

UHD Faculty Senate Meeting

November 16, 2010

Minutes

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

R. Beebe, C. Bedard, R. Chiquillo, D. de la Pena, A. Eliassen, G. Evans, A. Gomez-Rivas, J. Jackson, J. Johnson, P. Kintzele, N. LaRose, M. Moosally, W. Morgan, A. Pavelich, R. Pepper, N. Rangel, L. Spears, N. Sullivan, F. Williams, K. Wright, V. Zafiris, Z. Zhou

Absent: K. Jegdic, O. Paskelian

Announcements from Faculty Senate President Lyons

There is a BOR meeting at UHD Nov 17. Lyons will send out the agenda and encourages faculty to attend.

Lyons received word from President Flores that the Legislative Budget Board was proposing additional budget cuts of 2-3%.

The proposal for the International Coffee Building goes before the BOR tomorrow; it is unclear if they support our acquisition of this property.

Some grievance committee elections that needed to be rerun by the Credentials and Elections Committee are underway.

The Faculty Development Leave committee will distribute its announcement/call soon.

The Faculty Affairs Committee is reviewing the Chairs policy (P.S. 10.A.17). Please provide your feedback to Dr. Susan Baker, the chair of the subcommittee charged with revising the policy.

Congratulations to Urban Ed for the Star Award for the Kingwood-Cy-Fair alliance. This is UHD's third STAR award, the others being the Jesse Jones Institute and the Scholars Academy.

The Provost Search Committee conducted its airport interviews this past weekend and plans to bring in at least four candidates for on-campus interviews during the week of December 6. Lyons feels that because we started the search earlier than we did last year, we are getting better candidates.

Lyons has received several emails from faculty about the need to develop a testing center. Such a center is increasingly important in light of the concerns faculty demonstrated in the Faculty Senate survey about academic honesty in online courses. Lyons hopes our administration will move on this.

The BOR mentioned that the decisions of Facilities Master Planning should be driven by enrollment.

UHD will have a holiday reception on December 9; it will be more minimal than in the past due to budget cuts.

Dr. Lisa Morano, chair of the Faculty Awards Committee, has asked Senate's approval for teaching awards for lecturers and adjuncts. The T/T-T awards deadline for nominations is November 30; the deadline for nominations for adjuncts and lecturers would have a January deadline. The committee is asking for support from Faculty Senate, funds for awards from administration, and a commitment to a January deadline. Morano's request is attached to the minutes.

Lyons asked if Faculty Senate was willing to consider meeting on the fifth Tuesday of the month (November 30). We have a lot of business to cover including approving a final version of the survey. A motion was made to hold a Faculty Senate meeting on November 30. It was seconded and approved unanimously.

Report from Senator Michelle Moosally

Senator Moosally attended an AAUP conference on university shared governance in Washington, D.C., where she and Dr. Anjoo Sikka presented a paper.

Faculty Handbooks are a crucial element of shared governance at most universities. We have one, but it was developed in haste and without widespread faculty participation as a response to a SACS mandate. Moosally wanted to get a new one written by faculty when she was FS president, but there was a time/workload issue. This is work we still need to do.

Moosally discussed a Supreme Court decision (*Garcetti v. Ceballos*) that could have implications for whether academic freedom will continue to cover free speech that takes place in the university and is about the university (e.g. discussions at faculty senates). At this point, AAUP recommends that academic freedom is best protected through individual university policies. The *Garcetti* court case is available at www.aaup.org/AAUP/protectvoice/Legal/default.htm.

Panels and discussions at the AAUP conference prominently featured the importance of incorporating contingent faculty in university life and shared governance. Moosally urges that Faculty Senate consider developing policies to protect adjuncts and lecturers, such as longer-term contracts, recognitions for good work, and clear delineation of workload.

Universities are closing programs and dismissing faculty, often without regard to shared governance mechanisms. We need to remain aware of our own policies for due process and faculty input into such decisions.

Rangel asked if the *Garcetti* case involved external whistle-blowing. Moosally responded that she thought it was an internal matter that *Garcetti* had brought to the attention of his superiors.

Announcement of Ombuds William Gilbert

Gilbert announced that he had been approved for the ombuds position. (The official announcement was sent by Dressman after the meeting). Gilbert has attended an International Ombuds Association 3-day training course to prepare him for the position. He is open for business but asks that faculty set up appointments in his office, preferably by phone rather than email, and to discuss business in person only. His role is that of an unpartisan investigator.

Faculty Climate Survey

Lyons asked for volunteers to help Senate Vice President Allen with the Faculty Climate Survey. Allen said he needed help especially from people who knew how to design and run surveys. Moosally added that there is already an instrument in place but modifications might be called for, as well as a strategy for distributing the survey. Senators Wright, LaRose, and Bedard volunteered to be on Allen's workgroup.

