

## Faculty Senate Minutes for February 24, 2026

### Executive Committee Members in attendance (4):

Nicholas Hinojosa, Jaclyn Miller, Silvia Herrera, and Maria Cervantes.

### Senators in attendance (19):

**Business, Public Safety, and Technology:** Ruby Campuzano, Jesus Amaya, JoAnna Martinez, and Ana Valladarez.

**Liberal Arts:** Michah Bailey, Annie Liss, Melissa Terry, Rachael E. Brown, and Robin Bell.

**Math, Science, and IT:** Courtney Galle, Mehrzad Mahmoudian-Geller, Fidel Rodriguez, and Isauro Zaragoza, and Juna Luna.

**Nursing and Allied Health:** Sharon Rice.

**Social Behavioral Science:** Pooja Rishi, Tim Weber, Liza Veliz, and Celina A. Jorge.

**Bachelor's Programs:** Laura Garcia.

### Senators absent (9):

Blanca Herrera, Alexia Trigo, Victor Fonseca, Claudia Mercado, Nihan Kayaardi Hinojosa, Robert Miller (Sean Kennedy proxy), Rebecca L. Lynch, Reginald Gonzales.

## Meeting Agenda

### **4:00 pm: “Cultivating Connections” Faculty Discussion Panel: Crista Hirmas and Jessica Galloso**

Crista Hirmas and Jessica Galloso from the Teaching and Learning Center, in collaboration with Nicholas and the Faculty Senate, reported on the success of the recent “Cultivating Connections” faculty panel, shared positive evaluation feedback, and discussed the upcoming Faculty Awards nomination process, clarifying nomination procedures for faculty.

- **Panel Discussion Outcomes:** Crista Hirmas and Jessica Galloso described the recent 'Cultivating Connections' panel, highlighting participation from all divisions and overwhelmingly positive evaluations, with faculty requesting more such events in the future.
- **Evaluation Sharing and Awards:** Jessica Galloso noted their intent to share evaluation comments and ideas for future training with the Senate and promoted the upcoming Faculty Awards, clarifying that faculty can nominate colleagues but not themselves.

### **4:05 pm: Campus Safety Meeting on Jan 20, 2026: Ruben Suarez and Johnny Barboza**

Ruben Suarez addressed the Faculty Senate, led by Nicholas, on campus procedures regarding Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and other federal law enforcement, answering questions from Micah Bailey, Liza Veliz, and Rene Rios about warrants, the role of campus police, and the handling of incidents involving minors.

- **Federal Officer Campus Access:** Ruben Suarez explained that ICE or other federal officers may enter public campus areas without a warrant but require a judicial warrant to access non-public areas such as classrooms, labs, and offices; campus police must be notified and will accompany officers for safety.

- **Handling Warrants and Subpoenas:** Faculty and staff are instructed to contact campus police immediately if presented with a warrant or subpoena for student or employee records, with campus police then referring officers to the appropriate administrative office.
- **Campus Police Role and Accountability:** Ruben Suarez emphasized that campus police cooperate with federal officers only for safety and do not enforce immigration laws or inquire about immigration status; any illegal actions by federal officers are subject to accountability and reporting.
- **Procedures Involving Minors:** In response to questions from Liza, Ruben Suarez clarified that warrants are typically for adults, and if minors are involved, family protective services would be engaged, with all actions subject to legal process and oversight.
- **Faculty Guidance and Emergency Contacts:** Nicholas and Ruben Suarez reiterated the importance of faculty saving the campus police emergency number and contacting police immediately if federal enforcement activity is observed.

#### **4:21 pm: Faculty Senate Voting and Appointments:**

- Quorum was met and verified by Silvia to begin voting.

#### **4:22 pm: Vote on new Parliamentarian Appointment: Timothy Weber**

- Micah made the motion to vote on Timothy Weber as interim Parliamentarian, and JoAnna Martinez seconded the motion.
- 24 poll responses (met quorum and passed).

#### **4:25 pm: Vote on November Meeting Minutes**

- Maria Cervantes motioned to approve November's meeting minutes, and Sharon Rice seconded the motion.
- 22 poll responses (met quorum and passed).

#### **4:26 pm: Vote on new senator for HSP: Assistant Professor Ntiense Otu**

- Sharon made the motion to vote Ntiense Otu as the new HSP senator and Mehrzad Mahmoudian-Geller seconded the motion.
- 21 poll responses (met quorum and passed)

#### **4:28 pm: AI Updates in Ethics, Manners, Current Issues and Laws: Assistant Professor Lyudmyla Dickinson**

Professor Lyudmyla Dickinson presented to the Senate, led by Nicholas, on emerging AI-related issues in higher education, including student data exposure, surveillance, unreliable AI detectors, ADA digital accessibility requirements, and legal risks, answering questions from McKay and Ntiense about proctoring tools and compliance.

- **Student Data Exposure Risks:** Lyudmyla Dickinson warned faculty about potential FERPA violations when using non-approved AI tools for grading, feedback, or plagiarism detection, and highlighted the risks of uploading student information to external platforms.
- **Surveillance and Proctoring Concerns:** Lyudmyla discussed legal and ethical issues with AI-based surveillance, such as room scans during proctored exams,

referencing a federal court case and international bans on emotion recognition in education.

