

FACULTY ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING AGENDA

FIRST MEETING OF THE FAC

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 2026

12:00 pm to 2:30 pm

STEM-227 **Room Changed to STEM 161**

In attendance (FAC members): Matt Watson, Berenice de la Cruz (virtually), Karen Burgard, Eve Lee, Lisa Polk, Donna Lehman, Alice Liu, Butch Miller, Sanikan Wattanawongwen, Michael Mary, Maria Acevedo-Aquino, Kun Gou, Emily Naasz, Danielle Fenimore, Alan Daniel, Rector Arya, Merritt Rehn-DeBaal, Scott, Gage, David Brooks, Kandice Diaz, Danny Malone, Mike O'Brien (virtually), Qi Han (virtually), Elena Foulis (virtually), Dennis Elam (virtually)

In attendance (non-FAC members): Monica Schoch-Spana, Thanuka Wijenayaka

In attendance (virtually on livestream non-FAC members): Melissa Gamez, Sabina de Vries, Sarah Flotte, Daniel Braaten, Jimmie Flores, Sarah Pollock, Vincent Creazzo, Rahman Md, James Finley, Alexandra DeLeon, Katie Bridgman, Daniel Delgado

OPEN SESSION

****Prior to the meeting starting, Karen explained the reasons behind the room change. She also explained the call for agenda items process, the FAC website, and the virtual meeting accessibility. Karen then explained that all documents that were provided to the FAC for today's meeting are also available online.*

- A. Call to order – Matt called the meeting to order at 12:00 PM.
- B. Explanation of the Newly Formed FAC (15 minutes)
 - Matt explained the role of the newly formed FAC and referenced the by-laws that have been approved by system. If more than 50% of the FAC members are in attendance, the meeting will be broadcast virtually as a livestream, starting with today's meeting.
 - The FAC will serve in an advisory role only, making recommendations to the university administration. The FAC will not have resolution and will not be involved in reviews, complaints, or grievances of the faculty.
 - The FAC officers will be selected from the elected members (not the one-year appointed members) by the university president. The three one-year appointed members, one from each of the three colleges, can be appointed for up to 6 years total but must be appointed each year.
 - The FAC will call for agenda items fairly early in each month. Then, the finalized agenda will be posted at least 7 working days in advance of the meeting. SB37 limited the size of FACs and affected the larger universities more. We are limited to a size of 30 which did not affect our make-up too much.
- C. Administrative Updates—Provost Abdelrahman and President Ochoa (30 minutes)
 - *Report pending their return from the Board of Regents meeting in College Station.*
 - President Ochoa Updates:
 - The President started with stating he is looking forward to working with the new FAC and collaborating together.
 - The University Strategic Plan is in Phase II and has 6 goals and objectives. Each group is determining the metrics of how to measure those goals. This

will be an actionable plan, not just a plan on paper. We are asking the question, “Where do we go from here as an institution?” Provost Abdelrahman is heading the group that is focusing on moving us to an R2.

- Budget—Next year’s state funding budget does not increase but our summer, fall, and spring enrollment (specifically the credit hours taken) will determine our funding for the next two years. We need to maximize enrollment. With the next state legislature, there will be a new funding formula based on performance metrics (not just on enrollment numbers). This is a very big unknown as the formula has not been decided yet. We will remain cautious in our financial plan.
- Curriculum Review (compliance review)—We have not received the list yet of courses that were flagged. We submitted all the syllabi in the Fall and we should receive our list of flagged courses in March. The President and Provost has also created a process for reviewing all courses (for all three semesters—summer, fall, spring) and will provide that process to the Deans and Chairs next week in the Deans and Chairs meeting.
- SB37—Systematic review of all core curriculum. To be in compliance with the law, we need to complete our review by Jan. 1, 2027. Review of all courses in the core based on several criteria: citizenship, workforce alignment, and costs involved. Groups (made up of faculty, administrators, business leaders, and community members) will be convened to review the core and make sure we are in alignment with the law requirements. This needs to be done by May 2026. Additionally, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) is considering reducing the required core credit hours. President Ochoa will provide more details when he knows more.
- Provost Abdelrahman Updates:
 - Multiple programs update—
 - Biomedical science to the May board review – less than a 50% chance for a Fall 2026 start, probably Fall 2027
 - Electrical engineering – waiting on the budget – 100% will not be ready for Fall 2026, definitely a Fall 2027 start – this one will have a lot more scrutiny and overview because it is starting an entirely new field of study here
 - Ed.D. – Will go to SACSCOC because it constitutes a substantive change in programming at the university – They meet twice a year and we missed the Sept. deadline – we almost have everything ready to submit for the March 15th deadline and will know the results in June – we will know more about what, if any, financial aid we can provide at that time
 - New Ph.D. programs development—
 - Integrated genetics and genomics – convening a committee to develop the program – they will finish developing the program by May – the earliest we will be able to start the program is Fall 2028 if everything goes according to plan
 - Research funding opportunities—collaborative proposals (3 from the university and we’ve received 7 abstracts so we will need to narrow down the university submissions) and individual research funding opportunities (unlimited number of submissions)
 - Core Curriculum—
 - THECB is reviewing the number of credit hours in the core and evaluating moving from 42 to 36, possibly 30
 - 08.01 – system policy regarding syllabi – we submitted the HB2504 syllabi from the website and should receive the results of the review in mid-March – they will determine the level of risk (of not being in compliance with the

