## **FACULTY SENATE DECEMBER 03, 2014**

**MINUTES**

**PRESENT**: Magdy Akladios, Tiffiney Barfield-Cottledge, Joy Bechtold, Carol Carman, Kent Divoll, Tom Fox, Jennifer Fritz, Lisa Gossett, Bettye Grigsby, Beth Hentges, Amanda Johnston, Sarah Lechago,

Pat McCormack, Scott Mcintyre, Tim Michael, Ivelina Pavlova, Alfredo. Perez-Davila, Richard Puzdrowski, Mohammad Rob, Leroy Robinson, Cheryl Sawyer, LieJune Shiau, Debra Shulsky, Felix Simieou, Jill Smith, Brian Stephens, Alix Valenti, Chris Ward, Jana Willis, Paul Withey.

**ABSENT**: Mary Short, Stephen Cotten, Chloe Diepenbrock, David Garrison.

**IN ATTENDANCE**: Darlene Biggers, Czajkiewicz Zbigniew, Glen Houston, Mark Shermis, Rick Short,

Carl Stockton, Gavin Steiger, Maria Gill.

## MINUTES APPROVAL -November 05, 2014

The meeting minutes were approved with the following amendment:

* Delete "Dr. Gossett stated that her view of addiction counseling is that such a program would be divided between SOE and HSH" (page 2, C&T Report)

## **PROVOST REPORT**

Provost Stockton reported the Psychology Doctoral program proposal had been submitted to UH system. Provost Council will consider it at the December 2014 meeting and the Board of Regents at the February 2015 meeting. Commencement will occur on December 14; BUS & SOE -12 p.m. /HSH & SCE-5 p.m. The Teaching & Learning Enhancement Center (TLEC) Advisory committee meets once weekly. Dr.

Mike McMullen and Dr. Bill Amonette were added to the committee. The committee developed a list of questions to be used for interviewing TLEC directors at 11 institutions. A short list of institutions will then be established for potential Advisory Committee visits. Afterwards, a proposal forging the future of TLEC will be documented and submitted for consideration.

## **SENATE REPORTS**

Budget Committee: Dr. Akladios announced that the Budget committee plans to forward three requests to the Faculty Senate Executive Committee and subsequently to the Provost for inclusion in the Priorities:

* + Request for Equity Increase in the amount of 500,000
  + Request to allocate 50,000 for faculty development
  + Request to increase faculty summer pay from 1/11 to 1110

Following discussion, a vote was conducted to prioritize requests. The Senate approved rank order as follows:

* + 1. Request for market equity increase in the amount of 500,000
    2. Request to increase faculty summer pay from 1/11 to 1/10
    3. Request to allocate 50,000 for faculty development

Curriculum & Teaching Committee: Dr. Ward brought forward the Accessible Information Policy on behalf of Dr. Mary Short, Committee Chair. State law mandates that a policy for making electronic information resources accessible to people with disabilities be in place. There is no existing policy at UHCL. There was considerable discussion on the policy in C&T.

Gavin Steiger and Maria Hill, Office of Disability Services were in attendance to provide information and answer questions relating to the policy. Mr. Steiger pointed out that this policy is in response to law suits filed against several higher education institutions nationwide by the Department of Education Office of Civil Rights or the Department of Justice. Electronic information includes course management systems, websites or any additional information shared electronically. UHCL is the pioneer in the UH-System attempting to address the policy. The Electronic Information Resource Committee (EIR) recognizes that making this information accessible will be intensive and a lengthy process due to the amount of electronic information (11,000 webpages) in the UHCL website. The first step will be to review 100% online courses, then public websites, followed by electronic information in face-to-face and hybrid courses.

There was a request for examples of how institutions violate the policy. Mr. Steiger commented that South Carolina Technical College System had several websites that were not accessible per Americans

with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Federal Section 508 Rehabilitation Act standards to users with visual impairments. Consequently, legal action was taken against the institution. Mr. Steiger said that videos, multi-media, websites and blackboard are currently being reviewed to ensure compliance. The high traffic webpages such as UHCL homepage and Admissions will be addressed first. Mr. Steiger stressed that electronic information needs to be accessible and available to everyone. Federal Section 508 applies to public entities such as UHCL whereas the ADA has a wider scope that applies to both private and public entities. Dr. Houston stated that accessibility issues will be addressed with the application of the new content maintenance system for the UHCL website which will be rolled out next year. No changes will be made to the current website. Templates to enforce accessibility will be set up in the new UHCL website.

Several senators expressed concerns that faculty will be responsible for converting current electronic course materials into multiple accessible formats. Currently, special accommodations are being provided for self-disclosed students without an effective accessibility policy. Why accommodate everyone-even individuals who have not documented and validated a disability. Online faculty have a disproportionate burden to provide access as all materials are online. Should faculty remove online material that is currently non-compliant? Mr. Steiger pointed that there is a difference between accommodation and accessibility. Accommodation is individualized service to the end user whereas accessibility refers to availability to everyone. A philosophy of universal design should be adopted. Mr. Steiger stated that the Accessibility Support Team will assist faculty and staff with conversion into multiple accessible formats. Dr. Houston said funding has been made available to hire an accessibility specialist in the Online Programs Office and to fund the Accessibility Support Team. Other resources for accessibility will be requested. Administration recognizes that this conversion will take time but accessibility issues have to be addressed to avoid problems in the future. Dr. Biggers supported the commitment to assist faculty with converting to accessible formats. There was a request for continued efforts to educate faculty and staff on accessibility issues. Dr. Divoll expressed concern about the need for sustainable funding for the Accessibility Office. He added that the Accessibility Support Team has been helpful with converting his course materials. Mr. Steiger will provide information on websites/resources about how to create accessible documents as well as examples of websites that are compliant. It was noted that there was no faculty representation on the EIR Committee. Mr. Steiger stated that EIR Committee would be open to faculty representation.

