ITEM 1. Call to order. Faculty Senate (FS) President Sandor Dorgo called the Faculty Senate to order on April 9, 2019 at 3:02 PM in the Blumberg Auditorium of the UTEP Library

ITEM 2. Determination of Quorum was made by President Dorgo, who called for a motion to seat the alternate members. That motion was made by John Moya (Engineering) and seconded by Luis Contreras (Engineering). The motion passed unanimously.

ITEM 3. Consent Agenda: President Dorgo called for a motion to approve the March 12, 2019 minutes. The motion was made by Anita Quintana (Science) and seconded by Paul Carrola (Education). Two corrections to the minutes were proposed to these minutes: 1) In ITEM 4, Jennifer Ware was cited as a representative of the School of Pharmacy, whereas she is actually with the School of Nursing, and 2) under ITEM 5, on the third page of the minutes, ninth line, the Department of Sociology should have been cited as the Department of Sociology/Anthropology. The minutes were approved with these corrections unanimously.

ITEM 4. Acceptance or Modification of Agenda: President Dorgo requested a modification of the agenda in that a report of the Committee on Committees was recently received, and needed to be acted upon expeditiously. A motion to approve the agenda as amended was made by Richard Langford (Science) and seconded by Senate Vice-President Gina Núñez-Mchiri (Liberal Arts).

ITEM 5. Announcements: President Dorgo.
   A. The Senate received a request from the International Oversight Committee (IOC) for a replacement for its retiring member who has heretofore represented the UTEP faculty. The IOC is responsible for reviewing and approving all University-sponsored international travel to High Risk locations. This body only meets as needed, and the term of service may well last until retirement. The nominee President Dorgo put forward is a volunteer, Dr. Gaspare Genna, a Professor of Political Science who possesses the experience and qualifications for this service. When put to a vote of the faculty present, Dr. Genna was unanimously approved as the nominee to send forward.

   B. The video recording of the “Special Meeting” of the Senate on 28 March with President-finalist Dr. Heather Wilson was uploaded to YouTube, and became extensively viewed. A suggestion was made to President Dorgo about recording and making available all the regular meetings of the Faculty Senate as well, a proposal that he reviewed and discussed with the Senate Executive Committee. President Dorgo now brought the idea to the full Senate, seeking input and discussion before any decision would be made. That discussion ensued, with some Senators in favor of the idea, and some concerned. It is not clear that YouTube is the platform of choice here, and that a more restricted access vehicle for any such video-recordings would be desirable. Also, there is some worry about those being recorded be reluctant to voice frank opinions on matters before the Senate if they were subsequently made public.
President Dorgo offered to look into these issues further before making a specific recommendation to the Senate.

C. The May meeting of the Senate is the occasion for the election of the Senate Officers, specifically the President, Vice-President, and Secretary. The Nominating Committee (consisting of three previous Senate Presidents) will at that time present a slate of candidates, likely the three current office-holders who have another year of eligibility to serve. However, nominations may be made from the floor for any or all of these three offices (please make sure you have the permission of the nominee before volunteering them for one of these positions!).

D. President Dorgo summarized the events since the last regular Senate Meeting (12 March) regarding the appointment of Dr. Heather Wilson as UTEP President thusly:

1. The Senate leadership left the 12 March meeting expecting to begin revisiting the “faculty priorities” document written before the identity of the finalist for the President position was known.

2. That revision was delayed, in that a faculty-wide, electronic survey was conducted over an 11-day period at the end of March. The survey was sent to 1204 UTEP faculty of all types of appointments but exclusive of administrators. About 530 individuals opened the survey, and about 450 answered it.

3. The three questions on the survey gathered responses consisting of:
   - 1st: Questions to be directly asked of Dr. Wilson
   - 2nd: Faculty perspectives on Dr. Wilson’s selection
   - 3rd: Revisions to the pre-selection faculty priorities document

4. President Dorgo organized a quick assessment of the responses to develop the general questions asked of Dr. Wilson at the aforementioned “Special Meeting of the Senate” with her on March 28, which took place in the Templeton Suite of the Union Building. He received numerous comments about this meeting from the faculty, largely because of its availability on YouTube.

