

Report of the UHD Faculty Senate President

For February 17, 2009

I reserve the right to update or highlight issues during the meeting. However, anything in these notes is fair game for follow-up questions and comment during the meeting or directly with me. Once the Senate has met, these notes, along with any comments/updates/corrections, will become part of the Senate minutes.

1. Workload Policy

The Faculty Affairs Committee has worked on the revisions requested by President Castillo and has sent it forward to Academic Affairs Council for discussion and vote on February 25. Dr. Lisa Morano, Chair of Faculty Affairs Committee will update us on details.

2. Academic Leadership

As a result of faculty ballots last semester, with a majority expressing serious concerns about academic leadership, FSEC has been in conversation with President Castillo since December and most recently with Provost Woods to work toward resolution of some of the issues. In initial conversations with Dr. Castillo, he had suggested appointing a faculty liaison to assist in paperwork management and information flow between faculty/departments and the Office of the Provost. FSEC was supportive of this plan and discussed some options for implementation while awaiting further feedback from administration. Our conversation with Dr. Woods last week revealed that, while she and Dr. Castillo had considered the liaison option, she perceived difficulty with implementing that idea. [The short-term position advertised by the Provost's Office in December has been filled by Lucy Bowen.] Dr. Woods also noted that in light of the resignation of Ms. Debbie Cally, they are currently seeking a full-time replacement for the position of assistant to the Provost. In her unit plan, Dr. Woods will ask for position to cover some of Dr. Williams' responsibilities, as he has taken on other tasks with his new title. Thus, as this point, we have raised awareness of the ballot issues and have an understanding with Dr. Woods that improved communication is a priority, particularly highlighting the benefits of direct communication between the Provost and the faculty; we have agreed that promptness of responses from all parties is critical. FSEC will continue to work with administration on these important issues.

3. Name Selection

The BOR met on February 6. Prior to that meeting and as indicated in the email that was sent to Senators and then to the faculty, I sent a copy of the February 3 Senate Resolution to the BOR, with a courtesy copy to President Castillo and President Khator. I referred to key points of the resolution in my brief statement to BOR but did not read any of it verbatim. I also reported on a near random sampling of 40 faculty members across all colleges in which a majority of respondents shared concerns about process, timing, motivation, and name options.

A few members of the Senate have expressed concern that the Senate resolution was presented and passed very quickly, with limited opportunity for discussion and notification to constituents. Certainly, we would prefer Senate actions to benefit from extensive notice to all members of our

community whenever possible; therefore, if this issue is of broader concern to the Senate and the Faculty, I would encourage us to think about how our constitutional revisions could include more explicit ways to address potential conflicts between the need for timely action and the value of timely notice to constituents and senators.

In terms of the name change, the BOR did not approve a specific name, citing concerns about the process and limited opportunities to vet the set of names to avoid confusion with other institutions such as South Texas College of Law. It is my understanding that we have no specific instructions on how the BOR and Chancellor plan to proceed, but there is little likelihood that any change will be sent forward in this legislative session, given the limited time frame for filing new bills this session.

4. General Education

I am the Senate representative on the General Education Advisory Committee. Based on extensive discussions during the last year, the Committee has proposed a new structure and Dr. Woods has approved it. The committee will remain an advisory committee to the Provost. However, highlights of membership are as follows: one tenured faculty member from each department, elected by dept T/TT faculty; this rep will also be appointed to the departmental curriculum committee during time of service on the Gen Ed Committee. The Provost will appoint 3 additional members and the committee chair will be elected. We are currently working to update the charge of the committee so that we can get the new committee in place as efficiently as possible to begin a more comprehensive process of reviewing and building the gen ed program and to follow up on various reporting needs.

5. Strategic Planning Oversight Council

This group is part of the new planning process. We will shortly be receiving unit plans from the major university divisions. Our primary responsibility is to rank them by content and alignment with strategic plan priorities rather than worrying about available funds. Once we rank the requests, the list will be turned over to the Resource Allocation Committee (which VP Belbot and I are also part of); that group will then assign available funds to the requests.