

UHD Faculty Senate Meeting

September 21, 2010

Minutes

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

C. Bedard, R. Beebe, R. Chiquillo, A. Eliassen, G. Evans, J. Jackson, K. Jegdic, P. Kintzele, N. LaRose, M. Moosally, O. Paskelian, R. Pepper, N. Rangel, L. Spears, N. Sullivan, F. Williams, K. Wright, V. Zafiridis, Z. Zhou

Absent: D. De La Pena, A. Gomez-Rivas, W. Morgan, A. Pavelich

Officers' Reports

There will be Board of Regents meetings held at UHD on November 16 and 17th. Lyons stated that one of these would discuss the name change. (We subsequently learned this was erroneous; these are both regularly scheduled meetings as opposed to specially-called ones.) A Nov 16 BOR subcommittee meeting originally scheduled at UH will be held in A300, displacing Faculty Senate. We will find alternative lodging.

FSEC met with Deans' Council. A topic being discussed is stipends related **to online courses and whether they should be continued?** No decisions have been made right now, but be aware it is being discussed in this climate of budget cuts. Also, Interim Provost Dressman would like departments to review course releases and what they are used for. Lyons believes departments should ultimately make the decision as to whether releases are well allocated. He said periodic reviews need to be done, and "budget time is as good as any time" for such reviews.

HB2504 states that universities are supposed to "develop a plan" for posting student evaluations, but the legislature has not yet required that we implement any plans. He then referred this question to Dr. Moosally, who is undertaking university compliance with this bill. Moosally says it is difficult to come up with specifics in the absence of specific legislation. Should legislation requiring posting come about, she will flesh out our plan.

BHAG (Big Hairy Audacious Goal): It is not clear to some what a "high impact experience" is. Presentations to departments have begun on how the BHAG developed through leadership and steering committees. Senate will become more involved in facilitating discussions and making sure they proceed according to shared governance principles. Once departments have had their discussions, we can proceed to Senate discussions.

Gail Evans announced the first generation students' Fall Welcome set for Mon Sept 27, noon to 2 PM in A300. She encourages first generation faculty to come and to encourage colleagues and students to come as well. These are students who don't have a strong support network at home because their parents are poorly informed about the university experience and therefore appreciate faculty contact. It was emphasized that there will be free food. No hints were given about the menu.

Schmertz noted changes that had already been made to the current draft of the minutes and a few subsequent corrections. She asked for a motion to approve the minutes. Evans so moved, Sullivan seconded, motion passed.

Vice President Allen: Grievance Committee elections are taking place; look for those ballots in your boxes. We were lucky to get one nominee in most cases. Ballots were distributed in the meeting for Faculty Development Leave and Faculty Awards positions.

Interlude (during the hustle and bustle of distributing votes)

Nell Sullivan to PR Director Sue Davis: Could a corrected version of the name change straw poll result be sent out? An uncorrected version that did not include write-ins for suggested names was sent to DT_All users. The Leadership group subsequently got a corrected result that did include those write-ins, but this version did not “filter down” to the rest of us. Davis said the report was posted in Skyline. Nell requested it be posted on DT All Users, as was done the first time. Davis reiterated that the report was posted in Skyline. Sullivan said if corrections were made to an original document, corrections should be sent out through the same channel. Davis said her intention was to distribute all messages the same way and that she would double-check to make sure she had done so.

Lyons announced that because there is only one nominee for Ombuds, we will extend the deadline, as we did last time. He will send out the announcement of this extension; he meant to send it out today but ran out of time. He encouraged faculty apply, or to recommend others.

Report from Interim Provost Mike Dressman

Noteworthy Awards: Interim Provost Dressman just got final written notification of a \$450,000 Nuclear Regulatory Commission grant award for Scholars Academy. Principal investigator was Mary Jo Parker, director of UHD’s Scholars Academy, with other faculty and staff in the Scholars Academy. Scholars Academy will receive \$90,000/year for a five year award aimed at gearing students for graduate research in the nuclear industry. Dressman mentioned a second noteworthy student achievement and passed the torch to Natural Sciences Chair Uzman. Uzman says an award was given to Jennifer Abrams, a graduate of the Scholars Academy now in her 3rd year at UT-Health Sciences. Abrams won a Ford research fellowship with the National Science Foundation for \$33,000/year. (This turns out to be erroneous: Skyline reports the award as coming from the American Society for Microbiology.)

