

UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON-CLEAR LAKE

UNIVERSITY COUNCIL

MINUTES RECAP

PLACE/TIME: Forest Room, 10 a.m.

DATE: April 13, 2017

MEMBERS PRESENT: Robert Bartsch, Yvette Bendeck, Darlene Biggers, Patrick Cardenas, Carol Carman, Jean Carr, Ted Cummings, Zbigniew Czajkiewicz, Jean Carr, Nichole Eslinger, Lisa Gossett, Glen Houston, A.J. Johnson, Heather Kanenberg, Ward Martaindale, Usha Mathew, Kathryn Matthew, Denise McDonald, Tim Michael, Trisha Ruiz, Mark Shermis, Rick Short, William A. Staples, Brian Stephens, Rhonda Thompson, Venus Turner, Alix Valenti, Karen Wielhorski, Paul Withey

OTHERS PRESENT: Amanda Johnston (representing S. Browning); Ju H. Kim (with Z. Czajkiewicz)

MEMBERS ABSENT: Sandra Browning, Chris Ward

AGENDA:

1. Action Items
  - Approval of Minutes of 2-9-17 – Approved
  - Smoking Policy Changes (ULC) – Approved
  - Minor in Social Work (AC) – Approved
  - Minor in Women’s and Gender Studies (AC) – Approved
  - Requirements for a Minor (AC) – Approved
2. Information Items – Shared Governance Committee Report
3. President’s Report
4. University Council Member Reports

ATTACHMENT TO Minutes – Items approved electronically between May 16 and June 17, 2017

1. Communication Minor
2. MA to MS in Psychology
3. Double Majors Policy Change

**ACTION ITEMS**

President Staples called the meeting to order.

Minutes of Meeting of February 9, 2017 – President Staples called for a review of minutes of the last two meetings. Dr. Stephens made a motion to approve, seconded by Ms. Wielhorski, and the minutes were unanimously approved.

Smoking Policy Changes - Dr. Staples called on Dr. Bartsch to present this item. He said ULC initially began looking at the UH policy for a tobacco-free campus, which is quite complex and detailed. Ultimately ULC agreed to make recommendation simply by revising the current policy, and he presented the policy with proposed revisions. Instead of having a big Town Hall meeting or a campus-wide survey, members of ULC went to their constituency groups to seek opinions on the policy proposal, then reported back to ULC. He distributed a summary of feedback received from constituencies, noting that about 2/3 of respondents were in favor of UHCL being smoke free. Concerns expressed included 1) going completely smoke free would be too restrictive to smokers; 2) this could have a negative impact on enrollment; and 3) that smoking would still occur and would be hard to control. If the decision is made to go smoke free, it is recommended that HR, Health Services and other appropriate areas offer smoking cessation programs to assist those who want to quit smoking. If the decision is made not to go smoke free, ULC will likely want to recommend changes to the areas on campus where smoking is permitted.

Dr. Staples called for questions or comments. Mr. Johnson expressed concerns related to students who drive to campus and would have to leave more frequently to smoke off-campus, potentially creating a traffic problem; and that the 2/3 vote at SGA may not be representative of all students, since attendance at SGA meetings is relatively low. He believes a smoke-free campus policy would take away the choice individuals should have, and encourages UC to consider this issue very carefully before making such an extreme decision. Dr. Bartsch responded that Mr. Johnson's comments express very well many of the concerns discussed in ULC about going smoke-free, and he agrees that there are convincing arguments on both sides of the issue. He added that the recommendation from ULC was given a great deal of thought and study, and has been put before the university community numerous times over many years. Several other comments and concerns were expressed by UC members on both sides of this issue.

Following discussion, Dr. Staples stated that this item comes from ULC as a motion and second, and called for the vote by a show of hands. This recommended policy change was approved by a vote of 18 for; six (6) against; and three (3) abstentions.

A question was asked regarding when this policy will be implemented. Dr. Bartsch said this was not discussed in ULC. It was agreed that implementation is to be addressed administratively, and will be communicated to the university community.

Minor in Social Work – Dr. Houston said this came to Academic Council from Faculty Senate, and AC approved it by a vote of 17 for and 2 against. Dean Short stated that the social work program is very strong and the proposal for a minor conforms to the university policy for a minor. Dr. Kanenberg added that the faculty believe this will provide another opportunity for students to expand their knowledge in social work. They looked at how minors are offered in other universities, and hope this will be an attractive offering for a minor at UHCL. Dr. Staples stated that this comes from Academic Council as a motion and second. He called for the vote and it was unanimously approved.

