



**Fall Faculty Assembly & Faculty Senate Meeting  
Minutes  
Wednesday, November 17, 2021  
Elizabeth D. Rockwell Pavilion, M. D. Anderson Library  
and Via Microsoft Teams  
12:00 p.m.**

Faculty Senate President Vallabh Das called the November 17, 2021 the Fall Faculty Assembly & Faculty Senate meeting to order at 12:06 p.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT: (116)**

ARCH: G. Chow, D. Froehlich, M. Kyropoulou, P. Peters  
ARTS: R. Bush, N. Harren, R. Koontz, T. Koozin, S. Matijcio, C. Meals, T. Morgulis, D. Politzer  
BUS: C. Becker, B. Carlin, N. Celly, P. Kumar, A. Lish, M. Murray, J. Porra, F. Sahin  
EDU: C. Arbona, S. Brower, S. Gronseth, K. Hassett, M. Lee, April Peters  
ENGR: D. Burleson, C. Chang, J. Conrad, K. Grigoriadis, K. Larin, D. Litvinov, H. Love, Y. Mo, D. Shattuck, G. Song, Y. Yao  
HRM: S. Sirsat, D. Christopher Taylor  
LAW: E. Trujillo  
CLASS: K. Anderson, A. Bencomo, F. Bunta, P. Butler, L. Camaj, J. Cortina, H. Glass, M. Goldberg, E. Goodin-Mayeda, S. Grigorian, M. Ivey, J. Kleinheider, M. Knoblauch, L. Maher, D. Papell, S. Pott, S. Scarrow, E. Simas, C. Sisk, B. Tamber-Rosenau, C. Tamber-Rosenau, J. Tolliver, Z. Xiao, L. Zhu  
LIB: K. Creelman, T. Davis-Van Atta, V. Douglas, S. Thompson, A. Wu  
COM: G. Gomez  
NSM: M. Almus, B. Bodmann, J. Brgoch, J. Briggs, A. Caglar, R. Capuano, B. Dauwalder, R. Forrest, S. Huang, R. Lee, J. May, A. Medrano, R. Meisel, M. Nicol, D. Pattison, A. Vershynina, C. Wayne, B. Xhabli  
CON: C. Brohard, L. McWilliams, P. Schrader  
OPT: D. Coates, V. Das, L. Frishman, R. Manny, S. Modi, J. Obrien, J. Porter  
PHA: D. Chow, D. Thornton, M. Trivedi, G. Udugamasooriya  
RES CTRS: S. Chung  
RES FAC: O. Bannova  
GCSW: S. Ali, S. Narendorf  
TECH: M. Burns, B. Detillier, M. El Nahas, M. Kidd, A. Lendasse, F. Merchant

**MEMBERS ABSENT: (31)**

ARCH: Z. Qureshi  
ARTS: K. Rigdon  
BUS: S. Basu, S. Werner  
EDU: W. Fan, J. Freiberg  
ENGR: S. Pei, M. Robertson  
HON: D. Gish, D. Price  
HRM: Y. Koh, T. Legendre, J. Madera

HSPA: D. Engster  
LAW: K. Brem, D. Fagundes, J. Nelson  
CLASS: Eduardo Alemán, R. Boul, S. Craig, S. Deyle, C. Spitzmueller, A. Vujanovic  
COM: K. Jones  
NSM: A. Czader, S. Huang, E. Papadakis, Z. Ren  
PHA: G. Cuny, R. Ghose  
TECH: W. Conklin, X. Yuan

