

UHD Faculty Senate

Minutes recorded by: Sandra Dahlberg

May 2, 2017; 2:30-4:00pm

Room A300

Attendance: Julio Canedo Soto, Michael Connell, Travis Crone, Sandra Dahlberg, Pamela Hurley, Ruth Johnson, Robin Jose, Stephanie Karas, Karen Kaser, Cynthia Lloyd, Kendra Mhoon, Creshema Murray, Mitsue Nakamura, JoAnn Pavletich, Azar Rejaie, Clete Snell, Benjamin Soibam, Michael Tobin, Edwin Tecarro, Hsiao-Ming Wang, Keith Wright.

Regrets: Trevor Hale, Anne Kane, Jacqueline Sack, Zhenyu Zhang.

Absent: Luis Cedeno, Michael Duncan, Jillian Hill, Anand Pore, Joan Wedes, Pat Williams.

Guests: Juan Muñoz, President; Ed Hugetz, Interim Provost and Senior Vice President of Academic Affairs; Faiza Khoja, AVP Academic Affairs; Jerry Johnson, AVP Research; Akif Uzman, Dean of the College of Science and Technology; Susan Henney, Chair, Faculty Affairs Committee; Krista Gerhring, CJ; Kevin Buckler, CJ; Paul Kintzele, ENG; Chuck Jackson, ENG; Michelle Moosally, ENG; Nell Sullivan, ENG; Jonathan Davis, MMBA.

Call to Order: The Senate was called to order at 2:30pm by Senate President Carolyn Ashe.

Minutes

Minutes of the Senate meeting on April 4, 2017 were unanimously approved as written.

Comments

President Muñoz

The UHD Faculty Senate welcomed President Muñoz to UHD, and to the Senate. President Muñoz addressed the Senate, and said that as a faculty member, he has always been active in the Faculty Senate, that the work of the Senate is vitally important. He wants to keep abreast of the Senate's priorities and concerns so as to build a foundation of good will, a willingness to work together in order to advance the work of the university in a spirit of cooperation, compromise, and conciliation. Muñoz stated that our students are the life blood of the university, and that faculty are the musculature. He looks forward to working with the Senate, and appreciates the experience and wisdom with which the Senate will inform administration.

Muñoz also discussed the funding and budget uncertainties in the Texas legislature, and said that he would be sending a memo next week to all units to address potential reductions. This will be done as a precaution, because we do not yet know the outcome of the legislative budgetary process. He also asked Mr. Hugetz to speak further on the budget and planning process.

Interim Provost Hugetz

Hugetz stated that the UHD Planning and Budget Development Committee last week finished the budget prioritizations for the next fiscal year, based on the Texas House funding recommendations. However, the situation in Austin is completely unclear at present. President Muñoz's upcoming memo to plan for reductions is a result of this uncertainty. There are proposals not only for budget cuts, but proposals that would freeze tuition, including previously approved tuition increases as was the one UHD is planning for Fall 2017. If there is a cut in state funding and a tuition freeze, UHD will have a \$3 million loss of funding for the next biennium. If these cuts stand, it will be difficult to retain the salary raise pool for faculty and staff, which is the highest budgetary priority for UHD. Hugetz said that by June 1 there should be a better sense of the funding picture, and he reinforced that all options are purely speculative at this point. All of the other universities in the UH System are undertaking the reduction exercise, and it is prudent for us to do so as well.

Updates

Faculty Senate Elections

Ashe reminded Senators that the election for the Senate's president-elect is open (in Qualtrics) until Friday, May 5. She also read the following statement sent on May 1 by president-elect Hale regarding the state of the elections to the Faculty Senate: "As far as faculty senate elections go, I have almost all the nominations I asked for....Qualtrics elections will be sent out over the next week or two."

Climate Survey

Ashe reminded Senators to participate in the Climate Survey before May 15.

Senate Constitution

Ashe announced that the voting on the amendments to the Faculty Senate Constitution passed with 83.96% of the faculty respondents in favor of the changes (106 faculty voted). The Qualtrics results and the comments received will be posted on the Senate webpage for faculty review.

Policy Discussion

Revised Rank and Tenure Policy—Susan Henney, Chair, Faculty Affairs Committee (FAC)

Henney asked for input on the revised Rank and Tenure Policy (PS 10.A.01) before the faculty for comment.

The main issues raised by the Senate related to the timeline for policy approval; the 2nd- and 4th-year reviews (or one 3rd-year review), the issue of having only full professors vote on associates coming up for full professor, electronic voting and in-person participation in rank and tenure processes, language that seems to require external service, confusion about the chair and R & T committee letters for the 2nd- and 4th-year reviews, the composition of the University Rank and Tenure Committee, and the proposed subcommittees for R & T. (See below.)

Timeline for policy approval

Pavletich expressed concern that this conversation, and a decision on the language of the Rank and Tenure Policy, is too important to be rushed for approval at the end of the semester and over the summer, and said that such practices are too common at UHD.