Gen Ed Assessment

Lyons went over a report that summarized an email Lyons had previously sent to the SACS committee, the Gen Ed Assessment committee, Interim Provost Dressman and President Flores. He asked senators to discuss his report with their faculty. The document provides a history explaining why UHD is behind on assessing the Gen Ed program and revising its learning outcomes, and raised questions about future work to be done on Gen Ed assessment and the role of faculty in the process. He then turned the floor over to Senator Pavelich, who was elected chair of the Gen Ed committee this year and was charged by the Interim Provost to develop a profile of the UHD graduate to be placed in UHD's catalog.

Pavelich stated that the Gen Ed committee has titled its document "The UHD Bachelors Graduate Profile." To generate this document, the committee sent out requests for feedback and received over 30 responses which were broken down into 120 statements about the UHD graduate, and then grouped them into four categories/features: communication, critical thinking, independent learning, and general knowledge. The committee attempted to avoid discipline-specific features. A revised document was then sent out which received 15 responses, resulting in the document currently under discussion. He went over the document.

Sullivan said there was no reference in the doc to ethics. Her number one hope, after teaching freshman comp for ten years, is that students will have a sense of academic honesty which they will carry into the workplace. In a post-Enron environment, she said, we need overt references to ethics.

Pavelich said Sullivan was in the minority. He then clarified that he meant Sullivan was in the minority not in wishing to guard against plagiarism, but in wishing that the document should include an ethics statement.

Sullivan asked how many people responded to his call for input. Less than 2% of the faculty was the response. That would mean Sullivan was in the minority among respondents, but not necessarily among faculty.

Pavelich said a possible ethics statement was discussed at great length by the Gen Ed committee. Current Gen Ed language includes a statement on ethics; this has been a massive headache for assessment because it is difficult to assess which moral standards obtain regardless of discipline. Those disciplines that have ethics standards established externally by their professional fields have an easier time of measuring ethics than do disciplines that have no such externally imposed standards. In such contexts (e.g. literature, history, philosophy), an ethical student has traditionally been determined as one who does not cheat/plagiarize, and this is not what "ethics" should mean; knowledge of ethical standards should mean more.

Chiquillo said that how to measure and value ethics would be a matter for the learning objectives rather than this general statement, which could include mention of an ethics standard. On technology, she thought the Gen Ed committee passed a technology requirement requiring students to keep abreast of emerging technologies.

Pavelich said the Gen Ed committee came up with the profile from scratch and without reference to the original 1983 document because Interim Provost Dressman believed the old learning objectives were not working. There was no deliberate decision to eliminate elements in the 1983 document such as technology and ethics.

Moosally said she was concerned about the process by which the document came about. She appreciated the reasons the Provost asked the Gen Ed committee to undertake the revision: old outcomes are not measurable, the profile of what a college graduate needs to look like has changed in this day and age, new state core requirements may be coming down. However, we should be concerned about the fact that the Gen Ed committee felt its work was curtailed by time pressures. Perhaps the document presented by Pavelich is a necessary starting point, but Moosally hopes there is an understanding that the whole faculty need to approve any gen ed curriculum that might later develop. The program put in place 25 years ago was implemented via shared governance. She is concerned that current efforts have not reached the full faculty. She would like to see some sort of university-wide assembly or forum to discuss these issues at some point.

On the possibility of assessing ethics, Moosally said that when Trudy Banta was called in to help us address our assessment issues with SACS, there was specific conversation about how to measure ethics outcomes. One option mentioned was student focus groups asked to deal with hypothetical situations involving ethical decision-making.

Moosally reported that a faculty member had asked about whether and where creativity or artistic expression fit into the description of the UHD student profile. Perhaps it was implied by some of the language in the critical thinking section?

Pavelich said the topic of creativity was not one of the major themes that emerged from the faculty input, although it was raised, and speculated that creativity was not seen as applicable to all UHD graduates. The common core might require an ethics class or a creativity class, but this would be a separate issue from assessment.

Sullivan felt there needed to be a statement in the document about ethics, particularly if the document was self-standing (i.e. not directly connected to assessment). She could not imagine anyone agreeing that they did not want their students to graduate without a sense of ethics. Pavelich disagreed, with the qualification that he was speaking only for himself and not for members of his committee. UHD is distinct from other universities in the fact that half of its students are over 25 and do not reside on campus; there is therefore no expectation that the university will be “raising them in thirteenth grade.” Other universities do look at a university education as part of the moral education of their students.

Sullivan said Pavelich was conflating ethics and morals; she was merely stating that UHD students should uphold the ethical standards of their professions. This does not legislate morality or intrude on students’ personal lives. Pavelich said he wasn’t conflating morals and ethics; Sullivan said he was, by invoking in loco parentis, and did not understand why it would be difficult for us to say that we want ethical standards for our students.

Chiquillo said she was disturbed that neither the ethics nor the issue of creativity were considered important enough to be included in the profile of the UHD undergraduate. On creative/artistic expression, don't we want all students to appreciate art, enjoy plays, speak or be exposed to foreign languages? Perhaps the committee was not bold enough in envisioning what we want for our students.

Pavelich agreed that the committee was not bold, but the language of exposure is a matter of the courses they take, which was not the task at hand. He would personally like students to be forced to learn foreign languages and engage in the arts in the common core, but the statement does not address the common core and will be equally applicable to all programs. It is hard for all programs to include everything given the limits on credit hours. Chiquillo suggested we needed to put program considerations aside in developing the document.

