UHD Faculty Senate Meeting

September 6, 2011

Minutes

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

J. Ahmad, C. Bachman, M. Benevides, C. Burnett, A. Chiaviello, G. Evans, S. Farris, A. Gomez-Rivas, V. Hrynkiv, P. Kintzele , P. Li, C. Nguyen, S. Penkar, A. Pavelich, R. Scott, A. Sikka, L. Spears, K. Switzer, W. Waller, K. Wright, V. Zafiris

Absent: D. Shelley

Report from Johanna Wolfe, Vice President for Advancement and External Affairs

UHD is beginning a marketing and branding initiative. The first phase is working with consultants to identify UHD's core values and public perception. Wolfe's office met with alumni after the convocation. There will be focus groups with faculty, staff, and students within the next two weeks; Senate President Allen will send out invitations. The next step will be a workshop in September.

Evans asked if the focus group sessions could be held at multiple locations so that all could attend. Wolfe said yes.

Senate President's Report

Allen said he would send out an official President's Report soon. The main news in the last two weeks has to do with Rank and Tenure processes. Flores has said he wants this year's tenure and promotion candidates to be "held harmless" whether they follow the portfolio format passed down from Provost Chapman or the one contained in current policy (P.S.10.A.01). Last week Chapman sent a similar memo to chairs. However, the R&T committees across the university are making independent recommendations to their faculty about which format would be best to follow. From Allen's perspective, the inconsistencies present potential problems.

The second piece of news is that UHD has been approached by UH System to help deliver and create a consortium program in nursing with other system universities. Chapman met with FSEC to discuss the variables. There is uncertainty about whether we will go ahead with this opportunity. However, Chapman would like UHD to pursue other consortium opportunities, particularly at the graduate level.

Special Order of Business: Resolution on Rank and Tenure

Schmertz opened a discussion on a resolution on Rank and Tenure placed before Senate. (Please refer to the draft attached at the end of the minutes.)

Pavelich objected to the second bullet in the "be it resolved" section, which resolved that President Flores extend the deadline for submission of Rank and Tenure materials. He said that

was his only objection to the resolution, and it was based on the tight timetable for all parties laid out in the Rank and Tenure policy.

Sikka noted that the confusion created for candidates and department rank and tenure committees by the guidelines sent by the provost made an extension fair. Her department R&T committee learned of the Provost's new guidelines "through the grapevine," making it difficult for that committee to prepare itself and its candidates properly.

Chiaviello said there should be no confusion if all candidates follow the guidelines currently stated by policy. If candidates have been following policy, they should not need an extension.

Bachmann (who is going up for tenure this October) said that extending the deadline will not help if she does not know which of the two guidelines is the better one to follow. Her department told her she could use either format.

Lyons said that the point of the resolution was to emphasize that candidates should follow current policy. To state the importance of policy and then extend a deadline stated in that policy is inconsistent.

Ahmad said she was concerned that an extension would create an expectation that the bar was raised, due to the candidates' "extra time."

Evans called the question on striking the second bullet in this section. The vote was 21 in favor of eliminating the section on extending the deadline for candidates from the resolution, with 2 abstentions.

Waller asked about the third bullet of the "be it resolved" section, which stated that the University Rank and Tenure Committee be convened as soon as possible to develop amendments to the R&T policy—why that committee and not the normal shared governance committee for faculty affairs (FAC)?

Allen responded that the University Rank and Tenure Committee will have to deal with the divergent portfolios that will emerge as a result of candidate's choosing either format, and also with complications that will emerge as a result of some of these portfolios being electronic— there may be issues they are not ready for, so convening early may head off potential problems.

Evans added that this third bullet includes the normal shared governance procedures in its language, but that the University Rank and Tenure Committee was the best place to begin the process of amending policy. Its members are all tenured and most members have long experience with the tenure process. The University Rank and Tenure Committee could send its recommendations to the Faculty Affairs Committee, lessening their burden.

Preuss stated that the resolution does not ask the University Rank and Tenure Committee to review the policy. He sees why that committee should meet before next spring but is unclear why it should meet really soon.

