

## UHD Faculty Senate

Minutes recorded by: Nathan Neale  
Regular Scheduled Senate Meeting January 18, 2022  
2:30 – 4:00 PM  
Online via Zoom

Members of Senate in Attendance: Krista Gehring, Ronald Beebe, Nathan Neale, Godwin Agboka, Stephanie Babb, Nina Barbieri, Maria Bhattacharjee, Alexander Bielakowski, Franklin Allaire, Amy Baird, Kasi Bundoc, Scott Davis, Austin DeJan, Prakash Deo, Lucas Fedell, Paul Fulbright, Rachael Hudspeth, Cynthia Lloyd, Michael Lemke, Jean Nganou, Angelica Roncacio, M. Nell Sullivan, Candace TenBrink, Adriana Visbal, Julie Wilson

Senators Absent: Edmund Cueva, Ayden Adler, Aaron Gillette, Heather Goltz, Don Holmes, Lucas Logan, Danya Serrano

**Guests:** Akif Uzman, Interim Provost, Jerry Johnson, AVP, Michelle Moosally, AVP, Sandra Dahlberg, Faculty Ombuds, Andrew Pavelich, Associate Professor, Patricia Ensor, Executive Director, W.I.D., Rachna Sadana, Associate Professor, Jesús Serrato, Mirriann Bidgood, Lucy Bowen, Darlene Hodge, FS Admin

**Call to order:** The Senate was called to order at 2:32 PM by Senate President Elect Krista Gehring after a quorum was assembled.

A motion to approve the December 7, 2021 minutes was made and seconded.  
The minutes were approved.

### **Reports**

Interim Provost. Uzman stated that an email to all faculty, staff and students would be sent soon regarding the soft opening for the semester and how attendance will be captured. The soft opening is designed to reduce density. Only about 30% of the current courses are scheduled in a face-to-face modality. He asked faculty to work with their chairs if classrooms have occupancies above 75%. All classrooms will be cleaned at the end of each day of use. UHD will clean a classroom immediately if there is a report of COVID-19. UHD is preparing KN95 masks for all instructors who need them.

Ms. Bowen stated that her office is working with the department administrators to request the number of masks needed and they will allot 10 per person.

Interim Provost. Uzman elaborated on the importance of capturing attendance. A much higher percentage of our freshmen and recent transfer students are on academic probation. UHD administration wants to ensure that students attending class are registered. Also, there is a concern that some students may be enrolling and incurring debt, but they are not actually continuing in or are engaged in classes. We need to identify these students. Therefore, we will capture this in BlackBoard by an administrator review of BlackBoard logins. Faculty are

responsible to tracking attendance for the first two weeks of class and will submit names online for any student not attending so that they will have a registration drop. The provost's office will also run engagement checks for FTIC students through EAP.

Q-What is the timeline?

A-This will be sent in an email soon. Then, directions will be communicated around January 29<sup>th</sup>. Faculty may use a simple assignment or other way to capture engagement. We are asking faculty to communicate with their students. Students will have three days to appeal a registration drop.

Q-What about eight week classes?

A-We are not sure how effective this will be with this group. However, this will capture most students.

Q-We used to do this electronically. Why does the system differ now?

A-We are working to fix this issue. We recognize that this is "far from perfect" but it may be the "best that we can do".

Q-Do we have data on differences between modalities?

A-There is a baseline across all modalities.

C-Please include a singular email, not multiple. This is critical as students, faculty and staff receive so many email messages from UHD. Please use one specific subject and include all the important components at the beginning of the message.

Q-Can we program Navigate in the future to assist us?

A-Yes, but it is not quite ready yet.

Dr. Moosally said that this may work.

Q-Today is the first day of classes. What data are required for the first day of class?

A-We are asking faculty to capture engagement and attendance over two weeks, not each day.

C-Yes, but some only meet once a week.

C-There are concerns about the two different emails with differing times that BlackBoard would open. There was one from President Blanchard and another from Interim Provost Uzman. Why do we need to open our BlackBoard courses early?

A-The main reason is that BlackBoard is a key way to communicate with our students. This includes what the soft opening means for each course.

Dr. Moosally added that by sending a message through BlackBoard, instructors signal that their courses are likely going to make and be open for the semester. We want students to use BlackBoard and to have this part of our culture.

C-It is a good idea for students to hear this from one source, not many. We should agree how to communicate with students.

Interim Provost Uzman explained that he appreciates the challenge associated with multiple instructors sending multiple messages to students. However, not all instructors are approaching the soft opening the same way. We can consider departments having one way to communicate.

C-I was under the impression that we had until 6PM to prepare our courses in BlackBoard. However, when I was working on a course on Sunday afternoon, I noticed that there were four students that had already accessed the course. I understand the importance of communication but following the timeline is too. Also, we have many adjuncts and some of our colleagues are religious, so a Sunday deadline is problematic.

Interim Provost Uzman acknowledged the point and that they would revisit this in the near future. We have many challenges related to this virus. He said that “we will do better” and apologized for the miscommunication from UHD.

C-The expectation to communicate early does not consider sections that may be cancelled the following week. This creates problems for instructors, chairs and assistant chairs. There is a concern with the way we interpret the environment when compared to Harris County. Also, we have not seen the message sent to students and need to cite it in our communication with them.

Interim Provost Uzman explained that students were told to contact their instructors. He said that they would improve communication. He expressed a concern that providing more specific instructions may increase rigidity and re-emphasized that instructors may interpret the soft opening differently. He said that he does not want to handcuff intelligent and creative people and that UHD has few face-to-face courses. They are working to expand the use of Flex classrooms. Moving to 100% online instruction is not an option. We need to ensure that we return to the modality required. We also need to focus on equity and addressing student concerns.

Dr. Gehring asked if the COVID-Task force still meets.

A-No, the COVID Group still meets, but the task force has not met for a while. It is not dissolved but is on a hiatus.

Dr. Moosally added that the Covid Task Force was not that active. The COVID group includes heads of shared governance, including SGA, Staff Council and Faculty Senate. This group is more active.

Q-The current isolation and quarantine times differ for adults and children. How are faculty, staff and students that have small children at home supposed to manage these differences?

A-We will need to find out and get back to senate about this.

Dr. Gehring asked the senate if there was any new business. None was brought forward.

A motion to adjourn was made and seconded. The senate voted to adjourn at 3:21 PM.

Key:

Answer

Comment

Question