

# UHD

## Faculty Senate

Minutes recorded by: Trevor S. Hale

Date and Time: September 15, 2015 2:30 PM

Room Number: A300

**Attendance:** Ryan Pepper (President), Susan Henney (Past-President), Carolyn Ashe (President-elect), Trevor Hale (Secretary), Susan Baker, Steve Coy, Pamela Hurley, Pat Williams, Anne Kane, Jillian Hill, Jane Creighton, Claude Rubinson, Steven Coy, Dvijesh Shastri, Bernardo Pohl, Kendra Mhoon, Michael Connell, Azar Rejaie, Robin Jose, Maria Benavides, Zhenyu Zhang

**Guests:** Nell Sullivan, Ed Hugetz, David Bradley, Michele Moosally, Faiza Khoja, Ron Beebe, Gene Preuss, Pat Ensor, Lisa Berry, Chris Birchak, Hsiao-Ming Wang, Karen Kaser, Vida Robertson

**Regrets:** N/A

**Absent:** Charles Smith, Keith Wright, Katharine Jager

**Call to Order:** 2:34 PM

## Meeting Proceedings

### *Presentation on UHD Faculty Handbook:*

1. Nell Sullivan updated the assembly on the status of the Faculty Handbook.

*Question: Faculty Senate President Pepper asked Dr. Sullivan what the next steps are:*

*Answer: Provost Hugetz replied that once the Faculty Senate reviews and signs off on the new version, the "interim" tag on the Faculty Handbook will be lifted.*

*Question: Senator Kane asked if the Faculty Handbook could include information on faculty compensation.*

*Answer: Dr. Sullivan noted that doing so was a good idea and would look into it.*

2. Faculty Senate President Pepper opened the floor for nominations to be on the ad hoc Faculty Handbook Review Committee. Hearing none, he appointed Senators Hale,

Rubinson, and Benavides to the Faculty Senate Faculty Handbook Review Committee and charged them with reviewing the interim handbook and reporting back to the Senate by the middle of October.

*Presentation by Mark Gurrola, Texas State Employees Union (TSEU):*

1. Mark Gurrola of the Texas State Employees Union addressed the Faculty Senate.
  - a. TSEU is a public sector union with ~12,000 members.
  - b. Several members are from public universities.

*Question: Senator London asked if the TSEU has had any success making effective change.*

*Answer: Mark Gurrola answered that the TSEU has indeed had some success and pointed to the shared services concern at the University of Texas as a success story for the TSEU.*

*Question: Senator Creighton asked if the TSEU could leave some contact information.*

*Answer: Mark Gurrola replied in the affirmative.*

*Presentation on the status of the QEP*

1. Drs. Khoja, Birchak, Beebe, and Robertson addressed the Faculty Senate on the status of the QEP at UHD.
  - a. The title of the QEP at UHD will be “Academic Achievement through Community Engagement.”
  - b. The main objective is to prepare students to think critically through three different levels of community engagement activities: Awareness, Integration, and Involvement.

*Question: Senator London asked if UHD students are actually the wrong type of student for this type of QEP.*

*Answer: Dr. Robertson cited research that, actually, the UHD student body should gain the most by this type of QEP. Senator Creighton added that she was originally concerned with the QERP, but has since been convinced that this is the best way to go forward.*

2. Dr. Birchak cited two pathways for community engagement:

- a. Blanket approval for a set of courses (E.g., UHD 1300)
- b. Singular course approval through an approval process initiated by the instructor.

*Question: Senator Henney asked if the faculty are on board. She cited that the faculty in charge of POLS 2300 haven't been approached about their participation yet the course shows up as having blanket approval.*

*Answer: Dr. Birchak replied that the department chairs have been made aware.*

*Question: Senator Benavides asked when the program will be implemented.*

*Answer: Dr. Birchak replied the target is fall of 2016.*

**Academic Achievement through Community Engagement**

University of Houston-Downtown  
2015

QEP  
(Quality Enhancement Plan)

**2013 FTIC Cohort: Where are Students 1.5 Years Later**

Category	Percentage	GPA
Retained at UHD	34%	2.51
4-Year Institutions	21%	2.87
2-Year Institutions	24%	2.17
Non-Residential Community	12%	1.88
Returned at UHD	7%	2.08

Source: Institutional Research, UHD

**Introduction**

THESIS

'Prepare students to critically and ethically analyze community issues'

- Focuses on entering freshman in **Fall 2016** & succeeding years
- Scaffolds a comprehensive set of curricular experiences
- Extends for first two years toward a baccalaureate degree
- Maps student learning outcomes easily onto the
  - Texas Core Objectives
  - AAC&U VALUE Rubrics

**Institutional Benchmarks**

1. Increased persistence from Y1 to Y2 and from Y2 to Y3
2. Decreased number of FTIC students going on probation
3. Increased level of engagement in community Y1 through Y2

**2012 FT FTIC Cohort: Where are Students Two Years Later**

Category	Percentage	GPA
Retained	43%	2.37
2-Year Institutions	17%	1.54
Other 4-Year Institutions	2%	2.47
3-Year Institutions	10%	2.47
4-Year Institutions	15%	2.09
University of Houston	9%	2.09

Source: Institutional Research, UHD

**Goals**

QEP- Goal 1

- Enhance Student Learning and Scholarship through Community-Based Analysis
 

UHD Students will be able to effectively apply academic skills and knowledge (including that of their discipline) in analyzing regional, national, or global community issues.

