it more explicit)
  - Protections for expressive activities on campus had previously been broadened; this bill would constrain free speech on campus so that outside parties could not engage in free speech activities on campus such as protests, would be limited to students, faculty, and staff; in response to last spring's protests
  - Accreditation—would no longer require us to use SACSCOC as our accreditor; reform around accreditors coming from the Department of Education
  - Required nutrition course in core
  - ROI and debt levels and graduate earnings
  - Bills around curriculum and what we can teach—critical

- Innocuous version: can't teach that one race is inherently superior to another.
- SB 2098 says we can't distort a significant historical event; cannot include an aspect that teaches identity politics; can't teach something based on a theory that racism, sexism, oppression, privilege, etc. are inherent in the systems and institutions of the nation or the state or was created to maintain social, political, or economic inequities (related to core curriculum)
- SB 2748, broader, more extreme: prevents any course or program where a student would receive a grade related to critical theory, whiteness, systematic racism, institutional racism, antiracism, microaggressions, implicit bias, intersectionality, social justice, decolonization, gender identity, and so forth; cannot promote an idea that racially neutral or colorblind laws or institutions perpetrate injustice or race-based privilege; cannot promote the different treatment of any individual or group of individuals based on race or ethnicity in contemporary American society, nor promote the idea that a student holds bias on account of their race or sex; can't curate instructional materials on the basis of the identities of the authors, nor participate in a workshop, training, seminar, or professional development on this content.
- Question is whether the curriculum items will be embedded in SB 37 or whether they'll be their own bills. We do not want the state telling us what we should be teaching in our courses.

**Senator:** I want to be cautious about the terms that we use. They keep calling this an antisemitism bill, but it's antisemitic. Attacking critical theory—critical theory was developed in response to Nazi Germany by Jewish intellectuals who escaped the Holocaust and came to the United States. We shouldn't use the same terms they do.

**President:** I appreciate your comments.

**Senator:** How can we continue if these bills pass, especially in their extreme form, how can we continue to offer certain disciplines? Our accreditation bodies in some fields require such acknowledgements.

**President:** The legislature would say you don't need accreditation, and they'd change the rules for licensing professionals. I'm optimistic that the worst of this will not get passed. The key policy staff members I've talked to don't want to put us in a situation like Florida, which passed unclear legislation that creates litigation risk and results in arbitrary decision making in terms of what can and cannot be taught. There were some lessons learned in Florida that the policy folks are paying attention to. But that's not to say we will not see some of this. There is an interest in trying to get a handle on universities and a perception that we are a big problem of what's wrong with America right now. That's what I'm hearing from legislators. How much we can move the needle is going to be critical. The Senate will send some of this stuff out, and then it will go to the House, where there's more balance between Republicans and Democrats. There's more opportunity to shape the legislation on the House side. I'm not ready to answer the question of what we do when this passes. I hope we can get something more acceptable, with minimal impact on what we can teach. On the core curriculum: there will be a tightening. Some of that will be a good thing. Right now, the core curriculum, nationwide, has moved from a common

experience into something that's a very broad menu for students to sample from. We have a transferability problem (e.g., intro to advertising counting as math some places, but not here). The transferability problem is something we can address.

**Senator:** That first bill is aimed at history in the core. What you're describing is more restrictive than the TEKS. If they're not realigning the TEKS, that could be something that could be advanced: why are you being more restrictive at this level than at that one?

**President:** At K-12 they're getting a new course on Modern Conflicts.

**Senator:** At the federal level, the Trump administration is going after specific universities. Do you think at the state level, the UT System is involved in collective action, or is it every institution for itself?

**President:** An explicit part of Project 2025 is to take down the Ivy Leagues. There are other views about major state institutions, but the primary target is the Ivy Leagues. A dilemma around collective v. individual action: university presidents at public schools can't sue anybody. The attorney general of Texas would have to accept our case and sue on our behalf in the matters related to changes in education. That will not happen. The collective action is happening through our associations: AAU (Association of American Universities), APLU (Association of Public and Land Grant Universities), and others; different organizations are suing on different matters, picking particular, representative universities to write letters to help make some of these cases. There is litigation around DEI and IDC matters. We're in regular conversations all the time about what's happening with the various changes. The administration is getting more attuned to what they can do within existing statute and their existing control. We've seen the beginning, not the end, of changes in higher ed. The budget reconciliation bill that comes in May will be critical. That will determine how many of the cuts will stick. The federal tax cut/deficit reduction targets we're hearing are anywhere from 50-60% in NIH and NSF; some funding agencies gone entirely; 80% reduction target in NEH. The executive side can set those targets now. The question is what the legislature's tolerance for reductions is. If funding targets in a particular agency are getting cut, a lot of damage is caused, even on national priorities. Going to DC next week. Writing an op-ed with Dick Benson, president of UTD, about the value of research and federal financial aid and support services. We don't anticipate that any UT System institutions will be explicit targets. But there are actions impacting our campus. A UTA PhD student had their visa revoked last week, not for protest activities but other reasons.

**Senator:** What about the bill about the Board replacing chairs and other administrators? Is it still alive?

**President:** What got rolled into SB 37 is at the Dean level and above. As it was originally proposed, if the Provost wanted to hire a Dean, she would have to tell the Board, the Board would have to take action, and the CV would have to be posted for 30 days. We think that language will be modified. It may just delegate the decision to the President. The hopeful outcome is that it will make it our practice as it exists today.

**Senator:** But the intent was to have the Board have more control?

**President:** There's a perception that the Board members aren't engaged enough in what's happening on our campuses. The governor appoints the Board members; they couldn't possibly serve on curriculum committees, for example. The legislature wants more accountability among Board members but in a practical way.

**Senator:** What's the reasoning behind the PhD student's visa being revoked?

**President:** It was a legitimate reason; that individual understood the reason. No reason for concern.

#### **Amy Austin, APT Committee**

- The committee has prepared a proposal to conduct a title equity study for APT faculty; a similar proposal was undertaken at UT Austin and resulted in title changes for faculty
- Senate endorses proposal

#### **Fred MacDonnell, Tenure and Academic Freedom Committee**

- Met with Provost to express concerns over T&P revision process becoming too quantitative.
- There were two memos and a rubric; the first memo, from the Provost, said T&P guidelines needed to be revised, a reasonable request (there was a lot of ambiguity in documents). When first drafts were submitted and DFS made their initial evaluations and assessments, they were a little overzealous. A rubric was created to score the guidelines. The scored rubrics gave many people the impression that guidelines needed to be revised again. Meeting with the Provost, we found out there had been a second memo where Provost clarified expectations to faculty chairs and committees. Her response to the committee was very reasonable. She wanted to know things like, if an associate professor becomes chair, can you turn that into a performance record to make full? She was seeking more clarification, less ambiguity. Conversation went well. Committee felt reassured that Provost is trying to get understandable, comprehensive, easily read T&P guidelines. Numbers are appreciated, where possible; clarification on specifics best addressed ahead of time.

**Chair:** Deans are the ones approving the T&P guidelines in each college. Rubrics were shared in some colleges but not others. Different Deans made different decisions about whether to pass the rubrics on.

**Fred MacDonnell:** The Provost said you can ignore the rubrics; you can get the Provost's direct feedback from Minerva.

**Senator:** The Provost reviewed the guidelines and wrote comments on those submitted as Word documents, and departments can ask to see that feedback.

Senate entered Faculty Forum (held in executive session) at 4:30.

**Meeting adjourned 5:00 pm**

**Next meeting: May 7, 2025**