

**Faculty Senate of the University of Texas at El Paso  
Minutes of the Online Faculty Senate Meeting of July 13, 2021**

Meeting was held via Zoom: <https://utep-edu.zoom.us/j/89322071871?pwd=U0lpQWk5VytDdjRsU3ErbWU4UktwZz09>  
Meeting ID: 893 2207 1871  
Passcode: 396519

**1. Call to Order**

President Núñez-Mchiri called the meeting to order at 3:00. Herrera moved to approve; Genna seconded.

**2. Determination of Quorum and Seating of Alternates**

A quorum being present, the alternates were seated. Herrera moved to approve; Martinez seconded.

**3. Consent Agenda**

Herrera moved that the minutes of the previous meeting be approved. Stratton seconded the motion and they were accepted.

**4. Modifications to the Agenda**

No modifications were noticed.

**5. Announcements**

Núñez-Mchiri asked Provost Wiebe if he had any announcements. Wiebe noted that UTEP's enrollment is down this summer and for the fall. The university has a substantial amount of federal aid that can help students pay for accounts with outstanding balances that are preventing them from enrolling and it is easy to apply for these funds. DACA, undocumented, and international students are eligible for this aid. The university is making every effort to contact students who may owe money to let them know about this assistance. Also, Wiebe noted that the university is supporting competitive faculty development leaves for the first time in many years; 10 faculty will be receiving these awards this year. Wiebe noted that our local community has a high rate of vaccination and that the COVID-19 positivity rate is low, locally, and that the university anticipates a nearly-normal return to regular business for the fall.

Genna asked when notice of development leaves will be made; Wiebe said that the final pieces are being put into place now and announcements will be made very soon. Herrera asked how to get information for students who might benefit from assistance with debts so that they can return to UTEP in the fall; Wiebe said chairs have received an email with this information and that students can be directed to contact the Financial Aid office or their academic advisors. If there is a problem neither of those offices can address, students can write to [studentsuccess@utep.edu](mailto:studentsuccess@utep.edu) and their case will be addressed quickly.

**6. Committee Reports**

A. Executive Committee: Tillman reported that five committees have submitted end-of-year reports and these are posted to the senate website; other committees will submit reports soon. Three committees are in need of chairs for the coming year.

## **7. Presentations**

A. Associate Provost Toni Blum reported on a new effort to redesign some core curriculum classes in light of the new strategic plan. A group will identify core classes and help instructors develop high-impact, active-learning, community-immersion practices that will enhance the student experience of these key classes. These courses already focus on written and verbal communication, computational skills, language ability, and critical thinking and reflection. But the hope is to find ways to recharge these classes in light of the strategic plan goals. The administration will not impose changes from above but seeks to identify and encourage faculty to develop changes from the grass-roots level since the curriculum is owned by the faculty. The administration will support such developments with funding for course development and redesign; course releases for those who coordinate multiple sections of redesigned courses (such as the RWS courses); and grants for course materials. The provost's office will also provide more funding for faculty development; for new information technologists in the CFLD; a new program manager in the Center for Community Engagement; more supplemental instructors in the Miner Learning Center; and more funds for convening meetings or development workshops. This effort will be led by Blum and Karla Iscapa, the director of assessment and evaluation; one provost faculty fellow, Jeff Olimpo; UTEP's Academy of Distinguished Teachers; and Non Tenure-Track faculty, who will be encouraged to see this work as a form of development in the promotion pathways that have recently been developed. Blum welcomes additional feedback. Núñez-Mchiri asked what will drive and direct this change? The needs of the community? Changes in academic fields of interest? Blum replied that there will be an effort to meet our local needs. Fleck asked what the timeline for this redesign is and whether EPCC will participate. Blum said that the target is to complete the redesign over the next five years and that new courses are not anticipated, but that the redesign will focus on what courses are actually doing pedagogically. She said that there will be meetings with EPCC to invite them to participate in these new designs. Wiebe added (in the chat window) that Vice Provost Virginia Fraire will be working closely with EPCC during this redesign.

B. Luis Hernandez provided an overview of Hi-Flex classrooms at UTEP. Pedro Espinoza provided a presentation on the new Learning Studio in UGLC 110. This studio can be used to create podcasts; it has a Media Desk for recorded broadcasts; it has a light board, an excellent teaching tool. They are devoted to meeting faculty teaching needs; they will listen to a professor's outcomes for a course and try to help see how the learning studio can be used to meet them. For appointments, visit: [utep.edu/technologysupport/learning-environment/learningstudio.html](http://utep.edu/technologysupport/learning-environment/learningstudio.html) Núñez-Mchiri challenged and invited Faculty Senators to visit the Learning Studio to report out to their peers in their respective academic units to and consider how to make use of this space in their teaching. Blum noted that a webinar on August 6 may be of interest to faculty interested in uses HiFlex classrooms. Genna asked if there was a list or a map of the current list of HiFlex classrooms. This information will be shared with faculty on the Faculty Senate website.

## **8. New Business**

There was none.

## **9. Adjourn**

Núñez-Mchiri thanked the senate for its service. Fleck moved to adjourn and Herrera seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 3:54 p.m. There will be no Faculty Senate meeting in August. We hope you will enjoy the rest of your summer to recharge. We will resume in September in the Blumberg Auditorium on September 14, 3 pm.

Meetings by Dr. Andrew Fleck, Vladik Kreinovich, and Dr. Gina Núñez-Mchiri, 7/16/2021.