

Report of the UHD Faculty Senate President

For April 21, 2009

Submitted by Michelle Moosally

I reserve the right to update or highlight issues during the meeting. However, anything in these notes is fair game for follow-up questions and comment during the meeting or directly with me. Once the Senate has met, these notes, along with any comments/updates/corrections, will become part of the Senate minutes.

Upcoming Events

Dr. Castillo Appreciation Event: Stay tuned for details

Student Awards Ceremony: May 6, 6:30pm

Commencement: May 17, 2:00pm, Minute Maid Park

Don't forget to volunteer for university service – time is limited! Contact VP Belbot with questions or nominations.

President Search

The search committee is in the process of conducting 75-minute, face-to-face interviews (called “airport interviews”) with a set of candidates. Our goal is still to have finalists on campus for more extensive interview processes within the first two weeks of May. The range and type of interview venues is yet to be determined.

Climate Survey

Members of the Faculty Assembly will have an opportunity to offer input through a climate survey; the survey will be conducted via a secure electronic process. Please expect notification at the end of the week.

System-wide Enrollment Management

UH System administration has hired Pappas Consulting to research enrollment patterns at all 4 universities as well as review mission statements. VP Belbot and I are scheduled to meet next week with System Administrators Ed Hugetz and John Antel to discuss these topics; we do not have any specific information or agenda at this time. These issues will be discussed at the Board retreat in June. We must submit our mission statements and tables of programs to the Coordinating Board by July 1, so we want to do everything we can to make sure that the work we have done as an institution to develop and approve those documents is supported by decisions of the BOR.

Academic Affairs Council

The online student course evaluation policy was presented and discussed. Comments and concerns reflected those presented during Senate discussion: 1) consistency of basic content between F2F and online/hybrid courses so as maintain basic comparisons, 2) observations of bias toward F2F in the instrument as it is currently written, 3) concerns about the lack of response rate and apparent lack of reporting of online survey data to faculty on a consistent basis. I do not believe any conclusions were reached. In conversation with Dr. Belbot and me about challenges of getting student responses, Dr. Gail Evans, Assistant VP for Academic Affairs-Distance

Education, has agreed to send an announcement to all faculty when she and her staff insert the evaluations into the online sections so that we may better advertise to our students the availability of these evaluations.

AAC also reviewed the deletion of programs policy from the UCC; it has been sent back to the UCC for clarification on signature authority from the faculty side. I believe we have agreed that the chair of the Rank and Tenure Committee in the department will sign on behalf of the entire department, once the department faculty have reviewed program deletion proposals, and the R and T chair will report whether the department approved or disapproved of the deletion. In order for deletion of a program to move forward to the UCC, it must have 2 of 3 approvals from the college level (Chair, the Dean, and/or the department faculty). This is similar to the R and T process, except with program deletion, the entire department faculty have a say.

Governor's Initiatives

UFEC will be presenting concerns to the Board on Tuesday morning (April 21). Specifically, I will discuss the resolution passed by the UHD Senate on March 24 and sent to the BOR and System Administration. (See resolution at end of report.) Vice Chancellor Antel has indicated a willingness to put together a task force as requested by UFEC, though details are still undetermined.

Firearms Legislation

We have no recent updates on these bills, though at last glance, the House bill has support of at least 76 of 150 representatives and is likely to pass at that level. The status in the Senate is less certain. The UHD Senate endorsed the Texas Council of Faculty Senates resolution that opposes this legislation (see copy at end of this report). This endorsement was sent to UHD and System leadership. I understand that TCFS will be issuing their resolution as a press release sometime this week. *Faculty who have a position on this issue may register that position with local legislators, using their own resources as private citizens.*

Resolution of the UHD Faculty Senate

Approved on March 24, 2009

Passed with one abstention, none opposed

TOPIC: 2009 Governor's Initiatives entitled "Higher Education Questions"

WHEREAS:

The requests from Governor Perry's office entitled "Higher Education Questions" raise serious concerns and questions regarding their validity, efficacy, appropriateness, and legality

BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

The UHD Faculty Senate urges UHD leadership, UH System leadership, and the UH Board of Regents to refrain from compliance or response to the requests from the Governor's Office until such time as we are able to ascertain the following:

- clarification on the authority and validity of such requests from the Governor's Office
- public explanation of the perceived benefits of such actions for improved teaching and practices in higher education in Texas
- cost estimates for gathering and maintaining these large amounts of data and restructuring faculty evaluation systems
- verification that these requests for public posting of information have no potential to violate FERPA, intellectual property rights, privacy rights, etc.
- an understanding of the risks and potential contradictions to our accreditation standards as established by SACS
- information about how other state systems are responding to these requests
- long-term implications for the retention and (inter)national reputation of Texas faculty, students, and the value of Texas higher education degrees
- justification using published empirical evidence for the use of student course evaluations as a tool for determining faculty raises and/or bonuses

AND

Upon receipt of said information, UH administrators should share information with system faculty and work with them to ensure that any responses are consistent with best practices in higher education and are undertaken for the advancement of pedagogical and research goals appropriate for public institutions of higher education in a democratic society.

Resolution of the Texas Council of Faculty Senates (TCFS)

Approved on March 7, 2009*

TOPIC: Concealed Weapons on University Campuses

WHEREAS, allowing concealed firearms on university campuses threatens our ability to create and maintain a safe, open learning environment for students, faculty and staff,

Be it resolved that the members of Texas Council of Faculty Senates oppose any legislation or initiatives that will overturn the present prohibitions on carrying concealed weapons on university campuses.

**This resolution was endorsed and affirmed unanimously
by the UHD Faculty Senate on March 24, 2009**

*The resolution was passed by TCFS at the meeting in Austin on March 6-7, 2009. The members of TCFS passed the resolution by a majority vote, with one "no" vote and two abstentions.