

Faculty Council Meeting Minutes

Date: March 25, 2026

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

Location Meeting: Midtown Room, #262, Student Center South

MEMBERS PRESENT: (48)

ARCH: Christopher Battaglia, Patrick Peters

ARTS: Rex Koontz, Blake Wilkins

BUS: Ye Hu, Norman Johnson, Basheer Khumawala

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

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

GHL: Yoon Koh

LAW: Johnny Buckles, Alissa Gomez

CLASS: Lisa Alastuey, Francesca Behr, Maria Gonzalez, Elena Grigorenko, Norman Johnson, Scout Johnson, Melissa Markofski, Adam Thrasher, Zhiwen Xiao

COM: Tameka Clemons, David Curtis

NSM: Regina Capuano, Guoning Chen, Stuart Dryer, Eva Harth, Karen McIntush, Manos Papadakis

CON: Deborah Smith, Shainy Varghese

OPT: Lan Chi Nguyen, John O'Brien, Rachel Redfern

PHA: Bradley McConnell, Doug Thornton

HSPA: Chris Bronk, Gail Buttorff

GCSW: Yvonne Mendoza

UNIV LIB: Leonard Martin, Mea Warren

MEMBERS ABSENT: (11)

ARTS: Rachel Bush

ENGR: David Shattuck, Jian Shi

GHL: JéAnna Abbott

HON: Daniel Price

CLASS: Pratik Chakrabarti, Billy Hawkins, Natalia Zhivan

NSM: Casey Douglas, Chin-Yo Lin

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: Whitney Breslin (CLASS), Lila Carden, Katherine Carter (UNIV LIB), Albert Cheng (NSM), Chris Dawe (Student Affairs), Provost Diane Chase, Kevin Haubrick (CLASS), President Renu Khator, Shawn Lindsey, Holley Love (ENGR), Andrew Joseph Pegoda (CLASS), J R Rao (ENGR), Marti Trummer-Cabrera (CAPS), Lauren Zentz (CLASS)

Call to Order: 12:03 p.m.

1. Welcome 12:00-12:40

- Secretary Kristi Santi welcomed everyone to the meeting. She reminded attendees about Q&A and discussion timing to help the meeting flow efficiently.
- Elena Grigorenko, Faculty Council Presiding Officer
 - Dr. Elena Grigorenko presented four of her observations while serving as the Council presiding officer:
 - Gratitude for time, commitment, and diligence
 - She expressed her appreciation for the councilors' time and dedication to the Council. With the support of the administration, there is a possibility of building a function in the Watermark platform as a way to officially record and acknowledge faculty service.
 - Trust in – and operationalization of – shared governance
 - Presiding Officer Grigorenko commented that the administration has been responsive to Council leadership's communication that faculty should be involved in significant discussions/tasks (e.g., curriculum review). The Council is a working group.
 - Pragmatic disagreement and constructive debate
 - There is value in all sides of discussions.
 - When discussions/debates become public, it is important to be cognizant when expressing points of view. There is a difference between the collective wisdom and personal interests. UH employees represent the university when public-facing.
 - Focus on a product (something achievable)
 - Councilors were asked to think about what can be accomplished in the remaining weeks of the spring term. The committee chairs will give an update on their respective group's activities.
- Jim Briggs, Associate Provost for Faculty Development and Faculty Affairs
 - Assoc. Provost Briggs acknowledged and appreciated the Council's work.
 - Watermark software:
 - Faculty Success, RPT and web profiles (a faculty information system) have been licensed. Faculty and administration will upload as much information as possible into this system to record (e.g., service, awards).
- President Renu Khator
 - Federal Updates: Not much to report, only fifteen percent of funding has been given out by NIH so far.
 - State Updates:
 - Legislature will implement performance-based funding. A Coordinating Board committee is tasked with figuring out how institutions will receive funding with this new model.

