UHD Faculty Senate Meeting
May 4, 2010
Minutes

Present: P. Lyons (President), A. Allen (President-Elect), J. Schmertz (Secretary).

C. Bedard, W. Botsford, R. Chiquillo, D. de la Pena, A. Eliassen, G. Evans. A. Gomez-Rivas, J. Jackson, P. Kintzele, N. LaRose, M. Moosally, O. Paskellian, A. Pavelich, N. Rangel, L. Spears, N. Sullivan, F. Williams, V. Zafris, Z. Zhou

Absent: R. Beebe, K. Jegdic, J. Johnson, R. Pepper, K. Wright

President Lyons asked faculty senators to introduce themselves to each other. They did. He passed out a current agenda and a short version of Roberts' Rules of Order for senators to refer to. We will follow this version for all senate meetings. A longer version is available in the Faculty Senate offices if it needs to be consulted.

Lyons said he had set aside 15 minutes in the agenda for President Flores to speak about his work as president up to this point and hear from us, but he had been informed by V.P. Apodaca that Flores was not feeling well and could not attend. Lyons expressed regret and said Faculty Senate would be in communication with him via other venues. Revising the agenda in light of Flores' absence, he said that we would first take care of old business (the Faculty Senate online education survey, to be discussed by Susan Henney), then elect officers to the Faculty Senate Executive Council (FSEC), next discuss a list of agenda items he had proposed for next year, and finally, ask the senate for proposals on new agenda items.

Report from Susan Henney on Faculty Senate Survey on Online Education

Henney gave a brief report on a few initial findings of the quantitative data (the remainder, plus a coding of the qualitative data, remains to be done.) This survey, which was put together by a faculty senate committee this spring, asked some common questions of all faculty (e.g. a faculty's rank and length of time at UHD) and then posed a separate set of questions to two self-selected groups: faculty who had taught courses online and faculty who had not. 170 faculty responded to the questionnaire. Of these, 139 (82% of respondents) were tenured or tenure-track.

Henney made the following observations (which were based on combining raw counts on agree/strongly agree and disagree/strongly disagree, and then converting these raw numbers to percentages):

- 82% of those who have taught online believe they have been successful instructors in an online environment
- 60% of those who have taught online believe students learn effectively online.
- 26% of those who have not taught online believe students learn effectively online (Henney referred to this as a "definite disconnect")

- 39% of those who have not taught online might be interested in teaching online in the future; 43% of that same group would not. Henney referred to this as a "nice spread" and indicated it was the role of Faculty Senate to represent and support these diverse needs.
- 70% of those who have taught online believe students have the technical literacy to participate in online courses. Of those who have not taught online, 43% believe students possess sufficient technical literacy.
- 48% of those who have taught online believe that students possess the independent study skills necessary to succeed in online courses. Of those who have not taught online, 18% believe students possess the independent study skills they need to succeed. Henney noted that the results of the survey therefore showed that independent study skills—not computer/technical literacy—was the key issue of concern.

Henney next discussed perceptions of the impact of online education on the academic reputation of UHD.

- 44% of those who have taught online believe online education will have a positive impact on UHD's academic reputation compared to 26% for those who have not.
- 30% of those who have taught online believe online education will have a negative impact on UHD's academic reputation; 56% of those who have not taught online believe online education will negatively impact UHD's reputation.

Henney said she would leave senators to read on their own a separate page of her report on reasons why some faculty elect NOT to teach online. (Belief that face-to-face experience is essential to their courses predominates, at 62%. The next most cited reason was the belief that online education undermines the quality of a university education at 43%, followed by concerns about monitoring academic honesty at 41%.) Henney stated that although perspectives between faculty who have taught online and those who have not differed on some issues, on the question of whether faculty should be involved in mapping out UHD's online strategy, 90% of respondents agreed that they should. This sends a "powerful message." Despite the diversity of faculty opinion, faculty are together on the need for faculty participation.

