

# UHD FACULTY SENATE MEETING

November 20, 2007

**CALLED TO ORDER:** The eighth meeting for the 2007-2008 academic year of the UHD Faculty Senate was held in A-300, One Main Street, Houston, Texas on November 20, 2007. The meeting convened at 2:30 pm. President Anjoo Sikka presiding, with Vice-President Michelle Moosally, and Secretary-Treasurer Gene Preuss.

**Present:** Anjoo Sikka (President), Michelle Moosally (Vice President), Gene Preuss (Secretary/Treasurer), Austin Allen (SOS), David Branham (SOS), Youn-Sha Chan (CMS), Raquel Chiquillo (A&H), Byron Christmas (NS), Merrilee Cunningham (ENG), Ermelinda DeLaViña (CMS), Joyce Dutcher (UE), Susan Henney (SOS), Lance Hignite (CJ), Steve Maranville (MMBA), Kathleen McLellan (ENG), Rich McMahon (FACIS), Pat Mosier (A&H), Sam Penkar (FACIS), Kimmera Pinkerton (UE), Nick Rangel (A&H), Ruth Robbins (FACIS), Larry Spears (NS), Jorge Tito-Izquierdo (ET), Jeong-Mi Yoon (CMS), Shengli Yuan (CMS), Zehai Zhou (FACIS)

**Absent:** Jeffrey Adams (MMBA), John Capeheart (NS), Tony Chiaviello (ENG), Anne Kane (SOS), Angela Pedrana (UE), Lucille Pointer (MMBA), Aimee Roundtree (ENG), and Cindy Stewart (SOS).

**Guests:** Director of Admissions & Recruitment Jose Cantu, Quality Enhancement Plan director Bill Waller, Director of Advising, Jemma Caesar,

President Sikka declared a quorum and called the meeting to order at 2:33 pm.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** The Senate voted to approve the minutes of the November 6, 2007, meeting, as amended.

**REPORT FROM SENATE OFFICERS:** President Sikka opened the Special Issue meeting on Student Advising, Recruitment, and Retention stating that many parts of the university are working on the issue, and there is no simple solution. She stated that the special topic meeting should create a forum to learn more about the efforts underway and make recommendations.

She said there was no intent to assign blame to any area, but to create suggestions so that we can all do a better job for the students.

Jose Cantu, Director of Admissions & Recruitment made a PowerPoint presentation detailing current recruitment and admission policies, procedures, and efforts.

After the presentation, Vice President Mosally asked how Admissions enforced a mandatory two-day orientation. Cantu stated that all students were charged the fee, and added that this was the first semester attendance was mandatory and they would be assessing its effectiveness.

Senator Cunningham asked about Fresh Start. Cantu replied that it is a state program that provides students who want a better GPA to sign a contract that eliminates grades students earned for course work ten years previously.

Moosally asked about TSI. Cantu explained that the Texas Success Initiative (TSI) test is to diagnose students' writing, reading, and math levels. Bill Waller, QEP Director, also explained that TSI also requires higher education institutions to track students whose scores falls below 1 standard deviation below passing. Sikka stated that students can take the Texas Higher Education Assessment (THEA).

Preuss asked if the Admissions Office recorded SAT scores even though they are not required. Cantu replied that the office does record SAT/ACT scores.

Moosally asked if these scores mean anything if students do not pass the TSI or Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) tests. Jemma Caesar, Director of Advising, said that UHD gives students Accuplacer tests to place them and that that acceptable SAT/ACT scores make the student TSI-exempt.

Senator Maranville asked about the process for home-schooled students. Cantu said they are asked to take the GED.

Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost Molly Woods stated that Advising begins once students are recruited and admitted. For new students, she explained, Advising does Accuplacer tests to determine if students are college-ready, or need developmental classes. Transfer students, she continued, come in with a variety of hours, and the challenge is providing services in one unit. We do not have consistency across the university, she said, when students are allowed to declare a major. Community college students want to declare right away, and other transfers are encouraged to declare as soon as possible. There is a problem, she stated, when transfer students do not turn in transcripts in a timely fashion, and she encouraged senators to learn about the processes and keep themselves informed. She also stated that the General Education Committee is considering the effectiveness and future of the Writing Proficiency Exam. Students do not take it when they should, she explained.

