

UHD Faculty Senate

Minutes recorded by: Nathan Neale
Regular Scheduled Senate Meeting March 2, 2021 2:30 – 4:00 PM
Online through Zoom

Senate: Ronald Beebe, Edmund Cueva, Michael Duncan, Godwin Agboka, Franklin Allaire, Amy Baird, Nina Barbieri, Maria Bhattacharjee, Alexander Bielakowski, Kasi Bundoc, Dexter Cahoy, Prakash Deo, Isaac Elking, Lucas Fedell, Krista Gehring, Aaron Gillette, Rachael Hudspeth, Tahereh Jafari, Michael Lemke, Cynthia Lloyd, Lisa Morano, Nathan Neale, Jean Nganou, Chu Nguyen, Anand Pore, Angelica Roncacio, Rupak Rauniar, M. Nell Sullivan, Candace TenBrink, Julie Wilson

Senators Absent: Shohreh Hashemi, Timothy Klein, Lucas Logan, Jeffrey Martz, Arpita Shroff, Pat Williams

Guests: Eric Link, Provost/VPAA; Michelle Moosally, AVP Programming and Curriculum, Jerry Johnson, AVP Sponsored Programs, Dahlberg, Faculty Ombuds, Kevin Buckler, Professor and Chair of FAC, Meritza Tamez, Dean of Students, Lisa Morano, Professor, Irene Chen, Professor, Patricia Ensor, Executive Director, W.I.D., Daniel Villanueva, V.P. of Enrollment Management, Leena Thacker-Kumar, Professor, Sheryl Sellers, Dateline, Darlene Hodge, FS Admin, T. Alan Modrow, SGA President, Caroline Smith, Staff Council, Lucy Bowen, Caroline Smith, Natalie Boehm, Patricia Ensor

Call to order: The Senate was called to order at 2:31 PM by Senate President Ronald Beebe after a quorum was assembled.

Minutes

A motion to approve the January 19, 2021 minutes was made and seconded.
The minutes were approved.

Reports

Dr. Beebe stated that there would be town halls held on March 24th and 25th. The working groups are producing videos to better share information about the bridge plan. These videos will help faculty and others better understanding what is happening. There will be a registration link for the town halls. Please send questions to Dr. Beebe and he can forward them to the applicable groups. The town hall meetings will only include brief executive summaries and a time for Q&A. Please watch these videos to better understand the details.

Dr. Beebe explained that the senate approved the S/U option for the summer and fall during the February 2, 2021 senate meeting. Now, we need to decide how to implement the S/U option for these terms. There are a number of options to consider.

Withdrawal Date: The withdrawal date for the first 8 week section is March 13th. If we decide that students need to make a decision before the withdrawal date, we need to move quickly.

Faculty-Friendly option to what we completed in spring: Like we used last spring, faculty would post grades and students would then need to choose to accept the grade or opt for an S/U. Peoplesoft has a mechanism that would record what students chose. This is an automated process. The option is the same as what we previously used but is much more faculty friendly.

Dr. Beebe asked for Mr. Villanueva's input. He explained that students would be able to see the grade they earned and the S/U conversion grade. If they did not choose, they would receive the S/U option. They would need to choose to accept the letter grade. Faculty would not be required to engage students in the process.

Q: A senator asked for clarification if the S/U was default.

A: Mr. Villanueva stated that faculty would record the letter grade. This grade would be converted to the S/U. Students could keep the grade and do nothing.

Q: A senator asked if this should be reversed. This may be less confusing and less of a hassle.

A: Mr. Villanueva stated that other schools in the system are using this process, so we would not be able to use the letter grade as a default.

A senator suggested that few students take the S/U option. This sounds as if it would be more work for students. It would be better for the letter grade to be default.

Dr. Beebe worried that there is not sufficient time to accomplish this as the process was already created system-wide.

Q: As this was presented as the faculty-friendly version, is the other option what we used in the spring?

A: Dr. Beebe stated yes, this could be an option.

A senator argued that many students do not immediately review their grades. This will create more work for faculty as students will likely approach faculty with questions about why they have an S/U.

Mr. Villanueva said that he does not disagree. We would encourage faculty to forward these students to the registrar's office. This is because the registrar would have both grades. There will be a term limit for this. We could approve an extension if needed. We can also use the option from the spring. Faculty and students would have the chance to discuss the grades.

Q: Is the registrar prepared and able to address questions from so many students about this?

