

UHD Faculty Senate Meeting

October 16, 2012

Minutes

Present: G. Preuss (President), T. Hale (President Elect), S. Henney (Secretary), A. Allen (Past President), C. Bachman, M. Benavides, C. Burnett, M. Duncan, S. Farris, J. Herrera, V. Hrynkiv, J. Johnson, R. Johnson, S. Koshkin, P. Li, W. Nowak, J. Schmertz, K. Switzer, J. Tito-Izquierdo, I. Wang, P. Mandell, C. Nguyen, R. Davidson, R. Beebe, D. Epstein, S. Yuan, C. Rubinson, J. Ahmad, F. Khoja, S. Penkar

Absent: P. Deo

October 2 minutes approved as revised with two abstentions.

Announcement: SGA President, I. Sanchez

Mr. Sanchez asked faculty to encourage their students to attend the “Walk the Vote” activity on November 1 at 1 pm. This is a non-partisan effort to encourage student voting and is sponsored by the SGA.

Faculty Senate President’s Report: G. Preuss

1. Preuss recalls us to Flores’ request for faculty to help with retention efforts. A handout was distributed with ideas for how faculty can impact retention. Although there is a committee addressing retention for the University as a whole, faculty must maintain a role in the process.
2. Dean Birchak is publicizing a workshop on developing a freshman seminar on Thursday, 10/18 at 2:30 in A701.
3. Faculty Development Leave Committee needs to be constituted. The Sexual Harassment and Title IX committees need faculty members. COC will issue a call for nominations.
4. The Ombuds’ evaluation is in process.
5. The list of FTIC students, broken down by college, will be distributed soon.
6. Gave an overview of the task forces Senate will be discussing. These include W Course Implementation Task Force, Teaching and Learning Center Implementation Task Force, and Online Education Committee. Previous reports of these committees will be distributed or links made available.

Senator asked that the Waters and Paveletich report on writing in the disciplines also be re-distributed.

Election of alternate member for Intellectual Property Committee was held. Byron Christmas was the winner.

Old Business

Motion to retain names in the minutes was taken off the table.

The ensuing discussion included the following points.

- “Why now?” Have there been documented retaliation incidents? We should have a rationale for changing, since we have “always” included names in minutes.
- Even if we take names out of minutes, it may be desirable for there to be a “deadline” or “expiration date” on this decision.
- Just because we have always included names is not a reason to continue this practice.
- Using names in the minutes can be negative, but it can also be positive in some way.
- One FSEC member has polled constituents in the department and, of those responding, most are not in favor of removing names unless the person requests it. The position of this department is to “selectively” use names as a compromise.
- Faculty Affairs, one of our key policy-writing committees, recently decided to not put names in their minutes.
- Junior faculty use minutes as documentation of their service.
- One department suggests that rather than having to “opt out” (asking that names be removed), Senators should “opt in” (indicate that their name can be used).
- The reasons to enable people to speak freely far outweigh any benefit of naming speakers.
- The issues are important, not who brings them up. As long as key issues are brought up and reflected in the minutes, there should be no need for names.
- The issue is not only retaliation, but also harassment and intimidation, particularly from senior to junior faculty.
- It is more important to have notes that reflect the issues discussed, even sensitive issues, than to go into Executive Session and have no notes.
- The issue is not about whether names go into minutes, but rather the atmosphere in which the conversations are taking place. If we are not able to speak about important issues freely, then this is a problem with the institution that warrants a larger discussion.
- A Senator asked for specific examples of negative repercussions from being named in minutes.
- Minutes should accurately reflect what was done in a meeting; they are not a transcript. Robert’s Rules of Order states that minutes are an accurate reflection of what actually happened and what was done, not a transcript of who said what. Faculty Senate is bound by Robert’s Rules.
- There are legal concerns surrounding minutes. They are legally discoverable documents, can be used in grievances, and can be used in complaints.
- There is some question about whether, as a state entity, the Faculty Senate is permitted to go into Executive Session. This issue needs to be researched.
- The issue of transparency was discussed, with disagreement as to whether names added anything to the transparency of the issues discussed.
- If taking names out of the minutes helps to protect or support a free exchange of ideas or free speech, then why not do it?
- Minutes are public documents. They can be read and reviewed by anyone at any level. There are real risks to putting names in minutes, including harassment at both the local and state level. Committees that take up controversial topics, like research with animals, do not include names in minutes because of concerns about harassment.
- Discussion of what is “missing” from minutes if names are omitted? Nothing is missing in terms of content, but “sense” of the discussion is missing.

- An audience member suggested that one understands the issues being debated from the current format of the minutes. If one wants to know who is speaking, one can come to Senate meetings.
- Overall, three main issues emerged from the discussion:
 1. The format of the minutes themselves. Should names be associated with statements in the minutes?
 2. Freedom of speech and academic discourse.
 3. Hostile work environment.

Senator objects to the consideration of the motion. Objection fails.

Amendment is proposed to be added to the active motion on the floor, “unless a speaker specifically requests anonymity.” Motion to amend fails.

Motion to close debate on the motion and call the question. Motion fails.

Motion to table. Motion passes.

New Business

Teaching and Learning Center Implementation Task Force

The report of the previous Teaching Excellence Task Force summarized what other institutions were doing in this area and set up a foundation of best practices. The report suggests that the next step is to take the issues forward for implementation.

The link for the report is available on the library web site: http://lgdata.s3-website-us-east-1.amazonaws.com/docs/1071/482624/Teaching_Excellence_Task_Force_-_Final_Report_5-12-reduced.pdf

The following suggestions were made for a charge for this task force:

1. Review the previous report and determine what model would be most appropriate for UHD.
2. Devise a plan and structure for what is needed for implementation.
3. Devise a budget and send it forward to administration.
4. Ensure an equitable distribution of the Center’s resources between traditional and online classes.
5. Have a model, the structure for implementation, and a budget ready to go to administration by February 1, 2013.

Online Education Committee

Two major issues are standardization of quality (best practices) and academic integrity. It was noted that there is plenty of existing academic literature both on best practices and on how to deal with issues of academic integrity. The committee should not reinvent this work, but may report on it.

There is no current policy concerning online intellectual property. We could, theoretically, lose control of our online content at any time.

SACS and AACSB are moving to address online education as part of accreditation review, so issues of assessment and quality assurance are important.

The following suggestions were made for a charge for this task force:

1. An overview of online teaching and learning best practices, specifically addressing issues of academic integrity and assurance of quality.
 - a. Best practices should include attention to discipline-specific issues (i.e., “How is it done in my field?”)
2. Compiling the best resources for online education.
3. Generate ideas for a policy regarding intellectual property.

Adjourn: 4:00 pm