- State senators are questioning about accreditation. There's still much doubt about regional accreditation.
- SB37: Course Review
 - General Counsel reported to the BOR that faculty have done their course review (BOR accepted the report). Pres. Khator thanked the faculty for their help.
 - She explained the next steps/timeline: 1) Coordinating Board (CB) will give institutions the guidelines for the core curriculum review, 2) core curriculum review completion and submission to the Coordinating Board (CB) by November 2026, 3) CB will report to the legislature in January 2027.
 - Pres. Khator encouraged the Council to continue to have healthy discussions/debates. She will continue to make sure that the faculty continues to have the environment in which they can do their work.
- College of Medicine, March 19th, Match Day
 - The college had a 100% match for every graduated student in a residency program.
 - Two-thirds of med school graduates are staying in Texas for residency (40% are in Houston and TMC institutions).
- Centennial Project
 - January 2027 – the construction fences will begin coming down.
 - A major public destination art piece will be brought to campus (an announcement will be made within a month)
 - Many academic programs for the centennial have been approved. About a dozen or so will be signature curated programs that highlight UH, the 100 years of journey, and the connection with Houston.
- Athletics:
 - Sweet 16: UH Men's Basketball team has done very well in the first two rounds
 - What can the UH community get the public to look at UH beyond athletics?
 - UH Marketing efforts have been focused on UH's academic excellence, student recruiting, connectivity with industry.

Q&A session followed:

Cllr. Maria Gonzalez asked Pres. Khator to confirm that Gen. Counsel Cornell presented to the BOR that UH faculty completed the requirements of SB37.

Pres. Khator responded that other than the Coordinating Board core curriculum review, yes, UH faculty have completed the SB37 requirements regarding course

review. However, she did state that whatever the Coordinating Board asks UH to do this summer, it will be done.

Cllr. Doug Thornton asked for an update on the Health Sciences Center plan. Pres. Khator responded that the Health Sciences plan will be submitted to the Legislative Budget Board as a special item request. UH will also ask to be given a designation for Health Science Center (having this designation involves extra funding).

- Chris Dawe, Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs — Health and Well-Being - Discussion: WISHES

Chris Dawe gave a presentation on the following:

- Health & Wellbeing Area
- Wellbeing Survey
 - Where else should we share?
 - Increasing response rates
 - Disaggregating data for your students
- Wellbeing Collective

Be Well Do Well

- Health and Wellbeing Departments:
 - Campus Recreation
 - Cougars in Recovery
 - Counseling & Psychological Services
 - Justin Dart Jr. Student Accessibility Center
 - Student Health Center & Campus Pharmacy
 - UH Wellness
- TX Higher Ed for Collaborative for Wellbeing
 - UH is part of this collaboration
 - Pulls together different research tools to work together around the concept of continuous improvement in the idea of well-being (e.g., survey).
- WISHES: Well-being Improvement Survey for Higher Education Settings
 - WISHES measures:
 - Conditions for Wellbeing (e.g., financial security, no discrimination, caring professors)
 - Intermediate Outcomes (e.g., belonging, loneliness, mental health)

- Longer-term Outcomes (e.g., overall health, flourishing, academic performance, retention, graduation)
- WISHES Distributions at UH
 - UH started in fall 2023, prior to joining the collaborative and continued through 2025 (data chart of student response rate).
 - Data comparisons (conditions for wellbeing, intermediate outcomes, longer-term outcomes: UH vs national reference)
- UH Wellbeing Collective Charge
 - Create an environment of wellbeing for students, faculty, and staff to **Be Well** so they can **Do Well** at UH and beyond.
 - Develop and implement a sustainable, whole-campus, approach to settings-based health promotion
- ORG chart of the Wellbeing Collective
 - Executive level, Co-chairs, every college has a representative

2. Committee Updates 12:40-13:15 or immediately after the end of Welcome

- Curriculum Committee – Brad McConnell on behalf JéAnna Abbott
 - March 11th CC meeting: The committee approved for recommendation thirty-four items reviewed across seven proposal bundles, one university policy, and two new degree programs
 - Bigger picture of CC:
 - Six review teams processed twenty-nine proposals; Routine course revisions, prerequisite courses, updates, and catalog changes were forwarded to the Provost without requiring full committee review.
 - The full committee and the team reviews involved processing sixty-three proposals. The three-tier review system that was implemented and utilized helped make the review process more efficient and expeditious.
 - Resource Guide: task force formed (CC and FAC)
 - Task force was formed on Monday, March 9th
- Faculty Affairs Committee - Melissa Markofski
 - Continuing working on priorities (student accessibility services (check UH Together), DOR updates, faculty resources)
 - Finalizing updated Faculty Handbook review
 - Appointments Subcommittee will soon start reviewing University Standing Committee preferences
 - Ends Tuesday March 31, 2026
 - Collaborating with Curriculum Committee
 - FAC will lead the theme for the May meeting

FAC Chair Melissa Markofski announced that March is colon cancer awareness month. She encouraged Council members to remind their colleagues about getting screened.

