



Faculty Council Meeting Minutes

Date: January 21, 2026

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

Location Meeting: Student Center Senate Chamber & MS Teams Townhall

MEMBERS PRESENT: (53)

ARCH: Christopher Battaglia, Patrick Peters

ARTS: Rachel Bush, Rex Koontz, Blake Wilkins

BUS: Ye Hu, Norman Johnson, Basheer Khumawala

EDU: April Peters-Hawkins, Kristi Santi

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, Scout Johnson, Melissa Markofski, Adam Thrasher, Zhiwen Xiao, Natalia Zhivan

COM: David Curtis

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

CON: Deborah Smith, Shainy Varghese

OPT: Lan Chi Nguyen, John O'Brien

PHA: Bradley McConnell, Doug Thornton, Matthew Wanat

HSPA: Chris Bronk, Gail Buttorff

GCSW: Jodi Berger Cardoso, Yvonne Mendoza

UNIV LIB: Leonard Martin, Mea Warren

MEMBERS ABSENT: (7)

EDU: Virginia Snodgrass Rangel

ENGR: Jian Shi

CLASS: Pratik Chakrabarti, Billy Hawkins

COM: Tameka Clemons

NSM: Guoning Chen

OPT: Rachel Redfern

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

GUESTS: Whitney Breslin (CLASS), Katherine Carter (UNIV LIB), Diane Z. Chase (SVP Academic Affairs), Dona Cornell (General Counsel), Veronica Douglas (UNIV LIB), Kevin Haubrick (CLASS), Renu Khator (President), Holley Love (ENGR), Michael Murray (BUS), Andrew Joseph Pegoda (CLASS), Magesh Rajan (VP, Research and Innovation, Prairie View A&M University), Marti Trummer-Cabrera (CAPS)

Call to Order: 12:03 p.m.

1. Welcome

- Council Secretary Kristi Santi welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced some of the guests. She informed attendees that the agenda is full and discussions will be limited to two minutes to ensure everyone has the opportunity to give their input.
- Elena Grigorenko, Faculty Council Presiding Officer
 - Presiding Officer Grigorenko informed the Council that Dr. Ruth Manny (OPT) had passed away unexpectedly on January 3, 2026. She expressed that the Council is grateful to Dr. Manny for her substantial contributions to shared governance and will continue to honor her legacy.
 - The special election to fill Dr. Manny’s seat is currently ongoing.
 - Two Council-appointed seats were vacated and have been recently filled. Presiding Officer Elena Grigorenko welcomed the newest members.
 - Ye Hu, C.T. Bauer College of Business
 - Tameka Clemons, Tilman J. Fertitta Family College of Medicine
 - She briefly outlined the meeting agenda and reminded that the meeting is livestreamed and recorded.
- President Khator

Presiding Officer Elena Grigorenko thanked President Renu Khator for attending today’s Council meeting. She reminded the Council that Pres. Khator celebrated her eighteenth anniversary as UH president.

President Khator welcomed everyone back to campus for the spring term. She mentioned the Centennial construction and commented that the project is progressing well. The Wilhemina Grove construction has been completed, and activities should be occurring soon in that area.

Updates:

- Newly Appointed UHS Board of Regents members: Alonzo Cantu, Thomas A. Lucas, Jr., Bryan F. Clark, Patrick J. Fertitta, and Lyndon B. Rose, Sr.
- State Updates: UH is preparing an agenda for the next state legislative session (2027):
 - Performance-based funding model: There is a state committee on performance-based funding. Provost Chase and Vice Chancellor Jason Smith are members. Also, there is a funding formula committee for the Health Sciences.

- THECB: an ombudsman office has been established (SB37) to take complaints against universities regarding SB37.
- UH Agenda:
 - Request that UH be designated as a health science center to acquire health science funding (COM, OPT, PHA, CON). UH. Pres. Khator encouraged the Council to invite College of Medicine Dean McCullers to a Council meeting to talk about the activities ongoing at the college (e.g., new partnerships, expanding student population).
 - Centennial Request: Will plan for a celebration at the State Capitol.
 - Expansion of Katy Campus to receive continued funding: emphasis on fulfilling the obligation at this campus (e.g., different approaches for expansion – quality programs, etc.).
 - CCAP (formerly TRB) building funding program for academic purposes. Building request for Sugar Land and Katy campuses.
- Compliance with SB37: TX institutions are required to perform core requirements (Pres. Khator had sent a campus-wide email last fall term). Pres. Khator said that she trusts UH faculty to do what they are supposed to do: expose students to different ideas and perspectives, not impose their own opinions on students. As state employees, UH employees must follow the law. She encouraged the Council to have more conversations with the Provost for help with faculty resources. Pres. Khator asked Gen. Counsel Dona Cornell if she had anything to add. Gen. Counsel Cornell responded that Pres. Khator was accurate in her explanation of SB37. She added that there were no specific directives in any legislation from the last session or the session before that stating that faculty can't teach a certain course. Some institutions are going down that path, but the Board of Regents and the Chancellor have not directed UHS towards that path.
- Concept of a Residential College (no name established yet).

