

UHD Faculty Senate Meeting

October 4, 2011

Minutes

Present: A. Allen (President), G. Preuss (President-Elect), P. Lyons (Past President), J. Schmertz (Secretary)

J. Ahmad, C. Bachman, R. Beebe, M. Benavides, C. Burnett, A. Chiaviello, G. Evans, S. Farris, J. Hackett, J. Harned, V. Hrynkiv, P. Kintzele, P. Li, C. Nguyen, W. Nowak, A. Pavelich, S. Penkar, R. Scott, A. Sikka, L. Spears, K. Switzer, W. Waller, K. Wright, V. Zafiris

Absent: A. Pavelich, P. Lyons

The minutes from September 20 were passed.

Report from Austin Allen, Senate President

Academic Affairs met last Friday and will meet monthly on Fridays. The policy on policies will be updated due to changes from System. There will be openings for elections in CHSS and NS. Kirk Hagen was elected to fill the AH Grievance slot. R. Beebe (UE) and V. Tzouanas (ET) were elected to Senate.

Allen said he would send report his report out in email later.

President Flores says he will not sign any new shared governance policy that contains the (existing) provision that the Senate and the University President must agree to any changes in the shared governance policy.

Allen wants to shift gears in Senate. We put the heat up high with the resolutions from early in the semester. He is concerned that we are “reactionary” and wants to make sure we break the cycle wherein we accuse administration of not following a policy and they then find a policy that departments are not following. Allen referred to an email he forwarded from Dr. Flores that suggested “bigger issues” Senate should address these. Allen asked senators come prepared to discuss it at the next meeting.

Charges from Senate to the shared governance policy-writing committees have been sent. FAC is taking up the R&T policy and the Academic Appointments policy. UCC is working on updating the course catalog.

Report from Jose Cantu, Director of Admissions and Recruitment

Cantu’s office handles more than admissions/recruitment—also new student orientations, articulation, international students, and campus visit programs.

In-house, his admissions staff handles a range of students and when needed points them to advising.

Externally, his office has four recruiters who work in seven counties and over 300 schools. His office will add two more recruiters. We also have 4 transfer recruiters who go to community colleges on a weekly basis.

Reagan and Davis are our top feeder high schools because of their proximity to UHD. UH, Texas State, and Sam Houston are our “top competitor schools.” (This means that these are the schools our applicants will simultaneously be applying to.) HCC is our top feeder community college, with Lone Star a close second. Biology, Psychology, and Criminal Justice are top majors for incoming students.

On-campus events: Open house is the largest on-campus event: student/parent attendance at this event has jumped dramatically since Cantu arrived. The surveys his office gives students indicate there is a need for more faculty and administration participation in these events. A campus tour program has been developed, and its attendance is growing rapidly as well.

Outreach includes presentations to high school and community college counselors.

Two effective recruitment activities are calling students over the summer to keep them on track in the registration and enrollment process and the joint admissions program. We also have a UHD Ambassadors group of 40 students who participate in tours and call students. We have also “revitalized” the Tau Sigma National Honor Society consisting of transfer students who earn a 3.5 GPA or higher in their first semester at UHD.

Evans noted that UHD had a significant decline in transfer applications this year although our yield (number of transfer students enrolled) still holds up well. Since the transfer students are the ones who tend to figure most highly in our graduation rates, what new initiatives have we started to recruit them?

Cantu responded by discussing UHD’s “Road Trip”—trips where staff visit community colleges and provide on-the-spot help with admissions, advising, and financial aid services. We are also expanding our presence at the Open Houses at community colleges. Application deadlines have shifted from August 1 to July 15—Cantu speculates this may be the reason for the drop of 400 in community college transfer applications.

Farris says she is in favor of the early deadlines; her impression is that the late applicants are the ones who do not succeed. Cantu said this is generally true and we could track this.

Sikka says there are faculty who are able to help with recruitment, but it would be a workload issue and she would want to make sure faculty-staff collaborations were managed in a way to maximize their effectiveness. Cantu said he is still trying to figure out how to channel the requests for faculty participation. Counselor luncheons (where UHD staff meet with guidance counselors) are a place where faculty involvement would make a difference.

Spears noted that until Cantu was hired, UHD had never had a comprehensive student recruitment program, and praised his efforts. Evans concurred, as did Allen.