Lyons said that the section under discussion said "develop amendments to the R&T policy." He noted that it would be amendments to existing policy that would be recommended (i.e. new dossier guidelines that were in step with current policy). He suggested replacing "develop" with "recommend." Evans noted that changing the guidelines would be an amendment to the policy, because the guidelines are part of policy. She proposed the phrase "develop recommended amendments for FAC to consider."

Ahmad said that this section refers to future R&T processes, whereas the rest of the resolution is focused on what candidates should do this year. We need to add language to the third bullet to distinguish present from future practices.

Pavelich said the resolution says "let's follow current policy this year"—that is the point of the first "be it resolved" bullet.

Bachmann said she was concerned that forcing candidates to follow the guidelines in current policy when another option had been made available would increase their stress. Lyons responded that the Senate can only state its advice, not "force" anything; individual R&T department committees can and have offered their own advice. The departments retain primary responsibility in advising their candidates.

Schmertz moved to strike the third bullet. The only bullet in the "Be it resolved" section would read as follows: "That, the Senate advises departmental rank and tenure committees to follow the guidelines established in P.S. 10.A.01." The motion passed 21-0, with 2 abstentions.

Waller asked how we will communicate to Provost Chapman and R&T committees that we are willing to redesign the R&T dossier provided things proceed systematically and according to policy? Department Rank and Tenure committees need to be talking about their portfolios.

Sikka stated that the resolution needed to be sent to the president and all other concerned parties and posted on the website. She made a motion that we place on the agenda for the next meeting a discussion of what the charges to all our shared governance committees will be. This could include a review of R&T policy. The motion carried 21-0.

Evans called a Point of Information on revising PS 10.A.01. That policy's guidelines for preparing the tenure/promotion policy are part of policy, so revising the dossier guidelines is revising policy. She informed the Senate that it was important to consult the UH System website for any SAM (System Administrative Memorandum) that might pertain to our policies. In the case of Rank and Tenure, there is a SAM that states each of the system universities must determine its own R&T processes through shared governance procedures. The SAM also says that changes to these policies will be "subject to final approval of the Chancellor"—an approval which will not happen without consent from System's Office of General Counsel ("legal"). Evans also noted that it is important to look at BORs. She tried to look up what they had to say about R&T policies but the website was down.

Allen said FSEC would find the SAM that Evans referred to and send it out for next meeting. (To access the SAM, go to **http://www.uh.edu/af/universityservices/policies/sam/6AcadmicAffairs/6A9.pdf** and scroll down to #4).

A final version of the resolution will be sent to the faculty assembly and posted to the UHD website.

Old Business: Resolution on Academic Shared Governance

Allen said that Provost Chapman has seen this resolution. Chapman likes the timeline we included. He dislikes the next to last bullet statement [Section R8] which states that any revision to our Shared Governance policy (PS 01.A.03) should include section 2.9 of the current policy verbatim: "Amendment of this shared governance policy shall be by the consent of the University's faculty senate and president." The Provost told Allen he believes the System and President Flores won't like it either.

Switzer asked for confirmation that Chapman had said that he didn't want verbiage in the current shared governance policy to be included in the new policy. Allen said it was this piece of language specifically that the Provost objected to. Switzer pointed out that section 2.9 currently exists in policy, and asked why the Provost had objected to it. Allen said the provost's objection was that he felt it made the Faculty Senate and the president appear to be on equal footing. Allen said he did not pursue the issue further at the time.

Evans made a motion that the resolution be adopted. Allen said it couldn't be adopted yet because there was a blank space left open for Senators to decide how large a majority vote would be needed for Faculty Senate to give their consent to future revisions of the shared governance policy.

Sikka made a motion to open the resolution up for discussion. She recommended that the majority be 4/5.

Preuss noted that 4/5 equals 80%, and that 80% seemed a little large. Evans said that at least one time in the past, the shared governance document was approved by the whole faculty assembly. In this case it is only the Senate that votes, and she would not be comfortable passing a policy that did not have a large degree of unanimity among Senators. She suggested 60% to 2/3 majority.

Pavelich said he favored a simple majority. Colleges and departments have different needs and agendas, and a simple majority vote would be significant.

Farris said Pavelich's remark was counterintuitive and had just persuaded her that a simple majority would guarantee a lot of dissatisfied faculty. If we have to work that much harder to arrive at a policy that 80% of the Senate agrees to, we will have a stronger policy.

