

The University of Texas at Tyler
Office of the Faculty Senate

Thursday February 20, 2025

12:30-1:50 p.m.

Hybrid Meeting

***Special Note: Due to technical issues no recording or attendance record is available.
The following is a summary generated by AI that has been reviewed for accuracy.***

Meeting summary for Faculty Senate Open Meeting (02/20/2025)

Quick recap

The meeting covered various updates and initiatives, including the announcement of finalists for a presentation, the upcoming leadership program, the AI integration grant, and the Credit for Prior Learning program. Discussions also revolved around updates from the bookstore, a proposal for funding to support first-generation students, changes in federal grants, and updates from the Texas legislature's biennial session. Lastly, the meeting touched on a pilot program for parking for adjunct faculty.

Next steps

- Lisa Bush to provide updates on any changes to federal grant policies and procedures as they become available.
- Colleen Swain to email textbook adoption handout to all faculty.
- Colleen Swain to consult with Faculty Senate regarding faculty preferences for meeting with Amentahru about first-generation students.
- Courtney Smith to meet with Lance Williams and other concerned faculty to discuss House Bill 2899 and its potential impact on core curriculum courses.
- Faculty Senate to keep members informed about evolving understanding of House Bill 2899.
- Andy Krause to continue implementation of campus walkability improvements.
- Faculty to RSVP for the Academy of Distinguished Teachers learning forum on March 11th.
- Faculty conducting human subjects research to consider reaching out to Jessica Escareno about the Community Scientist Program for assistance with study design and participant recruitment.

Summary

Dean Searches and Strategic Updates

The meeting began with a discussion about the previous minutes. The secretary was absent, so the previous minutes were reviewed via email. A motion to approve the previous minutes was made and seconded. The attendance was recorded, both in-person and online. The provost, Dr. Mirmiran, was invited to provide updates. Dr. Philly was mentioned to present a strategic plan refresh and master plan update at a meeting the following day. The updates were approved by the Board of Regents. Two Dean searches were discussed, one for the Dean of Graduate School and the other for the Dean of Fish College of Pharmacy.

Faculty Senate Updates and Initiatives Discussed

The Faculty Senate discussed several updates and initiatives. The first was the announcement of finalists for a presentation, which was expected to take place before the end of the semester. The second was the upcoming leadership program for the next fall, with applications and nominations expected to be open soon. The third was the AI integration grant, which would be announced the following week, seeking high-impact interdisciplinary ideas to equip students with emerging AI skills. The fourth was the Credit for Prior Learning (CPL) program, which would be piloted for the BAAS program and potentially extended to other programs. Lastly, the University Academy's accelerated 3-year degree program was discussed, with the aim of offering pathways for selected programs. The conversation ended with a discussion on the implications of the CPL program for students and the need for faculty involvement in the process.

Bookstore Updates and Funding Proposals

The faculty senate meeting discussed updates from the bookstore, including a new adoption portal and training options for faculty. The bookstore manager, Kirsten, has committed to assisting faculty with adoptions and will attend department meetings. The faculty senate also discussed a proposal to the UT system for funding to support first-generation students, with a speaker from Harvard scheduled to visit the campus. Lastly, the meeting touched on the changes in federal grants and their impact on the university, with the associate vice president for research, Lisa Bush, invited to discuss the situation.

Higher Education Updates and Concerns

The meeting discussed various updates and concerns related to the current state of affairs in higher education. The speaker, Courtney Smith, provided an update on the Texas legislature's biennial session, which began on January 14th and will continue until June 2nd. She mentioned that the legislature has to pass a balanced budget every other year, and that the Senate Finance Committee has already taken testimony from institutions of higher education. Courtney also mentioned that there are likely to be large higher education governance reform bills, including one that could affect faculty senates. She also discussed the potential for a bill that would affect how core curricula are taught in higher education, which could limit the topics covered in certain courses. Courtney also clarified that the institutional enhancement funds have been cut, representing a \$423 million cut to higher education across the state. The conversation ended with a discussion about the potential impact of these changes on the core curriculum and the teaching of scientific theories.

Environmental Science Class Topic Discussion

The meeting involved discussions about various topics, including a pilot program for parking for adjunct faculty. The Faculty Senate also discussed their participation in the University of Texas System, Faculty Advisory Council, and the Texas Council of Faculty Senates. Updates were given about the Master Plan reveal and discussion, the Academy of Distinguished Teachers' learning and teaching forum, and the Homecoming events. Lastly, the Community Scientist Program was introduced as a resource for researchers to gain different perspectives on their target populations.