General Education: Dressman met with the faculty side of the Gen Ed committee and told them what he hoped their charge would be, as a committee that reports to provost. **He asked them to come up with a description of what the future UHD grad should do (skills) and characteristics of that person’s overall achievement.** The reason is “assessment becomes so much easier if you can at least target that which you hope to have achieved” at the end of the process. The Gen Ed Committee should report a list of 4-5 descriptive sentences to the

University Curriculum Committee, who then looks at them, and then follows this up through a shared governance process. Dressman sees this project as one of essentially re-editing that page in catalog where the Gen Ed program is described. We will keep our state-mandated core, but focus it in the direction of the targeted outcomes. The goal is to make explicit in measurable fashion the bullets that now grace our catalog, which currently have more to do with inputs than outputs.

Gail Evans: Will the curriculum committee discuss its decisions in an open process?

Dressman: You will have to take that up with the Curriculum Committee, as the provost can't dictate how shared governance committees engage the process of shared governance. He emphasizes that the process must be completed within the academic year.

Jeff Jackson: Is one of the goals to change courses to fill state-mandated areas?

Dressman: No, we've already got those courses, but we can make other courses meet gen ed outcomes. The focus is not on changing the 42 hour curriculum but on the statement of outcomes for the programs themselves. Right now we say, "We are going to imbue you with these experiences and we hope they take," but the real world wants us to prove we have achieved it. We need to say what we are hoping for before we can say if we've achieved it, or before we can make the appropriate adjustments that our accrediting bodies and the legislature and the rest of the world expect us to make.

Michelle Moosally: I'm on SACS prep committee for the 5 year interim report, which is gathering material involving status of gen ed assessment. Can Dressman explain how will the Gen Ed committee develop his vision of the future UHD grad, while simultaneously completing its assessment project?

Dressman: It won't. Either another committee will be developed for the purpose of rethinking Gen Ed's goals, or the same committee will do assessment in fall and the other job in spring. Moosally put herself on record as saying she has concerns about the workload involved.

Schmertz: Will there be overlap (in personnel) between the Gen Ed assessment committee and the committee rethinking Gen Ed assessment?

Dressman: I haven't gotten so far as to decide it will be two committees. I need to "unpack the bullets" (crediting Pat Williams with this turn of phrase) myself before turning them over to others. We can't simply point to our current course offerings and check off objectives and say we have met them. We need the "heritage program" and the new program operating simultaneously, but split in their goals.

Lyons: If someone, e.g. Pat Williams, said we need help on the work Gen Ed committee would normally do, would the provost take this into consideration?

We told SACS we would work with our (currently 5) poorly structured outcomes; we have not done so. A back and forth discussion ensued on what the relationship between the provost and this as yet vaguely conceived committee would be vis-à-vis revising and making recommendations on these five outcomes. Ultimately Moosally rephrased Lyons' question: **will there be release time or extended deadlines to enable the assessment work of Gen Ed to get done? It's a huge undertaking. Lyons reinforced that this is an issue that would need to be addressed by the provost in some fashion.**

Senators Evans and Sullivan discussed difficulties with doing program assessment due to questions about Gen Ed outcomes and their place in departmental outcomes. Sullivan would like Dressman to place a priority on revising the Gen Ed outcomes; the one that requires us to measure "sensitivity to moral and ethical issues" is particularly problematic. Dressman used this question as an opportunity to show how the old (from 1982-83) statements were not working in the current assessment climate. Our curriculum is "currently silent" on how our courses deliver specific skills. We cannot check off courses taken and say this means students have met Gen Ed outcomes. We may have to translate the old goals into modern terms as a stopgap measure on the way to revising them. He has told Lea Campbell, Pat Williams and FSEC that we may have to change things we may have done as recently as last week (presumably the checkbox approach). Dressman suggests that bringing two models of Gen Ed together (our "heritage model" and a new one) may get us in trouble with SACS, but might at least be more honest.

