UHD Faculty Senate

Minutes recorded by: Michael Cavanaugh
August 20, 2019 2:32-3:58 pm
UHD Travis/Milam Room

Senate: Michael Duncan, Ronald Beebe, Hsiao-Ming Wang, Michael Cavanaugh, Franklin Allaire, Maria Benavides, Alexander Bielakowski, Dexter Cahoy, Kristen Capuozzo, Stephanie Coleman, Prakash Deo, Krista Gehring, Angela Goins, Felicia Harris, Pamela Hurley, Timothy Klein, Steve London, Laura Mitchell, Mitsue Nakamura, Nathan Neale, Andrew Pavelich, Joseph Sample, Johanna Schmertz, Jace Valcore, Pat Williams, Julie Wilson, Ting Zhang.

Absent: Isaac Elking, Susan Henney, Tahereh Jafari, Cynthia Lloyd, Jeffery Martz, Martin Wright.

Guests: Sandra Dahlberg, Faculty Ombuds; Darlene Hodge, FS Admin; Pat Ensor, Library Director; Lisa Braysen, Assistant Director Library Planning and Assessment; Chris Stempinski, Assistant Director of Public Services Library; Anne Zwicky, Interlibrary Loan & Distance Education Librarian; Carleen Huxley, Information Literacy Coordinator for Library; Ed Hugetz, Special Assistant to the President.

Call to order: The Senate was called to order at 2:32 pm by Senate President Michael Duncan.

Minutes

Minutes of the April 30th, 2019 meeting were approved unanimously.

Opening Remarks and Senator Introductions

Dr. Duncan opens the meeting by welcoming the new and old senators. He thanks past Senate President Hsiao-Ming Wang for his service to the body and his dedication to UHD. He explains that on the agendas moving forward, we will have times next to discussion points. While this may be a bit optimistic, hopefully, this will help us to stay on schedule. He asks everyone to briefly introduce themselves to the rest of the senators. Once the introductions are out of the way, Dr. Duncan explains that he will try to set up meetings with individual senators over the course of the semester to engage with them on what their priorities are for the upcoming year. Communication is important and Dr. Duncan believes that will help with the Senate's duties.

Reports and Updates

Mr. Hugetz joined the meeting to give an update on the PeopleSoft (PS) transition. He said PS is working and enrollment is moving up – 14,556 today. AVP for Enrollment Management and Registrar Mr. Daniel Villanueva sent out an email with resources on using PS. Please use it and pass it along. If you don't have it, please let Mr. Hugetz know.

Q – How will we do Roster Certification in PS?

A – Mr. Hugetz explained that it will be done very similar to what we have done in the past, but it will just look different.

Mr. Hugetz indicated that there was some bad news with the PS conversion. It was difficult converting everything from Banner as we have used that system since 1992. We have currently converted the most recent 7 years of data. The overall conversion started in March, but the spring data conversion did not happen until June (after grades were inputted) and the summer will not happen until late August.

Because of the lag in converting spring and summer data, we decided to lift the prerequisites for all fall classes when registration opened in April. The idea was to turn those on in the beginning of July, which we did. There were close to 6,000 student issues once the pre-requisite module was turned on. We brought in chairs, deans, and program heads to help figure out a solution to the problem. With many advisors helping, students' transcripts were checked manually in both Banner and PS to determine if they were actually qualified to stay in the class. Some programs, departments, and colleges actually waived the prerequisites for the fall semester, while others kept them on for some or all of their courses. For the classes in which prerequisites were enforced, the students who did not meet the prerequisites for the fall semester were manually removed. The College of Science and Technology and the Marilyn Davies College of Business had many more students listed as not meeting prerequisites than the other colleges.

The problem was simply unavoidable for the initial conversion. The time simply did not allow for all of the old records to be converted along with the new records. We are still cleaning this up and adding 2 more years to the total bringing the old records back 9 years. Additionally, our built up course history with other universities could not be fully transferred into PS. The most used ones can be (i.e., HCC, Lonestar) but it will take time to build it back.

Overall, this transition will take about 2-3 years to fully implement but the first year (and first semester) is always the most difficult. Some faculty may see "freshman" in their junior and senior courses. Some of these students, may technically be freshman, but actually have enough credit hours to be termed juniors. Additionally, the student's transcripts may not be fully counted in PS yet, which could lower their classification in PS.

Dr. Duncan mentioned that when this was discussed in FSEC, the suggestion was for faculty to use their discretion quickly. Mr. Hugetz agreed and said that while most of the unqualified students were removed, a small number may have slipped through the cracks.

Questions and Discussions followed

Q – How do we know if a student is missing prerequisites?
A – Mr. Hugetz suggested asking students in the class. The administration would trust the faculty.

Mr. Hugetz further asked the faculty to email him if there were other issues that popped up about PS. He has already heard of an issue with respect to DACA and residency.

There was a suggestion that prerequisites can be accessed in PS.

Q – Can this impact Financial Aid?

A – Yes. According to Mr. Hugetz, if a student falls below 12 hours, they would be responsible for the tuition.

Q – There have been some student issues with Financial Aid. Is that related to PS?
A – Yes and No. The payment in PS was delayed over the summer. Additionally, Mr. Hugetz said that UHD had to stop payment for a couple of days because of an issue with Bank of America. We were also short a few million dollars of financial aid due to a few different issues, but those have been fixed and the full amount will be coming shortly.

Q – Can we keep students without pre-requisites in class?
A – Yes. As Mr. Hugetz explained, some programs were better at removing unqualified students than others.