A: Mr. Villanueva thanked the senator for showing care and empathy for the office. This is impressive. They currently receive 350 to 400 appeals per semester. This would be set up as an appeal process. It would cause more students to approach the office. It would also require enrollment management to better educate students as we approached the process. We could have emails and "how to" videos. The process will not be complicated. They only need to click a button to choose between the grading options.

Q: A senator asked if this system may help alleviate some of the issues that arose from students later discovering that they had prerequisites that required letter grades.

A: Mr. Villanueva stated that advisors would be able to work closely with students and be able to reach out to the registrar's office. The grades could change as the registrar would have both options recorded.

Dr. Beebe pointed out that students needed to review their grades in the spring. They would review their grades and then reach out to individual faculty to inform them if they wanted the S/U option. This reverses the process. Either way, students have a responsibility to review their grades. Students need to make the decision. The differences between the options we are discussing is do they review the grades before we enter them in Peoplesoft or after. Students need to take action either way.

Q: A senator asked if there was a deadline for students to choose between the letter grades and S/U option.

A: Mr. Villanueva said that the current system is set for a three day review. There is an ability to extend this if we wanted. System is using three days.

Q: What would happen if students did not choose to change the option? Would they need to come to faculty or your office?

A: Mr. Villanueva said that this process would need work with faculty if we chose to follow what we used in spring 2020. The provost would like to have a policy that is not appealable. The problem is that this is appealable in some circumstances. We would tell students that they have three days. We would provide resources with them.

Dr. Moosally said that choice between the letter grade and S/U is not appealable. They can appeal the grade itself within a year as we are bound by the appeal process. Additionally, we decided that the grade change modality can only be changed once. Their GPAs may change when students make a decision. All grade appeals currently go through faculty.

A senator stated that this proposed process is much different than a normal grade appeal. Students may be impacted by health, technological issues or other factors. Then, they would not be able to choose between the grade options. It does not seem fair that a student that earned an A could not be able to have the grade because they did not respond in the requisite timeframe. We just experienced a week where many of us did not have electricity. Changing the rules in the middle of the semester does not seem fair and is wrong.

Dr. Moosally stated that this is what we did during spring and summer 2020.

The senator stated that this is different as the default is the S/U. This is the problem. It is not right to do this to students.

Mr. Villanueva said that students' are often appealing because of things outside of their control. It is up to the provost's office, faculty, our office and others to help students understand the process. Students are still going to faculty and some are changing grades.

Dr. Beebe said that it may be best for us to implement the process as we did last summer and not incorporate the option that defaults to the S/U. Faculty would enter grades in BlackBoard.

Students would then review the grades and let faculty know if they wanted the S/U recorded. Then, faculty would enter the correct grades in PeopleSoft.

Q: A senator asked if we can discuss if this is tied to the withdrawal date.

A: Dr. Beebe said yes, we can.

The senator expressed concern that our lecturers and part-time faculty may experience pressures as they have other demands and the window is short.

Dr. Neale said that this could fall back on the departments. The letter grade is recorded. The departments could work with the part-time faculty to update the grade to an S/U at that point.

Dr. Beebe said that the policy is that this goes back to the faculty of record.

Dr. Beebe asked for the senate to make a decision soon as the withdrawal date is approaching on the first eight week session.

Q: A senator asked how we should proceed.

A: Dr. Beebe said that someone could make a motion to vote on one of the options discussed. The senate could also move to rescind the vote from our last meeting.

Q: A senator asked if we could make a motion to use what we used before. While it may not be optimal, students and faculty have experience with it.

A: Dr. Beebe said that yes, this was the second option.

A motion was made to keep the S/U option and implementing it exactly the same as we did in previous semesters as faculty and students understand it.

The motion was seconded.

Dr. Beebe asked for further discussion

Q: A senator asked if we should tie this to the withdrawal date.

A: Dr. Beebe said that this would be a separate motion. If senators are uncomfortable, they could vote no.

A senator said that members of their department were also concerned. Realistically, the withdrawal date is just before the final exam date. This may create more stress and pressure.

Dr. Beebe asked for further discussion. There were none.

The vote was called. It passed with 25 yes, 2 no and 1 abstain.

Dr. Moosally asked for clarification about what was just approved. She asked if we would implement the process like last year, where faculty would record a grade in BlackBoard. Then, students would need to reach out to faculty if they wanted to use the S/U option. Then, this would only be appealable if students say that faculty recorded the wrong grade. Is this correct?

Dr. Beebe stated it was.

Dr. Moosally said that she would work with Mr. Villanueva to implement the policy and to inform students of the option.

A senator stated that they thought that students needed to email faculty if they wanted the S/U option. This provided documentation.

