

**UHD Faculty Senate Meeting**  
**March 22, 2011**  
**Minutes**

**Present:** P. Lyons (President), A. Allen (President-Elect), J. Schmertz (Secretary)  
C. Bedard, R. Beebe, R. Chiquillo, D. De la Pena, G. Evans, S. Farris, J. Jackson, P. Kintzele, N. LaRose, J. Johnson, M. Moosally, W. Morgan, O. Paskelian, A. Pavelich, R. Pepper, N. Rangel, F. Williams, K. Wright, Z. Zhou

**Absent:** K. Jegdic, V. Zafiris

**Reports from Faculty Senate President Phil Lyons**

Lyons reviewed the agenda. After reports from Vida Robertson (Academic Policies committee), Ed Cueva (Freshman Convocation and Common Reading Committee) and Pat Williams (SACS Steering Committee), the new business of the meeting would be getting input from senators on what Senate should be doing as a body.

He also previewed events for the remainder of the semester: April 5 is set aside for the Faculty Awards ceremony, which is scheduled for A300 at the normal meeting time for Faculty Senate (Lyons will send an invitation out shortly to the university community). Provost Chapman will report on April 19, and on May 3, Vice-Chancellor John Antel will hold a Q & A session.

The last reminder for NSSE (National Survey of Student Engagement) goes out today (March 22). Some students have begun but not completed the survey; encourage your students to do both.

UHD's Open House is scheduled for Saturday, April 2, 8:00-12:00.

Lyons made a pitch for having a Faculty Senate team in the Chili cook-off; he is willing to spearhead it. It is scheduled from noon to 5:00 April 9 on the South Deck. Contact him if you are interested.

Faculty will soon be invited to participate in Fall's freshman orientation. Faculty participation makes the orientation much more useful to students than lack thereof. Details about how requests for participation would be made were not clear.

A celebration for the new MBA is planned for Wednesday, May 4. Lyons asked if the entire university community was invited; Evans, who is on the committee, said she thought so but would check.

The Strategic Planning Committee, chaired by Michael Dressman, will soon be asking for faculty input on the 6 "pillars," or overarching goals of UHD, via the leadership portal on Blackboard Vista.

The President's spring town hall meeting will be on March 30 from 1:00-2:30 in the Robertson Auditorium and will involve President Flores, Provost Chapman, Dr. Dressman, the vice presidents, deans, and various staff members. The topic will be budget cuts. Along these lines,

the Budget Reductions Efficiencies Task force will be asking for input. Moosally noted that the president had notified the committee that after their report is delivered, the Budget Reductions/Efficiencies Task Force would be dissolved. She believes that the committee's report will be made publicly available but the timeline and mechanism are not yet clear.

The Faculty Senate committee on online education will meet for its first meeting on March 31. Lyons will give them their charges from Faculty Senate and have them elect a chair.

### **Questions from the floor: on the faculty climate survey and the parking situation**

Beebe said his department had requested that questions evaluating the effectiveness of the associate and assistant vice presidents be placed on the faculty climate survey, as has been the case in previous surveys. Moosally pointed out that if the questions were put back in, faculty would still be able to choose the "no opinion" option. Beebe made a motion to include the Associate and Assistant VPs in the survey, which was seconded by Pavelich. The motion carried 17-1, with one abstention.

Gomez-Rivas said that recent information about parking changes had created confusion among faculty members as to whether/when the faculty/staff parking lot would be torn down. David Bradley noted that the more immediate plan was to close off the ground floor of the lot and reserve it for visitors while two levels were being added to the visitor parking area. The project will begin mid-April and continue through November. He promised faculty would get an update this week.

Allen passed out ballots for an open slot on the Faculty Affairs committee. Shishen Xie (CMS) was announced as the winner in an email sent to faculty by Allen after the meeting.

### **Report from Vida Robertson, Chair of Academic Policies Committee**

The committee has completed its work on the grading system policy. It recommends a grade of XF for academic dishonesty and a grade for audited classes. The academic honesty policy will be revised to reflect the XF grade proposal also. A university-wide grade appeal application form has been developed.

The International Baccalaureate credit by examination policy is being examined. An emergency policy had been instituted as a "band-aid" to ensure compliance with state regulations, but as departments vary in what they will accept in lieu of US course credits, the policy will require input from the departments before final language can be developed. The committee will distribute policies from universities in TX to departments.

Lyons asked when the policies would come before Faculty Senate. Robertson replied very soon: the grading system policy, the academic appeals policy and a graduation/commencement policy that standardizes how honors degrees are awarded will be before Senate by the end of the month.

Evans asked if the graduation/commencement policy made distinctions between undergraduate and graduate degrees. Robertson said this distinction was addressed in the grading system policy but not the graduation/commencement policy.

Moosally asked if the admissions standards policy had reached the Academic Policies Committee. Robertson said he expected the academic standards subcommittee to make something available for review in April.