A brief Q&A session followed.

- Jim Briggs, Associate Provost for Faculty Development and Faculty Affairs
 - Event: Promotion & Tenure series for associate and assistant professors who haven't achieved the full level of promotion
 - Watermark (formerly Digital Measures) – a platform that captures faculty information (e.g., promotion and tenure, annual performance, research/teaching/scholarly activity, etc.) has been acquired. Three colleges are already using the software, and CLASS is currently transitioning to this platform. The Provost Office will populate faculty information into Watermark as much as it can and will ask faculty to input their information.

- A large advisory group will be established with representation from every college (Faculty Council) and input from UHD and UHCL (based on their experiences with Watermark).
- There will be user support sessions and training.
- Associate Provost Briggs pointed out that it will help UH be more intentional about how the department/college/university levels reflect excellence and outstanding performance.

Pres. Khator commented that faculty should remain committed to UH students.

- Claudia Neuhauser, Vice President for Research
 - Federal and Funding Updates:
 - Total Research Expenditures (Total R&D Expenditures, NSF HERD) – FY 2025 numbers are preliminary (estimate \$275M), but have increased (15% from FY2024) – a significant increase, keep spending!
 - FY25 R&D Expenditures by Federal Agency (\$125.6M)
 - 20.8% increase from FY2024
 - % Federal expenditures among External in FY2024: All (74%), UH (68%)

VP Neuhauser said that Congress is appropriating similarly to last year. There have been some funding decreases (NSF, NASA). NIH funding looks good (both the House and Senate are about increasing 2%).

 - FY26 Budget for Federal Agencies: funding will most likely be the same (good news)
 - Requirements and New Policies:
 - Research Security Training (CITI combined training, 1 hour, only need to take once)
 - DOE: May 1, 2025
 - NSF: October 10, 2025
 - NIH: May 25, 2026
 - Common Forms (SciENcv, ORCID ID)
 - NSF: Dec. 31, 2025
 - NIH: Jan. 25, 2026
 - NSF Expands Research Misconduct to Cover AI Misuse (applies to all financial assistance awarded on or after December 8, 2026)
 - Common Forms
 - You will be required to use SciENcv to complete Common Forms (i.e., Biographical Sketch, Current and Pending (Other) Support) and the NIH Biographical Sketch Supplement to produce digitally certified PDF(s) for use in application submission.
 - You will be required to enter their ORCID ID in the Persistent Identifier (PI) section of Common Forms
 - Investment: Core Facilities:
 - Finished: Digital Humanities, Mass Spectrometry, Electron Microscopy: calibration (expecting to open it in April to researchers). A manager was recently hired for this facility.

- In Progress: Advanced Imaging (Confocal Microscope), Advanced Manufacturing
 - Currently in Planning: Spatial Proteomics, Low Tesla MRI, Automation/Robotics
- Investment: Hanover Research