Provost Stockton emphasized that this policy is a federal and state mandate. The plan is to gradually address the areas that need accessibility. Faculty will not be asked to take down online materials or modify courses immediately. This policy has to be in print to demonstrate our intent to follow federal guidelines.

Dr. Hentges expressed concern that she had no opportunity to present the policy to her HSH colleagues for input.

Following discussion, the vote on the policy resulted in 15 in favor, 13 oppose and 1 abstention.

However, the Faculty Senate constitution requires 18 votes to pass a policy. Dr. Ward confirmed that the policy failed. It was noted that the University Life Committee needs to address the policy, so it may return to Senate for a second reading.

Dr. Ward asked if there was any other business from C&T. Dr. Michael added that C&T plans to consider Quality Assurance Standards for online course development. The committee is working on identifying requirements versus best practices based on SACS and THECB standards. This information will be submitted to the Provost. Another topic to be addressed is Minor proposals. Faculty involved in developing proposals should plan to be available for inquiries from C&T. The projected timeline for submission of Minors to C&T is January and to Faculty Senate in February.

Research Committee: Dr. Carman reported that Dr. Paul Meyers, Office of Sponsored Programs (OSP) attended the last committee meeting. Dr. Meyers shared that OSP will provide support with grant editing, submissions and budgeting. Additional staff will be hired to assist faculty. Research Support Funds totals about $100,000 annually and are disbursed in two rounds of $50, 000 each. Prospective agenda items include planning a research brown bag event, creating a searchable database (hosted by OSP) for faculty interested in collaborations, and determining whether faculty would be interested in research statistics available through OSP.

Faculty Life: Dr. Divoll announced the committee plans to address policies that have expired.

## **SHARED GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Facilities & Support Services Committee (FSSC): Dr. Valenti declared that FSSC subcommittees were activated at the last meeting. Dr. Brian Stephens will chair Space Allocation & Utilization Subcommittee. Dr. Chloe Diepenbrock was appointed Chair, Parking Committee. The Parking Committee will attend to a comprehensive list of parking concerns received from HSH.

Planning & Budgeting Committee (PBC). Dr. Simieou reported that PBC reviewed and revised dates on the Planning & Budgeting Calendar.

University Life Committee (ULC): Dr. Hentges said ULC continued discussion on the hand sanitizers project. The committee will deliberate on the recycling program and childcare needs for students, faculty and staff.

## **QEP UPDATE**

Dr. Grigsby informed members that the Quality Leadership Team is developing an evaluation form to assess the QEP professional development workshops.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

Dr. Carman presented a resolution requesting Senate support for ULC to create a UHCL Women's Council. She said that issues such as women in leadership, representation of women and general concerns of women should be addressed in a formal committee structure. It is proposed that the council should be housed in ULC. Dr. Michael pointed out that the Senate could not charge ULC. Consequently, the resolution was amended removing "charge" to "recommends". The Senate approved the resolution as amended.

Dr. Ward presented a request from the Council of Professors for Senate support of activities related to promoting leadership in women and minorities on campus. These activities include grant writing opportunities and distinguished speakers presentations related to gender and diversity. The Senate

resolved to support this initiative. There was an inquiry about funding for those activities. Provost Stockton responded that the President's Office will fund the distinguished speaker event.

Dr. Ward raised the resolution for notation of course modality on UHCL student transcripts. The rationale stems from concerns relating to accounting degrees in which students can take no more than 15 hours online in order to qualify for CPA designation in the State of Texas. Dr. Michael stated that students and recruiters have said it helps to have the course modality on the transcript. Dr. Mohammad inquired about the implications for designating modality on transcripts. He felt that it indicates a difference between

face-to-face and online courses. Dr. Robinson agreed and that there would be no control of how that information will be used. Is it possible to explore alternatives for accounting students? Dr. Sawyer suggested that this issue be worked out within BUS as it would cause problems for SOE students. It is not a school-wide issue. Dr. Michael responded that designing modality may encourage faculty to ensure equal value between face-to-face and online course. Dr. Gossett said that more clarification and discussion was needed prior to voting. Implications for international students need to be considered as well. The Senate voted and agreed to defer discussion until the next meeting.

Dr. Bechtold informed members of the SOE and Gulf Coast Local Workforce Board partnership to provide funding for priority-level assistance with child care costs for UHCL students. This a major benefit to students who attend school full-time, work 25 hours per week, or work for a combined 25 or more hours per week.

Dr. Bechtold asked for assistance in sharing this information to the university community. For more information, contact SOE's Early Childhood Program.

Dr. Ward announced that the administrative team met with the leaders of the faculty retreat. More information will be provided at a subsequent meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 3 p.m.