

## Academic Council Minutes

October 17, 2019, Thursday

B2524

2:00-3:30 pm

**Present:** Steven Berberich, Kathy Matthew, Charlotte Tullos, Tim Richardson, David Rachita, Jim Dabney, Ed Waller, Rick Short, Miguel Gonzalez, Joan Pedro, Chloris Yue, Brian Stephens, Michelle Giles, Rebecca Huss-Keeler, Sarah Costello, Sheila Baker, Mike McMullen, Heather Kanenberg

**Absent:** Aaron Hart, Vivienne McClendon, Nick Kelling, Steven Cotton, Elizabeth Beavers

1. **Approval of March 21, 2019 Minutes** – Approved with revision “marked to market” paragraph (a).
2. **Humanities Law and Society Minor.** Heather Kanenberg explained this is a re-visioning of a past concentration that had dissipated. The Curriculum Committee worked with the program before forwarding to Faculty Senate where it passed unanimously. Kathryn Matthew expressed concern on the frequency that minor courses were taught, her concern was that they were not offered enough. Heather Kanenberg stated concerns were addressed for this minor and courses are taught with good frequency, across the list, a number of the show up at least once a year or at least once a semester, and multiples that do that. There being no further questions or comments, a motion was made and seconded for approval of the minor. **The minor was unanimously approved. Item will move forward to University Council.**
3. **Textbook and Educational Materials Policy.** Heather Kanenberg spoke for Elizabeth Beavers She explained there were concerns regarding the end of number 5 relating to the final review and decision making brought up by Edward Waller. It then went back to committee to address the concerns and back to Faculty Senate where it was approved.  
  
There being no further questions or comments, a motion was made and seconded for approval of the policy. **The policy was unanimously approved. Item will move forward to University Council.**
4. **Ad Hoc Faculty Senate Committee on Student Evaluations Recommendations** (information item). Recommendations approved in Faculty Senate Ad Hoc Review Committee by Christine Walther. The Provost shared that their April meeting provided many excellent recommendations.

A discussion resulted on what happens to evaluations from students and how results were disseminated. One concern was whether they were being routed to the correct people while being kept secure. Comments were made on the importance of making these available to deans, associate deans, peer committees, department and division chairs for review and annual evaluations, as well as, the need for feedback on adjuncts, which will assist with a decision for continued assignments. David Garrison stated that access to student evaluation comments could assist in recognizing any recurring problems or whether any issues were addressed, as well as recognize effective teaching. Several faculty agreed students often complain to other faculty rather than completing the evaluations. It was agreed student comments were often more informative than numbers data yet more time consuming to read at the Associate Dean level.

Edward Waller explained COB uses a third party online software program that provides a substantial amount of flexibility and access for hierarchy review. Faculty receive summary and original submission including student comments.

Suggestions to increase response rates and ways to incentivize completion of evaluations included offer of early access to grades and chance to win campaign. David Rachita, Dean of Students, shared that students have shared that they seldom complete the evaluations and do not trust that any action or tracking results from their feedback despite the mandated state data collection. He has learned that some professors, on occasion, are collecting the evaluations themselves or a TA will collect and then provide directly to professor. Students report they have more trust in Rate My Professor.com.

Heather Kanenberg commented that faculty are concerned about response rates. She added that today's comments speak to the opportunity to change some of the language at the beginning of the survey to address student concerns and emphasize the value of completing the questions. She stated that the Ad Hoc group used literature of best practice compared and contrasted of other universities and the UHCL colleges to compare and contrast. They found there were large differences across the colleges some of the understandable. The idea was to distribute the document as a guide to faculty on how to frame it to increase response rates, while allowing flexibility for colleges to ask questions including those specific to their college or discipline. She added that the Ad Hoc committees new charge is to look at actual evaluations in college and see if any are out of alignment.

The Provost stated the Provost Office will break down the list of recommendations areas within an Excel spreadsheet for use in organizing sub-committees with academic leadership and faculty representation from each college. Once the spreadsheet is completed, an email will go out to show each area, such as student evaluations, teaching effectiveness, promotion and tenure, etc. Volunteers can then forward their category of interest to Charise for sub-committee assignment. The purpose is to look at recommendations from a student perspective and build student confidence that they are being heard. He urged the need to commit to using a Likert question format that is easily accessible, stressing that the number of questions and comments should be kept reasonable. He acknowledged that

addressing the access hierarchy would follow. The Provost has discussed with each Dean the idea to work with UCT to standardize output data to establish a common set of distributed of results used in an effort to improve educational experience, recognize outstanding teaching.

Kathy Mathew likes the questions brought forward and recommended standard questions be used across campus and be password protected.

Next step, important to achieve milestones identify those current questions that are critically out of alignment and develop questions now to create an online place students can go and roll out to the website in the spring.

### **Discussion Topics:**

- **Promotion & Tenure Policy Update** Talking at all levels and collecting and imbedding information from 1<sup>st</sup> draft, reviewing grammar and context, probably one more month needed then policy will move through shared governance.

### **The Provost asked college status. Colleges reported as follows:**

- CSE held meeting last Friday, developing criteria and aligning previous document with guidelines.
- COE guidelines sent to all departments to match with guidelines received. Have met twice focusing on research, teaching and service. Have received a lot of feedback. Once done will take to all faculty for approval
- HSH working hard to generate department specific document. Making good progress, now have two complete departments completed.
- COB, all faculty have received, accumulating feedback. Trying to reach a consensus, once received process should move forward to completion.

The Provost emphasized that the list was not created to be all-inclusive but to help the colleges move forward to align by providing guidelines. The goal is to fit each college and discipline.

### **A. Strategic Planning**

Provost provided an update: information was collected information in the fall strategic maps what are themes around our mission and vision. We created theme teams representatives from across campus who established different objectives in different areas.

Mike McMullen shared faculty are asking the status. Joan Pedro developing people as we go 25 Balance Score Specialist for colleges and divisions monitoring and progress. Identifying

new object owners. Meeting today will look at objective owners to spend two days in November to determine what needs to be done. There are a whole lot of ideas that need to be coalesced into 16 objectives.

Provost will share at Faculty Assembly and is hoping and expecting that others involved are sharing with their faculty to enlighten others. The website has information for clarification and will be updated as process moves along.

Becky Huss-Keller inquired about textbooks for spring – Provost stated Mr. Denney working with Follet System and will be providing update of status.

**Items to University Council:**

1. Humanities Law and Society Minor
2. Textbook and Educational Materials Policy

The meeting was adjourned.

Charise Armstrong