TEXAS WOMAN'S UNIVERSITY

Faculty Senate Annual Retreat

December 5, 2025
OMB 257 and Zoom

The meeting was called to order at 9:37 am

Roll Call

Akinleye x	Acho x	Barnett	Beatty x	Beins x
Blosser x	Burke x	Chen x	Dice	Dillon x
Du x	Dunlap x	Elkins x	Fredrickson x	Gates
Gullion x	Immanuel x	Landrum x	Lucero Jones x	Maier x
Miketinas x	Mooney x	Night x	Petersen x	Rosa-Dávila x
Sen x	Smith x	Trujillo-Jenks x	van Erve x	Williams x
				Woods x

Parliamentarian: Dr. Parker Hevron
TCFS Representative: Dr. Shawnda Smith

Recognition of Guests
Faculty: Dr. Amy Burke, Dr. Wyona Freysteinson, Dr. Jackie Hoermann-Elliott, Dr. Catherine Mbango, Dr. Linda Rubin
Staff: Ms. Stephany Compton, Mr. Christopher Johnson.

Approval of Minutes
Motion to Approve, Dillon; second, Blosser.
0 abstained; motion passed.

Approval of Agenda
Motion to Approve, Acho; second, Van Erve.
0 abstained; motion passed.

Guest Speakers:

IT Solutions — Dr. Henry Torres, Chief Information Officer (CIO)
- Student support comes first, then faculty.
- TWU has 131 classrooms across all three campuses. Each of those has equipment. Try to emphasize teaching and learning first in their IT decisions (specifically for classroom environments).
- Focuses on synergies for equipment and looking heavily towards virtualization and outsourcing some server maintenance tasks.
- Busy device environment: for instance, students bring a lot of devices to campus.
- IT is continually looking for efficiencies; one example is the safety lines and converting those to a digital setup from their current analog configuration.
- A new cyber regulation from the State of Texas requires inspections and access controls for network closets. Identified 75 critical network closets to protect and provide additional security for.

- Lots of activity with regards to maintaining network security: ~3,700 completed tickets, ~600 resolved phishing incidents, ~1,900 risk assessments completed, etc.
- Support services has resolved 2,802 tickets in November, and 400 tickets that are carried forward into December.
  - Currently supporting 4,000 machines. 2,000 faculty/staff, 2,000 labs/classrooms.
    - 1,100 laptops and 900 desktops
    - 550 Macs
    - 500 Apple devices (includes iPads)
    - 130 Learning Environment (classrooms)
- Support wants to focus on better escalation of tickets for faculty and staff.
- Currently working on 35 projects; 12 of those projects are internal to IT focused on service improvement.
- Big focus that's new is data visualization and creating dashboards to turn institutional data into information that can be used for decision-making.
- Moving forward, there will be an increased focus on strategy.
- There was an email outage right before Thanksgiving due to some equipment malfunctioning; this has since been resolved.

Chancellor's Forum — Dr. Carine Feyten
Presenting on the top-10 higher education headlines specific to Texas for the past year.
  - Record-high enrollment in Texas. No enrollment cliff here yet. State enrollment is up 4.7% over the previous year.
  - Texas State and Tarleton are the fastest growing institutions in the state.
  - Increased focus on workforce development.
  - May suggest changes in our approach as well with regard to workforce development.
- **Expanded state oversight of curriculum**
  - A&M and Tech adopted new limits on race/gender in instruction.
  - Faculty have faced discipline for non-compliance.
  - Part of broader trend in higher education moving away from faculty autonomy.
- **Governance changes in Texas Systems**
  - Regents increased authority.
  - New compliance mechanisms emerging statewide.
  - Signals tighter control over curriculum.
- **Declining public trust in higher ed**
  - National skepticism driven by cost and perceived ideological bias.
  - Texas growth increases pressure for clear workforce outcomes.
  - Universities must improve storytelling around student success and economic mobility.
- **Massive endowment for technical education**
  - TSTC receives large new endowment of $850m.
  - Allows expansion of applied workforce programs.
  - Reflects rising demand for technical careers in TX.
  - Technical education could become a defining strength of the Texas economy.
- **Rising concern over campus safety**
  - Campus crime incidents increasing in several categories.
  - Violent crime still rare but perception issues rising.
  - Student mental health concerns intersect with safety efforts.