Johnson said the common core was provided with the idea of providing students with a liberal arts education. The features of the UHD graduate need not connect directly to the core; it is up to programs to use their 120 hours wisely to make sure students meet gen ed requirements and assess how well their majors have achieved gen ed outcomes.

Pavelich re-emphasized that the common core is not under discussion but rather characteristics of someone who goes through not just the common core but a degree program. The common core is only part of what gen ed means and the committee attempted to capture this part in the "general knowledge" claim. He admitted that the committee was "conservative" in its claims because he thought they would pass more easily this way, and said he was pleased that the opposite has turned out to be the case.

LaRose said she does not see that the document has been updated from the 1983 learning outcomes; maybe we need more contemporary language like "global awareness" or "social/cultural awareness" that impinge directly on today's definitions of literacy. She also sees nothing that is specific to the UHD graduate; this should be addressed.

Pavelich reiterated his perspective that the fact that we don't have things like citizenship and ethical standards in this document is what makes this document specifically a UHD statement. Sullivan asked him to qualify his statement; why shouldn't our students be ethical? Pavelich responded that it is not the role of the university to make students ethical.

Rangel said the original Gen Ed outcomes contained a reference to media that could be reframed if we were to choose to incorporate references to technology and to art. Documents currently refer to verbal communication, but the reference to media in the original document could be expanded to include non-verbal media and performance.

Johnson disagreed with Pavelich's claim that it is not the job of the university to make students ethical. As a science educator, he has been given a charge from the government to train students in ethical approaches to research, such as the treatment of human and animal subjects. He understands his argument is discipline-specific; nevertheless, he suspects most other disciplines share his view.

Lyons said the fact that we have an academic policy on honesty suggests this is one of our key values. He would not file academic dishonesty reports or take academic honesty into account when deciding whether to provide a student with a recommendation were this not the case.

Moosally said that she would have a problem with a document that referred to plagiarism; a statement on ethics should be broader and based on professional considerations. She is concerned

that the claims listed on the Gen Ed statement sound like outcomes. Could the description of the characteristics of the UHD student be contextualized within a statement of values? Pavelich said this could be done; we could say that UHD values ethical standards so we want students to exhibit ethical characteristics. Schmertz asked if there were positive ways of framing statements on ethics that did not imply negative behaviors. Pavelich said there were.

Beebe is concerned that the Gen Ed committee took the statement too lightly. The characteristics described will drive assessment; what is not in the goals statement will not be seen as requiring assessment. Also, if we don't see teaching our students to be ethical as a priority, why are we compelled by ethical requirements? Why do we have a committee for the protection of human subjects, have an academic honesty policy, take mandated UH quizzes on professional conduct? The outcomes will not be clear if this statement is not clear.

Lyons believes the discussion indicates the committee was given the wrong charge. The starting point needs to be the Gen Ed learning objectives, and this should drive the statement of the UHD graduate. Perhaps the Senate discussion needs to be tabled. He is not sure what the committee's next charge should be.

Pavelich indicated that if Senate discussion was seen as representative of faculty wishes, the document has failed and needs to be revisited by the committee. Lyons suggested that it might be more important to tell the Provost that the task assigned is unmanageable and that addressing the outcomes should come first.

Evans was on the committee that engaged the 1983 process and is concerned that the discussion is not as broadbased in terms of faculty participation as was the 1983 discussion. She thinks that we should review the 1983 document and that this will take more than a few months.

Moosally says she does not believe that working on this document precludes other suggestions like beginning with the outcomes or reviewing the 1983 report. She would like to see a plan from the Gen Ed committee about how the Gen Ed process will play out in terms of the larger goals of the Gen Ed program and what methods they suggest for getting broader input into this document.

Lyons asked Pavelich to take the discussion back to his committee, emphasized that his committee's effort was not a failure and commended Pavelich for being willing to take on what turned out to be a very difficult but productive discussion.

Discussion of Online Education Survey

Allen asked the Senate for feedback on the current version of the Faculty Senate online education survey report.

LaRose mentioned that the bar graphs delineating faculty responses are broken down inconsistently; all need to be divided in increments of either 20 or 10.

Pavelich and Kintzele said that there is conflict between the "majority agreement" section subtitle and Table R-4.

Evans thinks the recommendations section goes beyond the scope of the survey and thinks there needs to be time for senators to share the report with their departments.

Morgan thought it had been agreed in a previous meeting not to include the differences between have/have not taught online in the “areas of majority agreement” section. Moosally said she had understood the discussion to have centered on not foregrounding the disagreement in the framing of the report, rather than not including the data at all.

Lyons hopes to vote on the report next meeting.

Audience member Henney objected that there was no literature review included in the survey: “We would not produce this document as scholars.” Lyons said we could provide addenda and noted that the Senate had discussed inclusion of other literature but also felt compelled to ensure a timely process for release of the report.

The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Johanna Schmertz

Faculty Senate Secretary