



# Faculty Council Meeting Minutes

**Date: November 19, 2025**

**Time: 12:00 to 2:00 p.m.**

**Location: Room 240, Bates Law Building & MS Teams Townhall**

## **MEMBERS PRESENT: (56)**

**ARCH:** Christopher Battaglia, Patrick Peters

**ARTS:** Rachel Bush, Rex Koontz, Blake Wilkins

**BUS:** Norman Johnson, Basheer Khumawala, Vijay Yerramilli

**EDU:** April Peters-Hawkins, Kristi Santi, Virginia Snodgrass Rangel

**ENGR:** Gulin Aksu, Craig Glennie, Shailendra Joshi, David Shattuck, Consuelo Waight, Yaping Wang, Jack Zhang

**GHL:** JéAnna Abbott, Yoon Koh

**HON:** Hayan Charara, Daniel Price

**LAW:** Johnny Buckles, Alissa Gomez

**CLASS:** Lisa Alastuey, Francesca Behr, Maria Gonzalez, Elena Grigorenko, Billy Hawkins, Melisa Markofski, Zhiwen Xiao, Natalia Zhivan

**LIB:** Leonard Martin, Mea Warren

**COM:** David Curtis, Kimberly Pilkinton

**NSM:** Regina Capuano, Guoning Chen, Casey Douglas, Stuart Dryer, Eva Harth, Chin-Yo Lin, Karen McIntush, Manos Papadakis

**CON:** Deborah Smith, Shainy Varghese

**OPT:** Ruth Manny, Lan Chi Nguyen, John O'Brien

**PHA:** Bradley McConnell, Doug Thornton, Matthew Wanat

**HSPA:** Chris Bronk, Gail Buttorff

**GCSW:** Yvonne Mendoza

## **MEMBERS ABSENT: (4)**

**ENGR:** Jian Shi

**CLASS:** Pratik Chakrabarti, Adam Thrasher

**GCSW:** Jodi Berger Cardoso

**EX OFFICIO MEMBERS:** Jim Briggs (Faculty Affairs), Sarah Larsen (Graduate School), Teri Longacre (Undergraduate Student Success), Claudia Neuhauser (Division of Research)

**GUESTS:** Albert Cheng, Anne Dayton, Veronica Douglas, Gregory Dudley, Fleurette Fernando, Hildegard Glass, Edward Gloor, Margaret Hale, Jennifer Holland, Stuart Long, Holley Love, Michael Murray, Sally Paulson, Andrew Joseph Pegoda, Jagannatha Rao, Maria Soliño, Shannon Viola

# 1. Welcome

- Elena Grigorenko, Faculty Council Presiding Officer

Presiding Officer Grigorenko called the meeting to order at 12:05 p.m., welcomed everyone, and went over meeting protocol and rules of engagement. She followed with a presentation which focused on:

- The Old:
  - Council committees' responsibilities and decisions continue in an advisory role and reflect UH's priorities and faculty expertise. With the transition to the new Council, committee charges remain the same, and the groups have begun their work.
  - Improved efficiencies: redesigned Council website, committee's workflow processes, and enhanced communication mechanisms between councilors and their respective colleges.
- The New Initiatives & Structure
  - Dr. Grigorenko introduced the Executive Committee (EC) leadership, which includes ex officio members from the administration. She encouraged Council members to reach out to them for questions and concerns.
  - EC initiatives at different levels (university, college, committee):
    - "Future of Higher Education" talks series, councilors establishing working groups within their respective colleges to provide two-way communication between the Council and the colleges, UH 4-year graduation culture, student/faculty engagement opportunities, and new faculty awards (Presiding Officer Grigorenko asked the councilors to provide examples of stellar teaching)
- Unknown
  - Core Curriculum review process – utilize faculty expertise (courses reflect rigor and relevance); The Faculty Council will work closely with departments and colleges.
  - Unification in the face of possible external pressure
  - Faculty voice: vocalized, recorded, and heard (faculty perspectives contribute to discussions).
  - Presiding Officer Grigorenko emphasized that these challenges allow the Council to reaffirm its commitment to shared governance, academic life, and unification.

## Coalition of Intercollegiate Athletics (COIA) Election Results:

Faculty Council Presiding Officer Elena Grigorenko announced that Councilor Billy Hawkins (CLASS) was elected as the COIA Delegate and Councilor David Shattuck (ENGR) was elected as the COIA Alternate.

- Jim Briggs, Associate Provost for Faculty Development and Faculty Affairs

AVP Jim Briggs introduced himself, providing a brief overview of his professional background. He expressed his appreciation for the councilors and the Council leadership for their willingness to serve in this new governance group. Dr. Jim Briggs encouraged the Council members to keep an open mind and help craft a forward-looking agenda that reflects the university's initiatives and enhances student success.

