UHD Faculty Senate

Senate: Michael Duncan, Ronald Beebe, Hsiao-Ming Wang, Michael Cavanaugh, Franklin Allaire, Maria Benavides, Alexander Bielakowski, Dexter Cahoy, Kristen Capuozzo, Stephanie Coleman, Prakash Deo, Isaac Elking, Krista Gehring, Angela Goins, Susan Henney, Pamela Hurley, Tahereh Jafari, Timothy Klein, Cynthia Lloyd, Steve London, Jeffery Martz, Mitsue Nakamura, Nathan Neale, Andrew Pavelich, Joseph Sample, Johanna Schmertz, Jace Valcore, Pat Williams, Julie Wilson.

Absent: Felicia Harris, Laura Mitchell, Ting Zhang.

Guests: Eric Link, Provost/VPAA; Michelle Moosally, AVP Programming and Curriculum; Pat Ensor, Library Director; Hossein Shahrokhi, AVP IT; Darlene Hodge, FS Admin; Sheryl Sellers, Student/Dateline Correspondent; Linda Dune, Associate Professor; Bobbi Shaw, Staff Council President-Elect/Accounting Specialist, Irene Chen, Professor; Michael Connell, Professor.

Call to order: The Senate was called to order at 2:31 pm by Senate President Michael Duncan.

Minutes

June 16th Out of Cycle Zoom minutes were passed unanimously.

Reports

Provost Link joined senate to give a few updates on the university. For an enrollment updated, Provost Link said that we are still 30-31% up in summer semester credit hours, which is fantastic. Currently we are up 9% in headcount (and about 5% SCH increase) over last year's fall numbers at this point in 2019. However, we do expect that 9% to decrease because of the odd enrollment issues we faced last year (PeopleSoft conversion and late registration surge) which we will not see this year. In budget and enrollment projections, we have continued to do exercises that project a 5% enrollment decline. We have also run scenarios with 2.5% and 7.5% declines to prepare for those outcomes as well. We hope for the best though. Provost Link thanked all of the staff and faculty involved in recruitment and retainment of students and this help is sure to maximize our ability to have good enrollment for the fall semester.

Provost Link also discussed fall planning. He explained that the university is diving deep into the schedule and we are looking into all the classes with face to face components to determine whether they should continue in the scheduled format or move to an online delivery. The university has already made the majority of its courses online, but more changes are on the horizon. There has been a lot of work in looking at the classrooms and determining the new student capacities with social distancing in place. We plan to have the fall course schedule rebuilt by July 13th. After that we will have some tweaks here and there but if there are no major developments with the pandemic (i.e., state shutdown), then the schedule should be set and ready to go.

There was a recent provost update (number 12) that went out yesterday (June 30th). There were some important items, and Provost Link encouraged the Senate to read it, if the members had not already done so. One thing that Provost Link wanted to highlight was the Thanksgiving online conversion. He explained that every class modality – face to face, hybrid, online interactive, and online – would be completely online after Thanksgiving break. The academic calendar does not change - break would commence on November 25th, classes would resume online on November 30th, reading days would occur on December 8-9, and online Finals would take place from December 10-16. For those faculty teaching with a face to face component, you would need to have synchronous sessions or asynchronous work to make up for the lost contact time.

Provost Link also wanted to bring the S/U item to the senate's agenda. UHD has expressed no desire to use the S/U grading option to the fall, but we instituted it in the spring and then extended the use for the summer sessions. We introduced this in the spring because of the uncertainty surrounding the situation and the difficulties our students faced. It was a unique situation. However, as Provost Link explained, he brought this to Senate because he learned that UH main is going to extend the S/U option into the fall semester. This does not mean that UHD must follow, but it is probably worth discussing. He further explained that he did not know if UH-Clear Lake or UH-Victoria were also following UH's lead, but he believes they are seriously considering the option. For UHD, either the traditional grading model or the S/U option would work, according to Provost Link.

Provost Link gave an update on the online interactive classroom buildouts (formerly called s-flex). The buildouts are going great, the equipment is ordered, and the IT team is ready to get things set up. While we originally planned to buildout 15-20 classrooms for the fall, we will probably build out 7-8 for the fall and build out an additional 7-8 during the fall. Provost Link said that faculty who do teach in these classrooms and get acquainted with the technology will likely appreciate the flexibility it provides students. When we finally exit the pandemic, this will be another teaching tool that the university can utilize.

Finally, Provost Link wanted to pass along a couple of notes. No matter what the plans are, things can change quickly as the situation remains very fluid. Since the last Senate meeting, there has been a COVID spike in Houston similar to other hotspots around the country. Eventually cases will begin to recede, but things could also worsen again. We cannot provide definitive answers as to what will happen for the fall. We must respond to the situation as it presents itself. If things change dramatically and the state closes in September, we will have to move online again. This is just something that we are having to deal with now. To end on a high note, we are now just two students away from hitting a 30% FTIC graduation rate (and we can hit that this summer). This would be the first time in the institution's history. This is a wonderful achievement and something to be proud of as faculty who have worked hard to increase it from where it was just a few years ago. Provost Link said that if we keep the current trend up, we will see 35%, 37%, and 40% graduation rates in the next few years.

