

UHD Faculty Senate Minutes
Meeting: 3/21/23
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 March 7, 2023: approved.

President Blanchard- Updates on Austin (elected officials) and Higher Education Bills.

There is a correlation between our legislature appropriation requests and several senate bills. We have a \$76 mil request on the table. Two in particular are for special items:

- 1) \$12 million to strengthen student success infrastructure. This is for academic advisors, financial literacy coaches and mental health counselors as we work to meet our goal to increase our FTIC graduation rate to 60% in 5 years.
- 2) \$10 mil for an entrepreneurial center.

To date, in 50 years, UHD has not received legislative funding for special items. Last year two universities asked for funding and were awarded it; UH and TSU received \$50 mil. each.

Capital construction was funded through legislative support years ago. As part of our current appropriations ask, we seek funding to move the campus police office and emergency operations center. We are seeking \$20 mil for construction costs. We also seek land to build the campus police and emergency operation center as well as to accommodate for the north highway improvement project. Land acquisition will allow UHD to increase the footprint and “feel” of the campus within an urban setting. There will be a need for parking and shuttling as the highway project advances. Our land acquisition ask in our appropriations request is \$25 mil.

Tied to funding for the next fiscal year, there are select bills higher education is being asked to pay close attention to:

1. SB 15 intercollegiate competition by biological sex
2. SB 16 critical race theory (CRT)
3. SB 17 DEI (diversity equity and inclusion)
4. SB 18 tenure
5. SB 19 creating new higher educational endowments.
6. Creating a constitutional amendment to authorize create education endowments.

Bills # 2-4 impact UHD. For SB 17, legislation wants to ensure that hiring in higher education is based on merit. The legislation also calls for higher education to look closely at the work of DEI centers and offices funded through state dollars.

SB 18 looks at tenured faculty workload and availability to all students.

As currently written as an initial draft, it is difficult to determine the direction of the CRT bill.

FS- Will the entrepreneurship center be a university-based center or will it be a joint center, perhaps between CST and MDCOB?

President- As of now it will be a university-based center.

FS- What will happen with the University's JEDI initiative?

President- We will not violate any state law and the work that we currently have under way does not appear to be in violation. We will continue to follow our strategic plan.

FS- How can you have an entrepreneurship center without DEI?

President - there is funding for minority and small businesses that we can pursue.

Guest- 1) The faculty owns the curriculum. As members of the academy, we have the right to define what we want to teach. Where is the red line?

Pres. – To date, curricula has not been used in the bill language.

2) I understand not using state funds for DEI, but we have programs that are tied into activities; how do we support these faculty without disenfranchising them?

Pres.- if the research and scholarship work centers on JEDI, that faculty member is not expected to change their focus.

3) What are we doing to protect our colleagues that are doing this work (DEI related)?

Pres. – We make clear that some faculty were hired based on their scholarship productivity along with their teaching and service records. Some faculty scholarship has a DEI focus.

FS- Will we stand for the state telling us we cannot hire additional faculty in the DEI related area?

Pres. – This has not been stated thus far in the current iteration of the higher education legislative bills.

Guest – curriculum as of now is a sacred space, at this moment would you have the same perspective for programs and opportunities (outside of curriculum). Will these be tied to the faculty member, or would they be viewed as independent?

Pres. – Based on what is written thus far in select higher education bills, there may be a few programs that could be targeted. We continue to monitor the bills closely.

FS- After being in Austin, what is your sense of topics in the house?

Pres.- From the house perspective, for any funding to be approved in the next biennium , there shall be no tie-in with DEI work.

Gehring- student misconduct and discipline.

Turned it over to Dr. Buckler who led the session.

Buckler - Overview of student rights policy.

As the policy is written, if something occurs in the academic environment, the faculty member has the right to ask the student not to come to class for up to 3 class hours. And then the faculty can file a student incident report and it goes to the Dean of Students. Then the dept. chair meets with the faculty member and the student. (see [policy](#) for more information)

Issues:

FSEC met with Branston Harris, Jennifer Bloom, and Dr. Maritza Tamez – and we discussed the process. Right now we are relying on the faculty member to submit the report to the Dean of Students and the dept. chair is not looped in. Kevin believes this is an issue in the process as the chair should know what is happening.

Item 2- These reports are perceived as occurring in a silo. The two parties are not coming together. It would be good to have the faculty member there to have a shared understanding of what happened. And can a student choose an administrative or committee hearing? (yes, a student may choose)

Item 3- often when faculty refer things, we are curious about the outcome. FERPA is often sighted as the reason that the administration cannot share outcomes. There is a loophole though. He believes that the dept. chair should at least know.

Item 4- There was some talk about the student handbook and UHD policy not being on the same page in term of process. We could do a better job with this.

FS- There are contradictions in PS-04.A.01. Senators should clarify the policy in the future. There are instances where the Dean of Students is not complying with the policy. Since 2018, none of the complaints I have filed have been processed correctly. Why was I not informed about this? I filed 4 or 5 claims. The policy states that the Dean of Students office is responsible for the policy. However, as you read through the policy, it discusses the Dean of Students and then in 4.2 it references the dept. chair. So it is confusing. I am not sure about the process. It appears that the procedures are misleading. It seems like the student must accept responsibility at the department level. I am not sure who is in charge of enforcing and clarifying the process. It is not working properly.

