

Faculty Council Meeting Minutes

Date: November 5, 2025

Time: 1:04 PM – 2:27PM

Location: B2524, Bayou Building, University of Houston-Clear Lake

Presiding: Dr. Baker

ATTENDED:

Ken Black	COB	Krishani Abeysekera	CSE
Silvana Chambers	COB	Nelson Carter	CSE
Steven Cotten	COB	Jeff Mountain	CSE
Farzaneh Noghani	COB	Ross Niswanger	CSE
Jeff Whitworth	COB	Yi Su	CSE
Faiza Zalila	COB	Paul Withey.....	CSE
Sheila Baker	COE		
Michelle Giles	COE	Karen Alexander	HSH
Rebecca Huss-Keeler	COE	Neal Dugre.....	HSH
Lisa Jones	COE	Lorie Jacobs.....	HSH
Omah M. Williams-Duncan....	COE	Jason Makepeace.....	HSH
Jana Willis	COE	Steven Sutherland.....	HSH

1. Notes

- Dr. Cotten, Presiding Officer, missed the first hour of the meeting to attend a UH-system meeting of all council presiding officers at UH.
- Dr. Waller, Interim Provost, also attended the meeting at UH-System.
- Dr. Baker served as presider; meeting called to order at 1:04pm.

2. ACTION ITEM – Approval of October Meeting Minutes

- Minutes from October Meeting were approved.

3. Information Item – Special Guest New Chief Human Resources Officer – Dr. Cynthia Springer

- Dr. Springer introduced herself and gave an overview of her background.
 - Approximately 30 years of experience in higher education; 25 of those in human resources.
- Expressed interest in fostering culture for all employees as a community, rather than focusing on differences between staff and faculty.
- Started in August; have met with many individuals (i.e., “rounding”) to understand UHCL culture.
- Open door policy.

4. Information Item – Special Guest – Associate Dean of Students – Mr. Matthew Perry

- Invited to speak to provide guidance; faculty have expressed concerns recently regarding classroom behavior with students.
- Briefly gave a personal introduction; briefly gave an introduction about duties in the Dean of Student's office.
 - When a student has been disruptive in a class, the Dean of Student's office is responsible for determining why and how to help.
- Discussed *Classroom Management* and classroom *Student Conduct*.
 - **Regarding student conduct:**
 - If a faculty member ever feels a student conduct issue occurs in the classroom, faculty are encouraged to [report it](#).
 - Link is at the bottom of every UHCL webpage.
 - There is an opportunity to add attachments (i.e., evidence).
 - When any incident report is completed, the Dean of Student's office will investigate.
 - Typically, the instructor of record will be contacted.
 - Dean of Student's Office will then have a procedural interview with the student.
 - The student can review all the records and/or allegations.
 - The student can then schedule a disciplinary conference or take the matter to the university hearing board.
 - The Dean of Student's Office will decide whether this is a minor disruption or if this is a more serious violation against the student code of conduct.
 - Students always have the right to appeal to the Dean of Students, whose decision is final.
 - **Regarding classroom management:**
 - The Dean of Student's Office has techniques they recommend in the following order. By far, most issues should be resolved with the first two techniques.
 - First, reset expectations with a student.
 - Example: The instructor says, "I can tell you have strong feelings about something, let's chat after class and discuss it. But for now, I'll continue with the lecture/assignment/exam."
 - Second, take a short pause.
 - If the student continues to be disruptive, the instructor could give the class a 5-minute break.
 - Have a short conversation with the student right then to try and diffuse the situation.
 - Offer the student a chance to set up an appointment with you to fully discuss the matter later.
 - Third, in extreme cases, the student may not allow the instructor to continue. These are cases where a student is being aggressive and/or overly disruptive.

- The Dean of Student's office recommends you reach out to campus police directly.
- They have specialized training related to mental health issues, which are frequently involved with these rare cases.
- Dial 2222 from any campus phone, or use the SafeZone App.
- There have been rare cases where police needed to speak with a student outside of class, which takes the student out of the classroom while the class can continue.
- Finally, in the **most extreme cases of last resort**, a faculty member may have to cancel the class for that day.
 - The Dean of Student's office does not recommend this unless it is non-traditional set of circumstances.
 - If the whole class needs to be reset, it could require a lot of additional work for the instructor, which could include making alternative assignments, deadlines of other assignments may have to be shifted, etc.
- The Dean of Student's office does work with faculty on issues like this, not just with students.
- These processes can take long periods of time to become resolved, depending on the case.
- Discussion continued for approximately 20 minutes after the presentation.