Q – What type of training is going to be available for those faculty who are teaching in the online interactive class modality classes? I have taught in a similar type of format previously and this is much more difficult than the traditional zoom session. I had to have an IT person sit in the classroom for most of three semesters because of audio/video problems and connectivity issues. I even had to cancel class on a few occasions because students couldn't connect through zoom. Have we hired enough people for the transition in the fall? There seems like a big risk.
A – Provost Link agreed that there is a risk. This is a new venture for UHD and thus there will be issues with the transition. Provost Link had asked AVP Hossein Shahroki to prepare to hire a bunch of student

assistants and other workers to help with the technology in the classrooms. This is especially important early on as faculty (and students) get adjusted to the new model. We do not have any training programs in place at the moment, but Provost Link said that his office is committed to providing trainings/workshops and other basics for faculty so that they have an understanding of how to use the technology. He also explained that this online interactive model is different from the hybrid flex model that is being used at other universities. At UHD, the online interactive allows students to participate in the class either face to face (with masks and using social distancing guidance) or online at the time period specified in the schedule. The hybrid flex model, not being used at UHD, records lectures, in addition to having synchronous class meetings. The hybrid flex model would add an extra layer of technology (and possible related issues) that we do not want to put on faculty now.

Q – What is the rationale that UH is giving for allowing the S/U grading option for the fall?
A – No real rationale is being given, although Provost Short's correspondence indicated that the university sees the fall semester as suffering from COVID related campus disruptions and issues, similar to what happened in the spring and summer. Provost Link said that was the extent of his knowledge on the issue.

Dr. Duncan gave feedback to Provost Link on the poll of senators of the facemask policy and the recommendation for blackboard training for online instruction. Dr. Duncan said the facemask policy was heavily supported with a major question being whether faculty would be required to enforce the policy in the classroom. For the online training, it was about 70/30 in favor and the negative comments seemed to focus on experienced blackboard users being required to have the training, have the ability to test out, or be grandfathered out.

Provost Link said he did not have much to say about the training piece yet, but he could speak a bit on the mask policy. There was a meeting with all the system provosts and Donna Cornell (Office of General Counsel) to talk about the masks. The end result was that the wearing of masks (or not wearing of masks) was to be treated like any other disciplinary offense. It should move through the Student Affairs office and discipline could follow from there. The Office of General Counsel is still trying to figure out other avenues as this method does not seem the most ideal when we are talking about the potential transmission of a virus. However, the enforcement mechanism is still being discussed.

Q – Can students be required to notify faculty if they have been infected or exposed, so that we can notify the rest of the class that they have been exposed? Will faculty have that ability in the fall and is that a confidentiality issue?
A – Provost Link stated that UHD has protocols in place for contact tracing if a faculty member or student in a classroom has been exposed to the virus/is infected. He explained that without getting into the details of the process (he didn't want to accidently misstate something), if a student identified as positive that would set in motion these protocols which would include quarantining the entire class (including the faculty member) for two weeks. Basically, that course, and any other face to face component course the positive individual is a part of would receive remote instruction for two weeks prior to being allowed back to campus. This is on the COVID website although you may have to dig around to find the information.

Q – When will these protocols be posted and communicated to all faculty?
A – Provost Link said that when they are completed, they will be published very quickly. Most of the information has already been communicated in one fashion or another, but the issue is that there is a massive amount of material to wade through to find it. However, we are trying to publish important

documents like this on the Keep on Teaching website run out of the Provost's office (https://www.uhd.edu/keeponteachinguhd/Pages/default.aspx) or the COVID-19 website run by University Relations (https://www.uhd.edu/administration/emergency-management/coronavirus/Pages/default.aspx). ESO has good information on their website as well (https://www.uhd.edu/administration/employment-services-operations/Pages/Covid-Resources.aspx). Provost Link said if you have a specific question about a policy or guideline please send him or someone on his staff an email as they can either point you to the link with the policy/guideline or they can inform you on what stage of development it is in.

Provost Link thanked Senate for the time to talk about the updates and thanked the senators for their work over the summer on what will be an unusual, but hopefully successful, fall semester.

Dr. Duncan brought up an issue that was raised by one of the senators before the meeting about the continued recording of the zoom sessions and the senator's decision not to attend due to the recording. He explained that this would probably inconvenience secretary Cavanaugh because he uses the recording to write up the minutes but that is preferable to having a senator not attend.

Discussion ensued.

I have a concern. If we stopped the recording, would the senator come back and attend?

