

UHD Faculty Senate Meeting

November 2, 2010

Minutes

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

C. Bedard, R. Beebe, R. Chiquillo, D. De la Pena, A. Gomez-Rivas, A. Eliassen, G. Evans, K. Jegdic, P. Kintzele, N. LaRose, M. Moosally, O. Paskelian, R. Pepper, N. Rangel, L. Spears, N. Sullivan, K. Wright, V. Zafiris, Z. Zhou

Absent: J. Jackson, F. Williams

Lyons reviewed the meeting's agenda and the October 19 minutes were approved, with the change that Ryan Pepper was recorded as present.

Old Business

Report from Faculty Senate President Phil Lyons

Provost Search: Airport interviews will be conducted before Thanksgiving. Still to be decided was whether candidates would be brought to campus December or January.

THECB (Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board) statement on low-producing programs: THECB has begun to focus more closely on identifying and eliminating "low-producing programs." Under the old regime, bachelor's through doctoral degree programs were reviewed every four years. The required number of graduates per year was 12 grads every 3 years for a bachelor's degree, 8 every two years for a master's, and 4 every year for a doctoral degree. Under the new regime, programs will be reviewed every five years, and associate's degrees would be added to the review process. Associate's degree programs and bachelor's degree programs will be required to graduate 25 students every 5 years, master's degree programs must graduate 15 every 3 years, and doctoral programs must graduate 10 students every other year.

Moosally asked if Lyons was sure the new requirement for doctoral programs was 10 graduates per 2-year period. Lyons said this was indeed what was stated in the THECB report.

Pavelich asked what happens to programs identified as low-producing under the new rules change. Lyons said they would be "killed," and Moosally added that there were some criteria under which appeals would be considered by THECB, such as programs with high industry or local demand, or programs that fall under state "closing the gap" requirements. Lyons said he hoped we would get data from THECB soon to see where our programs stand.

Pavelich will report at the next Faculty Senate meeting on the Gen Ed committee's work toward defining the profile of the UHD graduate.

SACS is willing to consider the Northwest site a “relocation” of Cinco Ranch and TUCS programs, so there will be no need to file a “substantive changes” report with them. This is not the case for Cy-Fair or Kingwood which do require substantive change reports.

After he gets back from Taiwan, Interim Provost Dressman will convene a meeting between the SACS Steering Committee, the Gen Ed Advisory Committee and the deans to determine the charges and responsibilities of the Gen Ed committee with regard to the SACS report, and streamline the process.

Report from Interim Provost Michael Dressman

Dressman is going to Taiwan to pursue pledges of continued cooperation with two universities there. Originally President Flores was scheduled to make the trip. Dressman will return November 9 and expects to be back at work on Nov 10.

The Provost’s office is preparing a presentation on UHD’s high-impact initiatives for the Board of Regents meeting on Nov. 17. Dressman hopes to get system backing for the UHD/ Buffalo Bayou Partnership’s acquisition of the Coffee Building for UHD use. Moosally asked if UHD is going to bring any academic issues up at the BOR meetings. Dressman replied that the Geosciences program and MBA program still had steps to go through at the Provost’s Council, so nothing academic would be on the agenda.

Chiquillo asked if she could raise the issue of her department’s concerns about the wintermester with the Provost. Those concerns were pay level, the short amount of time between the end of December and the beginning of wintermester to work with IT to get a course online, and whether a full semester’s coursework could really be compressed into three weeks. Dressman acknowledged these concerns and said that those faculty members who had agreed to teach the wintermester were under no compulsion to do so and were aware of the terms and conditions involved. He also said that HCC had been doing wintermesters for four years, and their sections for this wintermester had already filled.

Report from Vice President for Administration and Finance David Bradley

The Chancellor made a surprise visit to campus yesterday to look over the International Coffee Building (the purchase previously alluded to by Dr. Dressman).

With elections over, we should start to get word on state budget shortfalls and requested cuts. Currently we have been asked to cut 10% from our budgets; System says this may become 15%.

Two new levels of parking will be added to Visitor Parking starting in December and continuing through the summer. During this period, Visitor Parking will be moved to the bottom two levels of Faculty/Staff Parking, putting faculty and chair parking out of play.

