

UHD Faculty Senate Meeting

March 18, 2014

Minutes

Present: T. Hale (President), R. Beebe (President Elect), S. Henney (Secretary), M. Duncan, J. Johnson, F. Khoja, J. Davis, A. Lopez Pedrana, J. Quander, R. Sadana, P. Simeonov, S. Koshkin, G. Lund, S. Zhou, C. Rubinson, HM. Wang, U. Bose, A. Lopez Pedrana, T. Chiaviello, S. Penkar, J. Tito-Izquierdo, P. Deo, G. Preuss (Past President), F. Vela,

Absent: K. Hagen, J. Herrera, R. Johnson, M. Portillo, C. Stewart,

Approval of minutes:

Minutes of March 4, 2014 were approved unanimously.

Announcements

There will be a meeting of the Full Professors on March 28.

President's Executive Council Report: Tuition and fee increases for the next two years were approved by the Board of Regents.

Freshman and Transfer Seminar courses: Report by Provost Hugetz.

THECB disallowed these courses as part of the common core. The basis of this was that they were perceived as solely "skills" courses, which was primarily how we presented them in our submission to THECB. We discussed a lot about the learning skills part in our presentation.

Hugetz and Morano went to THECB to present information on the content portion of these classes. THECB members were worried about the courses being too narrow (and deep), rather than a broader survey (like most common core courses). Hugetz presented the literature/research reasons for these types of content-rich learning skills courses. THECB was amenable to these courses, but wanted UHD to offer them outside of the core. Hugetz and Morano presented arguments about these classes being appropriate to the core. THECB is further concerned that each course fit in to one or more of the established learning objectives for the core.

THECB is going to allow us to "appeal" their decision. We will most likely present template-type courses for each learning outcome for the core. We are going to proceed with preparations for these courses for now.

Q: Syllabi were presented that were exactly what was asked for; they mapped directly on to the core learning outcomes. What do they want that is different?

A: We may just give an example of a topic that might fit in to the learning outcome, rather than the varied content that might be covered.

Hale read into the minutes a message from Shahrokhi in IT providing clarification for a couple of items in the last meeting's minutes:

Q: Blackboard is a high-traffic part of the website. BB mobile does not work well on smartphones.

Blackboard mobile is a commercial application that we license so it won't be part of the web project as Diane had indicated. I have asked our Technology Learning Support group to follow up with students and share their concerns with the vendor for future improvement. Meanwhile, the team also feels that additional training may help with some of the issues such as using PDF or HTML files (which render very well) instead of .docx files (MS word) which generally have to be downloaded and reviewed using a different application that may or may not work well on a mobile device. Also, there are some functions that are not designed to be done on mobile device such as like grading assignments which is probably something that we should better communicate with the faculty about.

Q: There are pages on the UHD website that do not function on Macs at all, such as parts of e-services.

A: E-services are separate from this redesign, because e-services are managed by IT.

We are planning to rebuild the e-Services site and implement new Banner User Interface technology to take advantage of the newer technology that can better support different platforms such as Macs and Mobile devices. However, some devices, particularly Apple iPads offer limited support for standard business functions.

Guest: Pat Ensor, Library Director

Please fill out the library survey that was sent out this week at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/T65FJDF> (can also be accessed through the library website). The survey will be open until March 31.

Q: Is the survey just about what journals we want?

A: Services, journals, databases are all addressed.

Q: Can we recommend databases?

A: Yes.

TLC Conference

Get free lunch if you register! There will be sessions for faculty, staff, and students. Please encourage students to attend.

Planning and Budget Development Committee Report – Jerry Johnson, Chair

- Many improvements have been made to the Committee's procedures, and its processes are much more transparent.
- October was first meeting, have met regularly since.
- The completed budget was sent to Dr. Flores in first week of March and has been approved. It will be presented to UH System in early April.
- Last year, had about 7 million in new money to spend.
- This year, few new dollars to spend. Thus, reallocation has been the strategy. About 2.8 million in new money; 3.4 million with re-allocation (non-HEAF).
- The HEAF budget is set by the legislature in 5-year increments. This cycle we have 7.8 million per year. Some of this went to garage/welcome center.
- Bradley is preparing the budget for presentation outside of UHD.
- April 10 will be an assembly to present the budget to the UHD community.

Guest: Dr. Nell Sullivan, Chair of the Faculty Handbook Committee

- At the end of the week, the Committee will send a draft to Hale for Senate review.
- Must also get Administration and OGC approval
- The Handbook is a living document. The Committee wants the Senate to work with administration to identify a person to update the handbook as policy changes.

Standing Committees (APC, FAC, UCC)

No updates.

Old Business

UFEC Co-Resolution for Child Care Access – Second read and vote

UH-System Faculty Senates Co-Resolution on Child Care Access / March 2014

Whereas the University of Houston-Downtown, the University of Houston-Clear Lake, and the University of Houston-Victoria are devoid of any child care facilities for dependents of students, faculty, and staff

Whereas the Child Learning Centers at the University of Houston <<http://www.uh.edu/clc/>> are open to dependents of University of Houston faculty, staff, students, and alumni

Whereas the wait list for the Child Learning Centers is measured in multiple years rendering it ineffective for student success

Whereas lack of access to drop-off child care is a well-known hindrance on student success metrics

Whereas local community colleges have multiple, on-campus day and drop-off child care facilities open to students, faculty, and staff

Be it resolved that UHD, UHCL, UHV, and UH work together to develop and integrate viable, on/near campus, providers of day and drop-off child care facilities for all of its employees and students

Be it further resolved that the UHD Administration explore alternatives and present possible solutions to the Faculty Senate in the fall of 2014.

