

The University of Texas at Tyler

Office of the Faculty Senate

Thursday, June 26, 2025

12:30-1:33 p.m.

Hybrid Meeting

Recording:

https://uttyler.zoom.us/rec/share/1cvKAA9d_BHw2qGCCxlgZHoQn_4WxRCKx_mfqk5ywt1eSB90qnHjb62UhZ_DUNT-.DA_fE_e6m20qOAce

Faculty Senate

	Class of 2025	Class of 2026	Class of 2027
At Large	Nelson Fumo	Dominick Fazarro*	Kevin Gosselin
CAS	Matthew Kelly*	Kenneth Bryant	Katrin Kellner
Soules COB	Vivek Pandey	Brent Beal	Marwan Al-Sharmi
CEP	Forrest Kaiser	Ramona Grad	Gina Doecker*
COE	Chung Goh*	Aaditya Khanal	Ali Ghorshi
SON	Dixie Rose*	Gina Dudley*	Michelle Nelson
COP	Ayman Hamouda	Santosh Aryal*	Farah Deba
Library	Nicholas Bambach	Michael Skinner*	Esmeralda Rodgers
SHP	Jessica Escareno	Ahmed Abdelal	Arturo Arce-Esquivel*
SOM	James Menard	Pierre Neuenschwander*	Sujitha Nandimandalam

*means member was in attendance

Senate Executive Officers 2024-2025

Joshua Banta* President	Yanira Oliveras* President-Elect
Amentahru Walhrab* Past President	Catherine Ross Parliamentarian
Dixie Rose* Secretary	Pierre Neuenschwander* Treasurer

In Person Attendance: Mena, Souliman, Barbara Hass, Scott Dillingham, Colin Snider, Daniel Deslatte, Gracy Buentello, Amir Mirmiran, Lou Ann Berman, Rick Helfers, Courtney Smith, Christina Forisha, Jeff Noblit, Stephanie Fenter

Zoom Attendance: Anita Lowe, Yonjoo Cho, Lisa Dempsey, Zain Al Hour, Lynn Harris, Rochell McWhorter, Lorri Allen, Rhiannon Meyer, Woonhee Sung, Zita Hüsin, Kerrie Anne Ambort Clark, Sarah Sass, Carla Lacerda, Tara Propper, Susan Rossman, Lisa Bush, Mohammed Ali, Melissa Dobbs, Melissa Clayton, Hannah Buchanan, Kim Nimon, Julie Delello, Gina Nickels-Nelson, Becky McKay, Sonia Hernandez, Heshium Lawrence, Jason Smee, Colleen Swain, Mayzan Isied, Andrew Pettee, Denise Sprenkle, Elmer Manzano, Mary Perez, Matthew Mekalip, Melissa Hill, Jessica Sexton, Beverley Golden, David Criswell, Leah Velarde, Danielle Bailey, Melissa Gabel, Mukul Shirvaikar, Elizabeth Sills, Carla Biondillo, Johnna Darby, Emily Battle, Jolain LaMott, Brittany Childs, Chuck Brown, Jessi Reel, Kim Livingston-Cobb, Jared Sexton, Jo Simmons, Wei-Chin Ho, Brenda Burton, Sally Bouis, Sonja Morale, Isai Ramirez, Lauren Kirby, Rachel Motes, Dennis Cliborn, Pamela Beall, Kimberly Reagan, Lisa Jett, Steve Myers, Cindy Davis, Aarthi Ravichandran, Stephen Ford, Haley Gallagher, Louis Perkins, Cindy Strawn, Elizabeth Lisot-Nelson, Joey Saxon

12:30 – Welcome and Call to Order (Dr. Josh Banta)

- Dr. Oliveras reminded online attendees to sign in via chat.
- May minutes were approved.

President Philley Updates

Texas Legislature: SB 37 signed into law; Faculty Senates must be established by the Board of Regents. Implementation guidance pending from UT System.

Dr. Philley expressed appreciation for UT Tyler's culture of shared governance and pledged a seamless, transparent transition process.

Open Meetings Act: Curriculum proposals and agendas must be posted online.

