

## **UHD Faculty Senate Meeting**

**September 7, 2010**

### **Minutes**

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

C. Bedard, R. Beebe, W. Botsford, R. Chiquillo, D. De la Pena, A. Eliassen, G. Evans, A. Gomez-Rivas, J. Jackson, K. Jegdic, P. Kintzele, N. LaRose, A. Pavelich, O. Paskelian, N. Rangel, L. Spears, N. Sullivan, F. Williams, K. Wright, V. Zafiris

**Absent:** M. Moosally, R. Pepper, Z. Zhou

After calling the meeting to order, Lyons asked new senators to introduce themselves. Senators Wright and Jegdic did. Lyons explained that the meeting's agenda would consist of over-the-summer reports from administrators and setting the FS agenda for the coming year.

### **Faculty Senate Officer Reports**

Lyons asked faculty to recognize Flores for coming through with faculty raises. We applauded. He then began his president's report.

Freshman Convocation: Lyons has heard nothing but praise for this pioneer effort. Around 700 FTIC students attended, and about 60 faculty. Malcolm Gladwell's *Outliers* is being used to kick off a new Common Reading program. An important component of the convocation is some sort of followup, in the form of future activities and communication with students. About 500 students escaped the convocation net. Lyons will ask for faculty help in contacting them.

Ombuds position: Michael Dressman stepped down from the Ombuds position after becoming Interim Provost, and his position needs to be filled by a tenured faculty member who has worked for at least ten years in a tenured position. Faculty should consult PS 10.A.18. for further information. Lyons put out an email call on August 27. Deadline for application is September 15 for a position that begins by Jan 1. FSEC, in concert with the Provost, will review nominations and make a recommendation to Faculty Senate by Oct. 15.

House Bill 2504: Lyons thanks Michelle Moosally and Melinda Kanner for ensuring a smooth process for posting syllabi and cv's in compliance with this bill. Although the bill also requires posting student evaluations, the UH system has not pushed this. "Minimal compliance" has been the overall approach to this bill. The requirement to post evaluations is, for faculty, the most sensitive and serious aspect of HB2504. Some discussion is going on and Lyons will keep us posted on this important issue.

Admissions Standards: At the end of spring, an admissions standards committee chaired by Dean Birchak proposed a two-tier system consisting of automatic vs. conditional acceptance. Senator Johnson is part of this committee. It will meet again soon. Lyons asked President Flores what

happened to the admissions standards and “how far did the process go.” Flores said “As far as I know, it’s still in the Academic Affairs Council.”

**Budget Reductions:** Flores sent a report to the university in July regarding the budget reduction process. Legislative Appropriations Request (LAR) hearing will be held Thursday. The LAR has been submitted/ will be submitted to legislature with 5% reductions. More extensive reductions are on the way re formula funding. President Flores has assured an open process that includes faculty input.

**Deans’ Model:** Greater responsibility in budget allocation has been given to the deans than has been the case previously. Faculty needs to know what possibilities exist for developing clear allocation processes that include their participation.

**Provost Screening Committee:** This committee is in place and has met twice. Funk and Associates has been hired again, and an ad has been posted in the Chronicle of Higher Education. The committee is working on the description to be posted on UHD’s website.

**BHAG:** We have come up with “UHD will be a premier city university engaging all students in high-impact experiences” as our Big Hairy Audacious Goal that will drive our decision-making. Shared governance principles and committees should develop venues and timetables for implementing the BHAG.

**Online Education:** FSEC is preparing a report which should be ready soon for presentation to Faculty Senate.

Faculty Senate Vice President Allen put out a call last Thursday for nominees for committees and asked senators to “talk these up” (but make sure nominees are willing to serve). The Faculty Development Leave Committee has openings in AH, ET, SS, CSM. The Faculty Awards Committee needs nominees for AH, CJ, CSM, ENG, ET, MMBA, and UE.

Faculty Senate Secretary Schmertz asked for a motion to approve the minutes. A motion was made and seconded, and the minutes were approved.

### **Report from President Flores**

Lyons asked President Flores to speak.