law) – the lower level of the course the higher the risk – the Fall 2026 compliance review will start soon with the President and the Provost providing the process outline to the Deans and Chairs next week – for A&M College Station, they had 5,400 courses reviewed, 100 courses needed exceptions and 4 courses were cancelled

D. Discussion and Decision Item—FAC Committees (45 minutes)

- Committee Structure and Explanation of Roles
 - There was a brief explanation of all of the former Faculty Senate committees no longer being in effect (as the Faculty Senate has been disbanded) – Matt suggested that this might be a time to rethink how we do our business and reimagine the committee structure (and how the work on the FAC gets completed) – he also said we need to revisit the FAC by-laws to see what we allowed to do in regard to the decisions our body makes
- Immediate Need—all Ad Hoc Committees through spring
 - UG and Core Curriculum Committee – Karen explained that the UG and Core committee received letters from the Provost’s Office asking them to work in an ad-hoc capacity until the FAC establishes their new committee structure
 - Alan moved to keep the Ad-Hoc committees of UG and Core Curriculum and have them continue their work until the FAC holds new elections and establishes its standing committees
 - Maria Acevedo-Aquino seconded
 - Vote – 19 in favor, 0 against, 0 abstentions
- Distinguished Faculty Awards Committee
 - Joni in the Provost’s Office contacted Karen and asked that the FAC establish the Distinguished Faculty Awards Committee for this year’s awards and provided a description of the committee’s makeup and its responsibilities – the description calls for each college to elect two representatives and one library representative
 - The FAC agreed to have the presidentially appointed representatives (Lisa P., Eve L., and Donna L.) reach out to their college dean and ask them to organize and hold the elections for their committee representatives
 - The three presidentially appointed representatives will provide the names to Karen after the elections are conducted, who will send them to Joni, they will also report the names to the FAC at the March meeting
- Standing Committees
 - Configuration of committee membership
 - There was a discussion about the Graduate Curriculum Committee (which was not included in the previous discussion and vote)
 - Karen moved to have the Graduate Curriculum Ad-Hoc Committee continue their work throughout the spring semester
 - Donna seconded
 - Vote – 19 in favor, 0 against, 0 abstentions
 - Roles, responsibilities, duties, and meeting times of each committee
 - The FAC had a discussion about reimaging the committee structure on the FAC – part of this discussion was about shifting the inner workings and operations of the FAC to the committees – some FAC members mentioned the value of discussing issues

within the large group and others talked about maximizing efficiency by having the committees meet, discuss the issues more in-depth, and then reporting back to the larger group – recommendation was made to consolidate some of the former standing committees and collapse them down into 4 or 5 groups total (for example: Finance/Business Issues, Student Issues, Academic Issues, Infrastructure Issues)

- A question was asked if Matt could find the committee descriptions from the former Faculty Senate and provide them to the FAC members to provide clarity on what the committee responsibilities are
 - A request was made for Karen to create a FAC Teams channel
 - The decision was made to postpone the discussion of committees until the March meeting

E. Discussion and Decision Item—1- and 2-Year Term FAC Membership (30 minutes)

- Number of members rolling off in May – this was provided by Karen
- Establishing guidelines for elections to be held in departments this spring
 - Matt and Karen explained that the elections for new FAC need to happen this spring so they will be seated before the next school year begins –there was a discussion about fiscal year vs. academic year –the by-laws approved by system state fiscal year, so the current one-year members will roll off officially on August 31, 2026 but their final FAC meeting will be the May meeting
 - David moved to have the departments hold departmental elections in April 2026 to elect their new members, who will serve a two-year term
 - Butch seconded
 - Vote – 19 in favor, 0 against, 0 abstentions

F. Discussion Item (30 minutes)

SB 37 §51.315 General Education (Texas Core) Review: campus guidance and Jan 1, 2027 timeline

- The explanation for this agenda item was provided in the President and Provost’s updates – there was an additional question as to who “owns” the core, and the answer provided was the THECB – no further discussion was requested

ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 2:15 PM.

** Asterisks indicate additional documents available as attachments to the calendar invite.*