Lyons asked if faculty had questions for Henney. Sullivan wanted to know why, on the question of whether online education would impact the university's reputation, certain columns didn't add up to the total tally of responders. Henney replied that two responders had skipped that question. Sullivan then remarked that disaggregating the respondents into have/have not taught online had the result of emphasizing differences: could the data be reorganized to also show the faculty's coalescence on certain issues, such as an apparent consensus that students lack the necessary independent study skills? A back and forth conversation threatened to rupture the sanctity of Roberts' Rules. Lyons noted that the data presented by Henney were preliminary; faculty would have the opportunity to ask for certain types of data to be extracted from the survey. Moosally characterized Henney's report as a "teaser," hinting at further riches to come, as there were many more questions asked on the survey than were covered in Henney's report. Lyons further stated that Henney would work on the data over the summer, noting that even after

the numbers have been crunched, the qualitative information (written responses) constitute another "mound of work" to be done. He then asked if faculty had specific requests for Henney.

Evans asked if the report would show how responses differed by college. Henney said it could.

Kintzele asked what percent of UHD T/T-T faculty responded. Henney said almost 60%; this is a high response rate for an online survey.

Lyons noticed that 90% agreement on the need for faculty involvement already "sticks out" of the data.

Administrator Announcements

Apologizing for asking the question belatedly, Lyons then asked if any administrators had anything they had come to the meeting to report to faculty.

Provost Woods made the following announcements:

- Student awards ceremony is May 5. Faculty should come. Attendance is normally around 400 people.
- UHD's Geoscience program is at the Provosts' Council. It is hoped it will move to the BOR early this fall.
- The BAAS IT degree is still under review for some "cleanup" and "we should know soon."

Lyons asked if anyone had any questions for Dr. Woods. Spears said it would be a good idea if the survey, when formalized into a report, had an introductory section on the history of online education to let readers know online education is nothing new. Since Woods still had the floor, she continued her report:

- 249 had its open house the previous Thursday (April 29). Turnout was "excellent" and everything a student would need to be admitted to UHD was made available that night: representatives from admissions, advisors, veterans' offices were on hand. A member of the Lone Star board was there and he told President Flores he was impressed to see deans and faculty representatives there in addition to staff. He will talk to the chambers in the area to generate some interest. The plan is for 249 to have a "soft" opening in the summer, followed by a more "aggressive" entry in the fall.

Moosally asked if the period for administrators' reports was over, noting V.P. Sue Davis was present and asked about the straw poll. Moosally took the survey, which concluded with a statement that a report from the survey would be sent to the Board of Regents. Moosally asked whether the survey feedback would be part of a larger report and how that report would be assembled and framed. Davis responded that the feedback from the straw poll would be combined with feedback gleaned from the sessions set up by Stamats (the paid consultants), from

Thomas Workman's Center for Public Deliberation and from two public websites on the name selection. This feedback will be sent to the BOR "through the proper channels at some point in the fall." Moosally asked if this report would also be made available to the community. Davis said it would.

Elections to Faculty Senate Executive Council

The next order of business was to elect three members to Faculty Senate Executive Committee (FSEC). Lyons noted that the term started immediately, to continue for fifteen months (to accommodate new changes in the FS constitution involving continuity of representation). Summer work may be involved: "Faculty Senate does not die over the summer."

Sullivan nominated Moosally. Spears nominated himself. Schmertz asked if representation among the colleges was necessary; Lyons responded that it would be ideal but not required by the constitution. Zhou nominated Gail Evans from MMBA. Lyons asked if there were any other "sacrificial lambs" and promised to serve drinks to them. Members of CPS unfortunately had schedule conflicts that did not permit them to experience this mixed metaphor in action. Lyons closed the nominations and Schmertz began ripping pieces of paper to make ballots. Sullivan asked if we could simply vote "by acclamation" since there was no contest. Senate voted 20-0 to elect Moosally, Evans, and Spears, with no abstentions.