**Budget and Legislature:** Flores said he and VP Bradley were going to Austin Thursday (Sept. 9) to present the LAR to the state legislature. He will also request money for a Science and Technology Building and 800K in funding for the Scholars’ Academy.

**Name change:** Dr. Flores met with TX Senator Gallejos regarding the name change. The legislature has been handed a difficult plate containing an 18 billion shortfall in state budgets, redistricting and “rules change” issues, and a new Arizona-style immigrant birthright discussion.

All of these may detract from the legislators' focus on our planned name change. Nevertheless, Dr. Flores will be visiting legislators in the next few weeks to put our issues in front of them. Dr. Flores plans to focus on BHAG to spotlight our efforts.

Student Success: Dr. Flores asked if anyone had read the Houston Chronicle today, which talked about federal concerns about default loan rates in for-profit universities. UHD was mentioned in a sidebar and its default rates are not good either. He has already been visited by state representatives Dan Branch and Scott Hochberg, who are concerned about our 6-year graduation rate. Flores has shared with Lyons a written statement he made to Hochberg pledging to improve these rates. He offered his congratulations to those who made the freshman convocation happen.

Lyons mentioned a Houston Chronicle blog "Off the Kuff" by Charles Kuffner which cited the Washington Monthly article in which UHD was cited for its low retention rate. Flores pointed out, "We can respond to these blogs!"

### **Report from Interim Provost Dressman**

Dressman said he considered today's opportunity to address the Faculty Senate as the official beginning of his "provosture."

Ombuds: Dressman encourages applications for the Ombuds position he vacated upon learning of said provosture. There is currently only one applicant. The job promises to be a high-impact experience that will allow you to meet and train with other ombuds in worldwide governments and industries.

Planning Process: President Flores has given a preliminary nod to Dressman's vision for a planning process, to be discussed with the Vice Presidents on Wednesday morning. The plan is for departments to start the process by setting goals for "what we agree to do" regardless of budget allowances, and before engaging administration. In the fall, departments would set these goals internally, and they would be resolved and approved at the university level in the spring.

Lyons asked if this planning cycle would operate in conjunction with the University Planning Council. Dressman said it would not be the same planning council we have had, which typically put off making decisions "until we got there." Although departments are theoretically capable of making and acting on goals independent of the unit planning cycle, in practice planning has only moved forward on funding items. His new vision is for departments to get 3-4 goals approved at the university level, at which point "that's your commission" and that's how your department's success will be judged.

The WPE (Writing Proficiency Exam): Having recently abolished the WPE (Writing Proficiency Exam), Dressman now wants to put the writing success of students in the laps of the programs that graduate them, as this competency can't be addressed at the university level. In theory,

departments could set up their own writing proficiency exams, but he advises against it because the WPE as originally conceived measured an impromptu exam given under unusual circumstances and has never mirrored students' future workplace writing experiences.

Johnson asked if departments could use the SACS learning outcomes for writing as a tool for integrating writing into the majors.

Dressman: Yes. Properly administered, "W" courses, which are part of everyone's degree programs, would support revision and provide intervention as necessary in order to promote student competency in the requirements of the discipline.

We accepted them, we let them be majors. If they can't do the work, don't graduate them. There's something wrong with a situation where students graduate with As and Bs but fail the WPE. Let's have departments take responsibility for their majors.

### **Report from Ed Apodaca (Vice President for Student Services and Enrollment Management)**

As of the morning of this meeting, we had 13,087 students. If these students make the September payment deadline, they will be official numbers. We are at an all-time enrollment high—we just didn't reach our target of 13,125. New FTIC's account for 8% of our total enrollment. 75% of our new students are transfer students; 25% are FTIC.

Last fall we had 1041 freshmen, of whom 468 did not return this fall (45%). 35% of these students completed zero courses. Of the 573 students who returned, 55% are in good standing and 45% are marginal. 28% are in real trouble and "won't be with us next semester if we don't do something." We need to target the 28% not in good standing, push those of marginal standing up, and make phone calls to those 24% who did not return but are in good standing to make sure they return and don't transfer elsewhere. We are second from the bottom in our rate of student return (TSU being the bottom).