- o Implication: institutions may need new safety technology, staffing, and transparency measures.
- **The rise of alternative higher ed models**
  - o Growth of private, unconventional institutions such as UATX.
  - o Increasing interest in nontraditional credentials.
  - o Pressure on traditional universities to innovate.
  - o Implication: Texas may see a more diverse and competitive higher ed marketplace.
- **Political and cultural scrutiny on campuses**
  - o Ongoing rollback of DEI requirements across institutions.
  - o UT Austin drops cultural diversity flag courses.
  - o Identity, speech, and governance debates are intensifying.
  - o Campus climate and student expectations may shift dramatically.
- **Leaders focus on rebuilding public trust**
  - o Texas Tribune festival highlights urgency of transparency.
  - o Affordability and access seen as top priorities.
  - o Texas institutions under national spotlight.
  - o Expect greater emphasis on equity, support services, and community engagement.
- **Texas universities gaining national recognition**
  - o A&M earns spot on "Brands that Matter" list.
  - o TWU and UTA #2 and #1 universities in North Texas by WSJ.
  - o Several Texas institutions improving national standing.
  - o Enhanced reputation may strengthen enrollment, philanthropy, and legislative influence.

TWU Headlines for 2025
- **TWU Achieves R2 designation**
  - o Elevates TWU into research intensive national peer group.
  - o Impacts faculty recruitment, grad enrollment, external funding.
  - o Strengthens competitive and legislative influence.
- **TWU Posts Enrollment and SCH Growth**
  - o Total enrollment rises to 15,505; grad enrollment up 4%.
  - o SCH increase, signaling faster student progress.
  - o Counternarrative to national enrollment headlines.
  - o Growing and healthy, critical for budget.
- **TWU Earns strong national ranking visibility**
  - o Top rankings by WSJ and US News validate TWU quality.
  - o Nursing, OT, PT, psychology, and social mobility metrics stand out.
  - o Strengthens recruitment, fundraising, policy-making.
- **TWU strengthens footprint & infrastructure**
  - o Completion of several buildings, including the new health science center.
  - o Dallas and Houston strategic plans.
  - o Enhances workforce and healthcare partnerships.
- **TWU navigates political pressures with mission clarity**
  - o Woman-focused identity invites scrutiny in state context.
  - o TWU maintains integrity while adapting to policy shifts.
  - o Strategic tension shapes academic and governance decisions.
- **TWU solidifies woman-focused mission/identity**
  - o TWU remains the largest woman-focused public system in the US
  - o Differentiated narrative for donors, legislators, and partners.

- o Organizing principle that contextualizes other milestones.

Forecast for 2025-2026
- o TWU Scaling up: more local and national recognition; Doubling down on mission-driven strengths, specifically social mobility. Navigate political headwinds re: curriculum, gender, higher ed content
- o Program expansion forces strategic balancing. Growth vs. scrutiny.
- **Texas Talent Squeeze**
  - o Competency-based education, credential stacking, meeting workforce gap.
- **AI Degrees & Micro Credentials**
  - o Texas taking the lead in AI in higher education.
- **University Centers Expansion**
  - o More and more university centers being launched on campuses where they co-locate with other universities where they offer bachelor-completion programs and graduate programs.
- **Legislative interim hearings**
  - o Gives us idea of where the legislature is heading for the next session.
  - o Workforce alignment scorecard.
  - o Performance-based funding.
  - o Expanded regent oversight.
  - o Credit transfer mandates.
  - o Cap on administrative spending.
- **Rise of "Regional Public Flagships"**
  - o Institutions that have become an anchor for the region (such as UT Arlington for North Texas; UTSA for San Antonio).
- **Women's Leadership Ecosystem**
  - o Texas is investing in women's leadership initiatives at TWU and at other schools.
- **Donor pivot to workforce readiness**
  - o Donors interested in workforce simulation labs, K-12 to college rich programs, health and biotech structure, micro-credential ecosystems that can stack.
  - o Change in priorities could really affect our campus.
- **Small private college instability**
  - o Could be affected by the collapse of some smaller Texas universities in the next few years.