Evans: when it filters down to little people in degree programs, we have to figure out how to do the job. Bottom line, according to Evans, is her program is moving forward, adding and assessing Gen Ed goals related to technology and ethics.

Allen: I am on the Gen Ed committee, and, while we did discuss the fact that it would be nice to get some data from the programs, we never requested departments send up new data. Assessment Director Lea Campbell may have made this appear to be the case.

Dressman defended Campbell in her absence: Imagine you were hired to be responsible for making sure programs whose outcomes did not line up with their courses were properly assessed.

Lyons: Suggested Dressman take this "obviously contentious" issue up with FSEC.

Dressman brought up his next announcement. **When new degree programs are developed, it is becoming UH policy that the System Provost's Council get a short report with information demonstrating need, costs, projected enrollment.** After this step is taken, approval is granted to the university to bring a plan to the Board of Regents.

Moosally: Do provosts vote or are decisions just referred to the head provost?

Dressman: Provosts vote. This measure prevents programs from coming to Central unheralded and taking them by surprise. (It was noted that both Geoscience and MBA had been caught in this trap.)

Lyons: Dr. Bedard sent a letter to be forwarded to the Senate. He apologizes for not having had a chance to do so prior to this meeting. (The email was distributed after the meeting.)

Report from David Bradley, Vice President of Finance and Administration

Bradley: LAR meeting in Austin went as planned. The \$18 billion state budget shortfall that Bradley predicted would go up after November elections is already projected at \$21 billion by newspapers. Yesterday was the 20th day. Our headcount will be up 1.2 percent, from 12,742 to 12,900. Unfortunately, **this boost is countered by a reduction in credit hours per student, so overall revenue has not gone up.** He recommends reserves and lapsed salaries in hiring to cover this gap. The real problem comes when we develop the budget for 2012. **We need to grow more than 3% if we are to fund same budget as 2011.**

Construction: End of the month is the projected completion date for stair connection between 1 Main and the 7th floor of the Academic Building. Metro will put railings on the sidewalk from One Main to bottom of bridge on the Commerce side. This will happen by the end of month, Metro says, but as we see, nothing has been started. Mid-October is still the projected start date for tearing up Main St.

Hike and Bike Trail. Preconstruction meeting with TexDOT is this week. We want them to start on the east end to enable a pedestrian path to San Jacinto and Willow Street. Library and roof projects are ongoing. The contract for roof has been sent over to System.

Aramark: In answer to a question posed by Lyons, Bradley stated that **Aramark's contract has been renewed for the second five years of a ten-year period.** UH tore up their contract and signed a new one with Aramark allowing for expansions and renovations; however, we were satisfied with our original contract, which includes \$100,000 of upgrades in 6th year. We are looking to put coffee house on 5th floor of library. Our experience with Aramark has been "reasonably good" and we have few other options available.

On Faculty Senate ranking of agenda items for this year

Lyons: Has compiled Faculty Senate's rankings on their priorities. He explained how he assigned weights to the rankings. Top ranked priorities are, in order: Admissions, online ed, deans' role and evaluation, PR and advertising, SACS 5 year review, and the Office of Sponsored Programs. Most of these items are already in the pipeline for us to address. Feel free to add agenda items; this list is not exclusive.