Lyons suggested the faculty might want to provide more input into the academic honesty policy before the policy came up for the review of Faculty Senate. Robertson said the committee had not determined if the apparatuses mentioned in the existing policy actually exist and are being used systematically. The policy does not make clear if/how we track violations. He thought records might be kept by the deans. Moosally and Lyons said they were kept by Student Affairs, and that Deans' offices could not track offenses because there would be no way of identifying students who had violated the principles of academic honesty in more than one college. Robertson said he would look into the academic honesty policy more fully.

Kintzele asked if the committee had considered a plus/minus system for the grading systems policy. Robertson said they had not.

Evans said that based on the amount and degree of questioning that she had observed in the present meeting, she believed the way the academic honesty policy had been handled revealed a problem with the current relationship between faculty and the shared governance committees: there should have been full university-wide discussions within departments and colleges before policies were finalized for AAC.

Schmertz said that she wondered how/where the charges to fix these policies originated. Had Faculty Senate agreed that they were broken? Moosally said the grading policy charge had been brought by Faculty Senate: faculty had observed that the grades they had given students were sometimes overturned in appeals processes without their knowledge. Robertson said some of the charges pre-dated his role on the committee. The grading systems policy needed to be changed because it conflicted with other existing policies. The Senate's role in the process as he understood it is to offer input before the policies emerging from his committee reach the Academic Affairs committee.

Moosally said that shared governance committees needed to remember they work as representatives of the faculty body and recognize the importance of "cycling back" information on their charges and activities to their constituencies.

Senator Williams asked if anyone had studied the economic implications of enforcing the academic honesty policy, how graduation and retention rates would be affected. Robertson said he did not believe this had been studied. He said the XF grade would, as is the case with the current dishonesty policy, pre-empt a student's withdrawing from a course to avoid consequences. Faculty would be able to register the grade at any point in the semester. Evans said she was concerned about the future of students who, older and wiser, might be followed by this grade long after it had relevance. Robertson said this had been considered, and there was an appeals process for altering the grade. Provost Chapman added that any policy would have to go

through legal affairs and faculty would have to fully document the offense in a series of steps approved by that body.

**Report from Associate VP Pat Williams (Chair of SACS Steering Committee)**

Williams reviewed the objectives of the committee. SACS is our major regional accrediting body, and we must demonstrate compliance with all of its standards or be denied their accreditation, which would have serious financial consequences to our students and to the university. SACS conducts audits every 10 years, but accountability pressures have added a shorter five-year interim report. That report is due a year from now. Because of the increased accountability demanded of universities, the SACS Steering Committee is now a permanent committee.

The SACS Steering Committee includes the following members, 10 of whom are faculty: Jo Bailey (Assoc. Prof. of Sociology and Social Work), Linda Becerra (Prof. of Mathematical Sciences), Ron Beebe (Asst. Prof. of Education), Lucy Bowen (MIS Mgr, Academic Affairs), Lea Campbell (Director of Academic Assessment), Lee Uznick (Associate Professor of Business Law), Gail Evans (Prof. of Business Law), Sara Farris (Assoc. Prof. of English), Melinda Kanner (Interim Asst. VP for Academic Affairs), Phil Lyons (Assoc. Prof. of Biology and Faculty Senate President), Michelle Moosally (Assoc. Prof. of English). These committee members are working in pairs to gather and write up the information needed to document compliance with the 15 standards required for the interim report. Assessment is an important part of this effort. A list of who is responsible for what has been attached to the minutes.

The plan is for the committee to complete the report by December for submission in March 2012.

Lyons asked if the minutes of the steering committee were publicly available. Williams said they were available to the members of the committee and saw no reason why they could not be made public.

**Report from Ed Cueva (First Year Common Reading Convocation Committee)**

Cueva was reporting in place of committee chair Tammis Thomas. The committee has 8 faculty members and 3 students. They are meeting on March 29 to make a final decision on the book. Books under consideration include the following:

The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time

<http://www.nytimes.com/2003/06/15/books/the-remains-of-the-dog.html?pagewanted=all&src=pm>

The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks

<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/02/07/books/review/Margonelli-t.html>

Mountains Beyond Mountains: Healing the World: The Quest of Dr. Paul Farmer

<http://www.nytimes.com/2003/09/14/books/a-season-in-hell.html?pagewanted=all&src=pm>

After the committee has decided on the book, they will work on the freshman convocation, adding the participation of the library and the offices of Student Life and the Registrar. The convocation will be held the Saturday before the first day of classes. 600 students participated in the convocation last semester.

Johnson asked if there has been any effort to track the success of students who had participated in the common reading convocation. Cueva said he did not think so; Tammis Thomas would be the person to ask. There have been several followup activities, such as the essay contest.