Chancellor asks Houston faculty: Do you need me to come to Houston graduation? Is there an alternative that perhaps is more meaningful? Intent was to hand off graduation to campus president. Faculty note that they feel that Chancellor is academic head of university; value her being there. Chancellor is willing to come if faculty wants her to, but would prefer to look for another, more meaningful way for the Chancellor's presence in Houston.

Chancellor on workforce readiness and liberal arts: Believes we have a special opportunity to make explicit the link between liberal arts and, for instance, artificial intelligence; adding a focus on critical thinking and infuse it into all programs and workforce emphases. What Chancellor also emphasizes is that numbers don't convince legislators—storytelling does.

Question about the decline in public trust: Faculty is concerned about the return on investment issue. Worried about the increase in cost; but also worried about the decrease in funding from the state overall. Chancellor emphasizes that our tuition increases are the result of drops in state

funding. For the last few legislative sessions, it has been communicated to legislators, but they do not appear receptive. Think universities are sitting on pots of gold, that all universities are like UT and A&M. Women's universities tend to be less comfortable asking for money, we're working to change that.

Provost Forum – Dr. Angela Bauer
- **Curriculum Review Process**
  Announced that this was coming. Mindset moving forward is reflected in the preamble of the guidance document shared by the Chancellor. We honor academic freedom on this campus, faculty is subject matter expert and know what the best practices are to support student learning. To reiterate, this comes with some responsibilities, chief among which is creating classroom environments in which students feel free to learn. We want to provide a variety of perspectives and the freedom to form their own opinions. Academic Affairs has provided guidance, and while AA does not want to ban words, they have provided phrasing examples to make sure it does not sound activist but neutral instead; focusing on the science behind it.

- Forums:
  ACT 301 on Monday, 12/8, 4:00 pm.
  ACT 301 on Thursday, 1/15, 4:00 pm.

- Grey Scott is working on an FAQ document about the revision guidelines. Faculty will receive more instructions from their ACA about the internal departmental process soon.

- Department-ACA-Dean-College Curriculum Committee-University Curriculum Committee-UG/Grad Council-Core Curriculum Review.

  Firstly, the focus was on undergraduate, but after meeting of Board of Regents, expanded to also involve graduate courses.

- **Budget and Enrollment**
  Bump in retention rate of 7%. Working currently on formalizing a first-year experience, and hopeful about its impact because it's been shown to have a strong impact elsewhere. Encourages faculty to teach FIGs and reach out to Jackie Hoermann-Elliott or Shawnda Smith.

- **Increase in Applications**
  25% increase in completed applications. Part of that growth is due to Texas' free application week, but these aren't just students that log in once—these are completed applications. An increase in enrollment would result in more state funding and that would be able to result in salary increases.

- **Budget Advisory Committee**
  Policy on program fees. Broad discussion but specifically addressed the purchasing of food using program fees. Revising policy and reverting back to old policy given the link between belonging and events with food, and the fact that food is sometimes integrated in curriculum.

- **Project Thrive**
  Meeting every week. Two working groups: budget literacy and transparency, the other one is the program viability committee that will create a framework for the Budget Advisory Committee to apply.

- **Artificial Intelligence**
  Really happy with how our campus is responding to artificial intelligence. TWU is not doing everything heavy-handed. Faculty have freedom to choose how much of it to incorporate in their classes and we're listening to employers about graduates' AI readiness for the workforce. Creating some micro-credentials and certificates for AI readiness focused on certain programs and for the general campus community as well (Daniel Ernst is involved as associate AI strategist.)

  Provost is grateful for participation of faculty and shared governance as we navigate these topics and challenges.

