

# UHD Faculty Senate

Minutes recorded by: Michael Cavanaugh  
March 3, 2020 2:33 - 3:59 pm  
UHD Milam/Travis

**Senate:** Michael Duncan, Ronald Beebe, Hsiao-Ming Wang, Michael Cavanaugh, Maria Benavides, Alexander Bielakowski, Dexter Cahoy, Kristen Capuzzo, Stephanie Coleman, Prakash Deo, Isaac Elking, Krista Gehring, Angela Goins, Felicia Harris, Susan Henney, Pamela Hurley, Tahereh Jafari, Cynthia Lloyd, Steve London, Laura Mitchell, Mitsue Nakamura, Andrew Pavelich, Joseph Sample, Johanna Schmertz, Jace Valcore, Pat Williams, Ting Zhang.

**Absent:** Franklin Allaire, Timothy Klein, Jeffery Martz, Nathan Neale, Julie Wilson.

**Guests:** Eric Link, Provost/VPAA; Jerry Johnson, AVP Faculty, Research, and Sponsored Programs; Pat Ensor, Library Director; Hossein Shahrokhi, AVP IT; Sandra Dahlberg, Faculty Ombuds; Meritza Tamez, Dean of Students; Darlene Hodge, FS Admin; Sheryl Sellers, Dateline Student Rep; Sandra Jacobson, University Advancement/Annual Giving Fund Manager; Jesus Serrato, Online Learning Librarian; Stacie DeFreitas, Associate Professor; Aamir Merchant, SGA Senator; Xiomara Herrera, SGA Director of External Affairs; Kelsi Rios, SGA; Camila Sandoval Serrano, SGA; Meghana Karra, SGA; Ameena Rasheed, SGA Executive Secretary; Shay Tatum, SGA President; Jason Lillie, SGA Vice-President;

**Call to order:** The Senate was called to order at 2:33 pm by Senate President Michael Duncan.

## Minutes

Small wording change to the February 18 minutes. Addition of Ms. Carol Tucker to the Guest list and Point of clarification section added. Changes accepted and no further changes proposed. Minutes unanimously approved.

## Reports

Dr. Meritza Tamez joined Senate to give an update to Senate's concerns on Emergency Response from the university in cases of students in crisis. She handed out a flowchart and three sets of cards (see attached). The cards covered three distinct areas of concern for faculty: concerning behavior among students, active shooter situations, and reporting sexual misconduct.

Some questions followed.

Q – Will the handouts and cards be distributed widely and what is the timeline?

A – Dr. Tamez said the plan is to distribute this to all faculty. They need to look at funding for it, but it is likely to get done soon.

Q – This seems to set clear expectations up front. Do students know about this?

A – According to Dr. Tamez, the students know the requirements through the student handbook, policies, orientations, syllabi, class meetings, etc.

Q – Will electronic copies of the handout and cards be available?

A – Yes.

Q – How will this be handled for study abroad trips when the behavior is taking place in another country?

A – This all applies the same, according to Dr. Tamez. The actual process may end up being a little different (i.e., zoom meeting instead of a face to face meeting), because of the distance.

Q – Are we allowed to tell students to stay home if they are not feeling well (Covid-19)?

A – Dr. Tamez said that we probably do not want individual faculty setting rules on this, although suggestions may be okay. The Provost's office is likely to give guidance on this issue soon.

Dr. Stacie DeFreitas was welcomed to faculty Senate to discuss the Sustainability Council. She explained while the Council is new, and it is early in the process, she did want to come to Senate and give a brief introduction as to their mission. Generally, they want to promote sustainability across campus and in the university community. Dr. DeFreitas said that Sustainability Council will meet after spring break and will only target CST and CHSS for the initial run.

Q – How is sustainability defined?

A – According to Dr. DeFreitas, it is a very broad definition. It encompasses social justice and the elimination of waste. We want to change business practices and educate faculty, staff, and students.

Ms. Sandra Jacobson spoke to Senate about the Give to Gators campaign (see attached presentation).

Q – It has always bothered me that there is a push to get faculty to donate for these things. Shouldn't you just deduct it from everyone's wages rather than try to shame everyone into doing it?