Curriculum Review: UT System will now require curriculum reviews every five years.

New Office of Ombudsman created by Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB).

Federal Updates

Dr. Philley attended a recent meeting of university presidents in Washington, D.C.

Concerns discussed:

- **Facilities and Administration (F&A) / Indirect Costs (IDC)** reductions across the board. Dr. Philley explained that this is part of federal efforts to balance budgets, not punitive. Institutions will need to re-evaluate how research is funded and allocate resources accordingly.
- **Student Financial Aid:** Significant changes expected.
- **Pell Grant** restructuring is likely but uncertain.

In-State Tuition Policy Change: If a student is not a resident of the USA, they have to pay full tuition.

Question: Will this new tuition rule affect students who previously qualified via in-state high school graduation?

Answer: Yes, this rule makes them ineligible now. Students who graduate from a Texas public high school and attend a Texas public college (as of 2021) previously qualified for in-state tuition. Under the new rule, non-U.S. citizens must now pay out-of-state tuition. It may also impact graduate students receiving \$1,000 fellowships, which were previously granted at in-state rates.

Dr. Philley estimated: Approximately 70 students might be impacted, though citizenship status is not currently verified.

A faculty member asked for clarification regarding indirect cost proposals. Dr. Philley explained that three proposals were submitted. We need to rethink research funding models under the new federal framework.

Question: What is the status of Pell Grant changes, and should we be worried?

Answer: There is anxiety, but specifics are still unclear. There may be reductions and shifts in eligibility. Some students may benefit; others may lose funding.

Faculty expressed appreciation for Dr. Philley's positive attitude amid potential challenges.

Question: How are these changes being communicated to students?

Answer: We haven't issued communication yet due to the lack of finalized information. UT System is committed to student success.

Dr. Philley's Campus Updates:

- **Soules COB 4th Floor Build-Out:** Approved and prioritized to better serve students.
- **Master Plan:** Includes new roads, a new entrance, and infrastructure updates to support future dorm construction. A map with timelines to be shared soon.
- **School of Medicine (SOM):** New building to open at the end of the fall. Clinical services and instructional rooms are to be operational by next summer.
- **COP:** Dean search to conclude next week; announcement forthcoming.
- **SON:** The Anesthesia program is now accredited.
- **College of Pharmacy:** Accreditation status ongoing.

Budget and Enrollment:

- Budget draft submitted and will be shared with deans upon approval.
- Raises are a top priority, with a target of no more than 2.5%.
- Endowment spending deadline approaching. Faculty encouraged to coordinate with deans.
- Summer enrollment is up; fall enrollment is also expected to increase.
- Performance-Based Funding may become a reality in higher education.

Rose Scholars Program:

- The President's Office is expanding the program. Ten students selected for Fall 2025. They will serve as UT Tyler ambassadors, support branding, and represent the university at key events.

Convocation:

- Scheduled for Friday, August 22, 2025.
- Faculty Reception from 5:00–7:00 p.m., organized by Brittany Childs' team. This is a social event for new and returning faculty; spouses welcome.

Question: What about SB 2615 regarding telework?

Answer: There's a general legislative push to bring employees back to campus. UT Tyler already addressed this about six months ago. There might be a need for some changes. More accommodating to adjuncts and online faculty.

Faculty Comment: The bill suggests everyone must be on campus.

Gracy Buentello explained that some telework may be allowed for those teaching online.

Dr. Philley: Faculty members are not hourly workers. As long as teaching and duties are fulfilled, the faculty are on campus. Our priority remains student and institutional success. Outliers (e.g., teaching abroad without notice) may pose challenges.

It was commented that if everyone is on campus 9–5, there will be parking issues!

Dr. Philley agreed and indicated that everyone deserves fair treatment.

Provost Updates (Dr. Amir Mirmiran)

- Celebrated three faculty members who were part of the Cohort 3 Texas Leadership Academy Fellows.
- Discussed curriculum management system and potential Watermark integration.
- Aimed at easing faculty workload, training is forthcoming.
- Strategic Planning: Ongoing collaboration with Dr. Lake.
- Student Success: Early alerts, addressing financial and personal challenges.
- Student Government: Advocating for more flexible course offerings.

