

UHD Faculty Senate

Minutes recorded by: Michael Cavanaugh
Zoom Meeting April 7, 2020 2:31 – 4:00 pm
Online through Zoom

Senate: Michael Duncan, Ronald Beebe, Hsiao-Ming Wang, Michael Cavanaugh, Franklin Allaire, Alexander Bielakowski, Dexter Cahoy, Kristen Capuzzo, Stephanie Coleman, Prakash Deo, Isaac Elking, Krista Gehring, Angela Goins, Felicia Harris, Susan Henney, Pamela Hurley, Tahereh Jafari, Timothy Klein, Cynthia Lloyd, Steve London, Jeffery Martz, Mitsue Nakamura, Nathan Neale, Andrew Pavelich, Joseph Sample, Johanna Schmertz, Jace Valcore, Pat Williams, Julie Wilson, Ting Zhang.

Absent: Maria Benavides, Laura Mitchell.

Guests: Eric Link, Provost/VPAA; Faiza Khoja, AVP Academic Affairs; Jerry Johnson, AVP Faculty, Research, and Sponsored Programs; Michelle Moosally, AVP Programming and Curriculum; Pat Ensor, Library Director; Lucy Bowen, Executive Director Academic & Student Affairs; Darlene Hodge, FS Admin; Kevin Buckler, FAC Chair/Professor; Sheryl Sellers, Student/Dateline Correspondent; Karen Kaser, Program Director BAAS-AA/Senior Lecturer; Candace TenBrink; Assistant Professor; Crystal Guillory; Assistant Dean of CHSS; DoVeanna Fulton, Dean of CHSS; Akif Uzman, Dean of CST.

Call to order: The Senate was called to order at 2:31 pm by Senate President Michael Duncan.

Minutes

March 31st Out of Cycle Zoom minutes approved unanimously.

Dr. Duncan explains that these approved minutes are in an abbreviated form and there is a video of the meeting posted on the Senate website.

Discussion on minutes and video ensued.

Dr. Duncan explained that he did this without asking for senators' permission first, which could be a problem. He defaulted to this because the meetings cannot really be public while they are on zoom.

Please have normal meeting minutes written.

I assumed we were being recorded.

I am fine with the recording.

Our regular meetings are not recorded, I am not sure the need for it now.

I think it is best that they are available to the faculty.

I don't agree, our regular meetings are not posted.

There needs to be a written record of the minutes, not a reference to a recording.

The comments in the minutes are anonymized but they would not be if we post the recording.

We have minutes, which would be the public record.

Dr. Duncan asks if we should take a vote on it and default to a written record of the minutes instead.

We did not get normal minutes this week. I just want to make sure that when they are sent to the website they are written.

Dr. Pavelich makes a motion to post the videos until Senate resumes normal order. Dr. Martz seconds the motion.

Discussion on the motion occurs.

Minutes seem better and easier to reference.

That is not how it should work. If we need agreement from everyone to be recorded, then a motion should not suffice, right? The majority is not 100%.

Dr. Duncan says that we probably need 2/3 under the Senate constitution to suspend usual meeting procedures.

Minutes should be taken from the recording. The recording should not be posted.

Many senators agreed with the previous statement.

The motion is called to a vote. 3 yes, 2 abstain, 21 no. Motion fails.

New motion from Dr. Beebe, with clarification from Dr. Schmertz "Minutes should be taken from the recording, the recording should not be posted." Dr. Gehring seconds the motion.

Vote – Passes unanimously.

Dr. Duncan states that we will follow the practice as indicated, the Secretary will take minutes from the recording until otherwise indicated.

Reports

Dr. Duncan introduces Dr. Kevin Buckler, Chair of FAC who will be giving a couple of reports. The first report is over the proposed changes in the rank and tenure policy (see attached).

Questions and Discussions occurred

Q – I like the idea of an abstention vote. If I abstain, I would also like the opportunity to write a letter explaining why I am abstaining. Right now, that is not codified, am I correct on this?

A – Dr. Buckler said it is currently not codified. A lot of time was spent on abstentions and this issue was divisive. When we sent out this issue to faculty the responses ran the gamut, some wanted detailed explanations, some wanted minor explanations, and some wanted no explanations. Robert’s Rules of Order basically say that abstentions do not require an explanation and that is where we landed. If you participate in the discussion or in the review, then you are considered an abstention (if you do not vote). We really cannot require a vote either. I guess a person could create a statement on their own and have it attached.

There were several times in which I wanted to abstain because the I felt that the case was right in the middle. A formal policy mechanism (i.e. abstention letter) would have been nice in those cases.