**VACANT SEATS:** (4) BUS – 1 seat (At-Large); GCSW – 2 seats (At-large) & 1 GPSC seat

**VISITORS:** Kamran Alba (ET/TECH), Raymond Bartlett (SVC/SVP, Administration & Finance), Monique Baucham (Institutional Research), Wynne Chin (BUS), Mark Clarke (Associate Provost, Faculty Development and Faculty Affairs), Joseph Curtin (Associate Provost, Institutional Research & Effectiveness), Amr Elnashai (VC/VP, Research & Transfer Technology), Fleurette Fernando (KGMCA), Stefanie Florencio (Libraries), Sabrina Hassumani (Associate Provost, Finance & Administration), Lisa Holdeman (VC/VP, Univ. Marketing & Communication), Renu Khator (Chancellor/President, UH), Sarah Larsen (Dean, Graduate School), Teri Longacre (Vice Provost & Dean, Undergraduate Student Success), Julie Lu (Pharmacy student), Cindy Mejia (Chief of Staff, Provost Office), Frank Peralez (Crabtree ASL Interpreting), Eduardo Reveles (Crabtree ASL Interpreting), Christophe Ribelayga (OPT), Paula Myrick Short (SVC/SVP, Academic Affairs & Provost), Zelma Tuthill (SOC/CLASS), Yesenia Umana (Libraries), Navin Varadarajan (Chemical Biomolecular Engineering), Matthew Wanat (PPTR/PHA)

### **Approval of Minutes: October 20, 2021 Meeting**

The Senate approved the October 20, 2021 minutes as distributed.

### **Report from and Discussion with the Faculty Senate President: [Vallabh Das](#)**

FS Pres. Vallabh Das welcomed senators and guests to the Fall Faculty Assembly & Faculty Senate Meeting. Dr. Das provided the following updates:

#### ➤ **Guidelines for hybrid meeting**

- Attendance is recorded via name tents for senators attending in-person and senators attending virtually will be recorded via Teams.
- Senators attending via Teams will need to mute their microphones.
- Presenters will need to stand within the podium area so that the virtual audience is able to view him/her via the podium camera.
- In-person attendees who want to ask a question will need to go to the podium located to the middle of the pavilion to pose their question.
- FS President-elect David Shattuck and CGRC Chair Susie Gronseth will moderate the Teams chat for questions. In-person and Teams questions (via raised hand) will be acknowledged alternately.

FS Pres. Vallabh Das thanked everyone for their patience as the Senate tries to provide an inclusive meeting experience for all attendees.

#### ➤ **MD Anderson 306 update**

- The Senate conference room has gone under a significant technology upgrade. Video conferencing equipment was installed recently so that hybrid Senate committee meetings can be held. FS Pres. Das thanked Provost Short for providing funds to help the Senate expand its meeting capabilities. However, it is the discretion of the committee chairs to choose the modality of their meetings.

➤ **Brief Committee updates**

FS Pres. Das provided brief Senate committee chair updates with the goal of committee work transparency and communication within the Senate. Each chair has provided an update on what his/her committee has been doing the last month. Updates will be provided to the full Senate on a regular basis. Senators are encouraged to pass on information updates back to their departments and/or colleges.

- Community & Government Relations Committee (CGRC):
  - The second APeX talk featuring Dr. Lauren Gilbert from the College of Medicine was held last month.
  - CGRC is currently planning the biennial conference and is scheduled on January 27-28, 2022.
- Undergraduate Committee (UC):
  - Considered and approved 192 proposals
  - Currently reviewing 233 proposals
- Graduate & Professional Studies (GPSC):
  - Reviewing various program proposals (new and existing programs)
  - Revising bylaws to align with the Senate Constitution
- Research & Scholarship Committee (RSC):
  - Coordinating with the VP for the Division of Research & Transfer Technology to create a taskforce to examine research core facility needs on campus
  - RSC subcommittees are reviewing internal grant award proposals (i.e., Bridge, Center & Institute proposals, etc.).
- Budget & Facilities Committee (BFC):
  - The BFC has invited SVP Raymond Bartlett to its monthly meetings. This give the group the opportunity to ask questions and pose concerns regarding budget and campus facilities.
- Faculty Affairs Committee (FAC):
  - Formed two subcommittees: 1) NTT Subcommittee and 1) Mid-Career Review Subcommittee; Will consider and deliberate on issues related to these groups.
- Faculty Governance Committee (FGC):
  - Organized and ran the fall 2021 special election cycle; Results will be present later in the meeting.
  - FGC is currently organizing the revision of the Faculty Handbook.

