****

**FACULTY SENATE MEETING**

**University Union 332**

Minutes September 11, 2024, 2:00 p.m.

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| **Acree, William E.** | CHEM  COS | P | **Joyner, William** | MUVS  MUSIC | P | **Quevedo-Torrero, Jesus Ubaldo** | CSE  CENG | A |  |  |  |
| **Armintor Marshall** | ENGL  CLASS | P | **Kim, Jungkwun** | EENG  CENG | P | **Rubio, Brenda** | TEA  CENG | P |  |  |  |
| **Bednarz, Jim** | BIOL  COS | P | **Knight, Laetitia** | WLLC  CLASS | P | **Sankofa, Nicole** | EPSY  COE | A |  |  |  |
| **Ben Othmane, Lotfi** | CSE  CENG | P | **Lemberger-Truelove, Matthew** | CHE  COE | P | **Savoie, Michael** | SCM  RCOB | P |  |  |  |
| **Briggle, Adam** | PHIL  CLASS | P | **Lund, Brady** | IS  COI | P | **Scott Bracey, Pamela** | MDI  CACS | P |  |  |  |
| **Britain, Jeffrey** | HTM  CMHT | P | **Manzo, Maurizio** | MEEN  CENG | P | **Schalkwyk, Willem van** | MUVS  COM | P | **Temporary Senators (voting)** | | |
| **Campbell, Doug** | LIBR | P | **Martin, Eugene** | MRTS  CLASS | L | **Schoolfield, Anne** | ENGL  CLASS | P | Orhan Erdem |  | A |
| **Chamberlin, Adam** | DANC  CLASS | L | **May, Andrew** | MUCS  COM | P | **Sexton, Mike** | MGMT  RCOBB | P | Rick Cazier |  | A |
| **Chaing, Jason** | EPSY  COE | P | **McKay, Melissa** | MDI | P | **Sheppard, Steven** | SPAN  CLASS | P |  |  |  |
| **Condrey, Coby** | LIBR | P | **Morton, Sophie** | WLLC  CLASS | P | **Shiner, David** | PHYS  COS | P |  |  |  |
| **Evans, Sarah** | IS  COI | P | **Mukherjee, Sundeep** | MSE  CENG | P | **Subramaniam, Karthigeyan** | TEA  COE | P |  |  |  |
| **Frenzel, Ervin** | CSE  CENG | P | **Najour, Caroline** | WLLC  CLASS | P | **Thurman, Emily** | SPAN  CLASS | P |  |  |  |
| **Ginther, Jeannette** | TEA  COE | P | **Nasco, Dennis** | MGMT  RCOB | P | **Trippeer, Barbara** | ADES  CVAD | P |  |  |  |
| **Hutchison, Paul** | ACCT  RCOB | P | **Ojha, Divesh** | SCM  RCOB | L | **Trudeau, Justin** | COMM  CLASS | L |  |  |  |
| **Iaia, Joseph** | MATH  COS | P | **Peters, John** | ENGL  CLASS | P | **Welch, Lisa** | BIOL  COS | P | **STUDENT SENATORS (non-voting)** | | |
|  |  |  | **Philpot,**  **Denise** | ADA | P | **Wilson, Carol** | MUVS  COM | P | Alfred Dozier IV | SGA | P |
|  |  |  |  |  |  | **Wolski, Kristin** | LIBR | P | Satya Vara Prasad Namala | GSC |  |

Guests: Harrison Keller (President), Mike McPherson (Provost), Holly Hutchins (OFS), Angie Cartwright (OFS), Jennifer Lane (Graduate Council)

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| I. | Welcome and Introductions | * A moment of silence and remembrance for those who lost their lives and those who offered their service on 9/11/2001. * Approval of nominations of temporary Senators **[vote]**   + **There is no discussion; Chair calls a vote, unanimous** * A warm welcome to our new senators |
| II. | Approval of Minutes (June 12, 2024) **[vote]** | * Approval of Qualtrics Results Report In lieu of Meeting Minutes for the June 12, 2024 Faculty Senate meeting * **Hutchinson motion, 2nd McKay, no discussion, unanimous** |
| III. | University Update (President Harrison Keller / Provost Mike McPherson) | President Keller   * Taking a deliberate and thoughtful approach in these first five weeks, but has already identified three areas that need focused efforts this fall: strategic budgeting, expanding research, and bolstering student success. He would like to work in partnership with faculty on these and with leaders from all over campus.   + Strategic Budget - UNT operates on about a billion dollars a year, which has been distributed based on historical and incremental budgeting. This budget style makes it hard to focus resources on strategic priorities or to budget for contingencies. The President charged the Chief Financial Officer with a charter, and they have assembled a team made up of a steering committee and a technical committee. Their assignment is to develop and implement a new strategic budgeting process that will be much more transparent and give us the ability to align budgets with goals for the university. They will engage with budget officers from across the university to create a process that can be rolled out in January, with some course corrections expected in future terms.   + Research – We have made tremendous progress with over $92 million on the HERD report. The net new dollars from TUF were over 16 million. We are working with the VP for Research on how to focus these dollars strategically in line with the intent of the legislation but also in ways that we will be able to draw down additional state and federal dollars and make ourselves more competitive for private dollars as well. They are still organizing the charter and committees for this area.   + Student Success – We have made some good progress but are not where we should be. In terms of student persistence, nearly 1 out of 4 students don’t finish their degree. Most have debt when they drop out. Also, our graduation rates are still in the low 60’s. He argues that the issue is not just about graduation rates but also how well-equipped students are for what they do next, whether in school or a good job or career, with a sense of purpose. He has charged Lisa McEntire (VP for Student Success) and her office with developing a charter. She is assembling a steering committee. This will require engagement across the university. * The President is asking for the faculty’s help and partnership in two key areas:   + Student Support – From his role as commissioner, he saw the impact of COVID-19 on higher education statewide and the continued impact of never-before-seen high demand for academic remediation and student mental health services. There might be a natural temptation to lower the challenge level for students. The President asks for our partnership to maintain high standards and expectations, meet students where they are, and offer high support. This will keep our students competitive for top graduate schools and jobs. He realizes that raises several questions. How do we need to organize universities to facilitate that? How do we better support faculty in dealing with a different set of challenges than five years ago? It also has policy implications because we don't want faculty to buy in and work to improve the student experience and then have those faculty be penalized in the context of promotion and tenure. We want to recognize the work of realizing the vision. He is not here to present solutions but is asking for faculty partnership.   + Civil Discourse in a Democratic Society – The President has been concerned about what he has seen happening on many campuses over the last few years. Faculty, including at UNT, have said they are unsure about bringing up controversial topics in class. They are wary of how students might react or whether the institution will support them. So here is where the President stands: He sees institutions like the University of North Texas as essential American institutions. That means we have a responsibility to uphold our American values, including free speech. We need to have a deep and clear commitment to free speech, and at the same time, as a research university, we must be committed to academic freedom. That needs to be absolutely clear. As an educational institution, we have a responsibility to educate citizens for the republic – citizens who will participate and those who will lead. Again, he is not presenting a proposal but asking for partnership with faculty and administration, as well as student partnership, in promoting civic discourse and educating the students on how to have difficult conversations on controversial topics. * The audience offered their applause for President Keller’s comments. * Questions for the President   + Meredith Gross, senior student and writer for the North Texas Daily – In what ways are you looking for faculty and students to work together on civic conversations?     - He wants to emphasize an invitation for students, faculty, and administration to develop this together. There are many natural opportunities, especially in the context of core courses, communication courses, and social science. But we can do more than that. He looks forward to working with faculty leadership and with the students on what our strategy at North Texas should look like. He will be setting up a student advisory council for the president, and this is one of the requests he is bringing to the group.   + Chair – To help the Faculty Senate understand what’s happening with the organization of the university, please explain recent changes to your cabinet.     - At the end of his first month, he reconstituted his cabinet to include two deans, the chairs of both faculty and staff senates, the student government president, and the graduate student council. Two meetings so far have been informative, and we have had much better conversations about initiatives with all the representatives at the table.   + Senator McKay – What is the official stance about allowing voter registration in the classroom and does it include civic education classes?     - The Texas Code has specific restrictions on public resources. The analysis from general counsel said that includes classrooms in terms of class time. The recommendation is not to have outside groups doing outreach in the context of class time, but outside of classes, groups can continue to do outreach on campus.   Provost McPherson   * FY2024-2025 Budget   + He can give a quick overview, but if we would like in-depth information, we could invite Clayton Gibson to come and talk with the Senate.   + We shrank in enrollments for the first time in many years, but our organization’s expenses continue to rise with inflation, like in our personal lives.   + Some cuts were necessary, but we hope temporary. Of the $8.5 million cuts, most fell on Academic Affairs, about 45%, and the rest came out of colleges. Most deans managed at the college level by not filling immediately vacant lines. Many also delayed other opportunities for non-mandatory short-term expenses.   + We are not talking about cutting positions or laying off staff or faculty.   + We think enrollments will go back up, and he appreciates the faculty's role, especially in the graduate program. However, we need to work on the fact that UNT is very dependent on tuition revenue, so we need to reduce our reliance. With our new president, we believe that we can continue the conversation with the legislature for support. That's the primary way.   + Indeed, the TUF funding needs to be invested in more research. But there is a second level of funding that Pam Padilla says we are very close to this year.   + We also need to be aware of growing programs and those that need to grow faster.   + Fundamentally, the university is thriving.   + Question to the provost on the budget – Meredith Gross (Student Reporter): if the deans do not immediately fill these open faculty lines, how is work being performed?     - Provost states that others in departments have managed the workload, which is not ideal. However, he is not worried about classes not being taught as a result. * Other Questions for the Provost   + Senator Peters – We received an email that said three faculty senate committees are going to be discontinued. Could you give us a bit more detail on that?     - Provost recognized that this is an upsetting thing for all of us. As stated in the memo, the Office of General Counsel and our Office of Compliance notified us that these committees do not comply with SB 17. And the consequences of not complying with that law are dire.   + Lee Bacon – I have a follow-up question. One of the organizations cut was the new faculty committee. Why was that canceled?     - We had to disband some of these groups, and we didn’t think it was fair to disband some of them and not others. However, the main thing the Provost wants to make clear is that this is not about not supporting our faculty. We will take this moment to rethink and reconsider - where are the best ways to support our faculty? What could we do differently? It is not budget-cutting. The same budget given to these groups will be given to the Office of Faculty Success, and they will be charged to support faculty in new and better ways. He asks for the faculty’s partnership to rethink this.   + Senator Trippeer – For the faculty who are involved as advisors for the student groups that gather around these identities, what role can the faculty have under the law?     - The Provost understands that student groups are particularly exempt from the law. So, faculty should continue to be what they should be: the facilitator and not the leader of activities.   + Senator Mukherjee – Again, related to the budget and the enrollment numbers. Is that specific to UNT, or are these trends across the state and nationally?     - The “demographic cliff” is close in Texas but has not hit yet. We have managed this with international students at the master's level, which is where we saw the enrollment dip this year. But, we can prepare for the time when undergraduate enrollment decreases. We can expand the online programs that are in demand. Also, we have just scratched the surface of the adult learner pool. Crazy numbers of people started but have not finished their undergraduate degrees. We can get back to them, give them credit for their work, and help them finish. |
| IV. | Faculty Policy Oversight Committee (Lawrence Williams / Angie Cartwright) | * Senator Lawrence and Assistant Vice Provost Cartwright, co-chairs, reviewed how policies are brought to and reviewed by the committee and brought to the Faculty Senate. * Senators are encouraged to contact the committee co-chairs with specific recommendations or suggestions during the three weeks after the 1st Reading of a policy. We ask you to do this primarily because we will not have time for lengthy discussions of wording during the Faculty Senate meetings. * Visiting the website to see all the policies and reading more about the process is recommended. Policies related to faculty can be found in Chapter 6. By the time it reaches the FPOC committee, the administration has reviewed the policy and given feedback, so it has been discussed and negotiated when it reaches the Senate floor. Every policy in the manual has to be reviewed every six years. We have about six to review this year, but a couple were reviewed last year. * Second Read [vote]   + 06.034 Awarding Posthumous Degrees – recommend that it be dissolved and converted into a procedure. The process will still happen, but the Dean of Students will now handle it. This is just one example of a policy from the manual that could be converted into a procedure. The benefit of this conversion is that if something isn't working, it can be adjusted quickly instead of changed through a 6-9 month process.   + Senator Peters – has the committee consulted the students affected by this policy? (Peters is being facetious).   + Senator Hutchinson – how many of these degrees have been awarded, and what is the cut-off for credits completed by the student?     - These awarded degrees are significant to families, but we have awarded less than 5 over the five years. In terms of required credits completed, this is decided by the Dean of Students with the Provost. Angie confirms there is a system of checks and balances in the process. * The chair makes the motion; no second is needed because it is coming from a committee. One abstention, and the motion passes. |