Good news is we are 13<sup>th</sup> out of 35 in the number of students we graduate. This is a raw number, not a percentage rate.

Evans said that transfer students are an obvious area of growth for us. What are we doing to make sure we are the transfer institution of choice? Apodaca said our top "feeder schools" for transfers are, in order of most transfers to least, HCC, Lone Star, UH, and San Jacinto. We have a joint admissions process with Lone Star and are working on similar arrangements with HCC and San Jacinto. Joint admissions enables us to identify UHD students early on and make sure they take the right courses for their majors.

Lyons said that by virtue of his new position as Faculty Senate President, he is paying attention to retention numbers and graduation rates as never before, and they don't look good. He

encourages faculty to widen their perspectives beyond the classroom door. These numbers, along with the BHAG of providing students with a “high impact experience,” give him a target to reach as a teacher. He encourages us to let the “bigger picture follow us into the classroom.”

Johnson noted, regarding enrollment, that there is a strong perception among faculty that we are being “outgunned” in city advertising. Lone Star, UH, and HCC have TV ads, and have billboards going up. However, our billboards seem to be coming down; he has seen no advertising since spring. Sikka noted that UH has been aggressively marketing the greater Houston community.

Apodaca responded that the advertising market is especially competitive; all universities are dealing with state budget cuts and are targeting enrollment growth as an obvious revenue source. We have recently raised our number of community college recruiters from 3 to 5; we’ve been trying to compete with universities that have many more recruiters.

### **Report from David Bradley (Vice President for Administration and Finance)**

**Budget:** Bradley and Flores are headed to Austin Thursday to present the LAR (Legislative Appropriations Request)—the official “kickoff” to the legislative year. Things will be quiet until after November elections; at that point we start preparing for legislative sessions. In January, state comptroller will make a budget estimate announcement for 2012-2013. Bradley will not be surprised if the shortfall goes above the 18 billion forecasted in the newspapers. We made budget reductions of 5% for each of 2010 and 2011; it now appears we will need to make 5% cuts for each of 2012 and 2013 as well. The 2010-2011 cuts put us at 95% of our operating base in the previous legislative session. We are dealing with 2.6 million less per year, which will be pro-rated to various units, and Flores promises that the academic unit will take a smaller hit than the rest.

**Street Construction:** Metro is in the “utility phase” of construction north of campus, which means only the side of the road is involved in construction. Metro projects late October at the earliest for tearing up Main. We are currently working with the city and Metro for a 4-way stop with signaling and a pedestrian crosswalk at the Main and Naylor intersection. This will also clear up the problems at the Shea St. intersection.

**Library Construction:** Phase 2 of the library construction is ongoing, albeit slowly.

**New Stairs:** Stairs are being put in the west end of One Main, connecting 8, 9, and 10 to TTLC.

**And a Roof:** Chris McCall says we have a contract with a roofer for the North Tower of One Main, where Social Sciences is located. The project begins mid-October and will last three months.

The Green Building: We are in conversations with the Buffalo Bayou Partnership and its board; there is general support for the project.

And a Master Plan: We have an RFQ (Request for Qualification) out for a consultant to help us develop a campus master plan that will be in line with our Strategic Plan.

### **Report from Johanna Wolfe (Vice President for Advancement and External Relations)**

We have 1.1-1.2 million in donations coming in this year in donated contributions, and we must grow that number by being strategic. Wolfe has met with all the deans regarding their visions for their colleges. We are also working with Apodaca's and Davis's offices to be more strategic in light of limited funds for recruitment and advertising.

Public Relations Director Sue Davis stated that we have 5 billboards up in the NW area advertising our NW facility and are using Facebook and Google to advertise the rest of UHD. If you are not in the 16-35 age group, you've probably not seen the Google ads. Flores observed that of 1200 new enrollments, 500 are tied to NW facility. Despite limited advertising funds, NW facility accounts for much of our growth.

Lyons: It's great that we have "5 billboards out there" (Northwest) but we need "10 billboards around here."

John Lane, new President of Staff Council, was introduced. Most of us know him from Blackbaord Vista. He was also a member of the BHAG team.