Dr. Beebe said that this was the process used before.

Mr. Villanueva said that they would communicate this to students.

Provost Link asked if we would be implementing this for only the spring or both spring and summer.

Dr. Neale stated that the previous vote was for spring and summer.

Dr. Beebe reminded the senate that there is a proposal to change the Ombuds Policy and dates of appointment to align with other start and end dates for shared governance positions. He shared the proposed changes via a shared screen on Zoom. He shared all of the highlights, including tying the Ombuds policy to the Grievance Policy. Based on the conversations from fall, Drs. Beebe, Neale and Dahlberg propose that the Ombuds would take office on August 15th with other shared governance positions. The recommendations for filling the Ombuds position would occur in March and the current Ombuds would serve for two years and be eligible for reappointment. The screening process would remain the same but would move to April 15th. The recommendation to the president would move to June 1. This would also help alleviate concerns that a new FSEC was making decisions based on a previous FSEC's decisions.

Dr. Beebe asked for question or concerns.

There were none.

A motion was made and seconded to send the proposal to Faculty Affairs.

Dr. Beebe asked for discussion

It passed with 24 yes, 0 no, 0 abstain.

Provost Link thanked the senate for the opportunity to share updates. He said that he and Interim President Tillis are discussing what the Governor's order regarding masks means to UHD. They are waiting from system to provide input. He will update faculty as soon as he knows more.

Provost Link shared a PowerPoint report via Zoom to report on 2020 senate resolutions. He said that this would be shared with Dr. Beebe and could be sent out with the minutes.

SR-20-01: Core Assessment-version 3. UCC began a discussion but needed to focus on Covid-19 related issues. UCC will need to revisit this in spring 2021.

SR-20-02: Proposed GEC on Writing. This proposal focuses on improving students' writing abilities or skills. This was sent back to senate and GEC for clarification. GEC has a proposal. They will be reviewing this on a future date.

SR-20-03: Joint Resolution on Staff Returning to Campus. This was a joint resolution with Staff Council. His office halted the "Phase 1 Safe Return" plan and never returned to it. Under the cabinet leadership the resolution was supported.

SR-20-04: Course Releases for Shared Governance Chairs. Provost Link agrees with this request and will grant course releases. His office is asking for clarifications and to develop expectations. This will include a list of duties and accountability. He encouraged faculty to review the details from the presentation.

Post-Census Spring Enrollment Figures: Spring 2012 enrollment has increased 3.5% in headcount and 3.6% in SCHs. These are preliminary and not yet official. As an institution we have done well. UHCL is down about 1%, UHV is up about 4% and UH is up about 2%.

Fall 2021 Targets: We are aiming for a headcount of 15,600, with 1400-1500 FTIC. This also includes building enrollments in new programs and a 2-3% increase in SCHs. They also have a goal of increasing persistence rates.

THECB 2021 Enrollment Projections for UHD: The board produces enrollment projections for all Texas institutions every two years (in odd numbered years). The projections include 15,468 in 2021, which is lower than UHD's goal.

Faculty Hiring: UHD has authorized hiring 25 T/TT lines, 5 lecturers, and 5 through Interim President Tillis' initiative. This could add 35 new faculty if all searches are successful. Though some positions may be due to retirements and attrition, we are significantly increasing the number of faculty at UHD.

Leadership Transitions: Most of these are already announced. Finalist interviews for the Dean of SHSS are in process. They hope to appoint a new Dean in April. They are also conducting finalist interviews for the Associate V.P. for Academic Affairs with a goal of appointment in April. Dr. Meritza Tamez has been named as the new Dean of Students. Mr. Daniel Villanueva has been

named the new V.P. of Enrollment Management. Dr. Poonam Gulati has been named the inaugural Executive Director for the newly founded Office of Impact Learning. Dr. Loren Blanchard is joining us as our new President on March 15th.

Budget Updates, PBDC Planning: As a reminder, we had to set the previous budget aside due to uncertainties due to COVID-19 that may have reduced enrollment. However, this did not occur and enrollment is actually higher. We have returned to the budget. Some highlights include new faculty lines (\$793,868), an increased faculty summer budget (\$500,000), and increased Adjunct Budget (\$500,000), Tenure/Promotion (\$174,935), Faculty Excellence Fund (\$50,000), Service Learning/Community Engagement (\$50,000), Academic Recover Program (\$32,200), and Faculty Affairs Initiatives (\$20,000). They also launched the market study to review faculty and staff compensation. The PBDC will be meeting soon to begin working on the new budget.