Chiaviello says a large chunk of faculty exists that is less informed about shared governance than Senate, and that a 2/3 agreement in Senate would be "remarkable."

Sikka noted that the Academic Shared Governance policy (PS 01.A.03) is an "overarching policy that—at least on paper—guides the culture of this institution."She rejected the notion of a simple majority because of the fact that a department's representation on the Senate is proportional to its size; smaller departments have fewer Senators. An entire college (e.g. CPS) could disagree with a policy and the policy would still pass. A larger majority would make it more likely that the smaller departments and colleges could have influence on the outcome. Evans agreed about the problems with proportional representation and added that an agenda could be driven by a large department. "If we as university faculty can't agree on a shared governance document, we deserve whatever we get." We will lose voice as a faculty if we fail to agree.

Chiaviello said the converse is true—sometimes, as in congress, a small minority can drive the majority if the general public (i.e. faculty assembly) is uninformed or does not care.

Spears said that the current shared governance policy was installed through a simple majority of the faculty assembly. Had the standard been higher, the policy would not have changed, and we would be better off today. Nevertheless, 80% is too high a bar for anything that contains such potential for controversy. Spears said he would like the shared governance policy to change so that Senate has more power than it does now.

Preuss called the question on a 4/5 majority. The motion was defeated with 6 in favor, 16 opposed, and one abstention.

Farris moved for a 2/3 majority. The motion carried with 22 in favor and one opposed.

Preuss moved to approve the resolution and Schmertz seconded. The motion was passed, 22-0.

Sikka said when she saw the agenda she was concerned there was too much on the Senate's plate. She commended Allen, Schmertz and the Senate for moving the Senate through some very difficult issues. Having been a past Senate president, she knows how difficult it is to bring people with disparate views together to get things done. She reminded Senators about the shared governance conference in Austin (October 29). Shared governance is not a unified construct; it is constantly evolving, and as many of us as possible should get to know the various models out there.

A final draft of the resolution will be sent to the faculty assembly and posted on the Faculty Senate website.

New Business: Senate Resolution on Course Releases and Coordinators

A draft of this resolution is appended to the minutes.

Allen asked Farris to open the discussion, since she had authored most of the resolution. Chiaviello pointed out that advisors had had course releases eliminated as well; he did not think the resolution covered a full enough scope on the course release cuts.

Sikka called a point of order—we needed first to put the resolution on the table for discussion. Sikka moved to introduce the resolution for consideration; Preuss seconded.

Pavelich said he felt the crux of the resolution was in its last bullet point, which said that agreements made with faculty for course releases should be honored. However, he suspected that the answer from administration would be that there was nothing that could be done. He moved that the language suggest that either the course releases must be honored or faculty should be released from the expectation of performing those duties compensated for by the releases.

Preuss said he thought the heart of the resolution had to do with notification being sudden and unexplained. Was the point not that there needed to be a "public, or at least more open consideration" of the basis for the cuts? Farris pointed out that this was already included in the resolution.

Chiaviello said that the cuts this semester were a fait accompli and substituting course overload pay for them was unlikely to happen. He suggested we focus on remedying the problem in the future; resolutions are weakened when they are not realistic. He would like the compensation and duties articulated in job descriptions in the future.

Farris asked if Chiaviello was suggesting that administration be fair "in the future" but not now. She asked if someone who had five course releases cut to two should just be told "Oh well, quit if you want." She pointed out that several faculty holding these positions had already done much of the work for their releases.

Lyons said he saw the resolution as a (legitimate) complaint, but perhaps a resolution was not appropriate. FSEC and others have already registered their dismay at the way things were handled. He feels blame for the poor communication and process relating to these cuts "rests with a large number of people." He thinks some deans and some chairs did not convey information that had been given to them awhile back. Some departments had already begun the process of cutting back. The key issue for him was that Senate Leadership was promised an audit on course releases for a long time, going back to when Dr. Dressman was interim provost, but this information was never released. He would like a university-wide inventory of course releases and their criteria. If we do not receive satisfaction on our request for an audit, that might be the basis for a future resolution. We have already passed two strong resolutions today; Lyons asked that Senate restrict their energies to those two.