Facilities master planning begins next Monday. In the long term, we need to build at least one more student parking lot and replace the current faculty/staff parking garage.

Sullivan asked if there could be an audit of buddy parking; people with buddy stickers don't always use their designated spaces. Bradley responded that this should probably be done; violations were particularly notable on the roof area. The problem may be lack of police department manpower to enforce the rules, as the stickers are clearly distinguishable from the rest.

Bedard asked where things stood with regard to getting parking for the Commerce Building. Bradley replied that efforts had been made to acquire property on Fannin and Franklin which could be used for a parking garage, but the owner is asking more than we can afford.

Moosally asked what Metro's new timeline was. Bradley replied that work on the light rail had been delayed to April-May 2011.

Online Education Faculty Senate Survey Report (FSEC member Michelle Moosally)

A draft of the Senate subcommittee's report on last spring's Faculty Senate survey was distributed. Moosally noted its key features: percentages and raw numbers will replace the original bar charts in the final report, and data has been separated into two tables: 1.) items of general agreement (60% or more) and 2.) items with varying degrees of agreement (over 50% but with some division along the lines of have/have not taught online). She asked for discussion on what data should be stressed, particularly with the more ambiguous second category, and what recommendations should emerge from the shared positions.

Sullivan asked if number of total respondents and their breakdown could be addressed.

Pavelich suggested that data showing 50% or more consensus of opinion should be included and described as a majority view; items under 50% should be discarded. He said the report should also indicate that there was a significant difference of opinion among faculty on whether online courses should be flagged on student transcripts, a difference that broke down according to whether the respondent had taught online or not. (The latter agreed by 63% that course delivery mode should be identified, compared to 36% for the former.)

Evans said that no publicly funded schools in Texas currently flag online courses.

Johnson said that Louisiana universities do flag these courses; in fact, some UHD transfer students from LA have been told that their online courses will not transfer. Furthermore, the deans of medical schools in TX have decided that within 5 years, they will require online courses be identified as such. Laboratory sciences are of particular concern; there is some suspicion among the medical school deans that the use of syringes, beakers, and pipettes cannot be managed online.

Moosally added that state CPA certification guidelines also limit which courses can be taught online. Also, some businesses will not reimburse students to take online courses. Given the uncertainty about how online education is perceived by external constituencies, she believes we should stress the need for further research into these issues in the report from Faculty Senate.

Evans said that flagging courses as online could hurt students in some cases, and that decisions should be made on a discipline or school basis. Sullivan said that Evans' comments betrayed an awareness of the negative perceptions attached to online courses. She said we need to survey TX graduate programs and employers to fully assess the potential impact for students of online courses so that we make our decisions about the direction of online education with our eyes open.

Lyons said there is much national data gathered on the impact of online education; this could help guide our decisions.

Pavelich suggested we not debate the question of online education but rather return to what the report should emphasize about the survey findings. Allen mentioned that the written comments from the survey have been coded, and they will address some of the questions of quality and social justice previously alluded to.

Johnson said that points of strong consensus should be most heavily emphasized and differences of faculty opinion should be framed as a need for more communication on the issues concerned.

Evans suggested that the experience differential should be emphasized as a way to explain differences. Morgan said there should not be an "experience" breakdown on the issues on which consensus was most apparent. Moosally said that the subcommittee concurred on the point made by Morgan.

Kintzele asked if there were any system policies on online education, or were we "trailblazing." Moosally responded that there is no system policy, but we are not "trailblazing" when it comes to our implementation of online offerings. UH-Victoria is offering a large percentage of its courses online and faculty don't meet face-to-face very often; they even have a "virtual" Faculty Senate.

Lyons: Currently 30% of our faculty teach or have taught courses online. Should we frame the survey in terms of the larger picture of online education, so that the survey also serves an educational purpose? Moosally responded that time may not permit anything extensive along these lines, but an educational component could be part of a longer-term project. Lyons suggested this info could be added as an appendix. Evans mentioned the Western Cooperative for Education and Telecommunications listserv, a resource that has addressed many of the questions raised and can thus provide the larger picture. Dressman asked if the education gap could be closed departmentally, with faculty who had taught online giving presentations on how to do it.

