

UHD Faculty Senate

Minutes recorded by: Sandra Dahlberg

February 7, 2017; 2:33-3:50pm

Room A300

Attendance: Carolyn Ashe, Julio Canedo Soto, Luis Cedeno, Michael Connell, Travis Crone, Sandra Dahlberg, Trevor Hale, Jillian Hill, Pamela Hurley, Ruth Johnson, Robin Jose, Stephanie Karas, Karen Kaser, Cynthia Lloyd, Kendra Mhoon, Creshema Murray, Mitsue Nakamura, JoAnn Pavletich, Anand Pore, Azar Rejaie, Jacqueline Sack, Clete Snell, Benjamin Soibam, Michael Tobin, Edwin Tecarro, Hsiao-Ming Wang, Joan Wedes, Pat Williams, Zhenyu Zhang.

Regrets: Michael Duncan

Absent: Anne Kane, Keith Wright

Guests: Ed Hugetz, VP Academic Affairs and Provost. Shared Governance Task Force Members: Faiza Khoja, Associate Vice President of Faculty Affairs; Susan Baker (CHSS) and Ryan Pepper (CST). General Education Committee: Ron Beebe (chair, CPS) and Michelle Moosally (CHSS). Tyra Hessel, UHD Faculty Ombuds. Pat Ensor, UHD Library Director.

Call to Order: The Senate was called to order at 2:33 pm by Senate President Dr. Carolyn Ashe.

Minutes of the Senate meeting on January 17, 2017 were approved.

Comments/Updates

Hugetz announced that undergraduate enrollment is down but graduate enrollment is up, which makes our overall enrollment flat to slightly up. This should put us in a good funding position for this legislative cycle.

Hugetz also announced that Governor Abbott has frozen all State hiring pending a financial review of the State's resources. No one can be hired on Ledger One (State) dollars until the freeze is lifted. The Provost's office is working with the Governor's office regarding the freeze. Faculty searches currently underway will continue, using non-state funds. The provost search will also continue. Provost candidates will not be brought to campus until next fall semester.

Shared Governance Process and Procedure Recommendations

Khoja and Baker presented the proposed process (a flowchart) for revising/amending shared governance policies. This is not a revision to shared governance, or the Shared Governance Policy. The process proposed by the flowchart was created to ensure that all constituencies are allowed time to provide appropriate input, with feedback loops to ensure input is addressed, and to improve transparency for the policy revision process. The Shared Governance Task Force also recommended

that at the beginning of each academic year, the charges to the policy committees be provided along with the reasons for the policy revisions, to constituencies via a policy website. The website will also have the minutes for the shared governance committees, the status of the policies being reviewed, the most current version of the policies under revision, and the changes (track changes) made to the policies. A monthly “newsletter” (email) will be sent to constituents that identify the policies under review/revision, the reasons for the changes, a list of the committee members (so representatives can be contacted), and meeting agendas. The committee chairs will be providing with training on the processes at the beginning of each year and given information about resources to support their committees. Qualtrics will be used to collect feedback from individuals and that feedback will be available to the policy committee and to the Academic Affairs Committee (AAC) members prior to policy approvals. The AAC will ensure that changes made to a policy after presentation to constituents are minor, not substantive, and that the input/feedback comments were addressed. The Task Force is also working on a timeline for the processes, and is now suggesting a three-week feedback window.

The Senate was asked to review the proposed process/flowchart and offer feedback regarding the proposed process for the Task Force to consider.

Ashe and Canedo asked for clarification on what constitutes a substantive change, and Pavletich and Pore asked that a step be added to the process/flowchart that has the committee present the final text of the revised policy to constituents.

Moosally suggested that a form be used to document the process of each policy—especially the charge and reasons for revision—and that the form also be posted online for review. Baker said that the website was intended to provide this information. Moosally also said that a three-week feedback window was not sufficient for some policies.

Hessel asked if a citation index could be created to cross reference related issues in different policies.

Revised Policy

General Education Policy Committee

Beebe explained that the General Education Policy was created to address three issues:

- 1) to establish three-year terms for committee members to ensure continuity on the committee
- 2) to obtain for the chair of the General Education Committee one course release each long semester, and
- 3) to establish a process for changing the general education curricular approval process to go through the University Curriculum Committee process, while recognizing that if curricular changes necessitate change to the General Education Policy that those policy revisions will be made through the policy revision processes.

Currently, general education is defined as the 42-hour core curriculum mandated by the State. Input/comments received through Qualtrics was provided to the Senate.