FS Pres. Vallabh Das thanked the senators for their service, commitment to shared governance and their hard work.

Lastly, FS Pres. Das mentioned that COIA Delegate Mark Knoblauch has offered one sideline pass for the Memphis game this Friday. Anyone interested in this offer can send FS Pres. Das an email (first come, first serve). He thanked Dr. Knoblauch for this kind offer.

**Report from and Discussion with the University of Houston System Chancellor and University of Houston President: [Renu Khator](#)**

Pres. Renu Khator welcomed senators and guests to the meeting.

- Special Presentation: Pres. Khator thanked Dr. Jeronimo Cortina for this outstanding leadership during his 18-month stint as 2020-2021 Faculty Senate President. She briefly mentioned the many tasks and service roles he had performed during the difficult time of the pandemic. Pres. Khator presented Dr. Cortina with a crystal vase gift as a token of her appreciation.
- Federal Level Updates:
  - Signed Infrastructure bill (includes \$40B for higher education)

- Funding that can expand UH research initiatives (i.e., carbon mgt. issues, smart cities initiative, health equity access, etc.); Pres. Khator challenged SVP Paula Short and VP Amr Elnashai to think about a rapid response infrastructure for research grants and proposals and to help with federal lobbying to federal agencies. Pres. Khator encouraged senators and faculty interested in any of the areas she mentioned to contact SVP Paula Short and VP Amr Elnashai.
- State Level Updates:
  - Pres. Khator asked the state legislature for more funds this year (unfair funding in UH's favor)
    - UH received funding for four buildings (Hobby School of Public Affairs, IDEA Lab, TMC3 – for medical research, UH Sugar Land – College of Technology)
    - Funding for research core facilities
    - Next legislative session will ask for “unfair funding” on a permanent basis
  - Preview of College of Medicine building: Texas governor Greg Abbott the ceremony
  - Preview of the new UH Law Center building: well-attended ceremony on November 10<sup>th</sup>
    - Both buildings will open in July 2021
- UH Updates:
  - UH’s Wolff Center for Entrepreneurship undergraduate program is ranked number one in the U.S.
  - UH has a higher research portfolio
  - Athletics:
    - Football is ranked #15 – hoping to advance to conference game
    - Basketball is currently 3-0; Pres. Khator encouraged senators to watch the games in-person or via national television.
    - Hoping to officially join the Big 12 conference in 2023. UH is supposed to give 27-month notice: currently in the middle of negotiations
      - Will need to reduce UH athletics subsidy, once Big 12 revenue starts coming in.
      - Challenge colleges to look at how being in the Big 12 can positively impact student success, research, etc.
  - Board of Regents (BOR) meeting: December 2, 2021
  - Fall Commencement will occur in December.

Pres. Renu Khator thanked the Senate and its leadership for their work.

**Presentation by the University of Houston System Senior Vice Chancellor and University of Houston Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost: [Paula Myrick Short](#)**

Provost Paula Short presented “The Road to Top 50 University”.

- Strategic Planning Process: Together We Rise Together We Soar (Began fall 2019)
  - held 42 listening sessions w 1,203 participants
  - received 1857 comments received from the UH community
  - 66 members on the Strategic Plan Implementation Committee
  - Approved by 10 members of the UHS BOR
  - 10 UH Strategic Planning Working Groups
- Goals:
  - 1 - Student Success
  - 2 - Nationally Competitive Research
  - 3 - Social Responsibility
  - 4 - Nationally Relevant Athletics
  - 5 - Competitive Funding
- The Vision: Building a Top 50 Public University