Pavelich reiterated that we need to get the report out. We have a decent sorting of data that reflects the issues. We should distribute it "sooner than later," even if this means appendices to follow. Moosally summarized what she took to be the consensus of the discussion thus far: that the first table (60% consensus) should be emphasized strongly, the second table should reflect consideration of experience differences and emphasize the need for further followup (whether communication or education), and data that don't present a clear picture should be left for later

consideration. Bedard asked how the written comments would be reported. Moosally replied that they would be brought in as they supported the quantitative data or raised points outside of the quantitative question areas.

Wright said that online evaluation was flawed, he did not regard the student opinion surveys as legitimate, and this may have colored faculty responses; should this be taken into account? Moosally said that the Academic Policies committee is already taking up the issue of online student evaluation, and the issue can be addressed separately and in different ways from the report. Sullivan agreed that the problems of our current online evaluation instrument could come in a followup report. It's important that we run with what we have, so that any potential new provost understands our key point that that faculty must have significant input into decisions that pertain to the academic aspects of online education.

Johnson asked for the target date for completion of the report. Moosally said "next Faculty Senate meeting." Lyons asked if there would be time for additional response. Johnson said that would depend on how much time the committee needed to complete the report after such responses were offered. Schmertz felt that additional responses could not be managed in a way that represented faculty consensus—for example, Faculty Senate could not vote on new points raised. Moosally said any late-breaking comments would be filtered according to whether or not they fit the scope of the report as currently framed, so if there are any additional comments, send them to Senate VP Allen.

New Business

Academic Planning

Over the weekend, Lyons asked for one senator from each department to come to Faculty Senate to report on department planning group structure, where their department stands with regard to the planning process, where they stood with meeting the deadlines for it developed by the provost, and the degree to which HIE (High-Impact Experiences) were discussed.

CMS (report by Vasilis Zafiris): The CMS Planning Committee consists of the department chair, assistant chair, and the chairs of the four program committees. The committee has met and hopes to turn the report in by the Nov. 16 deadline. Their dean and the provost have given their input to his department. As for the High-Impact Experiences, they plan to collaborate with the University College to enhance the student learning and experiences in introductory low-level math courses, and to enhance their interactions with the industry and the Medical Center so that their students will have more internship opportunities. Senator Pepper added that a senior project that was formerly an elective course is now going to be a required component of the degree plan. Students will work with advisers on special topics in math.

COB/FACIS (report by Keith Wright): the chairs of COB and FACIS, assistant chair, and four discipline coordinators have completed a plan and are circulating it for comments. To accommodate degree plans and enrollment needs, they plan to hire two accounting professors to meet AACSB requirements. They also plan to expand tutorial sessions to improve graduation and retention rates. Dean and provost suggestions have been received as of now, and BHAG

(High Impact Experiences) will guide future planning goals. Paskelian added that SIP (a software program widely used in business) is being incorporated into their programs, and workshops are being developed for professional certification exams.

MMBA (report by Whitney Morgan): The dean's and provost's requests were funneled through all program coordinators to all faculty. The faculty is currently gathering data about what will be necessary to meet these requests. This information is due to program chairs by Friday. They will determine the resources necessary for the MBA program. The committee will also address the High-Impact Experience and attempt to address the issue through the stated AACSB goals of sustainability, globalization, and innovation. MMBA is on track for the Nov. 16 deadline.

Natural Sciences (report by Jerry Johnson): Since this is an interdisciplinary department, a committee was elected. A new department chair is being elected, and both new chair candidates are expected to participate, as one will end up executing the plans. Spears was added to the committee, plus two faculty from each discipline. Johnson is chair. They have met twice a week for a total of twelve hours. They took a preliminary plan to the full faculty on Friday. Johnson has had helpful conversations with both the provost and his dean to clarify their recommendations. They have five categories of High Impact Experiences and multiple examples within each category, and are deciding which of these experiences will reach the largest number of students yet remain cost-neutral.

