UHD Faculty Senate Minutes
Meeting: 3/7/23
Hybrid meeting (UHD and Zoom)
Minutes recorded by: Dr. Candace TenBrink

Guest and senator roster are at the end.
Meeting opened at 2:31 p.m.
Meeting minutes from February 21st, 2023: approved.

Dr. Quander – Faculty Success - Faculty Activity Reporting System and Strategic Plan
As related to the strategic plan, UHD needs a way to pull reports related to faculty success. Ideally, they would like one that includes scholarly/creative activity and community partners, but they could not find a system that works well for both. Dr. Quander and the strategic planning committee decided to focus on the scholarly/creative activity tracking. (They are not looking at community engagement at this point in her working group). They are supporting a product by Watermark (for faculty success). It has a faculty interface, is customizable, is used by other institutions, and fits our budget.

The provost will appoint a working group to help oversee the process with representation from many stakeholders such as faculty, deans, chairs, IT. They anticipate that it will be rolled out this fall, at least for faculty profiles.

FS- How much will this cost?
The cost would be ~$35,367, annually (including the MDCOB which already using it). The administration has earmarked funds for an effort such as this. New funds would be about $25,000. The college of business is already paying 10,000.
FS- Who pays for this? And for the COB?
Quander- We do. The University pays for it.
FS- Is there an installation fee and are there system upgrade fees and things like that?
Quander- There is no installation fee, but there are other fees.

FS- What is the point of this, the bottom line, can you bottom line what you want the database to do?
Quander - Faculty success is about making faculty output known, to share profiles. The goal is to disseminate what we do to a wider audience (scholarly and creative).
FS- Is Watermark the right tool? Maybe a different tool would be better.
FS- in response to the previous comment, the original plan was not just to show 'rockstar' faculty but to quickly find faculty that can work with community partners (in addition to previously mentioned needs).
Quander – (showed examples of faculty profiles at Texas universities) The information is customizable and may be updated on a regular basis.
FS- We went through this 10 years ago and it crashed and burned. Faculty did not want to participate. What is different this time?

Quander- We believe that this one is easier and that for the faculty that use it, UHD can pull reports as needed.

FS- What did we use last time?

FS- We used Activity Insight.

Guest- The bottom line is that faculty will need to update the system.

FS- If someone else adds an entry, it locks everyone out but the one that added it.

Quander- yes, we hope to address some of these issues with the working group.

FS- Do faculty have to participate?

Quander- The working group will discuss this. It must be faculty driven. Yes, we will have to figure it out. The basics from PeopleSoft can be added, depending on the working group, automatically.

FS- Databases make me nervous. Especially now, for example, for those that are involved in DEI. Who will have access to the database?

Quander- We will have to figure it out. It is a concern. Maybe it will reside in the provost's office.

FS- We are a public institution. Anything we post is public information. Some folks may be penalized for what they are doing.

FS- Who is going to update for us?

Paul Fulbright volunteered for the working group.

FS- Do we still have to compile DEI reports?

Gehring – we will discuss this later.

Gehring- Idea evaluations and UHD R&T Policy

In the UHD R&T policy, there is no language that says candidates must upload their individual evaluations. Please look at appendix C. Candidates may do so, but it is not a requirement. Now, departments can do their own thing.

FS- There is no university requirement that raw data and scores must be included. Only that a faculty member makes a comment or assessment about their feedback. Correct?

Gehring- Yes. A brief explanation and analysis or summary data is needed (not raw).

FS- It was surprising to see some departments use a numerical value on the IDEA to set a standard.

FS- fascinating. I wonder if this opens us up for disgruntled faculty. How do we create a fair process?

FS- What if someone gets a 7 and then someone else does not. It seems like there is an incentive here to have faculty focus on this (paraphrased that this may not be fair).

FS- Can we discuss that some are not great teachers. Not everyone deserves a 7.

Gehring- yes, but we need to discuss if this is a good metric to evaluate teaching well. I don't know if student evaluation scores are the best way to tap into this. If you get a high score, maybe you are just liked or cool. We do not know.

FS- I think if you have a negative trend, the question should be -how are you addressing it?

Class size, student level, and course all have an impact on the evaluations. Some courses are

hard and we should not penalize faculty because the course is hard. We cannot just rely on an IDEA score.

FS- I see a quantitative difference between courses. I think I do a good job in both types of classes, but there is a difference. I am lucky we do not have a numerical point as I would be in trouble (annual review).

FS- Taking one item alone is a mistake. We need to consider the faculty holistically. Taken in isolation we are not doing our due diligence if we are not putting evidence in context.

FS- Eventually scores become punitive. We need a conversation about what we do when we find a faculty member is not good at teaching. Let's find a way to make the evaluations constructive. Let's help them.

FS- To be clear, R&T policy is asking for a holistic view.

FS- But we are talking about a department.

FS- The R&T policy does not say you must upload your publications. But no one would not upload and document their publications.

(video disruption for a moment)

FS- There is an issue about student comments and how I run my class. I would like to find a way to have course evaluation be done in a more productive manner. It can sometimes be punitive. There might be cases of offensive comments or complaining or my teacher is a hard grader, but for all the time I have been here, I am ow a better teacher after reading feedback. I have concerns with the company providing the instrument, but I value my students' comments.

FS- We talk a lot about bias in the evaluations. But it may be interesting to see how this replicates in our students. We are not a traditional university, we are an MSI and HSI. A few of us studied bias in syllabi and professors (at UHD) and we found the students were not biased against professors, like we expected based on what has been seen in previous literature.

FS- It is not just a bias issue but a low response rate issue. It is a data validity issue. I am concerned that we are talking about this in terms of norming. To me the lesson is that we can have discussions at the department level about doing things differently. Democracy should win out. We should be able to discuss this and make changes if the majority wants to and move in a different direction.

Gehring – I am hoping that people do not feel the senate is telling people how to use this. That is not the case. This is the first time I have seen rubrics from other departments. Take what you want from this. I think it is important to have this awareness and discussion.

FS- It is stunning how much variance there is across different universities in terms of tackling this problem. There is a lot of variance. Some say that every professor must be evaluated. They have response rates of 95% plus. My point is there is an enormous amount of variance. All of these problems are not solved by high response rates, but everything positive gets better and everything that is worse gets smaller with the higher response rates. I think a body like this can help with response rates. It has a long-term potential benefit for the institution.

Gehring- Think about this and let's put a pin in this. We are getting into agenda creep. With regards to the legislative session and senate bills being introduced by Dan Patrick, especially with regards to higher education. I have had several conversations with the UH System and learned that the bills of most concern to us:

- sb 16 banning critical race theory in higher education,
- sb17 banning discrimination DEI policies in higher education,
- sb 18 eliminating tenure at general academic institutions.

However, many of these are just titles and not fully written (if at all).

We have had some conversation with the chancellor abouts DEI and how to move forward. Especially regarding hiring practices. Individuals have come up to me and expressed concern about this. I am opening the floor for comments on this.

FS- I am going to motion to go into executive session.
FS- second
The meeting went into executive session.
The minutes ended.

FS = faculty senator

Guests:
Provost Bordelon, Michelle Moosally, Judith Quander, Darlene Hodge, Sandra Dahlberg, Lisa Jennings, Lauri Ruiz, Hope Pamplin, Hossein Shahrokhi

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26	Austin DeJan	FNIS	x
27	Paul Fulbright	GMSC	x
28	Prakash Deo	FNIS	x
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