Questions: Is this a new curriculum platform?

Answer: Yes, it's under consideration. We're exploring platforms that reduce the burden on faculty.

Lou Ann Berman: Targeting spring launch; overlap with Watermark; go live in the fall.

Question: Is this the same performance-based funding Dr. Philley mentioned?

Answer: Yes, although we don't yet know what specific metrics will be used.

Question: What will count as an "outcome"? Graduation? Reduced course repetition?

Answer: Unclear, but graduation rates and job placement will likely be key.

Cowan Center Updates (Jeff Noblitt, VP for Marketing)

- Big-name shows planned for upcoming season.
- Individual ticket sales begin in September.
- Faculty and staff discount forms are available online or at the box office.

Question: Can I use my employee discount for a ticket for my mom?

Answer: Yes, the employee may purchase 2 tickets.

Senate President's Updates (Dr. Josh Banta)

- SB 37 limits faculty senates across UT System to 60 total.
- Not an issue for UT Tyler.
- New faculty senate elections are required by September 1, 2025.
- Current senators cannot be grandfathered in.
- Colleges are encouraged to consider supporting the re-election of current senators.

Question: How will SB 2972 (public forums) be enforced?

Answer: Enforcement details are unclear; UT Tyler has existing free speech policies.

Question: What if events are held outside by non-affiliates?

Answer: Josh Neaves currently oversees these matters, but new policies may emerge.

1:33 – Adjournment



Faculty Senate Open Meeting

June 2025

Agenda

- 12:30: Welcome (introduction) and call to order
- 12:32: Approval of previous minutes
- 12:35: President Updates, Dr. Julie Philley
- 12:50: Provost Updates, Dr. Amir Mirmiran
- 1:05: Cowan Center Updates, Jeff Noblitt, VP for Marketing
- 1:15: Faculty Senate President's Updates and Discussion
- 1:50: Adjournment

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- Sets up grants to support students with intellectual and developmental disabilities at Texas colleges and universities.

2. Senate Bill 37 – Higher Education Governance Reform

- Reduces authority of faculty senates, boosts power of governing boards, and creates a governor-appointed ombudsman overseeing higher-ed.

3. Senate Bill 2972 – Campus Speech and Protest Restrictions

- Limits student protests on public university campuses: no expressive activities 10 PM–8 AM, none during the final two weeks of the semester; bans camping, disguises, amplified sound; restricts access to campus "public forums" to students and employees only.

4. House Bill 126 – Student-Athlete Compensation (NIL)

- Authorizes public universities to directly pay student-athletes age 17+ from institutional funds, up to approximately \$20.5 million annually.

5. Senate Bill 2231 – Free College Application Week

- Establishes an annual free application week in October for all Texas public universities.

6. Senate Bill 1909 – Antisemitism Policy in Higher Education

- Requires all public higher-ed institutions to include the IHRA definition of antisemitism in their free-speech and conduct policies.
- Mandates disciplinary action (including expulsion or disbanding student organizations) for speech or violence that incites antisemitic actions.
- Institutions must certify compliance before using state funds.

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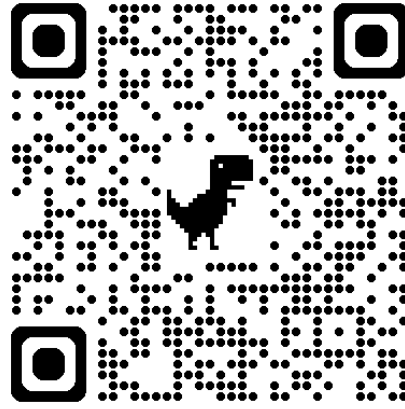
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Faculty Senate

- Composition: Elected from among the faculty body
- Purpose: Facilitate shared governance by providing a platform for faculty to participate in the decision-making processes of the institution
- Shared governance: Faculty and university administrators, with a shared stake in the success of our institution, working together in service of our common goals