

UHD FACULTY SENATE MEETING

February 19, 2008

CALLED TO ORDER: The eleventh meeting for the 2007-2008 academic year of the UHD Faculty Senate was held in A-300, One Main Street, Houston, Texas on February 19, 2008. The meeting convened at 2:30 pm. President Anjoo Sikka presiding, with Vice-President Michelle Moosally, and Secretary-Treasurer Gene Preuss.

Present: Anjoo Sikka (President), Michelle Moosally (Vice President), Gene Preuss (Secretary/Treasurer), Jeffrey Adams (MMBA), David Branham (SOS), John Capeheart (NS), Youn-Sha Chan (CMS), Tony Chiaviello (ENG), Raquel Chiquillo (A&H), Merrilee Cunningham (ENG), Ermelinda DeLaViña (CMS), Joyce Dutcher (UE), Lance Hignite (CJ), Anne Kane (SOS), Kathleen McLellan (ENG), Rich McMahan (FACIS), Pat Mosier (A&H), Sam Penkar (FACIS), Kimmera Pinkerton (UE), Lucille Pointer (MMBA), Nick Rangel (A&H), Ruth Robbins (FACIS), Larry Spears (NS), Jorge Tito-Izquierdo (ET), Jeong-Mi Yoon (CMS), Shengli Yuan (CMS), Zehai Zhou (FACIS)

Absent: Austin Allen (SOS), Byron Christmas (NS), Susan Henney (SOS), Steve Maranville (MMBA), Angela Pedrana (UE), Aimee Roundtree (ENG) and Cindy Stewart (SOS).

Guests: Chair of Academic Policies Liz Walden, Chair of Faculty Affairs Jon Harned, Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost Molly Woods, and Associate Vice President for Policy and Planning David Fairbanks.

President Sikka declared an absence of quorum at 2:35 pm, and called the meeting to order. She changed the order of the Agenda until a quorum was present.

REPORT FROM SENATE OFFICERS: President Sikka reported that progress is being made with assessment plans for each program and each department. The assessment plan put forward by Provost Molly Woods and Associate Vice President for Policy and Planning David Fairbanks incorporates all elements of the resolution passed by the Senate. A revised version of the plan was issued today that addresses many concerns raised by the Senate President and Vice President, and some issues are still unresolved. She also announced that President Castillo stated the university would hire an external assessment consultant, Trudy W. Banta, Professor of Higher Education and Senior Advisor to the Chancellor for Academic Planning and Evaluation Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis.

Sikka said that there is much work on assessment being done. She encouraged Senators to provide feedback and ideas, especially on how the consultant can help us in our efforts.

The Faculty Senate Executive Committee met with Dr. Woods to discuss the importance of keeping the UHD community informed about actions regarding the work on assessment.

Dr. Fairbanks stated that the advertisement for a director of assessment has been posted on the *Chronicle of Higher Education* and other websites. It appears that some applications have already been submitted. He stated that a screening committee would be appointed by the end of the week.

He also stated that a university assessment committee has been appointed.

Vice President Moosally asked if membership of the committee would be made available. Fairbanks said it would.

Sikka stated that feedback from the Senate and faculty suggests that creating a policy that includes a timeline of what coordinators and chairs should do would be in order. She said that the Senate will ask one of the shared governance committees to address a policy, and noted that David Fairbanks had offered to prepare a preliminary draft of the policy. Sikka said there is a question of whether the Academic Affairs Committee or the Curriculum Committee should draft the policy. She feels that the Curriculum Committee should handle the policy since the committee is comprised of department chairs who will be responsible for the implementation of the policy.

At 2:45, Sikka declared a quorum of the Senate.

Sikka then asked what Senators would like to see in a policy on assessment.

Moosally suggested a division of labor, describing who will be responsible for specific actions and a timeline for submissions and reporting.

Senator Spears said the policy should define the components of assessment and require an annual summary.

Senator Chiaviello said an assessment policy should include a qualitative and quantitative dimension.

Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs Distance Education Gail Evans suggested that we look at policies from other universities for guidance. She stated the Midwestern State University's policy is very clear. She also stated that assessment should not be a part of the rank and tenure process.

Moosally also stated that the policy should contain some understanding that assessment is to improve programs.

Chiaviello asked if it would be possible to start with what we have in place now and evaluate the process later.