- **Complaint Process about Course Content**
  Provost wants to guarantee due process and commits to reiterating to faculty that she wants to work with them and support them. She does not want to step over faculty. If faculty wants representation at these conversations, that should be possible—will emphasize that. All complaints this semester have been resolved amicably. Faculty is concerned that due process rights for faculty aren't sufficiently emphasized; Provost commits to making that more explicit for folks.

  Vice Provost Armstrong emphasizes the role of Nancy Chick, the Executive Director of Teaching, Learning, and Scholarship at the Faculty Commons: she can be used as a resource for faculty if need be, and will keep things confidential if need be.

  In response, faculty emphasize mental health of faculty—tend to feel powerless in the face of these complaints, and we should be aware of that. There is a lot at stake.

- **Online and In-Person**
  Programs need to balance in-person class needs with demand for online courses and enrollment. More important to provide in-person for lower-level courses to increase retention, in-person is more effective for that. Faculty asked if TWU was collecting data on student preferences regarding enrollment (because online often fills before face-to-face does). Provost commits to investigating.

  Faculty comments on the inclusion of diverse perspectives versus diversity. Faculty need to strike a balance.

Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs – Dr. Erika Armstrong
- Dr. Armstrong sent out email with slides from the Provost's budget forum; some problems with the listserv Dr. Torres is investigating.

- Struggling faculty members can call on the EAP (see HR) for access to counseling or other resources for dealing with stress and/or mental health issues.

Speaker Report – Dr. Emarely Rosa Dávila

- **Course Review Process**
  Provost presented to the Board of Regents a proposal for a General Education Council and wanted the Board of Regents to delegate responsibility for the Core to the Chancellor and the Provost. The Board of Regents was not willing to do that—they want to be more involved. (This is unlike the authority that the Board of Regents has over the Senate's constitution and bylaws, which the Board did delegate to the Chancellor and Provost at August's meeting.)

  More context for course review assignment. We are all going to be working on this. Important to know that *all* courses are going through this process.

  We should explain to other faculty members that this effort is inspired by Max Weber's framework of value neutrality. This isn't in the document, but this is the principle that the effort rests on. The process affects only the course titles, descriptions, and SLOs, but *not* the course content. Grateful that the Provost and the Chancellor have chosen the more conservative route.

  Faculty should support this process and senators should pass this information on to faculty in their departments. The goal is to have 50% of the courses completed and reviewed by February 1.

  Speaker has asked Gray Scott how FS could help with this process and if there are questions that he should add to the FAQ for the guidelines as he develops it.

- **Grad School Enrollment by TWU Undergraduate Students**
  TWU wants to increase grad program enrollment by focusing on students who are completing their undergraduate degrees here.

  If students are applying to graduate programs within a year of graduating from undergrad, they are eligible for a fee waiver. Alumni are also eligible for special, targeted scholarships for graduate degrees.

New Business:
- None.

Unfinished Business:
- None.

Speaker Pro Tem Report – Dr. Suzanna Dillon
Please examine the Academic Affairs Budget Advisory Committee in the Faculty Senate drive.

An initial survey has gone out among 36 faculty; initial conclusions are that data reliability is lacking, Oracle data isn't.

Project Thrive

Comments from the Senate's Budget Committee are being forwarded to the Project Thrive committees. Specifically, the Senate's desire for qualitative data to be included in the evaluations of programs has been transmitted.

Secretary Report – Dr. Wouter van Erve
- No report.

Report from TCFS Representative – Dr. Shawnda Smith
- No report.

New Faculty Concerns:

IT Services
- Status of moving to a single two-factor authentication system
  - Working on it, probably won't be finished this academic year.
- Visibility of student photos in Self Service
  - Partially working, but will investigate the possibility of a new feature to generate printable rosters with student photos.
- Emeritus faculty email access
  - HR wants to talk to faculty to investigate the scope of this concern.

Travel funds
- Continued concerns about allocation of travel funds. Take publication status into account for the distribution of travel funds, recent published research should have priority.