- Currently, UH ranks 87<sup>th</sup>, short term goal is to rank 75<sup>th</sup> and eventually reach the goal of 50<sup>th</sup> in the nation in the U.S. News & World Report ranking.
- U. S. News & World Report: 2022 Best Colleges Metrics – What counts?
  - chart of UH's metric (hard copy was distributed to audience – **see attached PDF**, page 8)
  - USNWR uses specific metrics to rank universities (percentage weight, UH compared to Top 50 target percentage); Provost Short briefly explained each metric.
    - Graduation & Retention
    - Social Mobility
    - Graduation Rate Performance
    - Undergraduate Academic Reputation
    - Faculty Resources
    - Student Selectivity
    - Financial Resources Per Student
    - Average Alumni Giving Rate
    - Graduate Indebtedness
- USNWR Metrics Focus: Graduation & Retention and Reputation contribute near 50% to the rank based on measures (What faculty do directly impacts these two metrics)
  - Graduate & Retention – 22% weight
  - Undergraduate Academic Reputation – 20% weight
- How do the strategic plan goals **connect**?
  - Provost Short presented goals 1 and 2 (Student Success and Nationally Competitive Research respectively) and corresponding action steps. She also gave examples of faculty impact with regard to each of the goals.
- Why do rankings matter?
  - All the work faculty does is interconnected.

Provost Short encouraged senators to bring back this information to their colleges by distributing the USNWR Metrics postcard and begin conversations within their colleges to support the road to the Top 50. She announced that her office will hold town halls in the future to discuss these metrics.

#### Q&A Session:

Sen. Anna Vershynina asked how UH can decrease student/faculty ratio, decrease class sizes, and hire more faculty with the current budget constraints (increase resource issue). Prov. Short responded that is currently being looked into and that the UH Strategic Plan does address many resource issues.

Sen. Anna Vershynina commented that innovative teaching methods and strengthening student engagement experiences (Goal 1 action steps) needs to be done collectively – university wide and not on an individual level. Prov. Short replied that individual work does make a difference and that university-wide work is also done through UH's Faculty Engagement Center. She gave examples for collective work (i.e., interdisciplinary research work with students, engagement workshops, etc.).

#### **Special Presentation by Dr. Navin Varadarajan, M. D. Anderson Professor of Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering. Title: Intranasal Vaccines**

FS Pres. Vallabh Das introduced Dr. Navin Varadarajan.

Dr. Navin Varadarajan presented how his research on the COVID-19 intranasal vaccine would impact society. He discussed topics such as: challenges to ending the pandemic, variants, the design of needle vaccines, the design of the COVID-19 vaccine, advantages of intranasal vaccines, viral persistence, and human translation timeline for intranasal vaccines. Lastly, Dr. Varadarajan thanked everyone who helped in his research.

#### Q&A Session:

Sen. Jacinta Conrad asked if intranasal vaccines will be accepted by people who are vaccine-hesitant and are there any differences on how intranasal vaccines would be perceived. Dr. Varadarajan responded that intranasal vaccines might be more acceptable to individuals who are not willing to receive needle-based vaccines. However, until intranasal vaccines are actually used, he said he does not know for sure.

FS Pres. Vallabh Das asked if COVID-19 intranasal vaccines would fit in the yearly booster COVID -19 scene. Dr. Varadarajan replied that intramuscular vaccine does wane and so boosters will be needed. He does see intranasal vaccines being used as a booster. However, Dr. Varadarajan said the goal is to stamp out viral replication in the nostrils completely.

Sen. Greg Gomez asked for clarification if intranasal vaccines gives systemic protection. Dr. Varadarajan responded that the advantage of nasal vaccines give long-lived immunity at the point of entry (nostril) and centrally throughout the individual's immune system.

Sen. Kevin Rowland asked if antibodies are bound to the spike protein, would it stand to reason that vaccines decrease transmissibility for those with a "breakthrough" infection? Dr. Varadarajan replied that this issue is still being debated and he gave a more technical answer.