Dr. Buckler explained that this was discussed but this is another item put in the candidate record. There was worry that it could be used in a potential grievance. For some people this might not be a big deal while for others this may.

Q – Is there any reason you “Can’t” say why you want to abstain?

A – Dr. Buckler thought it was possible for someone to write a statement on their abstention. However, it might not be a wise decision to do so.

Q – This semester (and possibly next) all R&T meetings will be conducted via Zoom. I am wondering about the signatures on R&T documents. Are we all to email our approval and have the R&T chair sign for us? What about the possibility of allowing for electronic signatures, assuming that at some point the university will move toward electronic signatures for more of its processes? For this semester, does the chair sign and scan the documents?

A – According to Dr. Buckler, the proposed policy is for normal circumstances and we have not considered all the special circumstances surrounding COVID-19. The Provost’s Office has explained that we need to continue R&T activities, so my department will continue 2- and 4-year reviews electronically. My response is that this can be decided between the administration and FSEC and faculty senators in how to work out the details and proceed in these abnormal circumstances.

Q – So for this semester the chair signs and scans?

A – Dr. Buckler stated, again, this policy was not meant to handle these types of circumstances. That is something that the Provost’s Office and faculty senate can work out. The new policy does allow for electronic participation and voting, but in the context of normal activity. The policy is assuming most people would be in the office and one or two would be traveling, not everyone off campus. In abnormal situations like this, the spirit of the policy gets examined and decisions are made on how to proceed.

Q – When does the faculty review period on this policy end?

A – Dr. Buckler indicated that the policy is going to AAC on April 17th.

Q - So it is going before AAC without another faculty comment period? The changes that were made after the last one were not substantive?

A – Dr. Buckler explained that he will take responsibility for that. He did not ask enough questions about the procedures for faculty comments on policy with regard to substantive changes. My preference is to go ahead and put this before AAC. We have been talking about this policy for 2-3 years. People are familiar with the issues.

Q - There is an addition to the policy in the timetable that is not documented in track changes. "All parties who rendered a vote in the process may request copies of the letters from any level from the Provost's Office." Why is this needed?

A – Dr. Buckler said this can be removed from the policy. It was my mistake and should have been removed previously after the first round of comments. Faculty indicated this was not needed. I will take that out.

So, the changes are substantive. Whether or not you take responsibility, the additional substantive changes must go through an additional faculty review.

Dr. Buckler indicates that he can bring these concerns back to FAC.

Dr. Duncan asks for any other thoughts on the issue or maybe a statement from Senate. He indicates a concern of having a vote on this policy during the "disaster period".

This is a huge issue. Not having additional faculty input on substantive changes is not acceptable.

Dr. Buckler indicates he can bring these concerns to FAC and they can be figured out.

Dr. Moosally brought up some points on the policy. 3.12.1 – She liked the faculty having LMS shells available at the start of the tenure track and adding to it every year. However, there is some concern that this will be the same one used for the 2nd and 4th year review as some departments have developed their own criteria for these reviews. They may not look exactly alike which could pose problems. An independent review from the chair and R&T seems to increase the workload on the chairs who are already doing annual evaluations. Possibly address the rationale there. Can the chair and R&T talk to one another while conducting the 2nd and 4th year reviews? That did not seem clear in the policy. Finally, when discussing the role of annual evaluations in R&T, the policy says this needs to be articulated, which I think is important. But there is some requirement about identifying the weight of it. I'm a little concerned because historically we have not assigned weights for R&T criteria and I do not know if the system can handle that now.

Dr. Buckler said in terms of weight, we wanted something in the policy that indicated here is how we are using annual evaluations and 2nd and 4th year reviews. We used weight because we just did not have another word to use in its stead. As for the LMS shells, we can go back and set up multiple shells for the candidates if need be. We had not thought about the different requirements. For the 2nd and 4th year review it would be separate and independent reviews by the chair and R&T. The intent was to mirror the R&T process for the 2nd and 4th year and to give the candidates more information moving forward.

Dr. Duncan explained that while the discussion was occurring, there was a motion on the floor.

Dr. Henney made a motion that the Senate recommend to Provost Link that this policy not be taken up by AAC until there is an additional faculty comment period and time for FAC to review and incorporate the additional faculty comments. The motion was seconded by Dr. Beebe.

Vote conducted through a poll on zoom. Vote was 23-0 in favor with 2 abstentions. Motion passes.

Dr. Duncan explains that he will let Dr. Link know about the vote and suggests that Dr. Buckler also provide information about the vote.

Dr. Buckler also presents to Senate about the Dean Evaluation Policy which covers two separate policy mark-ups: dean evaluation and staff performance evaluation (see attached).

Discussion occurred.