We would have to ask the senator.

It may take some time.

It probably won't happen today but are we sure the senator would come back for future meetings?

We can't be sure of that.

If we stop recording, are we still taking minutes?

Yes.

Maybe I can reach out to the senator and have a personal conversation about it. We can hold off on a vote until that is done.

The senator made it clear that missing the meeting was due to the recording.

Dr. Williams makes a motion to stop the recording.

Voice recordings have been done by senate secretaries for years.

I would like to hold off on a vote.

If we stop the recording, do we have to delay the discussion on the statement too? Those seem to be entwined.

Dr. Duncan said that the issues can be dealt with separately and suggested that the discussion of the statement could be done in executive session which would necessitate a stop of the recording. Are we okay with holding off decisions about the recording until the next meeting?

There has been no second to the motion. Without a second we do not have to move on it.

Dr. Duncan explained that because there was no second, the motion would not get considered.

Initiatives

Dr. Duncan started the discussion on the draft anti-racism statement.

Q – Can you explain how the draft of the statement was developed? This seems a bit different from the initial intent of the faculty senate.
A – Dr. Duncan explained that after the initial motion was passed to draft an anti-racism statement with faculty input, the intent was to get the draft back to senators on the 23rd. We missed that deadline because we moved the initial meeting from the 19th to the 22nd, wrote the initial draft in FSEC on the 23rd, sent it back to the 15 faculty participants from the initial meeting for feedback, and FSEC revised the it again on 26th. The draft statement (see attached) the Senate currently has is the draft from the 26th.

Dr. Martz makes a motion to consider the statement. Dr. Benavides seconds the motion.

Discussion occurred.

I wanted to point out a couple of things without commentary. The statement discusses two issues. The first is a statement of support for the protest and the second is a recommendation for UHD. Reducing or eliminating one of those things would not necessarily mean a reduction or elimination of the other.

Are we in executive session?

Dr. Duncan said we are not.

This may make people feel a bit more comfortable on the topic if we were.

Dr. Bielakowski makes a motion to enter executive session. Dr. Klein seconds the motion.

Discussion on the motion.

Is this to prevent a recording or are there other reasons for it?

We don't really need a reason.

It is a sensitive topic and people will talk more freely in executive session, so I am in favor.

Vote on the motion to go into executive session is called and passes unanimously.

Senate enters executive session at 3:14 pm. Minutes will be minimal.

Discussion on the statement continued.

Motion for wording changes in two parts of the document was proposed and seconded.

Amendment to separate the motion into two separate motions was made and seconded.

A vote on the amendment to separate the motion passed unanimously.

The first original motion (first part of the now split motion) was to reduce the list of names in paragraph 3.

Discussion occurred.

Motion fails on vote with 5 in favor, 16 against, and 5 abstentions.

Motion is made to delay the discussion to the next Senate meeting and is seconded.

Motion fails on vote with 9 in favor, 11 against, and 6 abstentions.

The second original motion (second part of the now split motion) is declared hostile by Dr. Duncan as the struck language proposed was fundamental to the statement.

More discussion on the statement occurred.

The language on the statement is called to question and seconded.

The vote passes 16 in favor, 4 against, and 6 abstentions.

Dr. Duncan explained there was an issue with the call to question and a second vote on the statement occurred. A vote to pass the draft statement as is passed with 16 in favor, 4 against, and 6 abstentions.

A motion was made to exit the executive session and seconded. Unanimous approval to exit executive session at 4:25 pm.

Dr. Duncan states that he will send this statement to DT_Faculty and DT_Staff and possibly students.

Dr. Benavides made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Dr. Bielakowski seconded the motion. Meeting adjourned at 4:26 pm.

Faculty Senate Procedures for Zoom meetings

To facilitate establishing a quorum, attendees will be directed to the waiting room before being admitted to the meeting. The Faculty Senate Secretary will admit attendees once they have been recorded.

All persons attending the meeting will be muted upon entry. Persons wishing to speak will use the "Raise hand" function in the "Participants" option; this will place speakers in order of their request to speak. This is being done because not all attendees are visible on the screen at the same time to ensure fairness regarding the order of speakers. Speakers will be unmuted in order of request.

In order to adhere more closely to Robert's Rules of Order, participants in the senate meetings are encouraged to use the chat feature only for making motions, seconding motions, or requests for points of order or privilege.

Motions must be placed in the chat as quickly as possible after being presented, in addition the person seconding the motion will enter that in the chat as well. This will ensure that motions are recorded correctly, the correct motions are discussed, and when appropriate, voted upon for adoption or rejection.

Meetings will be recorded, including any reports from invited speakers/presenters. Senators wishing to hold a discussion on a specific item may request that recording be paused during that discussion. The Faculty Senate President will also monitor the nature of items being discussed and request that recording be paused if deemed appropriate.