FS Pres. Das thanked Dr. Varadarajan for his presentation. He said that Dr. Varadarajan's research was a great example of collaboration, innovation, and adaptability at UH.

#### **Report from and Discussion with the University of Houston System Senior Vice Chancellor and University of Houston Senior Vice President for Administration and Finance: [Raymond Bartlett](#)**

- SVP Raymond Bartlett reported on the following items:
  - He will present the financial annual report (FY 2021) Dec. 2<sup>nd</sup> BOR meeting
  - Lab Renovation Taskforce:
    - SVP Bartlett thanked the members of the taskforce for their participation.
    - Goal of Taskforce: Create a set of policy recommendations for campus community review
  - COVID: Current negotiations with Curative are on-going to extend contract of testing kiosk
  - Customer Service (Facilities):
    - Finishing up of the restructuring of the customer service area.
    - Will roll out campus-wide communication of the reorganization in the near future

SVP Raymond Bartlett thanked the senators for their engagement with Administration and Finance in the past year.

#### Q&A Session:

Sen. Anna Vershynina – What has been done for the future to account for the discrepancy in salary increases with regards to inflation rate. Mr. Bartlett replied it isn't possible for UH to capture spikes in inflation – especially at 7% (CPI). He mentioned UH salaries had a 2% increase every year from 2014-2021 (except for two years). SVP Bartlett said UH is committed to increasing salary through a merit pool as long as there is money in the budget to do so.

#### **Report and Discussion with the University of Houston System Vice Chancellor and University of Houston Vice President for Research & Transfer Technology: [Amr Elnashai](#)**

- VP Amr Elnashai reported on the following items:

- Core Research Facilities:
  - RSC will form five working groups based on the 5 verticals (societal challenges) and 5 horizontals (research tools)
    - The groups' charge is to provide a recommendation list of prioritized equipment & other facilities for expanding the research enterprise.
    - Ask the groups to report by January 2022
  - Budget (preliminary):
    - \$20M (i.e., start-up packages, etc.)
  - Presidential Frontier Faculty Initiative:
    - 22 new assistant professors to be hired
    - Faculty lines to be managed centrally
    - Faculty research will focus on the five verticals
    - Hope to hire 100 more faculty
- DOR – major reorganization of OCG
  - Hired new Assistant VP for Sponsored Programs to oversee newly-reorganized department.
- Research Income has increased (24%) – faculty are encouraged to spend funds
- Research Innovation Forum (held monthly)
  - Second year running the forum
  - Generally there are five presentations – five minutes each in duration (3 from researchers and 2 from DOR staff)
- Research Reaching Houston (new site)
  - Stories (currently over 80 stories) of how faculty research has impacted Houston

**Presentation of Fall 2021 Special Election Results by Faculty Governance Committee Chair:**  
[Jeronimo Cortina](#)

FGC Chair Jeronimo Cortina announced that the Fall 2021 Special Election results were certified by the Faculty Governance Committee (FGC) on November 11, 2021.

**Fall 2021 Election Results**

**At-Large Senate Seats:**

Anadeli Bencomo	CLASS
Alan Lish	BUS
Richard Meisel	NSM – Biology & Biochemistry
John O'Brien	OPT
David Politzer	ARTS

**Research & Scholarship Committee (RSC):**

Dmitri Litvinov	ENGR
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**Undergraduate Committee (UC):**

Samuel Brower	EDU
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FGC Chair Cortina welcomed and congratulated the newly-elected senators. FS Pres. Vallabh Das also congratulated the new senators and commented that the Senate looks forward to their work in the future.

### **New Business**

None.

### **Announcements**

- FS Pres. Vallabh Das reminded senators to email him if any of them are interested in the football game sideline pass.
- Lastly, FS Pres. Das encouraged feedback regarding today's Senate meeting format.

### **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 1:51 p.m.