Dr. Andrew Pavelich gave a brief update on the faculty handbook revision. He stated that the handbook was updated and not revised. The committee mainly focused on the factual errors in the handbook, and then added new departments, new deans, new policies, etc. He asked for any fixes to be sent to him. The Senate will vote on the new handbook during the 9/3 meeting.

Q – For adjuncts, does the 40% refer to 2 or 3 classes a semester?
A – Dr. Pavelich stated that the 40% refers to 2, but that is not something that faculty often discuss.

Need for At Large FSEC members

Dr. Duncan explained that the Faculty Senate Executive Committee has 7 members from Senate: President, President – Elect, Immediate Past-President, Secretary, and 3 at large members. The at large members are elected from the senate and serve one-year terms. Dr. Duncan asked for volunteers to run for the seats. Dr. Nathan Neale, Ms. Mitsue Nakamura, and Dr. Joseph Sample all volunteered. All were unanimously elected as at large FSEC members.

Initiative

Dr. Duncan explained that there is a proposal for a workload ad hoc committee, which would be focused on only service and led by President – Elect Dr. Beebe. The description is below:

"The Senate would form an ad hoc committee to generate ideas for reducing the non-remunerated service workload on faculty members at the college and university level only, primarily by either eliminating or combining existing committees, reducing the size of said committees, or streamlining their responsibilities. The President-Elect would serve on this committee, with two other senators being members."

According to Dr. Beebe, the idea would be to look at all of the committees/subcommittees and determine the actual need of faculty service/time on them. The committee would look at the appointments/elections processes and actual deliverables for these committees. The product of the ad hoc committee would be a memo outlining the findings, specifically related to reductions of faculty workloads.

Discussion and Questions

It seems open. Maybe have a more specific charge or resolution.

A possible reason for this is service overload is all encompassing. However, I like it and I will vote for it.

This is a baby step and we are taking a stab at it.

Q – What is the next step?
A – Dr. Beebe said that the committee would recommend a next step in the report.

Dr. Pavelich makes a motion to move forward and charge the committee and Dr. Capuozzo seconded the motion. There was unanimous approval. Dr. Pavelich and Dr. Gehring volunteered to serve on the committee with President-Elect Dr. Beebe.

Other Business

Dr. Duncan explained that the Senate Constitution is in need of revisions and he would volunteer to serve on the committee but it will need a chair. Dr. Joanna Schmertz (Chair) and Dr. Pamela Hurley volunteered to serve on the committee with Dr. Duncan.

Additionally, Dr. Duncan mentioned that the Provost is putting together a 13-person committee (including 2 senators) to draft the academic calendar 3 years in advance. He will volunteer to serve as one member, if needed, but we definitely need another senator volunteer.

Q – Dr. Dahlberg asked if this included semester start dates and final exam dates?
A – Yes.

Q - Who decides the dates in the calendar?
A – Dr. Duncan said he did not really know, as there are multiple people involved both at UHD and at the system levels. However, for the committee, there will be 2 senators and multiple staff to decide the UHD calendar once the parameters are in place.

Q – So it is not just UHD, it is the system too?
A – Yes, there are multiple stakeholders.

Dr. Duncan asked for another volunteer and Ms. Nakamura volunteered. Dr. Duncan and Ms. Nakamura will serve on the academic calendar committee.

Dr. Duncan also wanted to discuss a few other issues that will be on the Senate's radar this year. Compensation is a big one and something that the Senate probably needs to say something about. We have been in a budget crunch for a few years but faculty still need to be valued. We need to assert ourselves and need to assert our desire to get a merit pool raise.

Dr. Beebe mentioned that there has also been a discussion of asking for a compensation study (CUPA) in addition or instead of the merit pool raise. CUPA examines the salary across disciplines and looks to see if certain faculty/ranks are underpaid.   The question is: should we focus on one over the other?

Some Discussion and Questions on the issue

Q – Would CUPA need an outsider to come in? That seems like it would take longer.
A – Dr. Duncan thought CUPA required this.

The last big CUPA raise was about 10 years ago. I am not sure which is more important.

Dr. Dahlberg suggested that no matter which direction the Senate wanted to go, it should get the CUPA figures, which should be available. This will give the Senate a good idea on how much impact the CUPA would have.

Dr. Pavelich makes a motion for FSEC to draft language on a resolution dealing with a merit pool raise. Dr. Schmertz offers a friendly amendment including language "whereas we put a huge amount of time and effort into annual reports and the lack of a merit raise is not justified." Bielakowski seconds the motion. The motions carries with a vote of 26-0 with one abstention.

Dr. Duncan also wanted to discuss the flexible 50/25/25 workload. There were possible solutions discussed among FSEC including a possible resolution from the Senate. In the past, there was limited movement on this issue and the discussion centered on faculty negotiating with chairs for flexible workloads or the flexible workload being based on past performance. The idea is to allow for leeway for exceptional performance in certain areas.

Discussion opened

I am open to the idea. However, the issue is what represents 15% or 25% when it comes to faculty time. The implementation will be problematic.

This idea was floated around years ago. The percentages do not represent time rather they represent the weight of a score. It is not a time piece. With the strategic plan, the argument was that faculty were not being rewarded for writing grants.

If we all minimize our weak areas, doesn't this just keep the rankings the same?

Everyone will game the system to maximize the score. Post-tenure review will become non-existent.

If the strategic plan calls for this, but there is no benefit (raises) then why do it.

The big motivation is tenure. After that, it changes for many people.

Dr. Benavides suggests continuing this discussion next meeting.

Dr. Benavides made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Dr. Deo seconded the motion.

Meeting adjourned at 3:58 pm.