Ashe said that no decisions are being made now, and that the discussion about the Rank and Tenure Policy will continue during Fall semester.

Henney said that FAC will discuss all comments submitted on Qualtrics in their next meetings, and that the policy will not go to the Academic Affairs Council this semester or in the summer. She also said that when FAC will makes changes to the language of the policy—based on feedback of faculty here at Senate, on Qualtrics, or by email—but that the revised policy will be sent forward to the AAC who will then be responsible for sending out the revised policy for comment, in the fall. [In an email to correct the minutes, Henney added: “FAC will not be sending the policy out for comment again prior to advancing it to AAC.”

Rejaie noted that there is concern about the process by which divisive issues will be decided in the revisionary process.

Henney said that FAC would craft policy language that would try to satisfy a majority of faculty, but differences of opinion meant that changes will not please everyone. She also stressed that the policy needs to be useable.

One 3rd-year review

Snell said that several of his faculty constituents said they would like FAC to consider changing to one review during the probationary period at the three-year mark, rather than a second-year and fourth-year review. The reasons for this suggested change are that these faculty feel that at the two-year review, there is not enough of a track record established to provide meaningful feedback about progress toward tenure, and by the four-year review, it is too late to provide meaningful intervention. Also, doing a third-year review is more consistent with other practices in the academy.

Electronic Voting

Crone expressed faculty concerns about electronic voting that would create more uninformed voting on tenure/promotion files, with more privilege given to people not engaged in the process than for people who are engaged. He said that the policy does not require attendance at tenure/promotion meetings to vote, and these changes seem to eliminate the need for R & T committees to deliberate as a group. Ruth Johnson said the junior faculty want senior faculty to collectively discuss their files. She also said that accountability to junior faculty should require that the R & T committees meet.

Henney said that the current policy does not require attendance at R & T meetings.

J. Johnson said that just because someone is absent doesn't mean they are not informed. There was continued discussion by Canedo, Wright, Crone, R. Johnson, and Ashe. After discussion, there was still much concern that the new language about electronic voting seemed to privilege an absentee process over face-to-face deliberation. There was also discussion about the use of Skype and Zoom to allow remote participation, and how these could impact confidentiality. There was also concern that the policy should not be written to accommodate absences. There was also concern expressed that policy is not the way to address individual situations, but must be made to address the

common goal of the R & T process. It was suggested that the new policy contain a statement about the importance of R & T work, and a framework for accountability.

External service

Murray, Sullivan, and Kintzele were concerned that the new policy requires external service without recognizing disciplinary differences for such service. There were concerns that requiring external service could reduce the number of faculty able to conduct university service.

Uzman noted that the language in the policy is not consistent with language in the appendix to the policy. He also stated that university service (departmental and college service included) is critical to the functioning of our under-resourced university.

Henney stated that each department will have to identify service criteria for tenure and promotion.

Sullivan noted that department criteria had to align with the Rank and Tenure Policy, and said that the policy language needs to better empower the departmental criteria.

Letters for 2nd- and 4th-year reviews

Moosally raised questions about the meaning of language in section 3.8, and noted that the old policy said that for the 2nd-and 4th-year reviews the chair consulted with the R & T committee, but the policy does not indicate whether one letter signed by both parties, or two separate letters, should be provided to the junior faculty. She said that the revised policy seems to create more isolation for chairs in this process, who should be able to have some ongoing consultation with the R & T committees especially about the application of criteria, so as to reduce confusion for junior faculty who may wind up with contradictory feedback.

Henney said they were asked to address this issue, and decided to call for separate letters from the chair and the R & T committees.

Rejaie, Moosally, Sullivan, and Dahlberg raised concerns about chair workload, and re-stated concerns about isolating chairs. Chairs serve for a limited number of years, and it is likely that more than one chair will assess junior faculty through the tenure process. Rejaie stressed that the real issue is to facilitate a conversation between the chairs and the R & T committees, and independent letters do not do so.

University Rank and Tenure Committee composition

Kintzele, current chair of the University Rank and Tenure Committee, said that the stated concerns about quid pro quo driving the full on full discussions are not relevant to the University R & T committee since department representatives do not vote on the files from their own department.

Subcommittees for R & T

Crone said that faculty are afraid of a five-member subcommittee vested with the power of a tenure decision. The policy designates five members per subcommittee, but does not require five votes. It may be possible, due to recusals and abstentions, to result in a subcommittees would allow a tenure

vote by only three tenured faculty members. That is not consistent with what junior faculty want from the review and tenure process.

Henney asked faculty to review the “Academic Leadership” section on page 15 of the proposed policy (in Appendix II) and provide feedback to FAC through Qualtrics or by email.

Closing Comments

Carolyn Ashe thanked the Senate and faculty for their support during her year as Faculty Senate President. She expressed her appreciation for the Senators’ hard work on behalf of UHD.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:00pm.

The next Senate meeting, in Fall semester, is on **September 5, 2017**.