5. In conjunction with consultation with members of the Senate Executive Council, the full data set was also quickly assessed and then summarized into broad categories of concern for a letter to the UT System Board of Regents (BOR). This letter was signed by all members of the Executive Council and sent to the BOR prior to their final 21st-day vote to confirm the appointment of Dr. Wilson.

6. The following week, the BOR voted to confirm the appointment Dr. Heather Wilson as the new UTEP President. This result was not unexpected.

7. Dr. Wilson will not be assuming these Presidential duties until the 15th of August.

Following this exposition by President Dorgo, a lively discussion/question-answer session with the Senate membership ensued. The following is a (non-exhaustive) summary of particular points made:

Senate Vice-President Gina Núñez-Mchiri will be attending the next UT System Faculty Advisory Council (FAC) meeting in Austin, and will be expressing to this group faculty concerns over the Presidential selection process as conducted by the BOR.

The “Special Meeting” venue for March 28 was small compared to what President Dorgo specifically asked for, but restrictions on space (60 persons) and invitees (Senate members only) were apparently the actions taken by the meeting organizers.

A more expansive general meeting of the faculty with Dr. Wilson likely will be held at some future date, and obviously desirable before her August 15th arrival.
In response to question from the floor, President Dorgo related that the Senate Executive Council post-Special Meeting, post-BOR letter actions have been to return to the faculty priorities document in the light of the numerous responses to question 3 on the March survey of the general faculty. A direct question was also asked of Dr. Dorgo, to the effect: Did Dr. Wilson see the contents of the letter to the BOR prior to their vote to confirm her? Neither the Senate President nor the Executive Council shared it with her, and they have no knowledge that anyone else (e.g., the BOR) has. There was subsequent discussion if it should be revealed to her, with pros and cons both being voiced.

Another direct question was asked of President Dorgo if he provided any feedback to the BOR on their selection process. The answer was no, due to a lack of direct communication opportunities with members of the BOR, but a) he had several telephone and in person conversations with the chair of the search committee, Vice-Chancellor Steven Leslie, and b) he had also spoken with current president of the Faculty Advisory Council (Daniel Cavanaugh, UT Arlington) about the likely possibility of the FAC taking up the subject of the BOR’s presidential search process in September. Clearly, however, the BOR has now used its current system for a few years and several presidential searches.

The subject of faculty evaluation of the university President was also raised, with President Dorgo explaining that the Senate’s biennial evaluation of administrators includes chairs and directors of academic units, academic deans, and the provost, only. The BOR alone evaluates the System’s University Presidents, apparently renewing their contracts on an annual basis. President Dorgo also offered to explore this evaluation situation as well, perhaps going through the FAC to do so.

A Senator voiced a call to eschew acceptance of a top-down governance system with more direct interaction of the Senate with the new President, an opportunity that this new appointment presents was not intended to be confrontational, but to instead seek enhanced communication.

Another Senator asked if it was known if the BOR’s negotiations with Dr. Wilson included the anticipation of her using her Department of Defense contacts to increase funding from the “military-industrial complex.” No one present had any direct knowledge of the BOR’s expectations in this regard.

Emerging out of much of the discussion at various points was the prospect of having a follow-up survey to see how the Senate’s “Special Meeting” with Dr. Wilson (and especially its YouTube dissemination) may have changed faculty perceptions since the previous survey. There were pros and cons voiced about desirability of this survey as well, and eventually a vote was taken to proceed with such a second survey (vote in favor of proceeding with such a survey as 22 ayes, 10 nays, 2 abstentions).

After a full hour of discussion on these new President-related issues, the Senate returned to the business agenda.