Credit toward mentoring undergraduate students in labs or studio settings
- Concern with regard to the amount of credit faculty receive for undergraduate students being mentored in lab or studios; credit currently capped at 3 students.
- Provost highlights concerns about SCH generation because mentorship could take faculty away from classroom, and classroom instruction generates more SCH.
- Provost suggests perhaps offering research-intensive courses in which students could enroll (with GA support), that could be part of faculty members' teaching load and could focus on more than labs or studios.

CAS Dean Search
- Will the Provost get to see the results of the Dean search surveys?
  - Yes. And Provost will be talking to all constituencies who are meeting with the Dean candidates as well.
- Have we addressed the confidentiality statement for search committees to also include statement of conflict of interest?
  - Not formally, but it has been addressed in the context of this search. HR is moving forward with revising the statement for the future.

Course Complaints
- Is the Provost tracking complaints by number and by category? Concerned the complaint content is a moving target, and that there may also be complaints about other issues that can impact our curriculum and other work. Also, do our efforts to revise course descriptions matter in terms of reducing the volume of complaints?
  - Some complaints don't come to the Provost. Majority of complaints are about gender and sex, but some are about politics, generally speaking. A little difficult to track.

- o Moving ahead, Provost says that most important is balance. Multiple perspectives, freedom to learn. If there's a topic that's considered controversial but it's done in a balanced and respective environment, that's allowed. Promote civil discourse, as it's an important part of the learning experience.

Parking
- Complaint about parking rules not being enforced.
  - o Parking has been told to not tow or boot anymore until upper-level has approved that. TWU wants Parking to be cognizant of student finances. Parking collects data on number of student parking tickets. Parking Office has been told to not place holds on transcripts before graduation; there are students with 30-80 tickets that are not being enforced.

Consent Agenda

Standing Committee Chair Reports
Academic Freedom and Responsibility:
Academic Standards Committee:
Administrator Evaluation:
Budget and Planning:
Committee Selection Committee:
Constitution and Bylaws:
Elections:
Faculty Affairs:
Faculty Handbook:

University Committee Liaison Reports
Academic Affairs Budget Committee:
Athletic Council:
Curriculum Committee:
Distance Education Advisory Committee:
Faculty Evaluation & Development Committee:
Graduate Council:
Honorary Degree Committee:
Undergraduate Council:

Adjournment
Motion to Adjourn, Blosser; Second, Dillon.

Meeting was adjourned at 12:57 pm

Wouter van Erve, Secretary

December 4 Meeting

Follow up from Oct 31 Meeting:
1. Policy on the use of program fees.
   a. Review of "old"/current actual program fee policy
   b. Updated language from existing URP 4.04 (2014) – which is still the policy in place, although other language has been circulated in the past few years regarding use of program fees (e.g., use of fees for food).
   c. Note for faculty that both the existing URP 4.04 and the recommended changes to URP 4.04 allow for use of program fees for food, which addresses issues of concern in the past years.
2. Project Thrive
   a. Impetus for Program:
      i. How do we counter a reduction in formula funding with our commitment to invest in our people?
      ii. Is TWU inviting an appropriate percentage of its university budget in academic affairs and in the people that carry out its mission?
         1. IPEDS for TX IHEs 40.3% goes to Instruction and academic support
         2. For TWU, it's 54.9% (4th in state for spending only behind only the UH campuses)
         3. For salaries and wages, 16.2% in TX, TWU 22.1% (top in state)
      iii. So, if this is true, why don't we see salary growth?
         1. 1% merit increase would cost TWU 1.4 million
         2. Market adjustment for staff 2.4 mil, faculty 3.0 mil
   b. Goal of Project Thrive is to develop/revise programs so that formula funding (SCH generation) can cover faculty salaries. Provost acknowledged that some programs may not meet this goal but that efforts in this direction will improve the University's fiscal efficiency.