## 2. Committee Updates

- Faculty Affairs Committee (FAC), Chair Melissa Markofski

FAC Chair Melissa Markofski introduced herself and updated the Council on the following FAC activities:

- FAC Structure
  - Representatives from all colleges/schools
  - Committee charge (bylaws): “..review and advise on policies concerning the conditions of faculty employment and workload...”
  - Advisory group to the Provost and the Assoc. Provost for Faculty Development and Faculty Affairs
  - FAC Chair is a member of the UH Faculty Advisory Committee on Human Resources -Fringe Benefits Committee
- FAC Priority Areas
  - Academic freedom guidance
  - Centralize links to grievance policies
  - Dart Center efficiency (assist faculty to best meet student accommodations)
  - Two-way communication facilitation (between Council and administration)
  - DoR improvements (RSC collab)
  - Additions to Simple Syllabus boilerplate (CC collab?)
  - A couple of other items, depending on response (i.e., leadership training for faculty)
- Research and Scholarship Committee (RSC), Chair Doug Thornton

RSC Chair Doug Thornton introduced himself and reported on the following RSC activities:

- RSC Structure
  - 2025-2026 Membership: 24 Council members and 3 ex officio non-voting members. The committee had one meeting last month and will meet this week.
  - Responsibilities (bylaws): “The Research and Scholarship Committee shall focus on matters related to the research and scholarship of the university and will be advisory to the Vice President for Research and Provost or designee.” “The RSC will advise on matters related to research, scholarship, and creative

activity across disciplines and recommend policies to strengthen the University's research ecosystem, including research infrastructure and intellectual property. The committee will also administer the Assistant Professor Excellence (APeX) speaker series."

- Subcommittees: Awards of Excellence, APeX, Bridge Funds, Centers & Institutes, Equipment Grants, GEAR, and New Faculty/Small Grants; RSC Chair Thornton gave an overview of each subcommittee.
- Other Business
  - Support grant-reviewing subcommittees including external grant reviews, as needed
  - Discuss and advise UH administration on priorities of research community, research infrastructure, and intellectual property
  - Discuss and advise UH administration on strategies to overcome the significant reduction in early career scientist support programs (training grants and career development)- from FY25
- Curriculum Committee (CC), Chair JéAnna Abbott

CC Chair JéAnna Abbott introduced herself and updated the Council on the following CC activities:

- CC Structure
  - Responsibilities (bylaws): "The Curriculum Committee advises on undergraduate and graduate curriculum matters." "The Curriculum Committee will be advisory role to the Provost and delegates regarding curriculum and academic standards." "Specifically, the committee will consider proposals related to academic programs, courses, and policies."
  - 2025-2026 Membership: 19 Council members (representatives from each college) and four ex officio non-voting members
- Key Work Underway
  - CC By-laws
  - Tiered Proposal Review Structure (3-tier)
  - Team Formation
  - Proposal Review and Tracking (reduce the group's workload by 85-90%)
  - Evaluation Criteria and Feedback Guidelines
  - Training Materials (for CC members to learn the review process)

### 3. Initiatives

- Four-Year Graduation Culture

Dean Teri Longacre gave the presentation, "Developing a 4-Year Graduation Culture," and discussed the following points (*see [meeting recording](#) for more details*):

- Graduation Rates (4, 5, 6-year graduation rates)
- FTIC Cohort 4-year rate

- Retention Rates- fairly high the last three years
- Timely Milestones Progress
- Closing the Gap – Retention goal is 90%
- Guiding Principles
- Strategic Focus Areas
  - Signature Learning Experiences
  - Bold Enrollment Strategies
  - Cutting Edge Academic Programs
  - Elevated Student Engagement
  - Technology-Driven Solutions
  - Proactive Advising and Mentoring
  - Remove Barriers to Success
  - Faculty and Staff Development
  - Vibrant Campus Environment

Discussion followed about inquiries on additional resources for the initiative (i.e., hiring staff), DWF courses/incompletes, AI use, and utilizing software to predict incoming class projections to better meet demand.

## 4. Other Business

- Patrick Peters, Associate Presiding Officer

FCAPO Peters introduced himself and mentioned the importance of Council representatives communicating Council updates to their respective college faculty. He gave an example of a communication model that the Gerald D. Hines College of Architecture & Design utilizes. Lastly, APO Peters reminded Council members to have ongoing dialogue with colleagues and bring back faculty concerns to the Council for consideration.

- Kristi L Santi, Secretary

Sec. Kristi Santi introduced herself and updated the Council on the following items:

- UH Together: Weekly Council newsletter emailed every Monday to communicate with faculty and give faculty a chance to communicate with the Council (“Your Voice Matters” portal). Sec. Santi adds concerns, policies, and events gathered from the faculty feedback received.
- Your Voice Matters: Dr. Santi featured and gave a brief presentation on “Faculty Salary Adjustments: Merit vs. COLA” and highlighted the differences.
  - Faculty Salary Adjustments: Merit-based, governed by Texas Education Code Section 51.908
  - Cost-of-Living Adjustments (COLA): Across-the-board adjustments, not automatic under TX law, and require legislative authorization and appropriation.

Lastly, Sec. Santi emphasized that UH Together is a valuable resource for faculty communication and that Council leadership does listen to faculty. She encouraged Council members and faculty to share the Your Voice Matters portal with colleagues.

- New Business

Cllr. Maria Gonzalez inquired about the status of the Sedona platform: Is it no longer in use? AVP Jim Briggs responded that Sedona is not TX Ramp-certified. UH is exploring the acquisition of a certified platform. The hope is to have a contract approved mid-December. Also, Dr. Gonzalez asked about the reason for the name change of the Women's & Gender Resource Center. Dr. Briggs replied that he didn't know the answer to this question and will work on this and refer her to the appropriate person who would know the answer.

Dr. Holley Love inquired about the timeline for reviewing course proposals, which will impact course scheduling. Dean Teri Longacre replied that courses will be prioritized before the next Curriculum Committee meeting so that the Provost Office can meet the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board deadline in early spring. Dr. Love also requested that class location and times should not be publicly available in the Simple Syllabus platform to keep class disruption incidents from occurring. AVP Jim Briggs responded that the Provost Office is evaluating the syllabus tool and will look into this concern further.

## **5. Adjournment: 1:35 p.m.**

**Next Meeting:** January 21, 2026