5. ACTION ITEM – Academic Policy on Policy Development – Dr. Baker

- Dr. Baker presented the Academic Policy on Policy Development.
- Dr. Huss-Keeler asked how this policy interfaced with the new “Policy Writing Guide.”
 - This guide was provided to the Faculty Council by one of the Ex-Officio members, which serve as liaisons between the Faculty Council and the Provost's Council.
- Dr. Baker responded by saying that it was unclear, but that this policy had been approved by the UHS Office of the General Counsel.
- Dr. Carter suggested that we not consider the guide for now and focus on consensus with the policy under consideration. If passed, we could investigate any conflicts and determine how to reconcile them later.
- Dr. Baker called for a vote to “recommend” the policy.
 - Policy passed overwhelmingly.

6. Information Item – Research and Scholarship Committee Report – Dr. Sutherland

- Committee was assigned policies to review because they were over 5 years old.
- Most were approved by Senate last year and are awaiting review from the UHS Office of the General Counsel.
- Committee is reviewing two policies at their meeting immediately after the council meeting. Those are:
 - The Personnel Policy

- The Research Misconduct Policy

7. Curriculum Committee Report – Dr. Huss-Keeler

- **Action Item** - Minnie Stevens Piper Professor Award Procedure
 - Nomination Changes
 - Previously limited, now broadened to include faculty, former students, and current students.
 - Self-nomination is allowed to ensure inclusivity.
 - Concern about popularity contests was noted, but expanding nominations gives students a voice since other awards do not provide this opportunity.
 - Rubric Update
 - Standardized rubric was created and provided to Dr. Matthew for the committee to use.
 - Future changes to the rubric are possible if needed.
 - Policy Considerations
 - New policy draft seems to allow for someone to win multiple times.
 - A faculty member stated that previous state-level winners had won after 2nd nomination.
 - Long-term Issues
 - Explore ways to enhance our nominee's competitiveness for the state-level.
 - Voting
 - Motion to "recommend."
 - Motion Seconded.
 - Motion passed overwhelmingly.
- **Action Item** – Grading Policy
 - Discussion about granting authority to change a grade to an administrator.
 - Agreed policy needed to go back to committee before voting to "recommend" changes.
 - Proposed Change:
 - Add the Associate Dean (or Dean's designee) as an authorized person to process grade changes, particularly for resolving incompletes.
 - Rationale:
 - Adjuncts often lose system access or leave before incompletes are resolved, creating delays for students.
 - Key Points Raised:
 - Verification is essential before changing grades; suggested wording: "following verification of successful work completion as stated in the incomplete contract."
 - Concerns about proper communication and documentation (e.g., incomplete contracts, Canvas access, end-of-course reports).
 - Discussion on whether the clause applies only to incompletes or all grade-change scenarios.

- Suggestion to review and refine wording for clarity and consistency.
- Next Steps:
 - Committee members to review and comment before the Curriculum Committee's November meeting (following Tuesday).
- Working on incorporating feedback from Student Affairs into Academic Honesty Policy.

8. Faculty Affairs Committee Report – Dr. Lorie Jacobs

- Information Item – First Reading of Grievance Policy
 - Key Changes:
 - Shorter Timeline:
 - Rewritten for consistency in terms of business days.
 - Panel Selection Process:
 - Previously: Large pool (66 faculty) with random draws.
 - Now: **4 faculty from each college** (total 16), pre-numbered.
 - For each grievance: Select **9 names**, then each party strikes **2**, leaving **5 panel members**.
 - Rolling assignment system (no randomization each time); discussion on whether to re-randomize after full cycle to avoid bias.
 - Conflict of interest: Members can **recuse themselves**; striking option helps address concerns.
 - Equitable Representation:
 - Ensure fair distribution across colleges; current numbering system aims to maintain balance.
 - Other Considerations:
 - Consistency in terminology for **presiding officer** throughout the document.
 - Plan to send policy draft to faculty for feedback; suggestion to use **Qualtrics** for structured comments by section to avoid confusion.
 - Next Steps:
 - Await approval from Office of General Counsel regarding timeline.
 - Prepare **clean copy** of policy for faculty review.

9. ACTION ITEM – Intellectual Property and Academic Freedom Statements

- Both statements were previously approved by old Faculty Senate and approved by the UHS Office of General Counsel.
- Out of abundance of caution, seek approval since Faculty Senate was dissolved and replaced with the new Faculty Council.
- Voting:
 - Motion to recommend both statements was made and seconded.
 - Approved with none voting to not recommend and no abstentions.

10. New Business

- Reminder to complete survey sent by Lexi Herrera regarding academic affairs communications.

11. Closing

- Meeting adjourned at 2:27 PM.