Moosally asked about the procedure for students who come to the advising center asking for more information about a particular major. Caesar stated that the advisor refers them to the department, college advisors, and individual faculty members who have identified themselves as available to discuss issues about the major with students. Senator Robbins stated that software is also available to help students evaluate opportunities for particular majors. Caesar stated that the Career Services office has software and counselors who help with these questions. Sikka stated that there is a difference between advising and mentoring. Caesar said that for mentoring, the advisors refer students to faculty who have identified themselves as available for mentoring students.

Senator Pinkerton asked how many First Time in College (FTIC) students do not meet TSI measures, what UHD does to track them, and whether UHD tracked developmental education. Waller explained that UHD does have a significant number of FTIC students who are not college-ready. Students may take developmental courses for a limited number of times, and they do pay a small fee. He also explained that there are a number of efforts to evaluate the data, via the QEP and Achieving the Dream (AtD) initiative, First Year Experience, and disciplines across

the board have access to the data, although the Math department has the most developmental students.

Woods stated that UHD has asked the Higher Education Coordinating Board to not count developmental students as FTIC students until they are college-ready.

Waller explained that the TSI program is different from developmental classes. 80% of FTIC students will take a developmental course, but there is evidence that we retain them better than students who do not take developmental courses. Declaring a major is important to retention, he said. He encouraged the Senate to consider what could be done encourage students to declare majors. Senator Branham agreed that students who do not take developmental courses are not retained as well. Waller included transfer students as not retaining well. Sikka asked why these students leave. Waller said there is no qualitative or quantitative data available, but it is an important question. It may be that they do not intend on staying at or graduating from UHD. He wanted to point out, however, that 50% of the FTIC students go in probation, and 25% are suspended.

Senator McLellan asked if the data is available online. Waller said that it's on the QEP website (<http://cms.dt.uh.edu/QEP>). Sikka said that the QEP and AtD are focusing on data to help the university make decisions. We need to think about the extent which students are separated from faculty, she said, and asked senators to think about ways to increase interaction with students because they do suffer from the separation.

Robbins asked why there is no information about why students leave. Waller explained that there has never been a survey. Robbins asked if we could determine if they left because they were failing. Waller stated that Ed Apodoca would have more information about failing students. Robbins suggested that the university develop a form or website to query students about why they do not reenroll.

Senator Henney stated that it is not easy to make recommendations with the absence of data and information.

Karina Stokes stated that there are programs for student retention. Recent studies, she said, have demonstrated that factors such as lack of high school preparation, financial problems, an unwelcoming attitudes, and several others, hinder student retention and success.

Senator Speers said that there is a problem with recruitment and marketing. Many students are going to choose community colleges, he said. UHD should be competitive with community colleges. We should recruit regular students from the Houston area. Cantu explained that he has not lost sight of average Houston students, but the university is trying to broaden its base.

Senator Cunningham asked if there was an articulation agreement with Lone Star College (formerly North Harris Montgomery Community College). Cantu said there is.

Senator Yuan stated that the web page at some community colleges are linked to an invalid UHD site. Sikka agreed that making sure weblinks are current is important.

Moosally said that even with a lack of data, there are some problems that we do know we can address. Cunningham agreed that many universities have created listservs with events calendars, created room for student spaces in libraries, and proto-honors courses. Preuss, who chairs the AtD committee, stated that there is a commonality of problems across the nation that hinder student progress and several fixes that have proven their results. Caesar said that increased family orientations, linked courses, mentoring programs, faculty involvement are all strategies that have been successful, and that UHD is pursuing. Moosally said that funding for linked course ends after this year. Cunningham stated that linked courses have been funded by Project Geer Up. The Student Instruction program has had good results, she added.

Waller said that linked courses are learning communities, and student instructors are standard interventions. Even without data, there is much information available to make good suggestions. Henney stated that the data needs to be more available.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:** Sikka asked senators to submit suggestions and recommendations to her by the next meeting.

**ADJOURNMENT:** A motion for adjournment was made and seconded. The motion carried, and the meeting adjourned at 4:09 pm.

---

**Date of Approval**

---

**Secretary/Treasurer  
UHD Faculty Senate**