MINUTES
GOVERNANCE COUNCIL – December 3, 2025

Members Present: Matt Seimears, Lucas Myers, Ashleigh Kruckenberg, Trey Batey, Shiree Bent, Dan Ruiz, Nolan Wheeler, Kristen Finnel, Amber Lemiere, Brad Benjamin, Dana Cummings, Michal Ann Ure, and Tracy Powell

Guests Present:
April Tovar Villa, Jessica Harris, Agnel Ruvalcaba, and Magnus Altmayer

Call to Order
The meeting was called to order at 3:01 PM.

Approval of Minutes
The minutes of the November 12, 2025, meeting were approved with minor changes.

MOTION:	By Michal Ann Ure, seconded by Ashley Kruckenberg
	The minutes of November 12, 2025, be approved with minor changes.
MOTION CARRIED	**unanimously**

Reorganization Update (April Tovar Villa, Agnel Ruvalcaba, Magnus Altmayer)
A reorganization update was provided, noting that the Executive Leadership Team met with Directors, who were empowered to make recommendations in the best interest of students. It was shared that moving advising and one-stop services under Instruction aligned well with relationship building, guidance, and student support. Training student workers to respond to financial aid questions was identified as a way to improve workflow.

Questions were raised about how the reorganization's success would be measured and how to maintain a strong organizational core amid significant change. Discussion included the future role and purpose of the Student Services Leadership Team, with no decisions made at this time. It was noted that a future meeting would focus on strategic goals.

Concerns were expressed about unclear data on student success outcomes before and after the reorganization, with the possibility that gaps in data, small sample sizes, and infrequent data-collection cycles may limit meaningful measurement. Student belonging was cited as particularly difficult to quantify. When asked about the fall term, it was reported that operations continued despite uncertainty, though staff unease and fragmentation were acknowledged. The reorganization was noted as budget-driven, and while collaboration among directors continues, concerns about workload, burnout, and decision-making tensions were expressed. Some staff indicated a preference for restoring a centralized Student Services structure.

Positive outcomes were also highlighted, including improved collaboration, streamlined registration for bachelor’s degree students, efforts to improve testing processes, and effective cross-team coordination that supported student success in specific course placements. The Governance Council expressed appreciation for the Directors' support of students. The importance of advocating for one another and prioritizing team and trust-building was emphasized, particularly given the difficulty of the quarter.

Policies and Procedures

UMCC recommended minor edits to Policy 673 and Procedure 673.1A. The item was brought back to the Governance Council for review.

Draft Policy 673 - Use of Force

673.1A Procedure

MOTION:	By Amber Lemiere, seconded by Trey Batey,
	Policy 673 and Procedure 673.1A be approved.
MOTION CARRIED	**unanimously**

Telework Policy and Procedures - What is Working, What is Not, and How to Improve?

ELT engaged in a detailed discussion regarding the telework policy, last reviewed in 2022, with a focus on fairness, equity, and the definition of suitable positions. The Governance Council conversation highlighted the need to balance equitable expectations between faculty and staff, differing perspectives on faculty presence on campus, and the general expectation that faculty be on campus approximately 50% of the time. Student feedback indicated a desire for greater faculty visibility on campus and at student events, and recent monitoring data showed faculty engagement falling below the 50% benchmark. The policy's provision granting supervisors authority to approve telework was noted, as was the importance of focusing on desired outcomes rather than restrictions, including what is gained through on-campus engagement versus remote work. Challenges were discussed regarding faculty advising of student clubs, their impact on workload, and the limitations imposed by the current bylaws. Consideration was given to how the collective bargaining agreement and telework policy interact, potential recruitment implications if faculty commitments are tightened, and the value of telework in terms of efficiency. The need for more precise definitions of campus service activities and recognition of faculty schedule nuances was identified.

Meeting Modalities - Setting Best Practices and Maintaining Consistency on Campus. (Should Governance Council have a consistent Zoom option?)

The Council discussed committee meeting modalities and telework considerations, noting that committees typically determine their meeting modality at the beginning of the year and do not change it midyear. It was agreed that when soliciting committee members, the committee list will indicate the expected modality, such as entirely in person, fully virtual, or hybrid, to support transparency and informed participation. The discussion emphasized that the primary goal is engagement and acknowledged that hybrid meetings can be more challenging to manage effectively. Options such as alternating between virtual and in-person meetings or selecting a modality based on agenda topics were considered, with a plan to review agendas in advance to determine the most appropriate format.

The group noted that telework and hybrid options can support faculty hiring and retention, while also recognizing that professional development may be needed to strengthen engagement and effectiveness in remote or hybrid settings. Concerns were raised about confusion surrounding the 50% on-campus expectation and the administrative and regulatory complexities of full-time telework, particularly related to taxation and state residency requirements. The importance of adhering to existing policies and procedures was reiterated, along with the view that engagement issues should be addressed at the individual level rather than through broad policy changes that could unintentionally penalize others. It was also noted that changes to previously approved telework arrangements may set precedents and should be carefully considered.

Budget Cut Communication and Planning Feedback/Ideas
The Council discussed feedback and ideas regarding communication and planning for budget cuts. Suggestions included holding regular monthly Zoom conversations with faculty, with questions submitted in advance, and considering whether these sessions should be recorded, which would create a public record that must be maintained. There was interest in providing an all-staff discussion to clarify what occurred over the summer and to improve transparency around the process for layoffs, including whether departing employees or Human Resources should provide a written statement and how individuals are named.

Questions were raised about awareness of current separation processes. It was noted that exit interviews are conducted, except in termination cases, with information routed to supervisors or vice presidents. Members questioned how this information is used and whether the relevant policy should be reviewed and updated.

The Council also discussed a proposal to develop a shared governance policy, potentially using another institution's policy as a reference, and identified next steps for reviewing the policy. Members emphasized the need for meaningful communication about the budget, including more precise explanations of financial numbers and impacts.

Upcoming budget forums were noted, with the understanding that timing may depend on state-level information. It was shared that the budget process begins with monitoring report lunches, and additional information was requested. The possibility of inviting budget leadership to faculty meetings was also discussed to support transparency and engagement.

Communication/Ideas - Staff Reduction During Budget Cuts (How do we honor their work?)
The Council discussed communication approaches and considerations related to staff reductions during budget cuts, focusing on how to acknowledge affected employees while maintaining clarity and compliance. It was reiterated that the college may not discuss personnel

issues, based on policy and legal guidance. Concerns were raised that sharing individual bios, even in the case of layoffs rather than terminations, could increase speculation and confusion.

The Council reviewed concerns about the tiered communication that occurred in June, including an email referencing Tier 1 and Tier 2 reductions, which created the perception that Tier 3 had been reached prematurely. Questions were raised about how the situation escalated, whether reevaluations were conducted, and how updates on outcomes or processes were communicated. It was noted that attention tended to focus on final outcomes rather than internal processes, and that budget information is typically not finalized until late June, rather than being withheld intentionally during periods when faculty are off campus.

As a result of the discussion, a recommendation was made to redesign future tier-related communications to enhance clarity, minimize misunderstandings, and better align expectations during budget reduction processes.

Other
With no further comments, the meeting was adjourned at 4:54 PM.