- **Unreliable AI Detectors and Legal Actions:** Lyudmyla noted the high false positive rates and biases of AI plagiarism detectors, referencing lawsuits and settlements resulting from wrongful accusations, and advised caution in their use.
- **ADA Digital Accessibility Compliance:** Lyudmyla explained new federal requirements for digital accessibility (WCAG 2.1 AA), the legal responsibility of institutions for AI-generated content, and the potential for significant penalties and loss of funding for non-compliance.
- **Vendor Claims and Institutional Liability:** Lyudmyla described ongoing FTC investigations into exaggerated claims by AI vendors and stressed that colleges are legally responsible for ensuring the accuracy of AI tools used for advising, grading, or proctoring.
- **Faculty Questions on Proctoring Tools:** In response to questions, Lyudmyla clarified that while a federal judge ruled against room scans in one case, their use is not universally banned; faculty should use only college-approved proctoring tools and remain vigilant about compliance.

#### **4:45 pm: Faculty Senate Updates- Nicholas Hinojosa**

**Faculty Senate Policy Updates and BGC Policy Revision:** Nicholas updated the Senate on the need to revise the BGC policy in line with new legal frameworks provided by TASB, with input from Timothy Weber, Daniel Montes, and the Constitution Committee, and outlined the process and timeline for review and approval.

- **Policy Revision Requirements:** Nicholas explained that the Senate must update its BGC policy to align with a new legal framework suggested by TASB, which outlines requirements for faculty senate structure and authority.
- **Document Sharing and Review Process:** He described plans to share all relevant documents with the Constitution Committee via a dedicated folder, enabling collaborative review and revision.
- **Approval and Implementation Timeline:** Nicholas emphasized the urgency of finalizing revisions before a March vote, as the updated policy is necessary for upcoming Senate elections and must be reviewed by Academic Affairs and legal counsel.

**Dual Credit Survey, Committee Formation, and Other Initiatives:** Nicholas provided updates on the development of a new dual credit faculty survey with the Student Success Committee, the establishment of a Campus Safety Committee chaired by Jaclyn Miller, and other ongoing Senate initiatives.

- **Dual Credit Survey Development:** Nicholas described plans to create a new survey, in collaboration with the Student Success Committee, to gather faculty feedback on dual enrollment issues, following the removal of a previous Padlet due to concerns over negative comments.
- **Campus Safety Committee Formation:** A new Campus Safety Committee was established within the Senate to address safety-related concerns and initiatives. On Thursday, January 15, 2026, Sharon Rice, Pooja Rishi, and Mehrzad Mahmoudian-Geller

motioned to approve the committee assignment via email. Nicholas Hinojosa sent out an electronic poll via email on the same day.

- 29 poll responses (met quorum and passed)
- Jaelyn Miller is the chair of the committee.

**4:51 pm: Committee Updates:** Maria Cervantes, Liza Veliz, Fidel Rodriguez, and others provided committee updates, including the creation of a student emergency fund, progress on sick leave donation policy, and survey results supporting multi-year faculty contracts and adjunct pay improvements.

- **Student Emergency Fund Creation:** Maria reported that the Student Success Committee, in collaboration with Dr. Marco Silva and others, successfully advocated for and helped establish a \$10,000 student emergency fund, now approved by the STC board.
- **Sick Leave Donation Policy Progress:** The Benefits Committee, working with HR, is close to finalizing a policy to reinstate sick leave donation for faculty, with the goal of implementation by the next academic year.
- **Multi-Year Contract Survey Results:** Fidel and Liza summarized survey findings showing strong faculty support for multi-year contracts, with 87% of 229 respondents in favor, and noted that most preferred three-year contracts and believed such contracts would reduce faculty turnover.
- **Adjunct Pay Comparison:** Liza presented data indicating that adjunct pay at several peer institutions exceeds that at STC, supporting efforts to advocate for adjunct pay increases

#### **5:05 pm: General Discussion:**

**Academic Classification Committee Recommendations and Next Steps:** Mehrzad and Nicholas discussed the process for forwarding Faculty Senate recommendations on academic classification to Dr. Petrosian's office, with input from Ntiense and plans for further collaboration with the college-wide committee.

- **Recommendation Submission Process:** Mehrzad clarified that the Senate's approved recommendations should first be sent to Dr. Petrosian, who would then coordinate with the college-wide committee, and Nicholas agreed to forward the relevant documents accordingly.
- **Committee Collaboration:** Ntiense, a member of the classification committee, offered to review and share the recommendations with peers, facilitating consensus and coordinated action.

**Parking Concerns and Motion for Service Vehicle Policy:** Timothy Weber raised concerns about college service vehicles occupying faculty parking near Pecan campus building T, prompting a motion (seconded by Annie Liss) to request that such vehicles be parked in designated areas unless necessary for work, with Nicholas facilitating a poll for Senate action.

- **Parking Issue Description:** Timothy described the difficulty faculty face finding parking due to service vehicles occupying spaces near building T, impacting those with mobility issues and those arriving from other sites.

- **Proposed Motion and Discussion:** A motion was made and seconded to formally request that service vehicles be parked in their designated areas unless required for immediate work, with the intent to address the issue college-wide.
- 19 poll responses (met quorum and passed)

**Campus Safety Committee Recommendations:** Jaclyn Miller updated the Senate on the new Campus Safety Committee's activities, including recommendations for emergency communication groups and faculty participation in safety training, with Nicholas and others discussing implementation and tools.

- **Emergency Communication Groups:** The committee recommended that faculty and staff organize private communication groups using apps like WhatsApp or Signal to ensure effective communication during emergencies, especially in the event of a campus raid.
- **Safety Training Opportunities:** Faculty and staff were encouraged to participate in available CPR and first aid training sessions, with the committee also exploring de-escalation training options.

**5:23 pm: Meeting was Adjourned**

- Fidel motioned to adjourn and JoAnna seconded it.
- 17 poll responses (met quorum and passed)
- Meeting was adjourned.

**Total Time Duration:** 1 hour and 24 minutes