



TEXAS COUNCIL OF FACULTY SENATES

Fall 2024 Meeting Minutes

Embassy Suites - San Marcos Hotel & Conference Center

September 27-28, 2024

In attendance: The Executive Board members

Joseph Velasco, President
Wynne Chin, Treasurer and Past President
James Woosley, President Emeritus
Zachary Valdes, Vice President, East Region
Catherine Ross, Co-Vice President, Northeast Region
Kip Austin Hinton, Vice President, South Central Region

TCFS Members Present: 47

Universities Represented: 26

East Region

Lamar University –
Beaumont
Prairie View A&M
University
Sam Houston State
University
Texas A&M University –
College Station
University of Houston
University of Houston –
Clear Lake
University of Houston –
Downtown
University of Houston –
Victoria

Northeast Region

University of North Texas –
Dallas
University of North Texas –
Denton
University of North Texas
Health Science Ctr. – Ft.
Worth
University of Texas at
Arlington
University of Texas at
Dallas
University of Texas at Tyler

South Central Region

Texas A&M International
University – Laredo
Texas A&M University –
Central Texas
Texas A&M University –
Corpus Christi
Texas A&M University – San
Antonio
Texas State University
Texas Woman’s University
University of Texas – Rio
Grande Valley
University of Texas at Austin
University of Texas at San
Antonio

West Region

Sul Ross State
University – Alpine
Tarleton State University
Texas Tech University

Representatives from Each Region:

East: 17

Northeast: 11

South Central: 13

West: 6

AAUP, TACT, TAFT, TFA, and NAACP Representatives: 20

Total Attendees: 67

Call to Order

President Joseph Velasco (Professor of Communication, Sul Ross University, Alpine) called the meeting to order at 11:00 am. There were enough TCFS members in attendance to constitute a quorum.

The Role of Faculty Senates

The meeting began with an insightful panel on the role of faculty senates, moderated by President Velasco, featuring Diana Hynds (Professor, Texas Woman's University; Texas AAUP-AFT Vice President for North Texas; President, TWU AAUP Chapter), Murray Leaf (Professor Emeritus, Anthropology and Political Economy, UT Dallas; Member, UT Dallas AAUP Chapter), Tabitha Morton (*not able to attend*, Assistant Professor, Prairie View A&M University; President, Prairie View A&M Faculty Senate; President-Elect, TCFS), and Lynn Tatum (Senior Lecturer, Baylor University; Texas AAUP-AFT Treasurer). They highlighted the vital importance of faculty senates in ensuring that faculty voices are heard in university decision-making processes.

Threats to Faculty Senates

Members explored the current threats facing faculty senates in a panel led by Brian Evans (Texas AAUP-AFT President), featuring contributions from distinguished faculty and legal experts. This session, which included perspectives from Adam Annaccone (UT-Arlington AAUP Chapter), Antonio Ingram (Civil Rights Attorney and NAACP Legal Defense Fund), Teresa Klein (Texas AAUP-AFT Vice President and Del Mar College AAUP Chapter President), and Lynn Ledbetter (President of TSUS Council of Faculty Senates), shed light on challenges such as diminished faculty participation in administrative decisions and increasing pressures from state policies.

Discussion of Roundup Reports

Each institution gave a brief Roundup Report. Afterward, members broke into Roundup Roundtables to share their takeaways from the reports. These discussions centered on eight critical themes that reflected the state of faculty governance across the Texas higher education landscape:

1. Trend of increased engagement/involvement from presidents and provosts in faculty governance
2. Trend in administrative turnover and administrative hiring
3. SB 17 Costs and Impact Trends:
 - a. Overall Student Recruitment and Retention
 - b. International Student Recruitment and Retention
 - c. Campus Culture
4. Trend in Developing Policies on Policy Revisions
5. Concern about decline in transparency and communication
6. Need to increase broader knowledge of the role of faculty senates and the benefits of engaging in shared governance
7. Need for grievance policy revisions
8. Trend in faculty salary increases

Approval of Prior Business Meeting Minutes

President Velasco asked for a motion from the floor to approve the minutes of the February 24, 2024, meeting.

Motion to approve the minutes by Coby Condrey (Associate Librarian, University of North Texas – Denton).

Motion seconded by Christopher Gabler (Associate Professor, Earth, Environmental, and Marine Sciences, The University of Texas – Rio Grande Valley)

The minutes were approved by voice vote with five members abstaining due to not attending the February meeting.

Report of the Treasurer

Treasurer Wynne Chin (Professor of Decision and Information Sciences, University of Houston) said the treasurer's report was being postponed until the spring meeting, at which time the numbers would be more comprehensive, and a motion would be made for a budget. He said the costs for hosting the conferences have increased dramatically from \$6000 to more than \$9,000. In the past, costs were contained by "locking-in" hotel conference fees for a set number of years, but in doing so, it limited meetings to being held only in Austin at a specific hotel. Treasurer Chin noted that TCFS was just breaking even with revenue from the conference registration fee of \$75 and \$400 annual dues. He mentioned that the Executive Committee would be soliciting financial support from the System Chancellors, some of whom have contributed \$5000 in past years.

New Business

TCFS Members revisited themes of the Roundup Reports and discussed best practices and proposed actionable solutions that could be applied across institutions. Ideas emerged around improving transparency in governance processes, fostering greater communication between faculty and administrators, and revising grievance policies to ensure fairness and principled processes. Suggestions that might be taken up at the spring meeting included:

1. Possible joint statement with AAUP around awareness of future trends.
2. Reports on what institutions are doing about decreasing enrollments and the impact on faculty, especially non-tenured faculty, and what plans are being made to turn this trend around.

General Election for Northeast Region

President Velasco explained that the Vice President representing the Northeast Region was vacant and that the elected member would serve a two-year term. Nominations were then taken from the floor. Michael Kresden (Associate Professor, Physics, The University of Texas at Dallas) and Catherine Ross (Associate Professor, English, The University of Texas at Tyler) were nominated. Professor Ross was elected by secret ballot, receiving the majority votes.

Action Items

Two action items were presented before the meeting ended:

1. Mr. Coby Condrey reminded members that statewide university charitable campaigns were underway and encouraged members to donate to an organization of their choice, which could be done through payroll deduction.
2. Stella Flores (Professor, Educational Leadership and Policy, The University of Texas at Austin) said that Faculty Senates need to act on upcoming policy matters suggesting that talking points be given to President Velasco. It was also suggested that action items might include: 1) education to broaden engagement with faculty and the community; and 2) a

unified message in favor of faculty senates broadening the knowledge of what faculty senates do. President Velasco asked that a working group be formed and for faculty to contact him if interested in volunteering. He gave a one-week due date for signing up.

Announcements

President Velasco reminded TCFS members that the Texas-AAUP meeting was underway in the adjacent meeting room "A" should anyone want to attend.

Adjournment

President Velasco adjourned the meeting at 11:10 am.