UHD Faculty Senate Meeting

October 18, 2011

Minutes

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

J. Ahmad, C. Bachman, R. Beebe, M. Benavides, C. Burnett, A. Chiaviello, G. Evans, S. Farris, J. Hackett, J. Harned, V. Hrynkiv, P. Kintzele, P. Li, C. Nguyen, W. Nowak, A. Pavelich, S. Penkar, R. Scott, A. Sikka, L. Spears, K. Switzer, V. Tsouanis, W. Waller, I. Wang, V. Zafiris

Absent: K. Wright

The minutes of the October 4 Senate meeting were passed.

Schmertz asked anyone who was planning to attend the Oct. 29 AAUP conference in Austin to let her know so that she could arrange for Senate funds to pay for it.

Allen reported on a meeting with Executive Council. Allen said the current focus seems to be marketing and recruitment. It is unclear what the role of faculty input or participation is to be. Preuss reinforced the remarks Provost Chapman made the previous week in Senate about the importance of marketing and delivering online and distance education in the face of low enrollment. Sikka pointed out that the increase in enrollment for distance ed may simply be a matter of students shifting in and out of various delivery modes—it may not represent new students. Evans agreed that we need a more accurate account of how our enrollment patterns break down. She thinks that some students take more or fewer classes based on the range of options given to them.

Sikka noted that the Strategic Plan has identified two ways to boost enrollment, and efforts are already underway. The two ways are 1.) identify and market niche programs and 2.) increase the number of degree programs and graduate degrees.

A discussion took place regarding the development of new programs. With a faster process now being used by the System Provost's Council for green-lighting the development of new proposals, it is uncertain at what point faculty will know what is going on in other departments.

Preuss said that out of many proposals from UHD that had been brought before Provost's Council, only one had been approved. He noted that the UHD policy on program approval was 20 years old and wondered if it needed to be revised in light of the new procedures coming out of Provosts' Council.

It was agreed that the normal shared governance steps outlined by policy would still be followed after a program received the okay to continue developing a formal proposal. For example, all proposals would need to come before the University Curriculum Committee. However, there remains concern that much work will be done at the department level before things are made public.

Moosally asked for public announcements of any program proposals that had passed the initial stage at Provosts' Council. Allen said he would ask for this to happen.

Ballots were distributed and collected for three committees appointed by Senate: the Shared Governance Committee, Faculty Awards Committee, and the Online Education Committee.

Online Education Committee Charges

The Senate next discussed what to charge the Online Committee with this year.

Academic Integrity

This was agreed to be the top priority. Faculty had agreed that UHD needs a testing center, in part to alleviate concerns about academic integrity, but administration has not taken this need seriously. Other possibilities include finding technical solutions to the problem of online cheating. The online committee can work with IT on the latter.

Perception of online courses and degrees

This was an issue the committee had been asked to provide information on last year but had not addressed in their end-of-year report. Benavides and Evans noted that there were graduate degrees in the state that restricted the number of online course credits they would accept. Bachmann said that graduate programs were increasingly allowing undergraduate online courses to count. Beebe, Sikka, and Pavelich emphasized that departments needed to be informed about any restrictions their students might face so that students could be advised appropriately. Sikka suggested we ask the Distance Education Office to inform us about any professional or graduate programs that place some sort of limit on online instruction.

Intellectual property rights for online or web-enhanced courses.

Evans suggested we might ask a representative from System's Office of General Council come talk to Senate about this issue, as a way of opening up a discussion of whether we needed to develop a policy on this matter.

Records retention

The question of how long faculty can return to their previous courses and find them intact is something the Online committee should ascertain from the Office of Distance Education.

A motion was made to task FSEC with writing up a charge that reflected the Senate's discussion. It passed, 27-0.

Charge to Develop a Policy on Course Releases

The Senate next began a discussion on a charge develop a policy on reassigned time for faculty. The charge is as follows:

Charge Related to Faculty Reassigned Time To Faculty Affairs Committee

Create a new policy on faculty course releases, specifically (a) clarify the types of activities that warrant course releases; (b) create a timeline for decision-making regarding course releases that ensures timely and informed decision-making and approval of course releases, with minimum disruption department operations; (c) ensure congruence with references to course releases in PS 10.A.09 (section 3.1.4); and (d) outline procedures for development and review of job descriptions pertaining to these course releases and faculty performance evaluation.