- Research and Scholarship Committee - Doug Thornton
 - RSC Chair Doug Thornton gave updates on the following:
 - The committee approved recommendations on:
 - One Bridge funding proposal
 - Equipment grant proposals
 - Center and institute proposals
 - Award for Excellence
 - GEAR proposals will be finalized for the next RSC meeting
 - RSC SOP discussion will be moved to the April RSC meeting
 - 2026-2027 APeX call for nominations was recently sent out. RSC Chair Thornton encouraged councilors to nominate assistant professors. Deadline to submit nominations is April 24.

Presentation: RSC Infrastructure Communication Pathway

- Background
 - RSC Involvement
 - Present Opportunity
 - The goal
- How it will Work
 - All UH Colleges are represented on the RSC
 - RSC: All colleges represented, VPR ex officio member, RSC is advisory to VPR and Provost
 - Structured cross-college input
 - Vice President for Research: Institutional planning & resource allocation
 - Builds on RSC's 2021 core facility plan. Moving from ad hoc to a regular process
- Why RSC is the Correct Option
 - Mandate
 - RSC bylaws charge the committee with advising on research infrastructure and this initiative is a direct fulfillment of that role
 - RSC is advisory to both the VPR and the Provost
 - Structure
 - VPR Dr. Neuhauser is a non-voting ex officio member of the RSC so the collaboration is built into our governance

- RSC has representatives from all UH colleges
- The Communication Pathway
 - Goal
 - Collect medium- and long-term research facility and infrastructure needs from all colleges
 - Synthesize input across colleges and provide a structured picture to the VPR
 - Process
 - Submission format and scope will be defined at the April RSC meeting
 - Colleges submit through their RSC representative
 - Ask to Faculty Council members today
 - No action required now
 - Begin identifying the right contact in your college's dean's office or research structure to facilitate conversation (e.g., College of Pharmacy's Research Committee)
- Timeline
 - March 2026 – Faculty Council informed College reps identify contacts
 - April 2026 – RSC defines submission format, scope, and process
 - May – June 2026 – Submissions collected through RSC college representatives
 - Summer 2026 – RSC synthesizes and delivers to VPR before new council is seated.

Cllr. Papadakis asked if the RSC discussed animal research facilities?. RSC Chair Doug Thornton replied that the RSC doesn't necessarily have the documented history of these discussions. The goal is to have a mechanism to do so.

3. Initiatives 13:15-13:30 or immediately after the end of Committee Updates

- The Future of Higher Education Talk Series (Elena Grigorenko)
 - Justin Reich, MIT Comparative Media Studies/Writing, January 28
 - Eric Kelderman, Senior Writer, The Chronicle of Higher Education
 - Talk: Has the U.S. Passed Peak Higher Education?
 - April 24, 2026
 - Room 210, Ballroom (East), Student Center South, 1 pm – 2 pm
 - Registration: Please register to confirm your in-person seat for this event. You may also join the session online

if you are unable to attend in person. We request that everyone please register so we can plan accordingly.

- John Sailer, The Manhattan Institute
- Sarah Brown, The Chronicle of Higher Education
- Elena Grigorenko will work on the program planning of these talks.
- CCC: College Council Communication (Patrick Peters)
 - Initiative Work: College to Council and Back
 - Councilors collect feedback for Council action per plan appropriate for their college size (wide range)
 - Councilors report back to Deans, Colleagues
 - “UH Together” weekly to push information out and to gather input back for Council action
 - Congratulated the Council on the work done thus far.
- SOP: Standard Operating Procedures (Kristi Santi)
 - Practical method of each committee
 - SOPs due by May 1, 2026
 - Ensures continuity and SOP can be revised as needed.
 - My Voice (UH Together) – will communicate a lot of information to faculty

4. Other Business 13:30-14:00 or immediately after the end of Initiatives

- New Business
 - Resource Guide (Melissa Markofski)
 - Joint CC-FAC task force to review and discuss the function of the resource guide

Q&A/discussion followed about the function of the resource document, AI issues, and teaching.

- Core Curriculum Review (Elena Grigorenko)
 - UH is the first institution to complete the review
 - Waiting for instructions from the Coordinating Board (CB)
 - Faculty initiative: forming focus groups that will focus on questions about the future of higher education. She encouraged FC input on this initiative.

Provost Chase reminded the Council that the funding base year starts this summer. UH faculty need to maximize their teaching this summer. Cllr. Manos Papadakis asked about meeting class enrollment and class cancellation. Provost Chase responded that it would be a question for the

college dean.

Next Meeting: May 13, 2026, Secretary Kristi. Santi encouraged councilors to attend in person.

5. Adjournment: 1:51 p.m.