UHD Faculty Senate Meeting

November 5, 2013

Minutes

Present: T. Hale (President), G. Preuss (Past President), R. Beebe (President Elect), M. Duncan, R. Johnson, J. Johnson, F. Khoja, P. Mandell, J. Davis, K. Hagen, A. Lopez Pedrana, J. Quander, R. Sadana, P. Simeonov, S. Koshkin, J. Tito-Izquierdo, U. Bose, P. Simeonov, S. Penkar, C. Stewart, T. Chiaviello, P. Deo, J. Herrera, G. Lund,

Absent: S. Henney (Secretary), S. Zhou, M. Portillo, A. Lopez Pedrana, C. Rubinson, HM. Wang,

Minutes

Minutes of 10-15-13 approved unanimously.

Announcements:

Henney is absent today; Senator Quander will be taking notes.

The Nov. 19 Senate meeting has been moved to N-1099 because of Algebra Day.

All are encouraged to vote today.

Update on Garage/Welcome Center.

1. Agreement with previous contractor has been terminated due to several procedural concerns. New contractor will begin on or around 11/20. We have worked with this contractor before. The garage will not be complete by August 2014 as previously hoped.
2. Senator asks about possibility of leasing temporary parking lots? There are no additional problems with parking foreseen because of delay.

University Archivist will begin archiving Senate records soon.

FSEC will be meeting next week with ESO and Global to receive preliminary findings from the Faculty Salary Study

Future Presentations:

- Dr. Lofton, past UHD Senate President, has been invited to speak.
- Dr. Bill Gilbert, Ombuds, will present in January.

Guest: Dr. Kaio, Disability Services

There have been updates and changes to "Disability Case Law" that faculty should be aware of.

- Compliance checks are being done on University websites. Looks at all parts of website, including email, LMS, library, etc., to make sure that it is accessible to students with disabilities.

    - PDF files, videos that are not captioned or require sight controls, or missing alternative text for tables/figures are a particular concern.
- Why are investigations done? Students with disabilities, including those using assistive technology, must have same access as non-disabled students. This includes ease of access; all information must be equally easy to access between disabled and non-disabled students.
- Even if it is a "beautifully laid out" course, it still must be accessible. The student may not be advised to drop the class if it is not accessible. For example, for "interactive" resources that rely on visual material, the same experience must be provided without the visual requirement.
- New rule: We must do more to accommodate our pregnant and parenting students; these students can register now with disability services. Title IX mandates that students who are pregnant or parenting must be excused from class for as long as the doctor deems necessary. When they return, they must be given the opportunity to make up missed work. Individual teachers may not discriminate against pregnant students; students may make up all work they miss based on pregnancy and childbirth.
    - Instructors must give students an opportunity to make up missed work, even if it goes beyond the semester.

Questions:

- What is "reasonable" accommodation? There are four criteria: 1) if the accommodation changes the nature or purpose of the course, 2) if it changes the nature of the degree plan, 3) too costly to university, and 4) if it is disruptive.
- What can JAWS read? JAWS can read anything that is text-based. No jpegs, for example. PDFs are readable.
- Regarding the visual communication requirement in the new core, how will this be accomplished for students with disabilities?
- Are there HIPPA implications? Yes. Refer the student to Disability Services, and they will take care of the accommodation.
- How will information about a student's pregnancy be given to faculty? Faculty will receive the same form as for any other disabled student.

Motion to table. Called out of order.

- Do students need to register for this and, if they fail to register, do they lose these rights? If they don't register, they will not have the accommodation.
- "Parenting" was mentioned; is this all parenting-related absences/excuses or just for neonates? Applies to "any student who has a child."
- Do we have data on how many students are pregnant/parenting? No, not comprehensive.

Guest: Ashley Walyuchow from UHV to discuss NAIA athletics

- Gave history of starting athletics at UHV.
- Transformed the campus from a commuter/online school to more campus-based. Provided a different atmosphere on campus.