(PS 10.A.09 section 3.1.4: Temporary salary adjustment based on additional assigned duties will be based on written agreements involving the faculty member, his department chair and dean, and the Vice President for Academic Affairs. The agreement will specify the amount of the adjustment, the length of time it covers, and the source of funds for the additional compensation.)

Spears asked whether it was necessary to create a brand new policy. It was agreed that there is no policy at present that guides course releases. The charge as written includes reference to policies that allude to the existence of course releases, so existing policies will not be ignored. The motion passed as written, 27-0.

Since Moosally chairs the Faculty Affairs Committee that would address the charge, she expressed concern about how all the issues Senate wanted addressed would be prioritized. Pavelich asked if the Faculty Affairs committee could be expanded so that new members could help handle the workload. Moosally said that the composition of the shared governance policy writing committees is dictated by the Senate Constitution. However, she can draw on faculty outside the committee to work on subcommittees as necessary, and will ask for help.

Discussion on a Center for Teaching Excellence

Beebe explained a FIPSE grant proposal distributed for the meeting. Although its focus was on improving K-12 instruction, many elements of it addressed professional development for university faculty because of an emphasis on teacher learning communities, reflective pedagogy, and practitioner research. He noted that a workshop on differentiated instruction at UHD had been well attended by faculty and told Senate to be on the lookout for another workshop in December.

Beebe has been involved in teaching excellence centers at other universities, and the idea is not new to UHD. Many initiatives already underway at UHD could be supported by a Center for Teaching Excellence—high-impact experiences, service learning, best practices of online education. Beebe also mentioned that the center could be a sort of "Faculty excellence" center as well, teaching faculty how to work effectively within university committees.

Evans liked the idea of a "Faculty Excellence" center and urged the importance of supporting adjunct faculty as well.

Nowak asked why previous efforts at developing a center for teaching excellence had failed. Evans said they had been "top-down" rather than faculty-driven. Preuss added that centers fail

because they are funded by soft money. A teaching excellence center at UHD needs to be installed within the institutional structure in order for funding to continue.

Concerns were raised about making certain that a center for teaching excellence did not become some sort of "compliance" mechanism or a way to install "one-size-fits-all" pedagogies that ignored disciplinary differences.

Sikka said the FIPSE proposal she and Beebe had originally made was geared toward K-12, but implementing faculty development at the university level would be more department and discipline-specific. She envisioned the Center as stimulating and coordinating opportunities for faculty development in teaching. Departments and disciplines could initiate their own faculty development opportunities and come to a Center for Teaching Excellence and ask for support. She recommended that the Center report at least in part to the Senate. Faculty "self-govern" at universities because of their disciplinary expertise; building faculty representation into the reporting structure of this center will protect that disciplinary expertise.

Preuss noted that the idea of a teaching excellence center had won support in a faculty climate survey that took place during Sikka's tenure as Faculty Senate president. He noted a charge previously sent to senators that had been drafted by FSEC:

> **Teaching Excellence Task Force**
> Charge: Investigate best practices and successful models for faculty development for teaching excellence at urban commuter universities, including comprehensive Teaching and Learning Centers, and make a recommendation to the Faculty Senate regarding a best-practice model to be implemented at UHD.

Timeline: Report will submitted by xx/xx/xx.

A discussion arose as to how soon the task force should complete its report. We would like to work something into this year's budget cycle, but don't want a rush job to "poison the well." Sikka proposed February 1 as the deadline. The amendment passed 24-2 with one abstention. Harned proposed that the phrase "best practice model" be amended to "best practice models" so that the task force might come up with more than one option. The entire charge was approved 27-0, with the aforementioned amendments, and with the provision that FSEC would be charged with appointing the members of this committee.

Respectfully submitted,

Johanna Schmertz, Ph.D.

Associate Professor of English

Faculty Senate Secretary