Motion to approve carries with one abstention (21 in favor)

New Business

Hale calls for discussion regarding the practice of instructors providing extra credit/course credit for filling out course evaluations. Highlights of the discussion include:

- Some instructors are requiring screen shots or other proof from individual students that they have completed the evaluation. Then they are giving credit or extra credit for this.
- Has seen this before at other Universities, where all students must fill out all evaluations and show proof to course instructor.
- Faculty have been specifically told in some departments that they are not supposed to offer incentives or coercion.
- What is the motivation for doing this? If evaluations are used heavily in evaluations, this drives faculty to do things like this.
- There is a rumor that we will be hiring a company to do the evaluation that guarantees a 75% response rate.
 - Hugetz: We have been piloting IDEA for several semesters, including in the COB. In April there will be several sessions where faculty can review the product. Our current evaluation instrument is returning small response rates, and it has not been updated in a long time. It is also not as applicable to online.
- There is an ethical issue involved in giving course-level incentives for completing evaluations. The person in charge of the grade then knows who filled out the evaluation and who did not. The instructor may not know who said what or gave which rating, but they will know who did and did not participate. We need to separate the incentive from the classroom to avoid any appearance of grades being influenced by evaluations.
- Our issues started when we began with the online evaluations; this is when we started seeing fewer evaluations overall and fewer written comments.
- Accrediting agencies do not value student evaluations as assessment techniques. Student evaluations are poor ways to evaluate teaching.
- There is value to the instructor in getting feedback from students to improve their own class. This is a separate issue from assessment per se. We need to encourage students to be good citizens about this; this is an educational experience as well.
- We need to both encourage students to comment on the course evaluations, but also give students feedback on their comments. They should be fully informed on how their feedback changes/impacts/influences how a course is taught. They want their voices to be heard.
- There are many universities that have requirements regarding student evaluations. Many of our students are aware of these differing models.
- What are some possible solutions?
 - IDEA allows the instructor to see class-level participation (percentage of class participating). What about giving extra points to the whole class if more than a certain percentage participates?
 - This is also a workload issue; instructors don't want to monitor evaluations all the time or nag students on this item.

- Students should not be allowed to register unless they did last semester's evaluations for all classes.
- Students who complete evaluations can get their grades two or three days earlier than other students. This is a true incentive approach, rather than a punitive approach.

In a straw poll of Senators, there was broad support for decoupling the classroom from the incentive for the evaluation (two abstentions, remainder in favor). The Senators agreed that it was a good idea to take the incentives out of the individual instructors' hands, but how to do so was debated. FSEC will develop some language and bring it back to the Senate to make a statement on incentivizing students for completing evaluations.

Hale called for a review of how each department is handling the development of department-level rubrics for annual evaluation of faculty. The following reports were made by Senators from each department.

- Natural Science: The department has met, and all faculty participated in the process. They now have a draft of a teaching rubric. Service and scholarship will come next, once they have gotten feedback on the teaching rubric.
- CSET: A draft of the rubric is being circulated. All eleven faculty participated.
- Math: Only rank and tenure committee participating so far. Will set up the rubric and then send them to whole department, so tenure track faculty and lecturers can comment.
- UE: Have met as a department to discuss. A group is working on a draft; will be sent out to everyone.
- CJ: Have met as a whole department. Three subcommittees, one for each area. Should be complete this week, and will be circulated.
- AH: All members have met; each of the three areas was discussed. One more meeting coming up where the rubrics will be completed.
- SOS: Two meetings. Representation from the department was low. Discipline coordinators are meeting to develop the rubrics.
- English: Have met as a department; three separate committees for each area.
- COB: No department meeting; only an appointed committee. Eleven tenured members will meet this week to discuss the three areas.

Hale noted the uneven representation of the faculty and lecturers in the process.

Hale called for a discussion of UHD's faculty search processes. Highlights of the discussion include:

- We lose valuable time in searches. The first thing that happens is the position must be approved in the budgeting process that occurs in the spring (for searches in the fall).
 - It takes an enormous amount of time to approve a job description, so they are not posted until Dec or Jan.
 - The job description should be tied to the position request. In other words, the job description should be submitted at the same time that a request is made for a

position. Then, once it is approved in the budgeting process, the posting can happen almost immediately.

- Faculty should always write the job description, with review by administration and HR.
- Search committee should have to review BEFORE it is posted.
- The search committee should be formed when the job description is written and the position requested.
 - If the job description and the search committee are formed together, it becomes part of a cogent, persuasive argument for the position request.
 - Faculty hires should be strategic; no faculty request should go forward without documentation of need.
 - Identifying appropriate search committee members is part of making a good argument for the position.
- Any change made at higher levels should go back to the faculty committee.
 - This is a time, money, effort saver.
 - It is essential that faculty review ALL changes to job descriptions.
- What about position requests that never make it out of the college? Lots of work for no results.
 - Positions should be requested to fill strategic needs. If strong strategic evidence is presented for a position request, then the time is not wasted if a good argument is made. It can always be requested again.

Adjourn: 3:58 pm