| V. | Graduate Student Teaching Program [GSTEP] (Aubree Evans / Babafunso Adegbola / Rudi Thompson / Natalia Zagajewska) | * Our guests were invited to explain the GSTEP program that our graduate students can use as an opportunity to learn about teaching and practice. The program team hopes to spread the word amongst faculty about the program's potential. * All graduate students enrolled in at least one for-credit course at UNT are eligible to participate. * The syllabus is consistent between semesters, but it is kept up to date with the latest research on teaching fundamentals. The program is especially beneficial for international graduate students who are transitioning to working with new student populations. * Departments can collaborate with GSTEP instructors to tailor a session for their students. This has been done for business and arts students. * Learning objectives   + Apply best practices in teaching and learning   + Develop a lesson plan to implement in a higher education setting   + Implement a teaching plan in a higher education setting   + Develop as a higher education professional * A key part of the program is the teaching practicum. There are four steps   + They find a course that fits their interests and qualifications.   + They observe the course to learn more about the students and structure   + With the instructor of record, they develop a teaching plan for a class session   + The student writes a self-reflection * If the student is a TA, they can teach a session in that course, but if not, they need to find a course and contact an instructor. * The course doesn’t have to be in the student’s college, just something that is a passion of theirs or something from their culture. Courses can be in-person, online, or hybrid. * They have had faculty unfamiliar with the program reject students, so they want faculty to get to know about the program. Having a guest lecture in your course can be a great opportunity. * If you have a course you think would work well, please reach out to the GSTEP team (gstep@unt.edu) |
| VI. | Faculty Senate orientation (Coby Condrey) | * Chair reminds us about the Faculty Senate Mission and Vision   + The mission of the Faculty Senate is to lead faculty in fulfilling their responsibilities in the shared governance of the University and to represent faculty interests to University and community stakeholders. The Faculty Senate is responsible for exercising its vested authority in ensuring that academic freedom is encouraged and protected, and for acting as a guiding body to oversee curriculum that promotes student learning through a rigorous course of study. The Faculty Senate serves as a liaison between faculty and administration. This includes:     - developing and implementing the strategic plan of the University;     - informing faculty about University policies, procedures, and substantive changes made by the administration;     - informing faculty about University policies, procedures, and substantive changes made by the administration;     - informing faculty about University policies, procedures, and substantive changes made by the administration;   + Vision: The Faculty Senate will be seen by University and community stakeholders as a valued partner in the fulfillment of the University's mission. It will establish itself as an efficacious champion of academic quality, as the authority for the delivery of education services, and as the source of advice and support for University administration. The Faculty Senate will be perceived by faculty and administrators as a well-respected body that has a substantive role in University governance. The work of the Faculty Senate will be seen as highly relevant to the daily endeavors of faculty and to University decisions that affect academic affairs. * Each senator must read the materials in advance of the meetings – you can find them attached to the Outlook invite. * It is also essential that you treat the information as privileged. There may be information that is just for you to know, not forward to external sources. * If you have a concern about anything in the material, try to address it in advance of the meeting. Look where the information comes from; for example, if it came from a committee, reach out to the chair if needed. * Another best practice is to consult your constituency. When you get the first read on a policy, you can send that policy via the email Outlook group set up for you (search "Faculty Senate" in the address book and find the number of your group). Let the constituents read it, and if they see something they have a concern about, they can relay it back to you, and you can address it in advance. * If you want to get business on the faculty senate agenda, reach out to your group’s Executive Committee representative or a Faculty Senate Officer. Note – the more lead time we have and the more time we can communicate about topics in the EC, the more we can keep the Faculty Senate running efficiently. * It is also best practice to be sure to sign in when you arrive for a Senate meeting and pick up your name placard. Place the placard in a visible place in front of you. Additionally, please use and share the microphone so everyone can hear and that comments will be audible in the recording. * Also, if the Chair has not formally recognized you by name, please say your name before speaking. **We will not put specific names in the official minutes for discussions.