I was supposed to get a student apology, the Dean of Students said I would get one in the summer. I have not as of yet. I have not received that support from the university.

Buckler- at our FSEC meeting we agreed that the policy is unclear and we need to link in the dept. chair somehow. There is an interest in fixing the policy.

Tamez- classroom incident – There are two forms with the same name. This is an issue.

Branston- has created an IT ticket to help tie-in the chair. When the complaint comes in, now we are referring it back to the local level, since the FSEC meeting this has been consistent. Prior, we did get a bit involved. However, it gets murky, especially in 4.2 when there are gray areas such as multiple rounds of complaints. I am open to revisiting the policy.

Tamez- 4.2.2 says the policy states the faculty can remove a student for 3 additional hours, not 4.

FS- what is proper process if someone feels a threat has been made?

Tamez – report the threatening behavior to UHD police.

FS- What if it is online?

Tamez - our police first. If there is a threat to harm oneself, then it will go to a local precinct. Fill out the student conduct incident form.

FS- what do we do after we call the police?

Branston- we can do a suspension if a student is threatening oneself or others.

FS- I ask Dr. Tamez to not define threatening behavior. It is very subjective. Once again, do not use your own definition of what a threat is. I have spoken to the new chief of police, and he has assured me that one's perception of threat will be supported. It is very unfair to define a threat. I have a right to define it based on my perceptions. All faculty do (have the right to define a threat). 4.2.4

Tamez- the policy does state what threatening behavior is.

Branston- yes, faculty may report behavior to the campus police.

FS- I think we should let faculty decide what constitutes a threat. We are savvy and educated. We understand a threat may come in many ways and not be a direct verbal statement.

Jennifer Bloom- (re what constitutes a threat) There is an objective part- context, words, and the situation. It is a thoughtful and holistic consideration. What may be threatening to one person, may not be to another. These are not easy cases. If a student acts in peculiar way or raises one's voice, yes, it is difficult. There are intellectual, emotional and thoughtful considerations for the cases. As a public institution, we need to have a rational basis for taking sanctions against a student. Campus policies inform the actions we can take and the student outcomes.

Guest- there will be some work on this policy in future.

FS- can you help define bullying?

Bloom- it is hard, it is fairly vague. It may become threatening, but I am not sure what you want? In what context do I define it?

FS- How do we differentiate between bullying and threatening. For example, if a student persists to do X when a faculty has asked the student not to do it, is that bullying?

Bloom – this generation seems to be quick to escalate. If a student is persistent, then I don't necessarily see this as bullying but as aggressive self-advocacy.

General disruption – when a student is sending scores of emails and being repetitive and aggressive. That is where we counsel folks to ask the party to not bring it up again, then you can file a failure to comply.

FS- we have faculty that can face professional damages due to threatening behavior. In relation to failure to comply and disruption, this could be highly damaging. This is not just subjective; this could have meaningful objective consequences.

Bloom- can you share more.

FS- I have a legal license, If a student says I am not carrying out my duties, it would have to be investigated by a board. I would have to defend myself and it would be costly. Some of this has the potential to be quite damaging. We need some clarity.

Faculty senate adjourned at 4:01 p.m.

After we adjourned a FS asked to continue this discussion next time. Pres. Gehring said FSEC would discuss it.

FS = faculty senator

Guests:

Provost Bordelon, Michelle Moosally, Judith Quander, Darlene Hodge, Maritza Tamez, Branston Harris, Vida Robertson, Ron Beebe, Jerry Johnson, Liza Alonzo, Kristen Anderson, Jennifer Bloom, Lisa Braysen, Jonathan Schwartz

Senators and Senate Leadership:

Senate Member	Pos/ Dept.	21-Mar X=present
Krista Gehring	President	x
Bernardo Pohl	President-elect	x
Edmund Cueva	Past President	x
Candace TenBrink	Secretary	x
CHSS		
Ayden Adler	A&C	x
Carolyn Gascoigne	HHL	x
Katrina Rufino	SOS	x
Natalia Matveeva	A&C	x
Nell Sullivan	ENG	x
Paul Fortunato	ENG	x
Raquel Chiquillo	HHL	x
Stephanie Babb	SOS	x
Travis Crone	SOS	x
Luke Fedell*	CHSS	x
CPS		
Diane Miller	UE	x
Franklin Allaire	UE	x
Heather Goltz	CJSW	x
Kevin Buckler*	CJSW	x
CST		
Adriana Visbal	NS	x
Gabriella Bowden	NS	
Katherine Shoemaker*	M&S	x
Ling Xu	CSET	x
Youn-Sha Chan	M&S	x
Kulwant Singh	CST	x

MDCOB		
Arpita Shroff	ACCI	x
Austin DeJan	FNIS	x
Paul Fulbright	GMSC	x
Prakash Deo	FNIS	x
Scott Davis	GMSC	x
Don Holmes	ACCI	x
David Epstein	MGT	
<i>*Faculty Senate Executive Committee Members</i>		