Dr. Buckler added that this policy had gone through the entire faculty review process/period. Section 3.5 in the staff review policy did not go through the process and will be deleted.

Dr. Duncan clarifies that these will be moving forward to AAC on April 17th.

If this policy goes forward, there needs to be a record that the faculty intend to revisit and re-expand the policy (e.g., they are not giving it over to ESO processes).

Dr. Buckler responds that there are comments in the margins.

Dr. Moosally explains that comments in the margins are not considered part of policy. If the Senate intends this to be temporary, then the Senate should attach a resolution or some other attachment because the comments in the margin do not get formalized.

Dr. Buckler asks whether FAC should put this in a memo.

Put this in the policy.

We cannot lose control of the Dean evaluation to ESO.

Dr. Duncan mentions that we can bring the Human Subjects policy up at the next Senate meeting.

Dr. Karen Kaser came to Senate to present on the new Competency Based policy (see attached). The goal is to have the policy before AAC on April 17th. Also included is a handout with frequently asked questions (see attached).

Some discussion.

I didn't really like the first few points in the policy just say that the program follows the rules. We shouldn't have to repeat that. 3.1, 3.2, 3.3. Each of those sections say you must follow this, or you have to follow that. It seems to make the policy longer.

Dr. Kaser explained that because there were so many questions about the program, they wanted to make the policy clear. Even though the courses are competency based, the program is course based and we wanted to make this clear. We probably made it longer than it needed to be, but we wanted to include everything up front to bring to AAC. If we make those changes, would we need to bring it back to UCC?

Dr. Moosally explained that a concern brought up in UCC was that if the policy did not reference the other policies, then there was an implication that this is the only policy that applies to the competency-based program. UCC wanted it clear that all these policies applied. Ultimately, when the general curriculum policy is revised, this will be folded into it.

Dr. Jerry Johnson gave a report on the internal funding awards to senate (see attached). This is in response to a Senate question as to whether tenure track faculty were beneficiaries of the awards.

Q – Is there is reasonable representation among tenured and tenure track, based on the applications?

A – Dr. Johnson said yes. The review committees have been intentional about how important it is for tenure track faculty to have a chance at these awards. Every year when I convene the committee, I talk about issues that have popped up in the past, including the perception that these are not widely distributed among tenure track faculty. The committees seem to be doing a great job in reviewing proposals and there does not seem to be a bias against tenure track faculty.

Senator brings up the issue of Blackboard Ally being enforced in his classroom. He explained that he received an email from IT informing him that the Blackboard page for his research students, which contains pdfs, is being reviewed and changes will be made for his review.

Dr. Moosally addressed the issue. There was a group in IT that can convert documents and they were planning on reaching out to faculty whose Ally scores could use improvement. This is an opt-in process for the faculty. Faculty do not have to participate for the spring if they do not want to, it is a service we are trying to offer. Our target for Ally is the summer term and Fall compliance.

Dr. Crystal Guillory and Dr. Johnson gave a report on the UHD Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Alliance (see attached).

Q – Is there a contact person for the group?

A – Dr. Johnson said he can serve as the contact person in the interim. Dr. Guillory also said that she can be contacted too.

I want to reiterate that it's important that conversations on diversity, equity and inclusion should be happening at the department level. I encourage all senators to share this information with their departments and stress that this should be a priority. Lastly, I think it's somewhat embarrassing to have student leaders address something that we as a body are largely quiet about.

Senator brings up the issue of technology for faculty. Is the university is planning to provide tablets and digital pens or other devices to faculty? There is a need for us who are doing research.

This is especially important for adjuncts who can not just go to Best Buy and get what they need.

Dr. Duncan brings up the last agenda item for the meeting, the lack of a faculty assembly on April 21st and whether to hold a regular senate meeting on that day. There seems to support for it. Two weeks from now there will be a regular Senate meeting (April 21st).

Final issue is the constitution, according to Dr. Duncan. We had the constitution edit set up but don't have the ability to have a faculty assembly this spring. Should we suspend the constitution edits until the fall? We have done stop gap measures for the elections, so there is not a real need to get anything passed right away.

Dr. Schmertz explains that she is the chair of the committee and she rotates off the Senate next year. Continuity for the committee would be good.

Dr. Duncan explains that any member of the faculty assembly could vote on the constitution changes.
Dr. Duncan asks Dr. Beebe to speak on this.

Dr. Beebe says that, in terms of procedure, we may need a vote to formally suspend the faculty assembly for the spring, because it is in the constitution. Then we can convene a faculty assembly in the fall.

Dr. Duncan says this is something that we can discuss in the next meeting.

Dr. Gehring made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Dr. Cahoy seconded the motion. Meeting adjourned at 4:00 pm.