Chiaviello asked why the number of students accepted was low relative to the number who applied. Cantu said his office will survey those students who applied but did not enroll to see their reasons. Chiaviello emphasized he was talking about acceptance, not enrollment. Cantu attributed this to students' failure to complete the application process, although his office follows up on students during the process.

Sikka said faculty who participate in recruiting will need an orientation. She has learned that the TX common application process is cumbersome. Part of the orientation could be setting up a "dummy" site where faculty could take themselves through the process to see what it involved. Cantu agreed and says he applies every year as a student to see what kinds of emails he gets as a student, particularly from his own office.

Provost Brian Chapman

Chapman said Cantu's office has moved forward a great deal in the past 5 years. New financial support for that office includes money for printed materials and mailing costs.

Chapman identified what he regarded as UHD's top SWOTs. Strength: Good faculty with strong credentials and a high interest in student success. Weakness/Opportunity: lack of "niche" programs to distinguish ourselves from other regional schools. Threat: other universities outside the region coming into our markets.

Chapman explained where enrollment fits into UHD's financial picture. 30% of our funding comes from state funding (based on SCHs). 10% comes from other sources (e.g. investment and Aramark, bookstore) and 60% comes from tuition and fees. The latter 60% is where our salaries come from; thus, our salary increases depend on enrollment. This year enrollment was flat. Face-to-face enrollment has decreased, but online and distance education sites have increased enrollment. By comparison, almost all universities in the state have increased enrollment by 3-7%.

On recruitment and retention: to get any extra money from state funding we need to increase our enrollment by 5-7%. We have also lost programs due to state requirements for increased enrollment in upper-division courses.

What is his office doing? Working on getting higher admission standards passed. Building a program called "Gator Guarantee" modeled after the "Cougar Path" at UH. In this program, students who are not admitted under our normal admissions process can be admitted as "probationary admitted students" if they return from a community college with 12 or more credits with a 2.5 average.

His office is also redesigning transfer center. David Morales will be putting all of our transfer agreements online. An idea under development is for students to click a "transfer" button that will pull up the institution they are transferring from and their intended major at UHD. They will then be provided with a list of community college classes that will transfer into their majors at UHD.

Regarding transfer articulation agreements: we will begin meeting with local community counselors to make the process more seamless. Chapman has taken various groups to Sam Houston's Student Advising and Mentoring Center, which has boosted its retention by 20%. We are planning a similar center. We have new distance ed sites in Lonestar and Kingwood-Atascocita.

The Strategic Plan will be up for another week or so for review and comments, after which there will be a series of Town Hall meetings.

An Associate VP for Academic Affairs position is being advertised; the person hired will be the leader of Office of Sponsored Programs.

Other initiatives:

- Developing a new process for proposing budgets for the coming year.
- Working on developing more minimesters to improve UHD's 6-year graduation rate, which is very low at present.
- Revising Academic policies—50 % are over 10 years old and our practices don't follow our processes in many cases.
- Developing an advisor tracking system so that students are assigned to specific advisors.
- Starting an Honors' Program; Sikka is chairing that committee.
- Starting an office of international programs. We have a record number of international trips planned for students.
- Challenging deans to come up with new "niche" programs.
- Moving room scheduling from the physical plant to academic affairs so course scheduling will work better.

There are also new activities "on the horizon":

- Coordinating Board has proposed a complete revision of the core curriculum; it will likely be approved in November. Outcomes will change for these courses, which will force us to reconceptualize them.
- We are planning for next year's budget and will make an announcement in the next few weeks about a university planning council. We will try to simplify the university planning process.
- We are developing a schedule for assessing our graduate programs and will bring in an external reviewer.

Chapman gave Senate a "take-home message": he has a reputation for innovation. We need innovation and should work with him to become a "first-choice" university. Bring your own innovative ideas to him and he will find ways to support them. Take a look at courses and programs at other universities like UCLA, Utah, and Carnegie-Mellon are doing to see if we can make them work with our existing faculty. Develop programs and bring them to your department and then through your dean to Academic Affairs.

We need a Teaching Excellence Center. “Don’t grouse because we don’t have one; bring forward a plan.” We need a Faculty Handbook: “that’s a Faculty Senate job.”