A – Ms. Jacobson indicated that she was not really the person to answer that question. However, the campaign is not trying to shame anyone and there are tax issues that arise if something is mandatory rather than voluntary.

Q – When will the payroll deductions start?

A – There is a bit of delay, according to Ms. Jacobson. The deductions start on September 1<sup>st</sup> – the start of the new academic year.

Dr. Ron Beebe gave two updates. The first update was on the upcoming elections. The call for nominations should close right after spring break. The voting should take place by April 1<sup>st</sup>.

The second update from Dr. Beebe was on the Texas Council of Faculty Senates (TCFS). He explained that there was a good bit of time spent on discussing the importance of having active AAUP (American Association of University Professors) chapters. This was so that faculty could be proactive rather than reactive to the issues facing them today. Commissioner Harrison Keller from the THECB spoke and talked about how he expects the next Texas legislative session to focus on higher education. There were also round up reports from other Senates across the State and UHD is one of the better supported Senates. We have a dedicated office, a dedicated office administrator, and a budget. Many Senates lack these things. A senate survey will be sent out from TCFS to Senate offices.

Dr. Duncan gave an update on PBDC. The committee has considered a preliminary budget. He explained there were three points to bring to faculty. The first point is that tuition and fees are likely to

increase by 2.6%. Additionally, we have money in the budget earmarked for the market study, some money earmarked for fixes based on the market study, and some earmarked based on the raises we were awarded last year. Finally, with regard to new lines of T/TT and lecturers we are fairly flat and have been for a few years. This leads to a service workload increase as we continue to continue to create new committees and service responsibilities continue to increase.

### **Initiatives**

Dr. Duncan introduced an idea for an SGA motion. Should the Senate encourage student participation in presentations and committees?

Ms. Shay Tatum, SGA President, briefly introduced SGA's ideas to Senate (see handout). As she explained, candidates for upper level administration meet with student panels and this is helpful. For faculty searches, we probably don't want students involved early in the process, but at the later stages.

Ms. Tatum said that SGA is focused on diversity of the faculty. It wants the faculty to look like the student body. SGA is currently hearing horror stories from students who have to deal with some bad faculty.

Discussion ensued

It would be great to have students involved in the process. The last time we had a search it was rushed, and no one was on campus. This was a bad look for us. If we want this to matter, we need to codify it into policy. This would require more than a motion or resolution. Is the question simply whether we agree or disagree with more student involvement? I'm not quite sure what Senate is being asked to do.

I have served on about 20 search committees at this institution and my previous one. We tried in all of those searches to hire diverse candidates and not just white males and succeeded just once. Even when we had great candidates and made offers, the candidates turned us down because they received better money elsewhere.

Ms. Ameena Rasheed, SGA Executive Secretary, asked a question. How many times were those practices changed to try and gain more minority candidates?

We did everything we could do to try and attract a PhD in that specific field.

Dr. Jerry Johnson suggested that the way we have always done things does not work. We need to rethink the whole process, the whole structure. The academy was built for white men and others need to assimilate. This can be changed. There are other model universities out there and we owe it to our students.

Ms. Rasheed explained that she works in the journalism field and they have organizations like the Black Association of Journalists, Hispanic Association of Journalists, etc. Maybe target these types of groups in your fields.

I am in complete agreement with what has been said on diversity, equity, and inclusion. I also want to explain to everyone, from having sat on numerous search committees, that ESO verifies all the candidate lists for diversity before the searches continue. Additionally, CJ has all candidates give a teaching demonstration in front of a real class full of students.

We should have this conversation.

Dr. Johnson said this needs to come from the ground up (faculty and students). Hiring and retaining diverse faculty and staff is on the strategic plan and has been for a long time.

Thank you, student leaders. I recently led a session for the President's Leadership Academy during which we discussed imagining an equitable future at UHD, and I agree we should retool everything. I am not a fan of serving on search committees and you probably would not like it much either. Search committees are time consuming and it's rare that members of the department all get a say so in the hiring process. However, this type of conversation needs to happen inside the departments. Perhaps we can reevaluate how we score the matrixes. If this happens, we can lower the value of categories that traditionally benefit white males, or members of dominant groups, and raise the values of other categories in which minorities and women also perform well.