QEP- Goal 2

- Foster Student Learning and Scholarship through Critical Thinking and Reflection
 

UHD students will utilize critical thinking, ethical decision-making and reflections to promote political, cultural, social, and/or economic understanding of regional, national, or global community issues.

## Student Learning Outcomes

**SLO 1** Students will be able to analyze community issues with respect to different perspectives, theories, or solutions.

**SLO 2** Students will be able to analyze ethical dimensions in the context of community issues.

*NOTE: Community Engagement designation (CE) requires completion of SLO 1 or SLO 2 and a required self-reflection assignment.*

**Assignment** Students will be able to employ critical reflection to identify the impact of community engagement experiences or activities on personal, career, and/or academic perspectives.

## Implementation

The QEP will be overseen by the Center for Community Engagement and Service Learning (CCESL) Interim Director, who reports to the Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs, Office of the Provost. The actions to be implemented may be categorized as follows:

- Infrastructure
- Faculty Development and Support
- Recognition of Faculty and Students
- Embedding Curricular Components
- Assessment and Evaluation

## Levels of Community Engagement

- Awareness
  - Students are introduced to the concept of community engagement through coursework examining social and community issues.
- Integration
  - Students continue to study community engagement through coursework enhanced with speakers, panels, documentaries, public deliberations events, etc.
- Involvement
  - Students connect coursework with community experiences/projects that require direct engagement with the partners in the field. Does not involve Service Learning.



## Community Engagement Course Designation

Two pathways are provided for acquiring the Community Engagement designation.\*

- "Blanket" approval when supported by the department/discipline is given for all sections of specific core courses enrolling large numbers of FTICs and having learning outcomes related to those of the QEP.

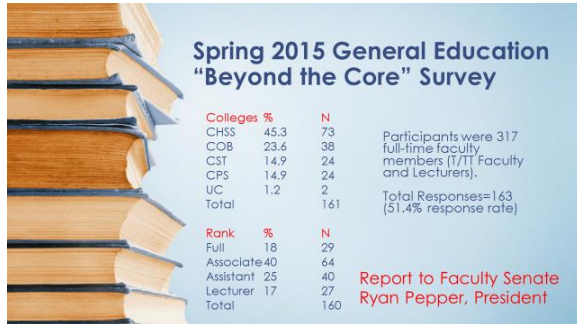
*Examples: UHD 1300, English 1302, POLS 2306, COMM 1304/1306, etc.*

- Individual faculty follow the identified process for submitting the required form for a course to be designated as Community Engagement.

\*All service learning courses automatically receive this designation.

## Presentation on the Spring 2015 GenEd Faculty Survey

### 1. Dr. Pepper presented some highlights of the Faculty Senate Spring 2015 survey of the faculty regarding GenEd.



Three major themes emerged...

#### 3) Ability to Communicate Effectively

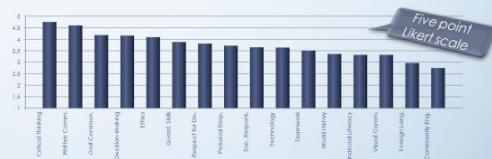
- To be an informed, well-rounded person with at least general knowledge on a variety of subjects besides one's specific content area. It should definitely include one's ability to communicate effectively - both orally and in writing. Without the ability to communicate what someone knows to others, that knowledge is wasted.
- Ability and interest in critically analyzing the world; awareness and experience with major bodies of cultural (with large) thought and knowledge; strong reading, writing and analytic (communication) skills; awareness of and capacity to consider different social and cultural perspectives
- The abilities to use critical analysis skills and to communicate clearly and concisely are essential to "being an educated person."
- An educated person is someone who has broad knowledge of many subjects, and can articulate that knowledge through written and oral communication. In addition to being knowledgeable about those subjects included in the common core, they are also well versed in current events.

How do we define an "educated person?"

#### • Original question:

"...general education refers to the competencies that all graduates of an institution should have. In other words, general education refers to the characteristics of every graduate - i.e., an "educated person." This can help us to determine the composition of our general education program beyond the core. In your opinion, what does it mean to be an educated person?"