Faculty needs to participate in recruitment for students. In revising the Rank and Tenure policy, FAC will need to bring in mention of “service credit” for participation in recruitment activities. At recruitment events recently, he has noticed that Sam Houston outnumbers us 15-1 in terms of representation. When students come to these events, they will come to the table that has a wide representation of deans, chairs, and faculty to talk to.

Wright asked what the role of the Academic Policies Committee should be. Should that committee take “the first shots” at rewriting policy or wait for his drafts? Chapman said he will sometimes give a charge to this committee to write a draft; other times he will provide them with one he has written.

Farris asked what the Sam Houston Advising and Mentoring Center does that we are not doing. Chapman responded that at Sam Houston there was a disconnect between the advising center and the advising going on in departments and colleges. They built a new building with 8 fulltime staff advisors and 12 part-time faculty advisors. Faculty worked twenty hours a week for 12 months, with a monthly stipend of \$1000. Students are assigned an advisor as soon as they enter the admissions office and that advisor uses Track Advising (something we are developing here) to place and register students. After the student has an advisor, s/he can return to that advisor or seek mentoring across the hall. The mentors use Early Alert, a system devised for teachers to report and refer students having academic difficulties for mentoring. It is the extra help students receive during the mentoring process that has caused Sam Houston’s retention record to improve.

Farris said she has observed that the greatest difficulty for students is often at the beginning of their college careers, with time management skills. Chapman suggested discipline-specific freshman seminars. Teachers would have to take a class themselves to make sure that in addition to disciplinary know-how, students were getting standardized information about such things as study skills and financial skills.

On the Coordinating Board’s plan to review graduate programs on a 5 year cycle, Sikka asked if the Provost’s office would be willing to share the rules of it with her so that she and Michelle Moosally can bring it up at the next TCFS (Texas Council of Faculty Senates) at the end of the month. Chapman said he would send the rules along.

Sikka added that it was a hard-fought battle to get “traditional” programs like English and History. We have specialists who are forced to become generalists. They may have 3-4 course preps in a semester, and at UHD the extra preps do not figure into computation of workload. Do faculty have the time to put in 20 hours of advising, given all this? Chapman responded that this could be handled as a workload adjustment: we could have a multi-track system wherein tenured faculty who had decided they no longer focused on research could focus on just teaching, or take time off teaching and become advisors. The transfer articulation program Chapman outlined at the beginning of his talk was proposed and developed by a faculty member who had opted out of

a research track. Chapman said UHD had no transfer articulation agreements with community colleges. Sikka said she had worked on one with Cy-Fair.

Evans mentioned a College Night in October where faculty worked the schools in their districts and it counted as community service. These things need to be worked into the R&T policy in terms of service “credit.” Students respond more to faculty than administrators at events like college fairs.

Beebe said a lot of work had already been done on a Center for Faculty Excellence. Chapman said “send it along”: we have some money set aside to fund it because we laid up some cash reserves with the expectation that the state of TX would ask us to give it back, and they didn’t.

Allen asked about the admissions standards. Chapman said we had gotten the chancellor’s approval and were now working the legislature. Kintzele asked if the legislature could object to the numerical cut-offs we’ve established. Chapman said no, only to the idea of our having admissions standards.

Moosally said that in order to make UHD an institution of choice for students, we must make it an institution of choice for faculty as well, through faculty research and teaching support. How will he engage faculty in the discussion of the changes to the core curriculum? Chapman said that since curriculum is a faculty matter, it must be a faculty-driven process. It will probably start with the existing Gen Ed committee but widen into subcommittees.

Allen asked Chapman to explain his philosophy of shared governance. Chapman said Senate’s idea of shared governance is not about “sharing;” the resolution we passed recently called for a shared governance committee that included only faculty. According to Chapman, “shared governance means committees have almost equal representation of staff, faculty, and students.” One reason our policies are “messed up” is that faculty who have written policies in the past did not with consult staff in writing them, so the processes don’t work. He has drafted a policy for the Senate President and President-Elect to review. They will vet it from a faculty perspective and give it to the shared governance committee. His primary recommendation is for including more staff, e.g. department secretaries, representatives from IT, librarian and registrar.

Respectfully submitted,

Johanna Schmertz, Ph.D.

Associate Professor of English

Faculty Senate Secretary