Ms. Meghana Karra, SGA member, asked Senate "why will the academic schedule show "staff" instead of the professor's name?"

Dr. Beebe explained that in Urban Education, 125 classes are listed out, but the department only has 25 faculty members. The department finds faculty to teach the classes after the fact. Additionally, some are there in case another class fills. Dr. Cavanaugh added that new hires cannot be listed until their paperwork is officially processed. So, while we know who is slated to teach the class, they cannot be listed because they are not technically UHD employees yet.

Dr. Duncan stated that he would support more committees to help with this task.

Dr. Johnson explained that there are already workgroups tackling this problem. You are welcome to join in and help. I can come back to Senate and present on this too.

We can look at diversity among the adjunct pool. We would be much nimbler with them as the hiring process is different. I suspect we are much more diverse already. We would be more competitive salary wise too.

Dr. Duncan moved on to the next topic: Minutes at Shared Governance meetings. Currently, there is no uniform requirement, and some do, and some do not take minutes.

Discussion followed

I remember when these committees did not regularly present to Senate, but now they do. Transparency is a good thing. I would encourage all committees to take minutes and share them, even FSEC.

There is not a repository or process for this. When I was on one of the Shared Governance committees, we took minutes. We tried to submit them, but no one would take them.

Dr. Sandra Dahlberg said that after the SACSCOC reaccreditation, this was supposed to be done as it is a SACS requirement. We could simply have a repository, like Senate, so people can click on the minutes and see what has been done.

Dr. Johnson said that the Provost's office is working on this. One question is, what should the minutes look like. Senate should probably decide the answer for Shared Governance Committees. For other committees (i.e., ORCA), the minutes may be more detailed or very minimal.

While this is a SACS requirement, the deliberation process does not have to be in the minutes.

Dr. Johnson suggested that putting something basic in writing for guidance on meeting minutes would be helpful.

On another committee, not shared governance, we have a blackboard course set up for the committee. We use it for all sorts of things, but the documents stay in it, including by-laws and procedures. The course is important for turnover.

Dr. Duncan suggested that FSEC could take a stab at this and bring it back to Senate.

### **Updates**

Dr. Duncan announced that the signature wall is now live in the Senate office 626. All current and former elected senators can sign the wall.

Dr. Duncan asks if there is any other business.

Q – Any updates from the administration about the coronavirus situation?

A – Provost Link addressed the question. He explained that UHD is working on Continuity of Operations Plans (COOP). Most of the rough drafts have been submitted from the units. Once submitted these plans will be reviewed, given feedback, and then turned in again with revisions. Once approved, we will start with phase 2. Phase 2 is more detailed, more complex and will occur in April and May before hurricane season.

Provost Link further explained that the administration set aside a lot of other things to put the COVID-19 issue to the forefront. You are likely to receive messages about this. We are gathering information for an online transition if need be.

Q – The online transition would work for the COVID-19 situation but what about a hurricane? They seem to require different responses.

A – Provost Link indicated that we are preparing for the immediate situation now and then we will deal with the hurricane issue. We are looking for two means of communication – email, call trees, etc. We are also working on two different plans – short term and long term.

Q – I am planning on going to Portland. Have we made any travel restrictions?

A – According to Provost Link, we have started cancelling study abroad trips. We are individually dealing with students who have been to countries with high levels of the virus. System-wide, we are also looking at developing some guidance, with language, on country threat levels (related to COVID-19).

Q – Are we going to advise students for spring break?

A – Provost Link stated that we will put out guidelines and memos about that, but we really cannot track people beyond faculty travel (which is registered with the university), so it is difficult.

Q – Can we put Purell in every classroom?

A – I'll mention that to David Bradley. Provost Link had not heard that mentioned as an idea before, but departments are free to do that if they would like.

Dr. Bielakowski made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Dr. Deo seconded the motion. Meeting adjourned at 3:59 pm.