**ITEM 6. Reports of Standing or Special Committees**

A. Committee on Committees – President Dorgo presented the report of the Committee on behalf of its Chair, Maria Duarte. The Committee requested the replacement of two at-large members with the appointment of Patricia Nava and Louis Everett (both from College of Engineering). The Senate approved this report and the appointments unanimously.
B. **Graduate Scholarship Committee** – President Dorgo also presented the report of the Graduate Scholarship Committee on behalf of its Chair, Patricia Lara. The Committee met on January 18, 2019 to begin the process of reviewing scholarship applications and to assign the 117 applications out to the various committee members for individual review. That work is now in progress. The report was informational, and no action was required of the Senate.

C. **Academic Policy Committee** – Mary Chavez, Chair. Unable to achieve a timely quorum to meet in person, the Academic Policy Committee voted electronically on 11 March 2019 to approve two proposals. Having been passed by the Committee, they are now put before the Senate for approval as action items.

The first proposal dealt with the timing of the Cesar Chavez Holiday in the context of the academic calendars 2020-2025, where the actual holiday falls (31 March) falls on a Tuesday in 2020. The recommendation of the committee is to have the holiday celebrated on Friday, March 2020.

The second proposal is a change to the wording of the “duties of the faculty” found in the Handbook of Operating Procedures (HoOP), in section 4.3.2, University Policy. The under the 4th duty listed in this section, “community engaged research” is added to the list of itemized scholarly activities listed, and the phrase “and the public good” was added at the end of the sentence to complement the stated disciplinary contributions of such activities. The 7th duty was revised and expanded to this statement: “To engage students in high impact practices and holistic learning to best prepare them for academic, personal, professional and civic success and leadership.”

In the discussion of these proposals that followed, the second proposal received no comments. The first, however, was challenged by a Senator with respect to adding another Friday holiday to the Spring term was going to be even more disruptive to end-of-week laboratory sessions, and that putting the observance on a Monday instead would be better. The response from the committee Chair was that this option was fully considered, but there seemed to be even more disruptions associated with a switch to Monday than to Friday.

Separate votes on the two proposals were taken. The first proposal was passed by the Senate with one “nay” vote. The second proposal was passed unanimously.

D. **Research Committee** – Chunqiang Li, Chair. The Research Committee has completed its annual charge to review the University Research Initiative (URI) proposals for the Office of Research and Sponsored Projects. The individual reviews, group discussion and scoring work was completed on January 31, 2019 for the 18 proposals, and their recommendations have been forwarded to ORSP for the final funding decisions. This report is informational, and did not require Senate action.

**ITEM 7. Presentations**

Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS) – Bill Dethlefs, Director.
This presentation to the Senate was invited by President Dorgo so that Dr. Dethlefs could elucidate and clarify current policies of CASS. Dr. Dethlefs began by demonstrating the significant increase in requests for his unit’s services by students over the past few years that are
now impacting about 85% of all the UTEP faculty. He pointed out that there have been several complaints (potentially expensive) made to the US Office of Civil Rights office against several Texas higher education institutions concerning accommodations matters, but none have so far occurred at UTEP. He outlined the classroom/academic circumstances where accommodations could not be made (Fundamental Alterations, Undue Burden, Direct Threat), and assured that cooperation and advice from CASS would be extended to faculty in meeting their concerns. Specifically addressed was the confusion associated with the use of “Memory Aids” by CASS students, emphasizing that these are singular cases primarily involving individuals with past head injuries affecting current recall abilities. A handout was distributed, and a new CASS staff member, Rebecca Matter, was introduced as an appropriate contact for faculty to reach with inquiries. Following the presentation, Dr. Dethlefs responded to further questions from the Senators about the specifics of how the “Memory Aids aspect was going to function and be administered.

**ITEM 8. Old or Unfinished Business**

None.

**ITEM 9. New Business**

None.

**ITEM 10. Adjournment:** There being no further business before the Senate, President Dorgo entertained a motion to adjourn. So moved by Senate Vice-President Gina Núñez-Mchiri (Liberal Arts), seconded by Hugo Gutierrez (Science), and unanimously approved by the Senators. The meeting was adjourned at 4:31 PM.