On Faculty Senate/Staff Council telephone retention effort

Lyons spoke on his request for Senators to engage in a telephone retention effort. The objective is to contact this year's entering freshman who did not attend convocation and/or did not submit their *Outliers* essay, as well returning students from 2009. He showed us a handout of the 2009 returning students broken down by GPA, hours earned, and ethnicity, pointing to the extremely large number of students (about 45%) returning with averages below 2.0. Admissions standards (to be discussed later) tie in with retention. If we can encourage some to stay, the effort will be worth it. Members of the Freshman Convocation/Orientation committee have made phone contact with their students; Faculty Senate is simply working with Staff Council to complement efforts already made. We will begin with the list of students who returned with GPA's below 2.0. When you get your spreadsheet containing students' contact info, call twice. If no contact or response, go the email route. There will be a column on the spreadsheet where you should record the outcome of these calls. Return your spreadsheets to Lyons and he will re-attach them to the data containing students' grade information. Moosally is working on a script.

Bedard: **Can the info provided in the handouts today (on the Fall 2009 cohort) be sent to us electronically?** Lyons: Yes, as will the spreadsheets with student contact info.

Wright: When do calls need to be made? Lyons: This week.

Sullivan: Wouldn't it be better to target the 2009 returning students with GPA's above 2.0 to make sure they don't transfer? Lyons: Yes, I simply presented the data in the order it was given me by Apodaca, and the order in which students are called can be switched. (All groups are included in this phonathon, however.)

Evans: Students on probation are blocked from taking a full-semester course load. Does the spreadsheet we are looking at include them? Is this the official FTIC cohort? Is this the rate our graduation is based on? Lyons thinks so but is not sure.

Report from Chris Birchak, University College Dean and Chair of Subcommittee on Admissions Standards

Birchak: The Board of Regents had a retreat which President Flores attended. Flores subsequently spoke to legislators. BOR found the two pathways for automatic admission confusing. Pathway One of automatic admission has more than one track, one option being a 1000 or above SAT combined score, which some external audiences considered too high. We can fix this SAT number easily. Another concern was limited access for Houston students, especially with Victoria and Clear-Lake doing downward expansion. Legislators wanted to know what would happen to students who did not meet our new admissions standards. One answer we have is joint admissions and reverse transfer agreements involving collaboration with community colleges. Students who do not meet our admissions criteria would be sent to HCC to take specific courses and meet a specific GPA and then they could be admitted. Texas A&M and Blinn have joint admissions agreements, as does UT with Austin Community College. There were also concerns about student with "grievous" academic problems merely being moved over to a

community college. We are concerned about students amassing numerous credits but huge debt. Will summer programs help students get success they need? Johnson (also on this subcommittee) has pointed out that we want interventions for all students, not just freshman who have intervention needs. Ed Apodaca wants to do a dry run next year on whatever admissions standards we decide on. Had we implemented standards, how would current students have fared?

Johnson: Just to clarify, “dry run” means requiring students to submit GPA and SAT without acting on this information, just getting data to suggest how proposed admission standards will impact us.

Birchak continued: One of the questions that arose within the subcommittee is what are costs associated with interventions. These interventions are particularly important for provisional students. In a tight economy, these requests would have to go through same process as other budget requests (whatever those are). Flores has emphasized that the Admissions Standards subcommittee needs to put price tags on these interventions and keep them low.

Wednesday, September 29 is the next meeting for the Admissions Standards Subcommittee. They will look at the two automatic admissions pathways. They will try to merge these into one. The subcommittee has also circulated a draft proposal on a retention and graduation plan that can be forwarded to appropriate policy committees when complete. **The Board of Regents does not want to see our new admissions standards until after this year’s legislative session has ended.**

Moosally: we have always had difficulty finding a “house” in UHD’s framework for retention issues. Budget requests are outside the scope of a subcommittee such as this. How will budget planning for these interventions occur and where will they take place? Provost level? Faculty Senate? Department unit plans?

Birchak: Flores said it should begin on the academic side. Birchak said budget items would begin in University College in consultation with the relevant degree programs. It was unclear if these items would be included in budget plans for each.

Evans noted that proposed admissions standards do not mention that students should have a college prep curriculum/high school diploma. Birchak said this is assumed; she had only put the more controversial issues on the material given to Senators.

The meeting had run out of time, and a motion to adjourn was made and passed.

Respectfully submitted,
Johanna Schmertz, Ph.D.
Faculty Senate Secretary/Treasurer