Faculty Senate Resolution on Online Education

The elections concluded, Lyons returned to the topic of online education. FSEC has been having meetings about the need for faculty to "take ownership" of the development of policy regarding online education; the faculty senate survey results have borne this out. He distributed a resolution that developed from these conversations. Here is the text of the draft:

UHD Senate Resolution on Online Education – DRAFT (5/4/10)

Whereas

- Online education is rapidly becoming a common means for delivery of courses in higher education;
- Online courses and programs are part of the curriculum, and the curriculum is within the purview of the faculty;
- Many issues regarding online curriculum require clear policy and publicly-stated guidelines to ensure success of online programs and fairness to students and faculty;
- A large majority of the faculty who participated in a recent Senate survey believes that the faculty "should be involved in mapping out UHD's online strategy."

Be it resolved that:

- The Faculty Senate will sponsor preparation of a comprehensive report based on the Faculty Senate online survey; this report shall include a summary and interpretation of the results of the survey, as well as recommendations for further action surrounding online education policy at UHD.

- Further, the senate expects that faculty will have a central role in determining all future actions and policy regarding online education.

Senator Williams moved to strike "rapidly becoming" in the first bullet and replace it with "is common." Pavelich countered that this change might imply online education ought to be common, which may not be intended. Moosally suggested the compromise "rapidly evolving."

Evans questioned the final bullet: should faculty be involved in ALL discussions regarding online education? She had no language to substitute, merely a question. Sullivan moved to strike the overly tentative phrase "expects that" in the final bullet and simply state faculty "will" have a central role. Evans said that faculty should have a central role in pedagogy and curriculum, and in technology, insofar as having the technological tools becomes part of one's pedagogy. Faculty should also have say in how they are how they are compensated and scheduled. However, Evans becomes nervous when she sees language saying faculty will have a central role in "all" future actions and policy because that could involve "nuts and bolts" things faculty should not be spending their time on. She wants the role of faculty vis-à-vis online education to be more clearly defined to center on curriculum, technology, and pedagogy.

Sullivan suggested that the language did not parse properly; one cannot "resolve an expectation." Lyons suggested Sullivan was "wordsmithing" and returned to Evans' point, saying that he understood her objection to the word "all" and her desire to restrict faculty involvement to pedagogy and curriculum, but he also had in mind the bigger picture of who sets the policy and direction of online education. Who has to teach online courses, where will they be taught, how many courses will be taught per semester—those are the kinds of questions Lyons feels faculty need to play a role in, not just pedagogy and curriculum. Williams said there are all kinds of teeny decisions involved in online education, and the words "all future action" may imply faculty will micromanage such things as Java programming and deciding whether the opening page of a document will be in chartreuse. Sullivan said that until we know what is involved in online education, we should protect the word "all," because otherwise we may find the tail wagging the dog. A decision made by IT could potentially determine how a course gets taught; one might end up with some "procrustean thing" where one adapts one's curriculum to fit the programs IT makes available. An example of a technology/pedagogy conflict has been seen with delays in formulating final exam schedules.

Evans said that what has really been bothering her about the resolution currently under consideration is that a far more comprehensive report than what was delivered by Henney will emerge from Faculty Senate; until we know what is in it, and have consulted with all our constituent groups, this resolution is "premature." Moosally said she is somewhat conflicted for the reasons Evans mentions (in ideal circumstances we would wait until fall when all the data is tabulated and the FS report is written), but feels the impetus to take some sort of action because the university has been moving toward online education and the process by which it is doing so is unclear. For example: the Provost's letter to new faculty, discussed at the April 20 Faculty Senate meeting, seemed to indicate faculty might have no say in determining whether they would