Evans stated that the administration administers these resolutions and can take them away. One of the problems with this resolution is that the course release situation is not the same across the university—her college pulled the releases in June, and the faculty were not required to continue with their duties. One issue that we should consider is that a number of course releases cover duties that could clearly be handled by staff. Our staff shortage remains hidden by the fact that faculty are willing to keep doing these jobs, and so we never get the chance to have this conversation about increasing staff support. Faculty energy and time should be spent on those areas that are their true areas of expertise, such as interaction with students and curriculum development and leadership.

Waller says that big courses will get neglected as a result of these course release cuts. One example would be pre-Calculus, which enrolls 30% of our students in any given semester, and it is a "huge barrier course" and employs lots of adjuncts. He has seen the job done well and poorly, and if administered poorly, UHD will have a hard time meeting the goals it has set for itself. We have to encourage the administration to go back and take a look at the damage they have just done and how it will impact enrollment and retention.

Preuss agrees with the previous speakers and notes that the real damage will be done to the students. Given the state of the economy, some of the releases may be gone for good. Are we really in a position to demand the course releases back, given uncertainties about how the economy will impact our future budgets? We need to find out how the cuts were made at the department level. He supports the audit FSEC has asked for. He made a motion to table the resolution for now due to time concerns and raise it again at our next meeting. We need time to talk amongst ourselves and figure out how to get an audit.

Chiaviello said that the resolution should include codifying course releases in policy.

Motion was made and seconded to table the resolution and take it up as the first order of business. The motion passed with 19 in favor and 3 opposed.

Sikka said that this resolution should be seen in the light of future cuts, and warned that she was informed the faculty assessment coordinator releases would be cut beginning Fall 2012. What does this mean for faculty's role in assessment and meeting our long-term accreditation goals? She also noted that if we place our emphasis in this resolution on success, as Preuss and others suggest, we need to be less concerned about whether the cuts affected all colleges in the same way and more concerned about the fact that the courses that are part of students' core curriculum were the most affected by the cuts. On behalf of our students, we need to give this resolution our full attention at the next meeting.

Schmertz agreed with Sikka and suggested that a resolution was not necessarily a solution to a problem but rather an expression of faculty will. She also noted that the course release cuts were a university-wide problem even though the cuts hit some departments more stringently than others. We do have evidence in many cases that administration was at fault for the last-minute notifications; it was not the fault of the chairs. The fact that some administrative decisions were made at the last minute should concern all of us, and this resolution is meant to express faculty sentiment about it.

Other New Business: Faculty Committees

Chapman has opted to freeze many committees, e.g. Faculty Development Leave and Grievance Committees. Last year's grievance committee members whose terms were set to expire just got letters of reappointment. Should we go ahead and hold committee elections per policy so that we will have committees in place? He noted that the resolutions we had passed today both emphasized the importance of adhering to current policy.

Schmertz moved that we hold elections per normal procedure. Allen said that would mean giving the charge to CEC (Credentials and Elections Committee). Sikka called the question. Allen reframed the motion to focus specifically on getting the grievance committee election done. Motion carried 21-1, with one abstention.

Allen stated that the Faculty Climate Survey Committee has "fallen apart." Per Faculty Senate Constitution, since Allen is no longer President-Elect, he will not chair. Current President-Elect Preuss will take his place. Allen notes the committee is down two members –LaRose and Bedard (on leave). Allen wants to put it on the faculty's radar that we need two volunteers. Preuss nominated Waller and Lyons. Sikka moved to table discussion of choosing members. Schmertz asked if the nominees accepted their nominations. They declined. Allen assumed the discussion was tabled.

Allen's final item was the Committee on Online Education. At our final meeting of the spring semester, Chair Cindy Stewart made a presentation to the Senate containing several "action items." He asks the Senate to review these action items and consider which of them the Senate wishes to go forward with. Stewart's memo was sent to Senators along other materials for this meeting: he will send it out again "with his next bundle of things." We will also need at least two more members for this committee: Beebe has resigned and Jackson has taken on too many extra duties as a new interim chair to continue on the committee. Allen will send out the criteria for membership. Evans noted that the transition to Blackboard Learn was going to be challenging but doable, and the committee needed to be working to ensure the transition happens as soon as possible.