Old Business

Resolution in Support of Tenure

At the January Senate meeting, Hale was charged with drafting a resolution in support of tenure in response to threats to abolish tenure in Wisconsin, Missouri, and Iowa. Hale distributed a draft to Senators prior to the meeting, which he read to the Senate. Minor revisions were suggested then the resolution was unanimously approved. The resolution will also be sent to UFEC.

In support of tenure...

Whereas earning tenure requires an individual to clear several hurdles with respect to teaching, scholarship, and service and that, once earned, tenured faculty are still subject to merit-based annual review.

Whereas eliminating tenure will make UHD less competitive with its peer institutions that retain tenure.

Whereas *"...every dollar spent tracking "productivity" in order to ferret out a small handful of bad actors is one fewer dollar available to go to actual instruction."*¹

Whereas eliminating tenure may significantly reduce any university's ability to attract external research dollars.²

Whereas eliminating tenure may preclude students from learning about all sides of today's multi-faceted world.

Be it resolved that, in light of legislative actions in other states, the faculty at the University of Houston-Downtown remain resolute in their support of tenure as a public trust in the State of Texas, as one of cornerstones of the academe, and as one of many tools utilized by the faculty to further the mission of UHD.

Workload Redistribution Draft Resolution

Since the workload issue was selected by the Senate as one of the top two concerns and received considerable discussion at the last meeting, Ashe introduced to the Senate a draft resolution regarding workload redistribution. This resolution was introduced last year but has unresolved issues that kept it from being voted upon. Hale initiated discussion of the resolution.

(Issue was never resolved and no vote was taken here)

UHD FACULTY SENATE RESOLUTION

REGARDING: Workload Reduction

February 24th, 2016

WHEREAS: The service workload for many faculty members has become overwhelming, as evidenced by the 2014 Faculty Climate Survey where almost 44% of faculty responded with "Disagree" or "Strongly Disagree" when asked if their workload was reasonable; the service workload is unbalanced in that a minority of people are doing a majority of the work; many junior faculty are being asked to chair important university committees; UHD is highly under-staffed when compared to peer institutions causing much committee work to fall to the faculty; many faculty are serving on several important university and departmental committees simultaneously – stretching their attention too thin and preventing their best work on each committee; and teaching and research/scholarship are suffering because of these service workload conditions,

¹ <https://www.insidehighered.com/blogs/just-visiting/do-nots-and-dos-when-defending-tenure>

² http://host.madison.com/wsj/news/local/education/university/uw-madison-slips-in-ranking-as-research-spending-declines/article_183a7570-6dfd-541e-b770-806ac807d9c0.html

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the UHD Faculty Senate urge the Provost, Deans, and Chairs to ensure that:

1. No more than one committee assignment, above the level of the discipline/program, be given to junior faculty in their first year.
2. Junior faculty may not chair committees above the level of the discipline/program (i.e., no chairing departmental, college, or university committees).
3. No faculty member serve on more than two University-level committees per year (including Senate).
4. If one or more full professors are on a university committee, one of the full professors must chair that committee.
5. Department Rank and Tenure committees must be chaired by a full professor.

The Senate discussed the issues in the draft and issues related to workload such as whether or not department chairs have the power to balance service workloads among department faculty (Canedo), how university search committees are classified in relation to the workload suggestions in the draft resolution (Mhoon), problems with items 3 and 4 that seem to provide no room for negotiation or faculty expertise (Crone), or allow for associate professors to assume leadership positions (Pore). Rejaie feared that there were not enough full professors to support items 4 and 5, and Hill noted that some committee work is voluntary whereas some is assigned.

Hale asked faculty to email him with their comments and he will continue to work on the draft and bring it back to the Senate for further discussion.

Faculty Senate Constitution Revision

Duncan sent Senators the revised Senate Constitution on January 18. Ashe asked Senators to read the Constitution before the next Senate meeting when the changes will be discussed and hopefully approved. Hale noted that the only real change was in Section Three to require three years at UHD prior to election to the Senate for tenured/tenure-track faculty.

Updates

Ashe reminded Senators of the UFEC conference at UHD on March 31. The date and scope of the conference were changed to avoid conflicts with the UH Provost's Teaching and Learning Conference.

An open house (office) will be scheduled soon for the new Senate office (S-630).

Faculty Senate elections are fast approaching. Please ask your colleagues to run for Senate and for Senate office. The climate survey will be distributed in 2-3 weeks.

Meeting adjourned at 3:50pm.

The next Senate meeting is on February 21, 2017.