Sikka said that given there should be at least three learning outcome goals for each program, and linked to that, we need to use data to assess techniques, so we probably cannot do all the assessment in the time period.

Moosally said that Dean of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences Susan Ahern has asked faculty in the English Department to look at writing courses tied to the General Education Assessment.

Chiaviello said if we start here, we will not have time to do a complete assessment, but will be meeting the letter of the requirement without really doing any good.

Senator Cunningham stated that it is good to evaluate skills, soft and hard.

Sikka stated that this is a conversation for individual colleges and departments. We need assistance to help with this issue.

Chiaviello said we are moving toward standardization.

Sikka replied that we want to maintain academic freedom.

Senator Robinson asked if there is funding available for assessment for which faculty could apply.

Senator DeLaViña suggested that data is another method of assessment, and the policy should have a way of regulating data.

Sikka replied that the FSEC would take these recommendations and devise a charge.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Secretary Preuss stated that in response to several comments regarding comments Provost Woods made during the January 15, 2008, about what she stated about the status of online courses during a retreat. Upon review of the recording, Preuss stated that the Provost actually said that online courses were increasing in number while ITV courses were declining. Preuss said he would so correct the minutes of the meeting. The Senate voted to approve the minutes, as amended. Senator Mosier stated that it appeared that page 4 of the minutes of the February 5, 2008, meeting was missing a word in the sentence attributed to Dr. Woods in the middle of the last paragraph, “She didn’t think the recent review team had seen earlier.” Moosally asked if the word “material” would suffice, and Mosier agreed. The Senate approved the minutes, as amended.

REPORT FROM STANDING COMMITTEES: Liz Walden, who chairs the Academic Policy Committee, reported on the committee’s progress and passed out a list of policies completed this year. She noted that PS 03.A.26 “Online Course Evaluations” would be discussed at today’s meeting and anyone who is interested in providing input is welcome. She also announced that PS 03.A.10 “Acceptance of Transfer Credit” is also finished.

Sikka stated that the revised courses policy was never approved by President Castillo is finally signed and posted. All courses each term should be evaluated, and there is a process for the Provost’s office to follow in conducting evaluations. Vice President for Employment Services and Operations Ivonne Montalbano sent out notification that the policy is posted.

Walden stated that providing rationale for all changes is helpful so people can see them.

Robbins asked if the policy is common for all courses and if all courses would be evaluated online. Walden replied that they would not, but it is a common question. The committee tried to

avoid any references that would not be valid for all courses; not specific to any one type of course.

Sikka said that she was part of the committee that drafted the original questions for the course evaluation and that the questions were elaborately developed.

Walden said that online teachers deal with different issues.

Senator Dutcher stated that perhaps students can skip questions that do not apply. Questions should focus more on effectiveness of learning rather than procedural questions.

Walden stated that the evaluation should also be short, and that creating a common instrument is difficult.

Sikka hoped the committee would share drafts with the Senate so that students will have options.

Evans said this is a simple instrument that will be used in all formats. She asked if there was consideration that students would not fill out the evaluation if it is not required.

Sikka stated that the Senate needed to consider other issues on the Agenda, and encouraged anyone with other questions to direct them to Liz Walden.

Sikka stated that at the Texas Council of Faculty Senates meeting in Austin February 16 & 16, 2008, a resolution was drafted supporting UT-Brownsville's senate's resolution protesting plans to build a border wall being through the center of their campus. When the final draft of the resolution is completed, Sikka will bring it to the Senate.

She also stated that there is a resolution to include a non-voting faculty to the state university systems' boards of regents in order to include faculty opinions. She reported that the Council approved preliminary language on the resolution.

Spears asked if we should assume the resolution by the UT-Brownsville senate was negative. Sikka said that it was.

Moosally announced that Sikka was named president-elect of the Texas Council of Faculty Senates at the meeting.

Bill Waller, QEP Director, announced the 2008 QEP Formative Summit Friday, March 7, 9:45 AM – 2:00 PM, in the A300 Special Events Area. Lunch will be provided.

Senator Branham introduced a resolution creating an ad hoc Senate committee to report to the Senate each department's assessment status. The resolution was suggested at the February 5, 2008, meeting for presentation at the February 19, 2008, meeting.

Senator Kane asked if the resolution would establish the committee this year. Branham said yes.

Senator Pointer asked how often the committee would meet. Branham replied that it would only be responsible for reporting to the Senate so as it only needed to report to the Senate, it did not need to meet outside the Senate.