Arts and Humanities (report by Raquel Chiquillo): A&H consists of four degree programs, each of which meets individually. The planning committee consists of the chair and degree coordinators, and they met today to discuss SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats). No output as yet from that committee, but they will get something to Chair Cueva by next Monday and he will be on track for Nov 16. Chiquillo has heard no planning recommendations from either the Provost or her Dean. On HIE, she wonders if required internships meet the definition.

CJ (email from chair Clete Snell, read by Schmertz): Snell met with the Provost early in the month to discuss Academic planning but has not yet set up a department planning group. Changes in the planning process were discussed in a faculty meeting on October 20. Growth strategies for the department are the development of the MSCJ Online for Fall 2011, exploring dual enrollment programs with high schools, and a possible online honors program. They have requested and received permission to hire two new tenure track faculty lines based on their 13% enrollment growth, UHD Northwest, and the MSCJ Online program. The dean requested a meeting with Snell to discuss the planning process but they have not met as yet. Snell argues that dual enrollment and an online honors program would qualify as high impact experiences.

Social Sciences (reported by Austin Allen): They have received no recommendations from the provost or the dean. A group of 6 volunteers met last Friday to cover a range of potentially high-impact experiences, including portfolio projects and capstone experiences. They want to extend the Freshman year experience with a second year component. This will require support beyond the department. The committee has yet to meet with department faculty.

English (report by Michelle Moosally): the English department has a Chair's Advisory committee consisting of two tenured faculty, two tenure-track faculty, and one instructor (all elected), plus the assistant chair and the program directors. They are looking at curricular restructuring and a new minor. They are concerned that adjunct coverage is increasing. Current high-impact experiences include the department's new writing associates program, but this reaches only a limited number of students. Since the department teaches so many lower-level courses, they are concerned about the fact that high impact experiences that could reach freshmen are not housed anywhere and thus will not get funded. Moosally asks that all departments include the First-Year Experience in their planning, since it is critical for state funding and retention. There have been no recommendations from the provost that Moosally is aware of. The English department chair is supposed to meet with the dean, and Moosally has asked for a written response from the Dean to share with all faculty.

Urban Education (report by Carol Bedard): The Urban Ed planning committee has met and brainstormed Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats but has not as yet met with faculty. They want to build relationships with their 9 partner school districts. They have concerns about how to deal with a state mandate that will require teacher certification programs to be responsible for their graduates three years down the road, as there is no funding or support structure for this mandate. Like the English department, they are concerned about their high number of adjuncts. They have received no communications from the Provost or their dean.

Lyons thanked the senators for their reports and asked them to what extent they believe committee discussions have been shared with the department. Are departments planning on having department meetings to discuss the work of the committees, for example? Moosally responded that the Chair's Advisory Committee in her department is very concerned about the fast approach of the Nov. 16 but recognizes the need to share its work with the faculty. Wright says he believes that in his department, discussions have not moved beyond the committee level for full faculty discussion. Lyons also reminded faculty that it is a first for us in a long time to have a provost share a plan with us, so it is incumbent on us to involve ourselves in these deliberations. Senators should send emails to their planning committees to make sure they and other faculty are in the loop in their department's deliberations.

Moosally says the provost's current plan provides for meeting with the deans "as needed." She would like the provost to formalize this part of the process, as these meetings are indeed necessary.

Lyons suggested that senators take what they have learned about how other departments are handling the planning process and timelines back to their departments. Johnson added that this is the first time in his 5 years at UHD that he has been given the opportunity to influence planning and how his department operates. To benefit, we must participate.

The meeting was drawing to a close, but Lyons allowed Moosally to make one final comment: Previously, the UPC (University Planning Committee) operated to ensure that the academic division was represented in discussions involving other university divisions. There has been discussion of abandoning this committee, which did not necessarily function well, but nothing that involves university-level faculty representation has been proposed by administration to take

the place of UPC. We need UPC or else a new proposed structure so that faculty can know, and be involved in, what happens after our plans leave the academic side and go to the university level.

Respectfully submitted,

Johanna Schmertz

Associate Professor of English and Faculty Senate Secretary