Moosally asked how faculty would be solicited to participate in the convocation. Last year, the call was passed through the deans. Johnson noted that his participation last year was due more to “who he knew.” Cueva said this time Thomas will send the call to all faculty for discussion leaders. Small group discussions of the common reading work better for students, so more faculty participation is needed. Schmertz noted that Malcolm Gladwell’s *Outliers* had worked in her freshman classes because it spoke to a wide range of academic disciplines and explicitly drew from sources. Cueva said the three final choices for the common reading allow for interdisciplinary approaches and all have been used successfully in the common reading programs of other universities.

### **Discussion on Faculty Senate’s Roles and Responsibilities within the University**

Lyons sent an email to senators asking them to ponder areas in which Faculty Senate might take some leadership in working with the faculty body to move the university forward. He read the excerpt of the Shared Governance policy which states the role of Faculty Senate and encouraged senators to read the whole policy : <http://www.uhd.edu/about/hr/PS01A03.pdf> . Some key areas where faculty play a role in the university include academic affairs (working with the provost to ensure that academic programs are effectively delivered) and faculty affairs (making sure faculty are properly protected and fairly treated, e.g. compensation). He asked that the remainder of the meeting be spent opening up this conversation. He suggested three areas where we could begin: 1.) identify academic priorities, especially with regard to budget cuts 2.) student success and 3.) faculty affairs.

Pavelich said that in order for Senate to work as a representative body, Senate needs to change how it is run. Our work is meaningless unless the actions we take represent the wishes of the faculty body. We cannot call for actions based on our colleagues’ feedback unless we are aware what we are to seek department input on a few weeks prior to Senate discussion. And once we have received feedback from our departments, we will be unable to communicate it to the Senate body as long as it remains the case that the majority of the 90-minute Senate meetings is spent listening to administrator reports. Administrator reports should be disseminated prior to meetings. Lyons apologized for having sent the request for senate feedback the night before but reiterated his point that he hoped the remainder of the meeting could at least begin the discussion of Senate priorities.

Moosally said that large groups like Faculty Senate do face challenges in getting work done; other Faculty Senates conduct the majority of their work via subcommittees. The subcommittees research issues and write resolutions or white papers and present them at meetings for Senate response. A subcommittee system might more effectively manage the time spent in between meetings.

Pavelich noted that his report last semester on Gen Ed, and today's report on the XF grade, would have been handled better if conveyed first as written documents and placed on the Senate agenda for a date two weeks after their initial dissemination. This would allow sufficient time for faculty to provide their input to senators. When senators are asked to provide input immediately after seeing a document for the first time, they will be more reactive than representative. To be representative as opposed to merely reactive will require that Senate agendas be set well in advance.

Evans said she felt Faculty Senate needed to redefine its relationship to committees, particularly those which addressed areas specifically in the purview of faculty. Before 1989, Senate had to formally approve a committee's work before a policy was sent forward. Chiquillo agreed that some restructuring needed to occur but she noted that when she requests input, she gets it from junior faculty and rarely senior faculty.

Rangel said that Moosally's institution of written President's reports sent before the meetings made meetings and communication more effective. He agreed with Pavelich that administrator reports took up too much Senate time and said that there needs to be a greater burden placed on administrators to disseminate information in advance. What happens now is that speakers wait to report, counting on their reports to be recorded in the Faculty Senate minutes, and speak on the fly in ways that discourage any in-depth discussion.

Farris said that while this may be lore, not fact, the phrase that she has heard attached to Faculty Senate is that it is "advisory only." This could explain why senior faculty become disengaged. Lyons said that the shared governance policy currently defines Faculty Senate as advisory, which may be "problematic."

Evans said that the change to make Faculty Senate advisory happened when the shared governance policy was revised in 1988-89. She and Moosally have reviewed shared governance policies from other universities. We are different, and, in her view, worse. The thinking undermining shared governance at the time was that faculty were overburdened with having to review and re-review policies. Another reason Faculty Senate's role got weaker may be that President Castillo was not, as other university leaders have been, a member of the faculty.

Allen asked Evans if she were recommending that the shared governance policy be revised. Evans said that we should compare our governance system to those at other universities. If we are examining the range of issues surrounding shared governance, the policy is within that range.

Lyons synthesized the discussion as he understood it: Senate has recently been in somewhat of a "pushback" role, but with new administrative leadership, it is up to Faculty Senate to work with

administration to define what the relationship between Senate and Administration will be. Issues for further discussion are senate workshops, shared governance, and the use of subcommittees to balance out the 90-minute structure of meetings. He called for the meeting to adjourn.

Moosally asked to make one more comment: While she believes it is important to strengthen shared governance at UHD, it is also important not to underestimate the power and success of Senate's advisory role.

Respectfully submitted,

Johanna Schmertz, Ph.D.

Associate Professor of English

Faculty Senate Secretary