end up teaching in strictly online programs. Another example: a statement was made in University Planning Council that we would like to have 5 programs online in the next three years. Where are decisions made that programs are to go online, who decides and when? A resolution may not be what we want at this time, but Faculty Senate needs to make clear somehow the importance of transparency in the decisions being made. Spears agreed with Moosally and said this is why he previously mentioned the possibility of stating that online education has been around for awhile—faculty have not had sufficient input all along. Spears agrees with the first bullet and suggests the second bullet simply strike the word "all." UPC is not a faculty dominated body. They put out the proposal that 5 degree programs should be placed online—should they be the body to decide this? Moosally said this issue came up in a discussion about hiring 4 instructional technologists, one for each college; the question then becomes which program from which colleges will be designated to go online, and by whom?

Lyons suggested we take a step back and make a decision about whether we should go ahead with a resolution at all. Pavelich stated this is the last meeting before we break for summer, and we should make a decision today. The resolution is fairly innocuous; it simply states that we want involvement we clearly have not had and does not give an itemized list. "Things around here change only if a lot of voices say that they should." Schmertz said her notes showed some fairly concrete suggestions made for change in the resolution: in the final bullet, change "expect" to "will" and eliminate "all." Lyons revised the resolution to reflect these changes. Moosally moved to accept the changes in wording prior to any vote; LaRose seconded, and the motion passed 20-0. Lyons asked if there were any suggestions on the wording of the first bullet; Schmertz proposed Moosally's compromise suggestion: online education "is rapidly evolving as a common" means for delivery. Lyons revised again. Allen moved to accept these further changes in wording, Pavelich seconded and the motion passed 20-0. Moosally gave her interpretation of what curriculum being in the "purview" of faculty means in the second bullet point, and wanted to make sure that interpretation was shared; it means faculty decide if and when programs go online. Faculty know best practices in pedagogy; therefore faculty would make decisions about when and how programs go online. Nobody objected to her interpretation. Kintzele asked if Moosally wanted to change the resolution to reflect her comments; she said not at this time. Pavelich moved to accept the resolution as it currently stands; Eliassen seconded. The resolution passed with 18 in favor, one opposed, and one abstention. **The final version of the resolution, approved by majority vote of the Faculty Senate on 5/4/2010, reads as follows:**

UHD Senate Resolution on Online Education

Whereas

- Online education is rapidly evolving as a common means for delivery of courses in higher education;
- Online courses and programs are part of the curriculum, and the curriculum is within the purview of the faculty;

- Many issues regarding online curriculum require clear policy and publicly-stated guidelines to ensure success of online programs and fairness to students and faculty;
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Be it resolved that:

- The Faculty Senate will sponsor preparation of a comprehensive report based on the Faculty Senate online survey; this report shall include a summary and interpretation of the results of the survey, as well as recommendations for further action surrounding online education policy at UHD.
- Further, faculty will have a central role in determining future actions and policy regarding online education.

New Business: Potential Agenda Items for Fall 2010

Lyons moved to the next item on the agenda--discussing Senate topics for next year. The items were not arranged in priority order; he wanted feedback on what topics should be pursued. The first two items, online education and distance education, are ongoing business that has already begun.

He asked if the next item, "UHD name change" should remain on the list. Moosally said we should pursue this issue, particularly how the new name will be defined and promoted. Bedard said her students frequently ask how they can participate in the name change, is the website still open to students, and "how can we get word out" to them. Davis said there have been emails sent via gatormail, posters, sessions, and a straw poll on the e-services webpage. Bedard asked if the poll could be posted to UHD's homepage. Davis stated the straw poll could not be on the homepage because of authentication issues; the e-services page is better because it is targeted toward audiences that are part of the UHD community, thereby screening out the general public. Sullivan pointed out that the poll requires a user ID and password, which fact presumably automatically screens out the general public, so why not place the poll on the homepage? Davis responded that there is a problem authenticating/verifying alumni, implying that alumni would somehow be allowed to take the poll via e-services, whereas the general public would not. Sullivan objected that the general public could not take the poll even if it were on the homepage because they would be screened out. Davis said, "No, that is not correct" but did not elaborate.

