

UHD Faculty Senate

Minutes recorded by: Nathan Neale
Regular Scheduled Senate Meeting October 19, 2021
2:30 – 4:00 PM
Online via Zoom

Senators Attending: Edmund Cueva, Ronald Beebe, Krista Gehring, Nathan Neale, Godwin Agboka, Ayden Adler, Stephanie Babb, Alexander Bielakowski, Franklin Allaire, Amy Baird, Nina Barbieri, Maria Bhattacharjee, Kasi Bundoc, Scott Davis, Austin DeJan, Prakash Deo, Lucas Fedell, Paul Fulbright, Aaron Gillette, Heather Goltz, Don Holmes, Rachael Hudspeth, Michael Lemke, Cynthia Lloyd, Lucas Logan, Jean Nganou, Angelica Roncacio, M. Nell Sullivan, Candace TenBrink, Adriana Visbal, Julie Wilson

Senators Absent: None

Guests: Akif Uzman, Interim Provost, Michelle Moosally, AVP Programming and Curriculum, Jerry Johnson, AVP, Sandra Dahlberg, Faculty Ombuds, Maritza Tamez, Dean of Students, Danya Serrano, Assistant Professor, Patricia Ensor, Executive Director, W.I.D., Darlene Hodge, FS Admin, Catherine Howard, Lecturer

Call to order: The Senate was called to order at 2:32 PM by Senate President Edmund Cueva after a quorum was assembled.

A motion to approve the October 5, 2021 minutes was made and seconded.
The minutes were approved.

Reports

Dr. Howard shared information about the Honors College and her interim role. She and her team are attempting to get things in place and revisit existing policies. They have Zoom meetings set up to share more information with any faculty that may be interested in offering honors courses. Please reach out to her at howardc@uhd.edu with any questions.

They are developing strengthening existing policies addressing honors contracts. Some students did not understand that it is best to approach faculty early and some chose to ask late. Similarly, they are reviewing the handbook and will distribute that.

The 5 year QEP assessment report is due and Dr. Campbell has a survey to help better understand what faculty believe Honors College looks like at UHD.

C: There is a current group of 10 faculty that routinely attend honors events and serve as mentors. Please interact with them as they are friends to the honors college.

Q: I would like that. Is there a list?

A: Yes, there is a list.

Honors Students are performing well. UHD has five students attending the NCHC conference and some will be presenting a poster. The 5-year graduation rate of these students is 69.33% and this is much higher than others.

Dr. Beebe asked why UHD was conducting a national search for the director position as the program is not large.

Interim Provost Uzman stated that he and Dr. Moosally will meet to discuss this. He prefers a faculty member and one that is passionate about the honors college. He thanked Dr. Howard for her efforts.

Dr. Cueva asked if Dr. Howard's position is new.

A: Yes, it is.

A senator shared concerns about the UHD cafeteria's food options. The senator spoke with many students, staff and faculty. Many are concerned about the lack of fresh food and that this may be going in the wrong direction. This is because UHD has the pantry and seems to want to promote healthy eating. We need to be aware that the cafeteria options are not aligned with this.

Dr. Cueva asked how the senator would like the senate to move forward. He said that FSEC is concerned that there is a lack of vegetarian and vegan options. Also, the food is not the healthiest nor cheapest. He understood the lack of a salad bar due to COVID but felt that we should have better options.

Q: Are we under a contract?

A: Yes, with Chartwells. The senator did not know how long until the contract ends.

Q: We have some food trucks available. Can we look into expanding the number here?

C: A senator suggested that TXRX has a kitchen. We may be able to work with them.

Q: Can you find out how much money it will cost to change this situation? Can we find out when the contract ends and if we can offer vegan options or boxed lunches?

A: Yes

Dr. Cueva shared the reply from administration regarding naming the new theater lobby.

Q: Can we look at a plaque?

A: OK

Q: Where can we locate the actual policy cited?

A: It is located in the UHS website. Please look at the SAM policies.

Q: It appears that a financial donation is important. How much will this require?

A: We are not sure how much this will cost for specific items. It is up to administration.

Q: We are not sure about plaques. It is a specific percentage for buildings.

C: Marilyn Davies donated 10MM to name the college of business

C: This was to name the college. Naming the building would cost much more. It is normally 1/3 to 1/2 of the building cost.

C: When will the new policy be shared with faculty?

Dr. Beebe explained that this was revised March 2021.

The senate revisited the A+CE program discussion from the previous meeting. The senate was asked to vote to remove, keep or expand the program. Instead of voting, the senate requested additional information. Some additional information was provided a few days ago.

