



## 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**

Texas Woman’s University  
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  
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: 12

South Central: 12

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.