Consultants will help researchers with proposal preparation.– proposals will need to be ready 2-3 weeks before the deadline so that consultants will have time to review them.
- Funding Opportunities
 - Weekly announcements – Wednesdays (Inside Research)
 - Health: NIH has a large number of opportunities that fit UH
 - STEM (AI and quantum)
 - Social Sciences, Art, Humanities, & Education
 - Scholarships & Fellowships: added to provide opportunities for graduate students
 - DOR can help with organizing mini-symposia to bring people together to start collaborations
- Initiative and Events
 - Civil Military Innovation Institute (Feb. 19), <https://cmi2.org>; Partnership with the Division of Energy and Innovation and Government Relations.
 - Dedicated to accelerating military modernization through hands-on warfighter-driven innovation (engineering-focused)
 - “Innovation in the Dirt”: tactical innovation
 - Merging military experience with public and private sector innovation
 - Quantum Initiative Seminar Series: There is a networking event after each seminar. A Zoom link will be provided, but people are encouraged to attend in person. The State passed a quantum initiative bill last year. Texas universities organized the first Texas Quantum Summit. There will be a second summit in August 2026.
 - **Feb 6 (Fri)**, Dr. Xiaoqin Li (UT Austin), Director, Texas Quantum Institute.
 - **Feb 12 (Th)**: Dr. Pedram Roushan (Google Quantum AI)
 - **Feb 19 (Thu)**, Dr. Emilia Morosan (Rice U), Director, Rice Center for Quantum Materials.
 - **Spring 2025 (date TBD)**, Dr. Abhinav Kandala (IBM), Principal Research Scientist.
 - **Fall 2026 (date TBD)**, Junichiro Kono (Rice U), Director, Smalley-Curl Institute.
 - March 2/3: Write Winning Grants Workshop (2-day workshop)
 - Dementia Research
 - Brain Health Institute at UTMB & UH DPRIT Workshop (**Dec 4**; follow-up planned)
 - **TBD**: Dementia Workshop with Doctors Hospital at Renaissance (DHR) in the Rio Grande Valley
- PI Portal Updates

- New Award Setup: Pre-Review -obtain input from principal investigator (PI) before account setup; Do legal review and compliance review (done in parallel)
- New Award Setup – completed in a few days
- Burn Rate: Award Summary – Award Profile
 - How much has been expended, \$ amount of soft commitments, the total balance, etc.
 - Calculates if you are spending too fast/too slow (monitoring tool for grants)

Q&A session followed about DoR help for mini-symposia for the humanities, AI initiatives, and DoR expenditures.

Cllr. Maria Gonzalez would like to thank voters for voting in favor of the Texas University Fund (TUF) and asked DoR to help communicate this success.

2. Committee Updates

- Curriculum Committee - JéAnna Abbott
 - The committee met last week and reviewed eleven proposals without objections and forwarded them with recommendations to the Provost Office.
- Faculty Affairs Committee - Melissa Markofski
 - FAC subcommittees were formed and are working on priorities
 - The UH Standing Committee Preference Survey will be launched soon. FAC Appointment Subcommittee recommends faculty to the various standing committees. FAC Chair Markofski asked the Council to remind their colleagues to complete the survey.
 - Early successes as a committee and a Council (administration working with the Council)
- Research and Scholarship Committee - Doug Thornton
 - The RSC members are currently working in subcommittees. RSC Chair Thornton thanked the subcommittee chairs for their leadership.
 - The Internal Award program (esp. New Faculty Award - NFA/Small Grants) had a great response rate. NFA and Small Grant proposal reviews were completed. The RSC will vote on the recommendations at the next meeting, and they will be forwarded to DoR for approval.
 - Centers & Institutes Subcommittee review: Proposals have been reviewed, and recommendations will be forwarded to DoR. RSC Chair Thornton thanked RSC Associate Chair John O'Brien for his help.
 - RSC Chair Doug Thornton extended his thanks to the Council members (seven non-RSC members) for helping with the reviews of the New Faculty Awards and Small Grants.
 - Assistant Professor Excellence Talk (APeX): The 2026-2027 call for nominations will begin soon. The requests will be sent out in the spring.
 - Acknowledging Cllr. Gonzalez's earlier TUF comment, RSC Chair Thornton mentioned that RSC wants to reach out to UH Communications and Community

& Governmental Relations to formally thank Texas voters for supporting UH and other universities' research endeavors through the Texas University Fund.

3. Initiatives

Presiding Officer Elena Grigorenko informed the Council that the Executive Committee (EC) decided to create initiatives that could be completed within a year (especially since members will rotate annually).

- The Future of Higher Education Talk Series (Elena Grigorenko)

January 28, 2026 (room 120 HSC, 3-4 pm) The Homework Machine and What Comes After... (Dr. Justin Reich, MIT), RSVP via UH Together

- Provost's Office and Faculty Council: Committee formed to draft guidelines for course self-review
- Faculty Council's office hours ("Coffee with a Faculty Council Member") at the FED
 - Strengthening connections between the Council and faculty.
- CCC: College Council Communication (Patrick Peters)

This initiative is to improve communication among the wider faculty community. Councilors from each college will work together as a group and create a communication mechanism to be utilized between Council representatives and their colleges.

