

**Faculty Senate of the University of Texas at El Paso  
Minutes of the Online Faculty Senate Meeting of June 8, 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. Núñez-Mchiri asked Dr. Heyman to offer a brief reflection and moment of silence commemorating the death of UTEP faculty member Dr. Patricia Juarez-Carrillo from the Center for Inter-American and Border Studies (CIBS). Drs. Eva Moya, Dennis Bixler-Marquez, and Núñez-Mchiri also provided her comments. Núñez-Mchiri would also like to remember any other faculty or staff member who lost their lives this past year.

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

A quorum being present, the alternates were seated.

**3. Consent Agenda**

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

**4. Modifications to the Agenda**

No modifications were noticed; additional committees reporting were added to the agenda including D. Student Conduct Committee and E. Museum committee.

**5. Announcements**

No announcements were made initially. Dr. Wiebe provided announcement on COVID and Faculty fellows later in the meeting.

**6. Committee Reports**

A. Executive Committee: Dr. Marc Cox announced the Nominating Committee's slate of candidates for Senate President, Vice-President, and Secretary. Its candidates are the current office holders and their election to a second one-year term in office was recommended. No nominations were made from the floor. Cox conducted an election and Núñez-Mchiri, Tillman, and Fleck were re-elected unanimously.

B. Undergraduate Curriculum Committee: Dr. Art Duval presented a series of recommendations from the UGCC. COBA's Marketing and Management made three requests: modifying its requirement about sophomore-level foreign language; reducing the number of upper-division, non-Business courses, and updating a prerequisite for OSCM 3336. Engineering's Computer Science would modify the prerequisites for CS 2101 and CS 3350 to reflect new courses offered in Mathematics; Mechanical engineering would add preprofessional experience with its 4370. COLA offered four changes: AFST 2300 would enter the core curriculum; ASIA 2300, a new course, would enter the core curriculum and the minor; and CHIC 1311 would be added to the major and the core. CHIC 1311 was

presented as counting as a block elective, but this was a mistake and a friendly amendment from Dr. Paul Edison removed that error. PSYC 1301 would update its catalog language to reflect the anti-racist pedagogy initiatives in COLA. With the friendly amendment on CHIC 1311, these proposals were unanimously approved. \*Subsequently, Associate Dean Crystal Herman joined the Zoom to clarify that a 1000-level course like CHIC 1311 could not fulfill a block elective.

C. Teaching Effectiveness: Dr. Fernando Jimenez presented a proposal by which students who commit academic dishonesty would be excluded from contributing to end-of-semester evaluations in the course where that misconduct occurred. Fleck asked whether this could exclude a student who cheated in the final week of the term and had already completed an evaluation. Jimenez reported that the exclusion would only work for cases adjudicated before the distribution of course evaluation invitations. The proposal would go into effect for Spring 2022. It passed unanimously.

D. Student Grievance: Dr. Tillman reported that the committee has a new chair for the coming year. He reported that Vice Provost Ann Gates continues to help with the new grievance process. That new process is intended to automate some aspects to make the process work more efficiently and quickly. The committee has developed a program with guidance on how faculty can be more transparent with students in order to avoid creating grievances in the first place. New UTEP faculty will receive this guidance and current faculty may be offered the guidance as well.

E. Museum: Dr. Laura Rodriguez reported on the change of chairs of the committee and its membership and encouraged everyone to explore the virtual Lhaxhang website via the museum.

## **7. Presentations**

A. Tenure and Promotion: Dr. Ann Gates presented on the provost's office's efforts to respond to the concerns expressed in the COACHE survey. A sizeable number of faculty reported lack of clarity about tenure standards; many associate professors expressed lack of clear standards for promotion. The Provost's Office conducted listening sessions to gather more information. It is working on approaches to improve and provide more mentoring opportunities. Departmental and colleges T&P committees will also receive reminders that FMLA leave includes a complete halt to professional development and should not be used against those who avail themselves of it. Other aspects of the listening sessions and COACHE survey include making sure that teaching and service excellence are appropriately valued in promotion decisions. The HOOP could be clarified on a number of points. In addition, Gates mentioned that the Provost's office recently sent out a memo about the tenure process and acknowledged that this made some candidates anxious. The memo was intended to address the feedback about clear and transparent guidelines, as well as the importance of candidates making their qualifications for tenure/promotion clear with evidence submitted in all areas of evaluation in accordance to workload distribution. She also pointed out that interdisciplinary research and education is valued. The memo also clarified how external evaluation should be conducted. Also, it included provisions for a COVID-19 Impact Statement, since the recent pandemic had such a detrimental effect on the productivity of many faculty preparing for tenure applications. Fleck mentioned that he has heard some frustration from faculty about the inconsistent use of PARs over

time. Gates agreed that this is being addressed. Fleck suggested that Personnel Committees might benefit from a more formal orientation and “norming” process from the Provost’s office. Gates said that was a worthwhile recommendation. Vukovic commented that candidates would benefit from feedback earlier in their process. Gates said it was important for chairs to be in regular communication with tenure-track faculty and that the third-year review was an important part of the whole process. Lesser asked about ensuring that publications are of the right quality; Gates said that it was important for departmental committees, more familiar with the discipline, to comment on the quality of publications. Núñez-Mchiri thanked Gates for hosting a series of listening sessions with faculty on COACH results.

B. Provost’s Office: Wiebe thanked Gates for her efforts on behalf of faculty development, including in helping to relaunch faculty development leave. He commented on the state of COVID-19 and its impact on campus. Many statistics show that locally and on campus, the vaccination effort is very significantly reducing the impact of the virus. The campus will soon discontinue on-campus COVID testing and is rapidly returning to normal, face-to-face operations. Carrola asked about flexibility for departments to employ faculty to teach online. Wiebe stressed that such offerings should be strategic, employed in the best interest of students. The return of significant fees to cover the costs of distance learning requires such a strategic approach. Wiebe commented on the Faculty Fellows program in the provost’s office, thanking those whose terms are complete and welcoming new and returning fellows. He said that this program has many benefits, both for the fellows who gain institutional leadership experience, and for the provost’s office, since it helps the provost know the issues that matter to faculty.

## **8. New Business**

Núñez announced that the UT System is having an LGBTQIA event on June 11. Information on the event is posted on the Faculty Senate website.

## **9. Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned at 4:23 p.m.

Next Faculty Senate meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, July 13<sup>th</sup> at 3 pm via Zoom.