### **Report from Ali Abedi, President of SGA**

SGA membership and student voter registration: SGA has grown from its previous 30 members to "knocking on the door" of the 50 members they pledged to administration. SGA members went to the Texas Student Association (TSA) this summer, which met in Houston. UHD also hosted one of two regional TSA meetings. Voter registration is a key emphasis; more registered student voters means more clout in Austin. Houston is shooting for 50,000 registered voters out of its 100,000 students. One goal of Houston's TSA is creating a Mayor's Advisory Council that parallels the one in Austin.

Student Response Survey: An important factor in enrollment and retention is student life (or lack thereof). Students are filling out surveys ranking their top priorities, areas where the university "is lacking." Food, parking and absence of a student union are key issues: on the latter, UHD students are "unique" in their willingness to pay more in student fees to fund a student center. Campus security is (to Abedi's surprise) somewhat lower on the list. Childcare is important; SGA has been taking pictures of students carrying kids to class as support for their case. Fewer than 4% of students are involved in a student organization. SGA senators may be

requesting time in classes to administer 3-minute surveys so they can reach their goal of 4000 student responses by the September 16 Town Hall meeting.

On food options: Students only like Chick-Fil-A, says Abedi. Johnson notes that the most healthy food option in the cafeteria is also the most expensive.

Point of information (or perhaps just a taunt to unfed senators): Moody Towers at UH now has a cafeteria ranked first in the nation, incorporating a \$7.50 all-you-can-eat option with 5 chefs making made to order meals. Aramark's contract is up for renegotiation soon at UH.

Lyons: UH is putting 40 million (paid for by student fees) into renovating its student center and is kicking another 40 million into an addition.

### **Report from Tammis Thomas (Student Success Coordinator)**

First Year Common Reading/Convocation Program: This is point number 5 in an overall retention plan presented to Flores, Dressman, and FSEC this summer. Common reading programs are nothing new; 290 universities have them in place. They are meant to create community among students and between students and faculty, and thereby “tether” students to the university. Malcolm Gladwell's book *Outliers* was chosen for its theme of student success and its academic tone. Stanford used it last year. 600 students attended the Freshman Convocation, of whom 530 wrote the essays requested. 60 faculty leaders responded to a single call last semester for faculty discussion leaders for the convocation; Thomas praises their dedication. Funds were provided by Achieving the Dream; Gene Preuss turned over \$40,000 to fund the First-Year Common Reading/Freshman Convocation Program for the freshman class of 2010 and 2011.

Books: Out of the 1400 books ordered, 300 went to faculty teaching freshmen, 860 were given to freshmen at freshman orientation, 150 given to students after Aug 6. The remaining 90 went to Deans, SI leaders, peer tutors, student ambassadors in freshman orientation, people who taught in summer FSSP, etc.

Follow-up events: There will be an awards ceremony honoring the 22 awards winners. Thomas is working with student schedules to fix the date. (It has now been scheduled, according to Skyline.) A welcome week is planned for the end of September including first-generation students and faculty who were themselves first-generation college students. On Oct 13, Lisa Morano and Jerry Johnson will present a talk titled, “*Outliers* and Your Academic Student Success.”

Request: Thomas requests two things from faculty--ideas for additional events building on the convocation's momentum and recommendations for next year's Common Reading text.

Lyons will be sending out an email to faculty urging them to call the remaining 600 students who were not covered by the convocation and orientation efforts. FS is urged to step up to the plate

and agree to make calls and “entice, push, shove” faculty in their departments to share the calls. It sends a good message if FS gets involved. Allen suggested we develop a script. Lyons agreed.

A list of possible FS agenda items was provided and senators were asked to rank their top 5 agenda items. Lyons reminded senators to recruit faculty for committee spots or volunteer themselves. Dressman urged senators to recruit their senior colleagues in particular, as their expertise has been missed and needs to be re-invested on behalf of the university.

Sikka asked if the Office of Sponsored Programs was a possible agenda item on the list. It needs more resources and improved service. A one person operation is not sufficient for the kind of work the office needs to do. She gave the example of a grant agency having to leave a voice message because that person was on leave. A motion was made and seconded to adjourn, and senators passed their ranked checklists up to Lyons on their way out.

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