Minor in Women's and Gender Studies – Dr. Houston said this came to Academic Council from Faculty Senate, and was approved by Academic Council by a vote of 17 for and 2 against. Dean Short stated that Women's Studies became a major several years ago, although it has no allocated faculty, no funding and has graduated a relatively small number of majors over the years. Women's Studies does, however, have a long and illustrious history at UHCL. The decision has been made to move it from a degree program to a minor, and it is believed that this will be a more attractive option to our students. Dr. Kanenberg added that this recommendation is the will of the Women's and Gender Studies faculty. Their plan is to continue to offer the full complement of courses, and possibly at some point in the future the potential may exist to have this become a major with faculty lines and funding. Dr. Gossett commended the faculty for the fully open process they conducted in making this decision. Dr. Staples stated that this comes from Academic Council as a motion and second. He called for the vote and it was unanimously approved.

Requirements for a Minor – Dr. Houston said this comes from Academic Council and is a change to the current requirements for minor. He noted a correction needed to the last sentence of the third paragraph, which should read: Minor hours do not alter excess hour fee requirements. This change allows students to take a minor, but take in excess of the 120 hours. This is consistent with what most other universities are doing, and allows them to take the additional hours for a minor. A question was asked as to whether this might be confusing to students. Dr. Houston said the edits to this document also include the addition of a statement: Students should consult the requirements listed in the catalog. Dr. Bendeck added that the catalog includes a section called "Excess Hours," in the degree requirements section, which addresses the rules and the applicable charges. The Academic Records website also has a detailed explanation regarding excess hours. Dr. Staples stated that this comes from Academic Council as a motion and second. He called for the vote and it was unanimously approved.

Dr. Staples expressed appreciation to University Life Committee and to Dr. Bartsch for his leadership related to the issue of smoking on campus. There has been an ongoing discussion of this matter for a number of years, and we all know there are many different viewpoints. The opportunity to express these views is a part of the process, and regardless of which side of the issue one is on, it is important to get the input, which ULC has done very well.

## **UNIVERSITY SHARED GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Academic Council – Dr. Houston said we are still tracking the status of our B.S. in Mechanical Engineering. There is a Coordinating Board meeting later this month (April 19) and he hopes to learn more at that time.

Facilities and Support Services Committee – Dr. Valenti said the bulk of their last meeting consisted of a presentation by Ward Martaindale on the new buildings. Parking and traffic safety issues were also discussed, and that subcommittee will meet again next week.

Planning and Budgeting Committee – Dr. Michael said PBC met on March 30 to hear from Dr. Houston and the deans on their preliminary plans for addressing the budget cuts. The

information they gave was very helpful. PBC will meet again on April 27 to hear plans for budget cuts from the President's division, Academic Affairs and Administration and Finance.

University Life Committee – Dr. Bartsch said in addition to working on the smoking policy matter, the committee has been looking into a transportation issue brought to ULC by Student Life, with concerns related to bus service for students. ULC has been invited to make a presentation on this at a meeting of the Parking and Traffic Safety Subcommittee, and hopefully coordinate efforts with them to develop some recommendations.

## **PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

2017 Legislative Session – Dr. Staples said the Senate and House have both finalized their budget bills. After the Easter break the conference committee will be appointed and will work to reconcile the differences between the two bills. The conference committee will also get the state revenue forecast from Comptroller Hager, which is the budget number against which the committee must budget. Since we now know the Senate and House budget recommendations, Dr. Staples asked Jean Carr to prepare a brief report for today's meeting (attached).

Looking at this document, the Senate Bill's second iteration (after hearings with state agencies) shows the following: 1) a 10% reduction in general revenue; 2) special items removed; and 3) no university was cut more than 10% or less than 6%. The Senate version goes on to show that UHCL will receive \$7.7 million for the biennium for special items. In doing this, the Senate essentially decided the parameters (no special items), then determined how to do it by basically ending up with an "equity adjustment" by cutting money from some universities to assure that no university winds up with less than 6%. In doing this, the Senate proposal actually helps UHCL, because if they had not taken from other institutions and reallocated, our cut would have been greater than 10%.