Questions:

- Were new staff members hired? Coaches, directors, administrators, and trainers were all paid for by soft money and no University funds were used. Money also comes from ticket sales.
- Were scholarships offered? Very few. There are limits from NAIA on number of scholarships.
- Are you tracking graduation rates? Just started, but student athletes have a high average GPA.

Standing Committee Report: Dr. Austin Allen, FAC Co-Chair

After sending out a draft of the evaluation scale, received plenty of feedback. The scale has changed significantly in response to the feedback, with the 7-pt scale being the only thing retained. Issues FAC must consider when revising the policy:

1. Administration wants some discretion in how raises are determined.
    a. Kept the formula, but eliminated the "flat rate" within the formula. Now there is some discretion for administrators to influence the outcome. The exact "percentage" of the formula that will be discretionary has not yet been determined.
2. An evaluation scale based on a 7-point scale (to break from the 10-point scale) and the associated anchors for the points on the scale.
    a. Removed language associated with national and regional comparisons.
3. Departments will be charged with creating or modifying existing rubrics. In other words, departments will decide what actual achievements (or lack thereof) anchor the scale.
4. Have discussed average or caps on how many faculty can be awarded each number on the scale. The purpose of this is to prevent evaluation inflation.
    a. FAC is still discussing this aspect.

Questions:

- What about distributing merit by department; wouldn't this address evaluation inflation? FAC is not discussing "how" money gets distributed, but this may be an option.
- What quality controls will be in place on departmental rubrics? If the rubric is poorly designed, it will not address evaluation inflation. FAC envisions rubrics should be vetted by chairs, deans, and provost.
- Is there value in comparing rubrics across disciplines, so they are normalized? Might be a good idea eventually, but not this semester.
- Why a 7-point scale and not a 10-point scale? Doesn't really matter either way, as long as the poles are anchored.
- There is no true anchor because 3-5 are grouped without associated anchors for these numbers. How does the wording match up with R & T (i.e., the language of excellence)? FAC recognizes that "excellence" cannot be a 10 if we don't want everyone to get the highest score. So there has to be a range or area of excellence.
    - FAC has also discussed the issue of time. Faculty can have a very good year, followed by a "down" year. How do we account for these types of cyclical achievements?
- What about taking the scores from all three areas and take an average? Yes, the three numbers would be averaged together for an overall score. FAC is still discussing this.
- Audience member asks whether FAC was charged with mandating forced curves or forced averages on the evaluation scale. If so, here did this mandate come from?

    - Hugetz responds that there is no mandate for a forced curve or average. There is a mandate for a distribution of some kind.
    - Audience member suggests that a distribution could be achieved through well-constructed rubrics and appropriate application of these rubrics.
    - Hugetz points out that NS has been refining their evaluation rubrics over the last few years, and their distribution looks different from other units. This may take care of some of the problem. The ultimate goal is to give guidelines to the chairs that they can use to make a distribution happen.
- Clarify the formula idea; how much would be formula and how much discretionary? FAC is currently considering 90% formula and 10% discretionary by chair and dean.
- Argument was made against a 10-point scale. If you are lower on the scale, the difference between scores are indistinguishable because that fine of a distinction is unreasonable. A score with less range allows better anchoring of each number, particularly on the low side.
- What is the need for the discretionary portion? FAC has heard from administration that it needs to have some discretion in order to be able to provide "leadership."
- Discretionary powers can be misused. FAC should consider some sort of accountability mechanism. The process is still under consideration.

Senate Business: Dr. Beebe presents on Texas Council of Faculty Senates Meeting

Fall meeting of TCFS focused on the future of tenure.

- To some extent, tenure will still exist, but contingent faculty are changing the landscape.
- Post-tenure review is also changing how tenure operates.
- THECB has been "reigned in" somewhat. For example, can no longer close programs, only recommend to Boards that they be closed.
- Intellectual property rights were discussed.
- Digital security is an important current topic. Some institutions are requiring that faculty install tracking software on office and personal electronic devices (including phones, tablets, and home computers). This spyware is required to be installed, and includes keystroke tracking (so personal passwords would not be secure).
- Dr. Moosally received recognition for her stellar service to TCFS.

Adjourned: 4:00 pm