- ARCH (Christopher Battaglia): ARCH councilors are members of their college steering committee and can communicate updates/other news at these meetings. Council reps also communicate during larger faculty meetings, and memos are sent out after each major session.
- BUS (Basheer Khumawala): Cllr. Khumawala introduced the newly-appointed Cllr. Ye Hu. He informed that BUS councilors communicate with the associate dean, and from there, the associate dean will further disseminate updates.
- EDU (Kristi Santi): The COE has three mechanisms to communicate. 1) monthly Faculty Executive Committee meetings with the dean, 2) Dean's newsletters (discuss what to share publicly – EDU EC group), 3) Communicate during college meetings (EDU ED has space to give updates).
- ENGR (Consuelo Waight): ENGR councilors met with their dean in December and provided updates. Also, councilors give updates at college meetings.
- GHL: (JéAnna Abbott) – Two councilors give updates at monthly faculty meetings.
- LAW (Johnny Buckles) – Law faculty usually ask councilors for updates. Emails summarizing Council committee updates are sent to faculty and staff. Possible plans for meeting with the dean in the form of "brown bag" events. Also, updates could be communicated during faculty meetings.

- CLASS (Melissa Markofski): Ten councilors will meet with the dean to brainstorm ideas on communication mechanisms, especially since CLASS is large and meetings are only three times a year.
- COM (David Curtis): COM holds monthly college meetings, and councilors update colleagues at each meeting.
- NSM (Karen McIntush): NSM councilors will meet with their dean to propose a communication template this Friday.
- OPT (Chi Nguyen): Councilors are currently sharing updates at department and college meetings. Urgent news is communicated by email. Also, information is posted on a faculty Teams page for reference.
- PHA (Doug Thornton): Councilors give updates at monthly college faculty meetings, business meetings, and department meetings.
- HSPA (Gail Buttorff): Councilors are continuing to email summaries of Faculty Council meetings and committee meetings at monthly college meetings.
- UNIV LIB (Leonard Martin): Councilors send communication via two listservs. News is also shared with additional digests of Council meetings with the Library and updates/news are shared/discussed during all Libraries business meetings.

Associate Presiding Officer Patrick Peters asked councilors who didn't attend today's Council meeting in person to meet and brainstorm communication ideas to share.

- SOP: Standard Operating Procedures (Kristi Santi)
 - Each committee is developing a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)
 - SOPs will support continuity, consistency, and institutional memory across years

Secretary Santi thanked councilors for their help.

4. Other Business

- Kristi L Santi, Secretary
 - Data on UH Together/My Voice
 - November 2025 stats (views increased from October 2025), December was a quiet month.
 - My Voice is a space for faculty to communicate their concerns, feedback, etc. to the Council. So far, the Council has received eleven submissions (two duplicates and one item under review).
- New Business
 - Cllr. Maria Gonzalez voiced two concerns: 1) investigating the four-year graduation culture (she gave an example of one of her students leaving UH) and 2) migrating across campus to classes (need more travel time). She asked if the Council could begin the process of addressing these two issues. Secretary Kristi Santi responded that leadership will take note of these concerns. Provost Chase

commented that spring enrollment is looking strong. She said that if certain students are having issues navigating, etc., the key would be to have the faculty do what is needed to keep students engaged (e.g., offer online courses, etc.). A brief discussion followed about student preparedness.

- Cllr. Gonzalez inquired about the status of the core curriculum review as required by SB37. Prov. Chase responded that the core review is required to be completed within a year from now. UH is beginning with the easy tasks of reviewing: looking at core courses that haven't been offered in a long time, and those reviews went to the Curriculum Committee. Since core courses are foundational, there are core courses that are at the advanced level. Colleges will also review those courses and forward them to the Curriculum Committee (and back to the colleges).
- Cllr. Basheer Khumawala voiced his concern about campus safety and what is being done to address this issue. Provost Chase suggested that the Council invite the CFO to a meeting to give the Council an update. She mentioned that there is an exterior lighting project almost completed, and UHPD will open a substation in the Welcome Center. Presiding Officer Elena Grigorenko asked the Council if they would like the CFO to come to a Council meeting, and the Council responded affirmatively. Cllr Gonzalez also requested inviting Vice President of Student Affairs Paul Kittle to a Council meeting to clarify the changes that occurred (e.g., transition of Women's Resource Center to Family and Parent Center).

5. Adjournment: 1:44 p.m.