

UHD Faculty Council – Minutes

Date: October 7th, 2025

Location: A300 - Buffalo Bayou Room

Attendance: See final page for information on attendance at this meeting.

- **General Welcome and Introductions:**

The meeting was called to order by the presiding officer, Dr. Paul Mandell at 2:30 pm . This was followed by a welcome message from Dr. Mandell and by introductions from all members of the Faculty Council.

- **Statement of Change from Faculty Senate to Faculty Council:**

After welcoming all Faculty Council members, Provost Deborah Bordelon provided a brief overview of the events that led to the transition from Faculty Senate to Faculty Council. She stated that because SB37 bill passed into law over the summer, the UH System was prompted to establish Faculty Councils across campuses. She also stated that the Board of Regents requested Faculty Council bylaws for review at their August 21st meeting, and during this meeting bylaws were approved, faculty senates were dissolved, and previous elections were nullified. She mentioned that not all systems moved forward immediately. She also mentioned that shared governance bodies on campus include the Faculty Council, the Staff Council, Student Government Association, and the Graduate and Professional Student Association. She also reported that the Faculty Council bylaws introduced new shared governance committees such as the Faculty Affairs Committee, the University Curriculum Committee and the Research & Innovation Council and that their membership and responsibilities are outlined in the bylaws.

- **Election Results:**

Dr. Mandell presented the election results for the Research & Innovation Council. He reported that Dr. Cho and Dr. Natasha Perez received the highest number of votes for the two 1-year term position and will therefore serve on this council. For the two 2-year term positions, he noted that Dr. Katrina Rufino secured the most votes, while in second place, Dr. Vasilis Zafiris and Dr. Natasha Poggio received an equal number of votes, resulting in a tie for the second 2-year term position.

To resolve the tie, Dr. Luke Fedell introduced a motion, seconded by Dr. Nasser Hussein, to conduct a vote during the meeting to select either Dr. Zafiris or Dr. Poggio for the remaining 2-year term seat. A vote was held by a show of hands among Faculty Council members. The final count showed 12 votes in favor of Dr. Zafiris and 9 in favor of Dr. Poggio. As a result, Dr. Zafiris was elected to the second 2-year term position on the Research & Innovation Council.

- **Shared Governance Committees:**

Dr. Mandell presented a summary of the nominations from the Faculty Council to the Shared Governance Councils received via a Qualtrics survey.

In reference to the Faculty Council Executive Committee, Dr. Mandell informed the Faculty Council that four faculty members had submitted nominations, but only two positions were available. Dr. Sullivan moved that all four candidates be given the opportunity to introduce themselves to the Council; the motion was seconded by Dr. Shoemaker and subsequently approved. Following the introductions, an election was conducted using paper ballots to select the two individuals who would serve on the committee. The ballots were counted by the Secretary, Dr. Benavides, and the results are summarized below:

Candidate	Votes
Luke Fedell	24
Judith Harris	13
Nasser Hussein	8
Kyle Moore	11

Based on the voting results, Mr. Luke Fedell and Dr. Judith Harris will be joining the Faculty Council Executive Committee.

- **2025 Faculty Handbook Taskforce**

Dr. Judith Quander spoke about the need to revise and update the Faculty Handbook to accurately reflect on recent changes. A motion was put forward by Dr. Nasser Hussein to discuss the Faculty Handbook, which was seconded by Dr. Daniel Perez. After some discussion, a taskforce was formed consisting of 4 volunteers:

Dr. Issac Elking
Dr. Ryan Pepper
Ms. Casey Akins
Dr. Maria Benavides

- **Faculty Ombuds Position:**

Dr. Judith Quander informed the Faculty Council that the current Ombudsperson will be retiring at the end of the spring semester, necessitating the initiation of a search process to identify a successor. She provided an overview of the role and responsibilities associated with the Ombudsperson position.

Four members of the Faculty Council volunteered to serve on the Ombuds Search Committee:

Dr. John Roundtree
Dr. Chris Zhang
Dr. Daniel Perez
Dr. Ashleigh Petts

- **Shared Governance Council Reports**

Dr. David Ryden introduced himself and shared a flow diagram outlining the restructuring of the University Curriculum Committee.

Dr. Judith Quander spoke about the Faculty Affairs Council and the Research & Innovation Council and their role and their operational function. She stated that FAC will oversee the Faculty Development Awards while the Research & Innovation Council will oversee ORCA and TRIP awards.

Provost Bordelon stated that the Policy Advisory Council was recently created to provide oversight and feedback on institutional policies and that it will meet on the third Friday in the morning. She stated that PAC will ensure that policies are reviewed, updated and properly posted. She also stated that the Academic Affairs Council will discuss academic updates, policy issues, budget, and facilitate cross-departmental communication.

- **Other:**

Two Faculty Council members submitted self-nominations for positions in Shared Governance Councils:

Kyle Moore from CHSS to the University Curriculum Committee

Chris Zhang from College of Business to the Policy Advisory Committee.

- **Public Comment/Open Forum**

Dr. Mike Duncan, president of the UHD Chapter of the AAUP spoke about this organization's background. He stated that the AAUP is a national, faculty-led organization that supports the rights of faculty to teach, conduct research and speak freely. It offers legal advice and representation, and it is actively involved in legislative lobbying. He mentioned that it partners with the American Federation of Teachers and that its membership has doubled this year.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:45 pm.

Attendance Information:

Faculty Council Member Name	Present	Absent
Mandell, Paul	X	
Shroff, Arpita	X	
Benavides, MariA	X	
Bowden, Gabriela	X	
Akins, Casey	X	
Albrecht, Sarah	X	
Ali, Syed	X	
Alvarez, Jose	X	
Colon Rivera, Edgardo		X
Dowie, Cheryl	X	
Elking, Issac	X	
Fedell, Luke	X	
Harris, Judith	X	
Henson, Billy	X	
Hoang, Toni	X	
Hu, Jingxin	X	
Hussein, Abdelnasser	X	
Johnson, Kenya	X	
Moore, Kyle	X	
Nakamura, Mitsue	X	
Pakhrin, Subash	X	
Pepper, Ryan	X	
Perez, Daniel	X	
Petts, Ashleigh	X	
Roundtree, John	X	
Rufino, Katrina	X	
Shoemaker, Katherine	X	
Sullivan, Nell	X	
Thomas, Jarvis	X	
Yilmaz, Emre	X	
Zhang, Chris	X	

Other Attendees
Deborah Bordelon
Judith Quander
David Ryden
Mayte Alvarez
Christian Purdy
Greg Dement
William Nowak
Azar Rejaie
Chuck Jackson
Ray Aria
Carole Cleric
Divya Bhati