CARES Act Money: HEERF/CARES-ACT provided about 10MM to UH. 4.7MM went directly to student aid. 4.7MM was for institutional aid and 700K to MSI funding. CRRSAA Funding provided about 18MM. 4.7MM is for direct student aid and 13.4MM is for institutional aid. There are many rules and stipulations. They are receiving instructions from the Federal Government, so they cannot share how these funds will be used. These may be able to assist with lost revenue and broad expenses. The moneys from the CARES act went to Financial Aid (59%), Admin & Finance (25%), IT (12%), Facilities (2%) and University Relations (2%).

SACSCOC Fifth Year Interim Report: This a large, important enterprise that is being led by a steering committee and project management team. The timeline is available in the presentation. Many of the requirements and goals are completed. They are still working on some others.

EAB Navigate: There is a lot of information that faculty may want to review from this slide. They are making progress and graduate students are now included.

Summer and Fall 2021 Planning: The Majority of our academic programming will be online for Summer 2021. Deans and department chairs will work with faculty to assemble summer offerings with necessary health and safety precautions. Fall 2021 guidelines allow departments to build the schedule with flexibility during the summer. We currently plan for campus to be fully open and all classrooms will be available to use. We encourage departments to use the Flex classrooms. COVID caps are included in the initial build. As we progress, we may ask to raise caps if social distancing is no longer necessary. Provost Link reminded the senate that these plans are subject to change.

Dr. Beebe asked for questions.

There were none.

The Home Office Stipend Working Group shared an update. They polled faculty about their desires for a one-time and monthly stipends. There were 186 responses. The most requested amount for the one-time payment was \$1000, followed closely by \$500. The interest in the monthly stipend showed a desire of \$100 a month, followed by \$50 a month. They also looked at other universities. There seems to be a common amount of \$50 a month and some showing some \$500 one-time allowances. There is not much found by universities but this is much more

common in businesses. There were many faculty comments from the poll, with most being positive.

Q: Dr. Beebe asked if they collected rank or other demographic information.

Q: Dr. Cueva asked if we could use some of the most recent Federal funds for this.

A: Provost Link said that it may be possible. He said that if we are aware in a loss of revenue or technology needs that are directly connected to the pandemic, please bring these to his office. If there is a need attributed to the pandemic, please forward them to him. He has started conversations with Mr. Bradley to see how they may be able to address these.

Q: Dr. Neale asked if UHD would own faculty equipment purchased for home if we were reimbursed for equipment.

A: Provost Link stated that he was not sure.

Dr. Beebe emphasized that we had a limited amount of time left for the senate meeting. He said that tapping into the Federal funds may be different than the stipend as this would be at an individual basis.

Q: A senator asked if we could motion to accept the results of the survey and ask for the stipends.

A: Dr. Beebe said that the senate could. We would need to include specific actions.

The senator said that the proposal would be a \$1000 one-time allowance and \$100 a month starting when we altered operations in spring 2020 until we no longer needed to work from home. We could also split this into two motions.

Dr. Beebe said that the presentation was two questions.

The senator suggested making two motions. One for a \$1000 one-time payment and the other for a \$100 a month stipend.

The senator also motioned to extend the meeting by ten minutes. This was seconded.

The senator then motioned to ask for a \$1000 stipend and this was seconded.

Dr. Beebe asked for discussion

Q-A senator asked if everyone would receive a \$1000 payment because we are assuming they needed it or if they would be reimbursed for computers and other equipment that would now be owned by the university. This is not clear.

A: A senator said that the \$1000 could be due to many different needs, such as painting their rooms or buying furniture.

Dr. Duncan said that he did not believe we could finish this discussion in ten minutes. We may be able to suggest that we pass the survey results onto the Provost's office.

Dr. Beebe said that we would also need clarification about Dr. Neale's concern about equipment ownership.

A senator amended the motion to have further discussions.

Dr. Cueva amended the amendment to have FSEC address this issue during their next meeting. This was seconded.

Dr. Beebe asked Dr. Neale if he could clarify the motion.

Dr. Neale said that the motion was to ask for a \$1000 one-time payment, with an amendment for further discussion and another amendment to have FSEC bring a proposal to senate during the next senate meeting.

Dr. Beebe said that we are really voting on sending this to FSEC to bring back to senate.

The motion passed.

Dr. Beebe said that the next senate meeting was scheduled for spring break. He asked if the senate wanted to meet.

A senator believed that we would not have a quorum.

Dr. Beebe asked for a motion to adjourn. One was made and was seconded.

The meeting ended at 4:13 PM.