** But if you mention a problem that we can resolve, it helps the officers know who said it so we can follow up. * Motions   + If you can write it down in advance, that helps the secretary correctly record the business the Senate is working on.   + Many motions from the floor require a second, but those from committee do not.   + Once a motion is on the floor, we will have a discussion. Sometimes, during a discussion, you decide that you need to change the wording. You can amend it at that point. Once the business is on the floor and there is an amendment, there can be no more motions until we have dealt with the amendment. You must get something on the floor seconded before changing the words.   + The person who makes a motion can withdraw it as long as there is no objection from another Senator. If there is an objection from another Senator, then we have to vote on whether it can be withdrawn.   + We have a bad precedent of using the word “tabling.” Officially, that means setting it aside while we talk about something more urgent, which rarely happens in our setting. Instead, if you want to not talk about a motion right now, use the proper term “postpone.” You can make a motion to postpone indefinitely or to postpone for the next meeting. That's how to stop discussing something we are not taking action on.   + "Calling the question" happens after an extended discussion, and people start to repeat themselves. A senator can call the question, meaning we will vote now. It requires a second to call the question. * Voting   + Most votes will be a show of hands. Please keep your hand in the air until the chair says, "Okay," and moves on to the next voting category.   + You do have a right to ask for a roll call if you think the vote is too close. * Clarification – in order for visitors to speak, they need to be recognized by a senator. * Remember to build trust by following through, staying on task or topic in discussions, and maintaining civil discourse. Remember that, as a part of democracy, changes take time. * Jill Stover, the Administrative Coordinator for the Faculty Senate, is our number one resource supporting our work. |
| VII. | Committee on Committees (Melissa McKay) **[vote]** | * Call for nominations for standing committee vacancies   + Voting groups caucused to fill the vacancies * Call for voting to accept these nominations as a block. Berdnaz moves, and Mukherjee seconded. Approved. |
| VIII. | Executive Committee Update (William Joyner) | * The EC appointed Srinivasan Srivilliputhur to the Faculty Policy Oversight Committee. * The EC accepted the Committee on the Status of Faculty of Color 2023-24 end-of-year report. |
| IX. | Other Standing Committees Updates **[vote]** | * UUCC Report/Minutes [September 2024] (Natalie Ellis / Courtney Glazer) Glazer presents minutes. The vote is unanimous. * Graduate Council Report/minutes [June 2024] (Jennifer Lane) The August meeting lacked members to create a quorum, so we have the June minutes. Summer agendas are brief, but there will be longer meetings coming up. The vote is unanimous. |
| X. | New Business | None |
| XI. | Old Business | |  | | --- | |  | | None | |
| XII. | Comments for the Good of the Order | * **Remaining fall Faculty Senate general sessions: October 9 (University Union 332), November 13 (TBD), December 11 (TBD)** * Faculty Senate Officers have regular meetings with the provost now. This will allow us to bring up issues that bubble up directly with him.   + Senator points out that the parking and transportation needs an organization chart on the website. They only have a general email address. * The UNT Division of Research and Innovation will host the [2024 University Research Day](https://research.unt.edu/research.unt.edu/events/research-day-2024) 9 a.m.- 5 p.m. Oct. 4 in various rooms of the University Union. * The Faculty Awards Committee is seeking nominations for the Minnie Stevens Piper award. Eligibility information, nomination materials and the deadline can be found on the [Faculty Senate website](https://facultysenate.unt.edu/faculty-senate-awards). * There will be an Open House for the Academic Success Center Sage Hall September 24th from 1-3 pm and September 25th from 10am-12pm; there will be resources tables, workshops, photo-ops with Scrappy, and giveaways for students. * The Office of Faculty Success is hosting a faculty reception at 3 p.m. today (September 11) in University Union 249/the Faculty Lounge. Feel free to go by after the Faculty Senate meeting. |
| XIII. | Adjournment | 3:46 pm |