Most regional universities were cut 10%; for example, UHD was cut 6%, but instead of getting \$3 million in Special Items, this went into the equity adjustment pool. In this version Texas AM gives back \$76 million. If these adjustments had not happened, UHCL's cut would have been more than 10% due to the current enrollment situation. For certain institutions there are still some Special items listed, and for others they have been eliminated. For example, in this version no special items are listed for UH and they would stand to lose about \$24 million. This is the first time the Senate has listed some things as "special item phase-out." There are significant differences of opinion in the Senate about special items. One group thinks there should be no special items and all money should be run through the formula. The second group believes in special items, but as start-up funding rather than permanent funding. The third group does believe in special items, as they give legislators an opportunity to take something specifically to an institution in the district they represent. With the Senate's greater focus on special items, between now and the next session they are likely to review all special items. If this happens, UHCL and other institutions who have recently added freshmen and sophomore students, need to be certain the legislators understand that this funding is critically needed for at least "X" number of years.

Regarding the House version of the budget, they kept special items in, but cut them overall at a 9.9% level. UHCL's present calculations for budget reductions for the next biennium are based on the House version, even though the Senate version would give us \$1.379 million more dollars than the House bill. Once they go in to Conference Committee, given past history they will likely wind up somewhere between the Senate and House versions.

Other issues we need to watch closely:

- The Senate voted for a tuition freeze for two years. They are now looking at whether future tuition increases would be based on inflation only, or inflation plus 1%. We are hopeful that the House will not go along with the idea of a tuition freeze.
- Where they will end up regarding the universities' request to provide funding for at least part of the Hazlewood exemptions for Veterans is unknown. Right now UHCL spends about \$1.5 million on these exemptions, with no state funding to compensate for this other than our general revenue.
- There is some traction in both the House and Senate for giving limited bachelor's degree authority to community colleges in the areas of applied technology (BAT), applied science (BAS) and nursing (BSN). So far they are not talking about authority for bachelor of science and bachelor of arts degrees, but we need to continue to watch to this.
- There is an ongoing battle related to the House's desire to use some of the rainy day fund, but the Senate does not want to do this. Part of the House budget bill is based on using some of these funds.

Dr. Gossett thanked Dr. Staples for his leadership during what has been a very difficult legislative session. She also noted an excellent editorial by Chris Tomlinson in yesterday's Houston Chronicle that outlines some of the challenges we are facing. Dr. Staples added that there is no question that these are significant issues. Given what is happening in this session, and what might occur in the next session, we could potentially see tuition regulation, the end of most special items, and more bachelor's degree authority for community colleges, all of which would present major challenges for universities.

Dealing with the budget reduction for 2017-2018 is a challenge, but the biggest challenge is the year after that, 2018-2019. Addressing this will require a combination of base cuts (i.e., money you do not get back), and use of reserves. We are using reserves for 2017-2018, and we are targeting reserves for 2018-2019; and each time we dip into reserves, we have less reserves for the future.

Key dates in the future:

- June 1 – end of the legislative session;
- Fall 2017 – fall enrollment could make the situation better, or could make it worse.
- Board of Regents' decision on tuition for FY 19 and 20 - What will the Board of Regents do with tuition for FY 19 and FY20 is important because our budget reduction plan is based on tuition being flat – no increase, and no decrease. If tuition increases and enrollment does not decline, we would gain some resources. But it is very hard to predict what the Board will

do, as Regents are appointed by the Governor, and if the Governor does not want to increase tuition, it is unlikely that the Board will vote for an increase.

Planning for FY 19 needs to start now. Otherwise we will potentially have to react very, very quickly. The data we will have from Noel Levitz, and the data we have from Institutional Effectiveness, and every program we have will need to be evaluated. Every faculty and staff line/position that comes open will have to be evaluated, and hard decisions will have to be made. Summer of 2018 will be critical, as this will be the start of the next base period – summer 18, fall 18 and spring 19. Although the university is not in financial exigency (which means we cannot pay our bills), some very tough decisions will have to be made to get us through FY 18 and FY 19.

Groundbreaking at UHCL Pearland Campus – Groundbreaking for the new Health Sciences Building at Pearland is on Friday, April 28, at 2 p.m.

UHCL Pearland Campus/Alvin Community College – Across the UH System the satellite operations (UH Sugarland, UHS Katy, Northwest Corridor, etc.) are partnering with community colleges in the region – UH Sugarland with Wharton County Junior College; UHS Katy with Houston Community College and Northwest Corridor with Lone Star College. Likewise, UHCL Pearland will partner with Alvin Community College. Our Pearland campus is in ACC's service area, but not in their district. For fall of 2017 we will have an agreement with ACC to offer a select number of lower division courses on site, and when the new building comes on line in spring 2019, we will work with ACC to see what additional classes they can offer.