C: A senator stated that their department had limited input. The largest concerns were about a perceived lack of benefits, the track record and return on investment.

C: A senator said that some faculty felt that the question being asked is confusing.

C: We are concerned that A+CE may not fit the current strategic plan. We need to focus on the mission and those initiatives that are most important.

C: A senator shared concerns about the lack of data and suggested that the senate refrain from moving forward without more information about how critical thinking is emphasized. Instead of focusing on community engagement, we should be concentrating on intellectual and analytical abilities. Many of our student are already involved in their communities and come to UHD for intellectual benefits.

Dr. Beebe said that we do not have the luxury of waiting to decide how we want to move forward with A+CE. This is because it is part of the five-year report that is due. A previous president focused on community engagement and we do not see the data. He wanted to better understand how we are preparing students, improving graduation rates and persistence.

C: There was a thought that we use critical thinking to solve community problems. We should be involved in the community. Every class in the university should be a lab. Students get experience working in teams. Research shows that these initiatives are important, especially to minority populations. This approach works. We need to have the ability for some faculty to focus on retention, some on research and others on other opportunities at UHD.

Dr. Moosally stated that this conversation is similar to others that she has participated. The QEP is owned by the faculty. We need to make a decision for the five-year report.

Q: Will the university support the senate's decision?

A: It is a determining factor.

C: Some community engagement projects are good and others are not.

Dr. Moosally said that there may be other avenues. This is also related to the resources needed.

Q: Can we have more information about where the QEP and A+CE will be housed. Is this part of the impact learning office?

A: We can investigate.

Dr. Cueva suggested that the senate return the request as we do not have sufficient information to make a decision. We are open to suggestions but are not sure if more data are available.

C: We still lack information. Please ask Dr. Gulati to attend our next meeting.

Q: Should we state that the senate is indifferent to keeping or removing the program but we are not interested in expansion?

C: The senate is not indifferent. We need more information. We need data and cannot rush.

Dr. Cueva said that he would invite Dr. Gulati but worries that we may be in the same situation as there may not be additional data. He said that he will ask her to bring options to the next meeting.

Drs. Cueva and Moosally committed to meeting to discuss an approach.

A motion was made request additional data. It received a second. The motion passed.

Dr. Cueva followed up on previous discussions on the climate survey. There have been numerous rumors and misconceptions about the person that shared details of our previous meeting that was held in executive session. He has the name of the person and it is not Dr. TenBrink. The senate has been harmed by this person's actions. He opened the floor for discussion.

C: Senators are elected to represent faculty. This harms those we represent when individuals betray trust.

Dr. Gehring said that senators are part of the faculty body. She argued that senators' jobs are to serve faculty and their interests. Senators' are not here to focus on administration. They have support. She said that she cannot tell anyone what to do but stated that this person upset many and betrayed colleagues.

C: The senate is part of shared governance. Administrators already have a strong voice. We do not need to look after them.

Q: Can we act?

A: We do not have sufficient proof. However, the offense has been repeated.

Q: Dr. Cueva, have you approached this person?

A: NO, not yet. This is holding us back.

Dr. Gehring stated that she was disappointed and upset.

C: Your FSEC representatives have not shared any of this information. Dr. Neale is not the person that shared details outside of the meetings.

Dr. Cueva said that an open records request was filed. He met with OGC and the senate needs to surrender the data. He reiterated that the senate is not an investigative body. If anyone wants to request an investigation, s/he can individually request one.

C: This is difficulty because a person needs to be willing to put out their neck

C: Now this information is out there. This suggests that administration does not have plausible deniability.

Dr. Cueva said that he would ask Jennifer Bloom to attend a senate meeting to explain our roles and the protections related to serving in this body.

Dr. Gehring and Cueva shared a short report about meetings with the Texas Council of Faculty Senates. First, many believe there should be language to address disruptions such as COVID-19 and how they may affect faculty evaluations. Course surveys may need to be adapted due to circumstances. Second, they suggest improving the way that administrators at deans and above are evaluated. This should include votes of support, no confidence, censure, etc. Third, there are discrepancies in workload across universities. Some do not consider the amount of work required of faculty.

Q: How can we obtain information about expectations?

A: These should be listed in individual employment contracts.

Dr. Gehring asked senators to take the strategic planning committee survey and to ask constituents to do the same.

C: Please ask the committee to reconsider using the word learner and to remove buzzwords.

C: The focus may be on learners is because we have students and those here for non-degree programs or continuing education.

A motion to adjourn was made and seconded. Senate adjourned at 4:07 PM.

Key:

Answer

Comment

Question