Lyons said that these questions regarding the straw poll highlighted a lack of information dissemination and communication on the name change and suggested "UHD name change" remain on the list of proposed agenda items for next year. Were there any other questions? Bedard said that some students have not been able to attend because of schedule conflicts; will there be additional meetings and can these announcements be posted on the webpage? Davis responded that the meetings were videotaped and made available. Bedard: This does not help the students who were unable to speak because they could not attend. Davis: There will be

"additional avenues that [students] will be able to pursue in the summer and in the fall." Moosally said that the May 14 deadline may not give students opportunity to respond, particularly as students don't always check gatormail regularly. Evans said there is a straw poll pop-up on Vista. Sullivan suggested that the deadline for the poll be extended through the deadline for submitting grades, so that students see the pop-up on the poll when they log in to check their grades. Lyons asked if Sullivan's comments were feasible; Davis said she would check. A student in the audience said a friend had mistakenly checked a name and was unable to uncheck it to simply leave comments. Davis said when the program was tested, it allowed participants to make changes, but that she would look into this. Zhou asked Davis what would happen in case of voter error (like the one mentioned by the student) and what happens if a person chooses not to vote for either of the names, but submits comments? How will the refusal to vote be recorded and reported? Davis said that this was just a straw poll, "advisory only," not a binding vote; the Regents make the final decision. She would ask IT about voter error, but any reports coming out from the poll would include total number of respondents, total number of city U and total of HCU, so people would be able to tell if some people commented but didn't vote. Lyons: bring all further comments to me, I will confer with Davis later.

Lyons went down the list of remaining items, giving brief explanations:

- Admissions standards—a report is ongoing. Dean Birchak needs to follow up and give report to FS.
- PR: more faculty involvement is needed in advertising, logos, public statements, and mottoes.
- SACS: P. Williams is beginning work toward the fifth year review deadline of March 25, 2012. We are getting a "head start for a change on SACS."
- There has been discussion of increasing the role of deans at UHD—we need to discuss the mechanisms for evaluating deans and whether they are adequate.
- The Office of Sponsored Programs has been working with Faculty Affairs Committee. Senate needs to provide direction on policy and resources.
- Childcare: Lyons started this last year but ran out of time. He hopes someone will pick up the ball on this important issue. Moosally said that Staff council has a report from UH on childcare issues and that B. Gilbert and C. Kimberly from English are working with Staff Council on the issue and welcome volunteers.
- HB2504 and other higher education legislation: it's important to keep up with whatever comes our way.
- Facilities Planning. There is a task force working with Bradley on this which Lyons has attended. Defining UHD's physical profile influences UHD's overall profile.
- Lecturer and adjunct roles and recognitions.

Having gone through this tentative to-do list, Lyons next asked for additional items.

Evans: Requested two further items for Senate consideration. First she stated our student course opinion instrument is 12 years old, unique to us, and not nationally normed or tailored to specific disciplines or teaching options. State legislature will eventually want us to post our student evaluations online; we need to have current instruments. Evans mentioned a *Chronicle of Higher Education* article she would send to Faculty Senate on evaluations. Second, Evans raised the issue of how students use/gain access to textbooks and how we relate to the bookstore: an example is a course fee at UH that pays for e-textbooks. Moosally referenced a law that requires faculty to tell students they may buy their textbooks outside of the school bookstore.

Pavelich: Add Rank and Tenure standards to the Senate's to-do list.

Moosally: Also add Faculty Handbook (to help new and existing faculty be aware of practices and policies) to the list.

Lyons will send out a finalized list to the Senate including these revisions. He asked if he needed a motion to adjourn and was told no, so he banged his gavel instead.

The next Faculty Senate meeting will be September 7.

Respectfully submitted,

Johanna Schmertz, Ph.D.

Faculty Senate Secretary/Treasurer