New Business for December 4 Meeting:
1. While Project Thrive is being developed and rolled out, there need to be decisions made about filling open lines.
   a. As faculty lines have opened, Provost's office is looking at program finances first. Deans are currently sending all faculty line requests to the Provost, in an attempt to be equitable in how funds are being utilized (previous practice for new faculty lines being reimplemented for all lines).

    b. Program analysis is looking at enrollment, SCH generation, formula funding, salaries, and the net differences. Emphasis on formula funding because that is primarily how salaries are paid. Focus is on efficiency of program so that we can consistently offer merit raises.

    c. Provost's office is also looking at the School/Department Chairs and how much they are bought out relative to the program size (because school/department chairs are included in the calculations with their salary and the SCHs they teach).

2. Reviewed slides from the Budget Forum.
    a. Provost's goal is to cut adjunct budget in ½ (currently ~7.6 million) by addressing low enrolled sections, raising larger sections were appropriate, and a few other strategies by the fall of 2026.

    b. Cutting the adjunct budget in ½ will allow for a ~2% raise for all faculty and staff.

    c. If adjuncts are paid off differentiate tuition funds, these would not be a part of this adjunct budgets. Also, nursing adjunct salaries are currently covered by specific state support.

Faculty Senate Budget Committee

Agenda and Minutes

Thursday, November 13, 2025, from 10-11:15 AM

1. Updates from Academic Affairs Budget Advisory Committee (AABAC)
   a. First meeting held on Halloween.
   b. Updates on Agenda items:
      i. Drafting a policy re: the use of program fees
         1. Concern from Faculty: Concern about policy on program fees and what that will consist of. If we place strong restrictions on the use of these funds — for example, stating that clinic and program fees may not be used to purchase food — it could impede our work. While this restriction may not affect some departments, our SLP program must purchase food for "feeding or swallowing therapy." The current wording allows exceptions only for research; however, this therapy is not research but rather required teaching. Writing a policy this rigid would ultimately hinder our ability to educate our students effectively.
         2. Will there be a percentage or maximum dollar amount per person or per event that can be spent?
         3. Can program fees be used only by the programs that generate the fees? Does differential tuition get included in the program fees? Where is the clear language on where funds can and cannot be spent?
      ii. Overview of Project Thrive and its relationship to the AABAC
         1. Updates from Faculty Senate Representatives to Project Thrive: Budget Transparency Work Group
            a. Survey being sent to the Council of Chairs regarding budget transparency. Items include what data will be included in the dashboard, what it will look like, how to access Oracle cloud, what training might be needed, what reports need to be made available?
               i. Concerns expressed about what this process means for the students. What does it mean when they see money being spent but not in ways that impact them?

2. Updates from Faculty Senate Representatives to Project Thrive: Program Viability Work Group
    a. Discussion of guiding framework and rubric in progress, with three levels/stages of review.
    b. Concerns about the heavy emphasis on quantitative data, which can be interpreted without context.
    c. Concern that those programs that are on the edge, they must engage in a regular process of justifying their existence (worth, value, job). This process detracts from efforts being spent to contribute to the program.
    d. Concerns that if the first level/stage is just financial/quantitative, then programs are always begin put in a position to defend themselves. If this is where we are going, we need the administration to state this… it becomes a business focus rather than an educational focus.
    e. Concerns that grant funding goes to the faculty or the school, not the program level. If program level is the unit of measure.
    f. Concerns about program level review (as unit of measure) rather than departments or schools.
    g. Concerns about administrative decision being made (perhaps in anticipation of these budgetary/business perspectives) without faculty input and/or program voice.
        iii. Faculty and staff merit increases
            1. Discussion of raising course minimums in effort to generate funds sufficient for merit increases.
        iv. Financial analyses of programs requesting to fill faculty lines
2. Matters Arising from Members:
    a. What about other components such as administration (especially higher-level positions) and staff, which account for more than half of the university's resources? We understand this may be beyond the scope of Academic Affairs or the Faculty Senate, but overall, improving efficiency and transparency across the entire university is essential.
    b. Concerns as to why merit raises are not included as a "fixed cost" that is accounted for in annual budgets. Suggests low value of the faculty.

      c. Continued concerns about administrator salaries; how, if ever, they are reviewed (and by who); and how it affects the bottom line of the programs that are being reviewed.

3. Next Meeting: January – New doodle poll will go out for members to accommodate spring schedules.