Respectfully submitted,

Johanna Schmertz, Ph.D.

Associate Professor of English

Faculty Senate Secretary

APPENDICES: Drafts of 2 resolutions

UHD Senate Resolution on Rank and Tenure

__ by __ vote of Faculty Senate __/__/2011

Whereas

- PS 10.A.01 outlines the procedures for promotion and tenure for faculty;
- P.S. 10.A.2.3.3 specifies that "By the first Monday in October, each candidate submits a detailed rank and/or tenure report (prepared according to the attached guidelines entitled "Guidelines and Format for the Promotion/Tenure Report") to the department rank and tenure committee chair, to the department chair, and to the dean." thus making the attached guidelines part of the PS statement, all of which was approved by UHS Legal prior to implementation at UHD.
- Probationary faculty up for tenure and promotion this year have completed second and fourth year review under the current policy;
- New guidelines for promotion and tenure dossier were announced by the Provost in August 2011, limiting its size and content, followed by an email allowing promotion and/or tenure candidates a choice between the two (i.e., following current policy or the revised guidelines);
- The guidelines have not been submitted through the shared governance process or approved by UHS Legal.
- Promotion and tenure decisions are made by various administrative and faculty groups, with university-wide promotion and tenure committee reviewing all dossiers;
- Some departments have advised candidates to follow the procedures outlined in PS 10.A.01 while other departments have advised candidates to submit in whichever form that they prefer;
- Inconsistencies in dossier content and organization will create difficulties for consistent review, especially at the university level;
- The University Rank and Tenure Committee may not yet be prepared to handle electronic submissions, especially regarding issues surrounding confidentiality.

Be it resolved:

- That, the Senate advises departmental rank and tenure committees to follow the guidelines established in PS 10.A.01;
- That, President Flores extend the deadline for submission of dossiers to allow candidates to complete the requirements for dossier submissions;
- That, the University Rank and Tenure Committee be convened as soon as possible to develop amendments to the R&T Policy for consideration through the shared governance process outlined in PS 01.A.01that provide for a more efficient, environmentally friendly format for R&T Dossiers that utilizes the full range of electronic tools available for the process of review and recommendation at each level.

UHD Senate Resolution on Reduction of Course Releases for Coordinators

__ by __ vote of Faculty Senate __/__/2011

Whereas

- The late-August course release cuts went well beyond the more modest reductions requested by the Provost in June, especially in the departments of English (52% course release reduction), Social Sciences (53%), Computer and Mathematical Sciences (65%), and Natural Sciences (66%).
- Faculty granted these course releases serve as program coordinators and assistant chairs and are responsible for over-seeing the courses most crucial to student success, that is, the core curriculum. This work includes curricular development, pedagogical leadership, staffing and scheduling classes, working with adjunct faculty, problem-solving with and advising students, assessment, and, increasingly, policing compliance with state mandates;
- Faculty who had agreed to take these important leadership roles had verbal and in some cases written agreements about their compensation and had already performed a significant amount of the work when they were notified, one or two business days before the semester began, that their prior agreements would not be honored;
- The Faculty Senate is greatly concerned by the lack of notice regarding the full scope of these cuts, given the disruption to course scheduling and compensation commitments made to faculty prior to their acceptance of these administrative responsibilities;
- The Faculty Senate is greatly concerned about the ability of the University to reach the ambitious goals for retention and graduation outlined in the forthcoming Strategic Plan without effective leadership at the program level, particularly those programs that serve large numbers of general education students;
- The university will have a difficult time finding faculty willing to take on these positions lacking adequate compensation;
- A university-wide audit of course releases was apparently carried out during school year 2010-11.

Be it resolved:

- Generally, that the university leadership (faculty, staff, and administrators) should decide collaboratively and transparently on budget cuts, minimizing impact on the instructional function of the university;
- Specifically, that President Flores and Provost Chapman involve the Faculty Senate leadership in budget cuts and provide sufficient advance notice of these changes to the university community.
- The Senate requests a systematic and publicly reported audit of course releases; this audit should include determination of whether elements of the work currently done by faculty could more economically and efficiently be conducted by staff.
- Course releases and work performed for them should take place in the same semester (that is, work performed during the summer semesters should be compensated in the summer