Cunningham asked if the ad hoc nature of the committee wouldn't interfere with the long term assessment committee.

Senator Capeheart stated that we're already busy with assessment and this committee would be a lot of work.

Moosally stated that the committee is not assessment, but a reporting tool to update the faculty on the progress. Branham stated that only one person needed to report on the status of assessment from each department and reiterated that there is no need for such a committee to meet separately.

Chiaviello said the resolution has no charge of enforcement.

Sikka stated we want more transparency of decision-making and information, so we need to be aware of what departments are doing. We do not want our assessment to become insular and having everyone doing their own thing.

Kane suggested we have program directors or department chairs report on progress.

Moosally said that the resolution would provide one more way of being involved, and there is no need for authority or control.

Pointer said it seemed that we do not trust the people responsible for doing assessment. We've managed to get by accreditation before, so why not assume we'll do so again, she asked.

Robbins said that perhaps this information is already collected.

Sikka suggested the Senate table the resolution so that senators could think about the issue. A motion was made and passed.

REVISED GRIEVANCE AND NEW OMBUDS POLICY: Jon Harned was present to discuss the revised policy.

Mosier stated that she didn't think members of the University Rank and Tenure Committee should be on the Grievance Committee.

Capeheart stated that the respondents should have a right to express reasons for their actions. Individual members of a group should have the right to address the hearing as individuals.

Moosally stated that section 4.6.3.1 implies time as needed, and that people can claim as much time as they need, but that there is need for clarification of the role of members of a group being grieved against.

Pointer stated that witnesses cut into the 45 minutes allotted in 4.6.3.5. Moosally stated that the grievant has decided upon witnesses with regard to their 45 minutes. Anyone can question witnesses, so does this count as part of the 45 minutes, she wondered.

Moiser stated that members of the grievance committee should have term limits to allow more people an opportunity to serve and so you don't have people who have been on the committee for a long period. Harned stated that there is a two-year term. Sikka said that they might think about consecutive terms. Robbins said that committee members might have staggered terms so that the turnover wouldn't affect all members at the same time. Dutcher stated that she is in favor of a rule that allows a minimum of one year between terms.

Robbins asked if the Grievance Committee is a pool from which the Hearing Committee is formed. Harned replied one person from the Grievance Committee and one alternative is selected.

Capeheart suggested that the policy specify staggered terms.

Moosally asked about the distribution of an alternative and regular member. Maybe the statement should just specify two members so there would not be overwhelmed for elections each time. Harned stated that election and appointment is stated in 4.5.2.

DeLaViña stated that the Grievance Committee chair already has many duties and trying to reelect five members is not practical.

Dutcher stated that it adds extra steps.

Capeheart asked if people had the right to reject an appointment. Harned said that that is a possibility. Pointer asked if it is possible that people won't serve. Moosally said that we are articulating an issue that we keep bringing up. She said the policy format is easy to read.

Mosier asked about section 4.7.1 regarding the VPAA. Harned stated that 4.7.3 added an exception when the VPAA is a participant in the grievance.

Moosally stated that 4.8.1 says documents should be stored electronically, but added that most documents aren't in electronic format. Evans said that this would need more consideration.

Robbins asked if 4.7.5 needed to include a timetable for the president to reply. Sikka stated that we must have some guidelines in place because it's not fair to have a grievant wait.

Mosier stated that although there is no limitation on Rank and Tenure members, no term limits, and the selection process needs some work, that overall she thought it was a good policy.

Chiaviello asked if the policy was a suggested action or would people be bound by it. Would the president adhere to the policy, he asked.

Robbins said that in section 3.1.2 discusses steps that must be completed before filing a grievance. She asked if the previous policy explained how long a person had to file a grievance.

Evans stated that all respondents should be in the hearing as it is being conducted.

DeLaViña stated that section 4.3.2 should state that no one with anything to do with the Grievance should not be on the committee.

Mosier stated that the Senate should have another reading of the policy.

Dutcher stated that the committee has done an outstanding job and that the comments provided should make it an even stronger document.

ANNOUNCEMENTS: No announcements.

ADJOURNMENT: A motion for adjournment was made and seconded. The motion carried, and the meeting adjourned at 4:15 pm.

Date of Approval

**Secretary/Treasurer
UHD Faculty Senate**