Importance of Gen Ed Competency Areas



- Respondents chose **Critical Thinking and Written Communication** as the two most important competency areas (the only areas over 4.5).
- Respondents chose **Community Engagement and Foreign Language** as the two least important competency areas (the only areas under 3.0).

Three major themes emerged from the responses: attainment of knowledge, ability to think critically, and the ability to communicate effectively.

#### 1) Attainment of Knowledge

- Possess the ability to determine which information is valid and to critically evaluate that information. An educated person should have well-rounded knowledge outside of their discipline which could include arts, social sciences, and hard sciences.
- To be an educated person means having some knowledge about a broad array of topics as well as in-depth knowledge in a specific area.
- Appropriate knowledge in certain area with general understanding of the universe and humanity, of which one is able to think independently and to effectively communicate in various ways.
- A person who has learned enough to know what he/she does not know and who has acquired the skills to learn what he or she needs to know

Ranking the Gen Ed competency areas

#### • Original Question:

"...if there is a general education program beyond the core, rank, in order of most important to least important, up to three goals from the list above that you want to see included in the general education program beyond the core at UHD (including any you added)."

#### Area #1 (most important):

- 1) Critical Thinking: 36.8%
- 2) Communication: 23.7%
- 3) Writing: 8.8%

#### Area #2 (2nd most important):

- 1) Critical Thinking: 27.4%
- 2) Communication: 23.6%
- 3) Quantitative Reasoning: 5.7%

#### Area #3 (3rd most important):

- 1) Communication: 25.5%
- 2) Ethics: 10.6%
- 3) Respect for Diversity: 8.5%

Three major themes emerged...

#### 2) Ability to Think Critically

- An "educated person" is someone who has the ability to think critically, utilize evidence, and communicate ideas. They should also be able to analyze various perspectives in a global context.
- An educated person must think analytically and critically about issues important to the self, family, community, and world. They must be able to communicate the results of their thinking in clear and logical written work.
- To be able to engage oneself and one's world reflectively on the shared basis of the current state of knowledge and critical thinking skills.
- An educated person should be versed in a general liberal arts base which is currently satisfied by the Common Core. This same person should be able to think critically, i.e. analyze an issue from different perspectives as well as take an informed position on the issue. The same person should be able to communicate her/ his ideas in good, well written form. The same person should be able to understand data and use it for informed decision making.

Support for Gen Ed requirements beyond the core

#### • Original Question:

"In general, do you support having any additional general education requirements beyond the 42-hour core?"

	%	N
Yes	43.2	60
No	56.8	79
Total	100	139

This response states that 4/7ths of the faculty do not support any GenEd requirements beyond the lower division elements.

Support for Gen Ed requirements beyond the core

- Break down by college:

College	Yes	No	Total
CHSS	32 (52.5%)	29 (47.5%)	61
COB	8 (25%)	24 (75%)	32
CPS	10 (55.6%)	8 (44.4%)	18
CST	9 (37.5%)	15 (62.5%)	24
UC	1 (50%)	1 (50%)	2
Total	60	79	139

Support for Gen Ed requirements beyond the core

- Hypothetically, if there were courses beyond the 42-hour core, how many courses would you support?

	%	N
0 (no credit hours beyond the 42-hour core)	44.3	58
1 (3 credit hours beyond the 42-hour core)	6.9	9
2 (6 credit hours beyond the 42-hour core)	20.8	27
3 (9 credit hours beyond the 42-hour core)	17.7	23
4 (12 credit hours beyond the 42-hour core)	10	13
Total	100	130

*Question: Senator Hill asked if GenEd beyond the common core could be left to the programs or departments.*

*Answer: Dr. Pepper replied in the affirmative.*

*Question: Senator Baker commented that critical thinking requires interdisciplinary exposure by its very nature.*

*Answer: Dr. Pepper noted that there are many definitions of critical thinking. (E.g., Paul and Elder, reflection). Dr. Hale further commented (and Provost Hugetz confirmed) that UHCL, UHV, and UH do not have any GenEd requirements beyond the common core that the 120 credit hour degree handcuffs some programs with little or no flexibility due to long prerequisite chains.*

2. Motion: Senator Benavides makes a motion to send a recommendation to UCC, "Since the faculty have spoken on the need for GenEd requirements at the upper division, to consider deleting the current GenEd requirements beyond the common core."
  - a. The motion was seconded by Senator London. Faculty Senate President Pepper asks for discussion. Hearing none, Senator Benavides calls the question. The vote ensues with 18 yeas, 2 nays, and 0 abstentions. Motion carries.

**New Business:**

1. Faculty Senate President Pepper noted that Staff Council and the SGA have asked that Friday's be designated Gator Blue Fridays.

**Next meeting:**

The next meeting of the Faculty Senate is October 6th.

**Adjourn:**

Adjournment (First: Henney/Second: Connell) at 3:53 PM.