Commencement is on Sunday, May 14, 2017, at Reliant Arena. At the 12 p.m. ceremony (College of Business and College of Human Sciences and Humanities), Mr. Spencer Armour, a member of the UH System Board of Regents, will be the speaker. He has been a very good friend of UHCL and his term as a Regent ends August 31. At the 5 p.m. ceremony (College of Education and College of Science and Engineering) the speaker will be one of our Ed.D. graduates, Dr. Brett Lemley, Principal of Clear Horizons Early College High School, which is a partnership between CCISD and San Jacinto College.

Art Exhibition – UHCL's Bachelor of Fine Arts students will hold an opening reception this evening from 5 to 7 p.m. in the UHCL Art Gallery. Works of art by 20 current and former BFA students will be on exhibition, and he encouraged those who can to stop by and congratulate these students.

## **REPORTS BY UNIVERSITY COUNCIL MEMBERS**

AJ Johnson, president of the Student Government Association, reported that SGA has revised its structure. An additional 3 to 5 seats have been added, and will be called the Senate. He said his reason for reporting on this today is that he would like the student government to have a connection with members of University Council, as he believes these students can play a very vital role in the university. He indicated this will be his last UC meeting, and expressed appreciation for the guidance and support afforded to him by each UC member.

Dr. Staples also expressed sincere appreciation to AJ for his leadership and involvement this year, stating that he has done a “simply outstanding” job. He has represented the student body very capably, including his current service on the Presidential Search Committee this spring as a voice for our students in this important process.

Dean Czajkiewicz reported on a new center of excellence in the College of Science and Engineering, The Center for Robotics Software. The launch of this new center will take place on June 7, with presenters from NASA and from CSE. The center will provide teaching, research and service to NASA Johnson Space Center and local industries by collaborating with the Robot Operating System (ROS). CSE’s initial objectives for the center are to 1) formalize the graduate-level robotics specialty in computer engineering; 2) create a dedicated website to promote the center; 3) coordinate with NASA JSC Software Robotics for ROS support; and 4) offer ROS workshops and seminars in the center’s lab on campus.

Ms. Wielhorski added that the Neumann Library will have an exhibit on the robotics program and the robots themselves later this spring.

Dr. Staples asked Ms. Wielhorski to report on a new series of events the Library is hosting. She said “The Long Night Against Procrastination” will bring together experts from the Counseling Center, Writing Center, Math Center, the research librarians and others to assist and encourage students. These sessions will be held periodically and hopefully more students will hear about them and take advantage of the expertise.

Ms. Thompson reported that the new UHCL website will launch on Friday April 21. There have been several target launch dates, however a number of unforeseen issues have come up and the team is working hard to resolve these. April 17 and 18 are key days for all areas to review their pages, links, etc. in preparation for the launch. She thanked everyone for their support and patience throughout this process.

Dr. Staples thanked those who are serving on the Presidential Search Committee and asked that everyone give feedback to the committee. The feedback will be seen by the Chancellor and will be taken seriously. Three candidates have been on campus thus far, and the fourth will be here the last week in April.

He reminded members that the College of Business dean search is also underway, with three final candidate visits scheduled. He encouraged all to participate in this process as well.

The meeting adjourned at 11:20 a.m.

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## ATTACHMENT TO MINUTES OF APRIL 13, 2017

University Council agenda items approved by electronic vote:

The three items listed below were forwarded to University Council members for electronic vote on May 16, 2017. These items had been approved by Faculty Senate and forwarded to Academic Council, where they were unanimously approved and forwarded to University Council.

1. Minor in Communication – This item is to add a minor in communication to offerings in the College of Human Sciences and Humanities.
2. MA to MS in Psychology – This item is to change the psychology degree program designation in the College of Human Sciences and Humanities to a Master of Science rather than Master of Arts. This change better reflects psychology as a science. Additionally, market research indicates that this change in degree type will increase employment opportunities for our graduates.
3. Double Majors Policy Changes – The policy on double majors is proposed to be changed by deleting the following language: *Students may use no more than six semester hours of major field course work required by the first major to satisfy major field degree requirements in the second major.*

These items were approved by University Council members with the following votes:

- 21 members voted to approve all three items.
- 1 member voted to approve the Communications Minor and the MA to MS in Psychology; and voted to disapprove the Double Minors Policy Change.
- 4 members did not vote.

June 17, 2017