UHCL Faculty Council Meeting Minutes

September 2, 2026

Call to order and Opening Remarks:

Dr. Cotten welcomed all members and thanked them for their willingness to serve on Faculty Council. Dr. Cotten reminded all present that the meeting is being live-streamed and that the microphones in the room are operational. He also stated that there would be adjustments to the agenda for the day given the availability of some of our guests and their timing. All agenda items will remain, but the order will be shifted.

Provost Report:

Dr. Abdelrahman acknowledged those in the room and shared appreciation for the opportunity to work with Faculty Council. He shared the following key points:

- Higher education is changing at a rapid pace, and he looks forward to working with the faculty and deans as we navigate the changes. He will look to Faculty Council for counsel on the changes we may be asked or required to make or that we may choose to make as an institution. Examples given included changes to the size of the core curriculum and changes to required undergraduate degree hours.
- He knows that we have a number of policies that we need to refine and update. He does want to learn more about how the institution operates, what we do as faculty, and how we support students so that he can use this information as he works with key stakeholders, including Faculty Council, on policy revisions.
- He hopes that as an institution we can be nimble, consider what is urgent vs. desirable, and also position ourselves to move forward while staying solution focused.

Review of Policy Work Completed Summer 2026:

Dr. Cotten shared that after the ’25-’26 Faculty Council completed its work in May, there were a number of policies that were endorsed by the council and forwarded to UH System Legal. Rather than put all work on pause, Dr. Cotten and Dr. Baker worked throughout the summer with Deans Council and System Legal to continue the review and revision process. All but one of those policies are returning to the ’26-’27 Faculty Council for review as there were substantive changes made with Legal. Dr. Cotten explained that redline versions have been provided to all Faculty Council members and committees are asked to resume the work of review and refinement. Dr. Cotten also reminded everyone that policy reviews are an iterative process and if a policy can be improved and passed, he would encourage doing so to ensure recent and improved versions are created. He reminded council members that if a policy is not perfect, work can begin again to continue to improve upon the work already endorsed.

Dr. Cotten then facilitated a brief discussion of each of the following policies and the changes made by UH System Legal over the summer months:

- Faculty Dismissal – Changes made since May were reviewed by Dr. Cotten. A question was asked about if someone was determined ‘innocent’ after dismissal and discussion of consideration of an unpaid leave option before dismissal. All are encouraged to share thoughts and feedback with Lori Jacobs so that the Faculty Affairs Committee can consider comments while doing their review. The policy was sent to Faculty Affairs for review, any needed adjustments, and return to the council.
- Financial Exigency – on hold until UHS tells us how they want to proceed as they want this policy to be the same at each campus.
- Academic Honesty – Changes made since May were reviewed by Dr. Cotten. Questions were asked about the suggested list of things professors ‘may’ do to help prevent academic dishonesty, faculty were concerned these might be construed by those implementing the policy as ‘must do’s’. There was discussion about the possibility of looking back to previous assignments once academic honesty issues are identified with a student. There was also a discussion of the merits of separating out the procedures required when academic honesty violations are identified from the

policy language; The officers will consult with UHS Legal and report back to the council as this could be done for all new policies moving forward, if determined to be an acceptable practice by system. Council members were encouraged to email Becky Huss-Keeler with any comments or suggestions relating to the academic honesty policy. The policy was sent to Curriculum Committee for review, any needed adjustments, and return to the council.

- Faculty Engagement – Changes made since May were discussed by Dr. Cotten. There was some discussion of what it means for faculty to be responsive to student emails during student holidays and summer. Council members were encouraged to send any feedback or issues to Steven Sutherland as the Research Committee will be reviewing the Faculty Engagement Policy before it returns to the council.
- Online Course Offering – this was briefly mentioned as a policy that needed more attention and likely a deeper revision.
- Non-Tenure Track Faculty – there was not time to discuss the changes made over the summer, but the redline is available and it was sent to committee
- Faculty Misconduct & Discipline - there was not time to discuss the changes made over the summer, but the red line is available, and it was sent to committee
- Office of Research and Sponsored Programs – this policy was approved by Legal with no changes made to the Faculty Council endorsed version, expecting signature and finalizing by the end of the week.
- Financial Exigency – there was a great deal of work and time put into edits to this policy over the summer and then System Legal asked to hold off on passing a stand alone UHCL Policy on Exigency as they are going to draft a System Administrative Memo (SAM).
- Faculty Workload – the policy was mentioned as one that would be a priority for addressing this year as it is time for a revision; it expires in April of ’27. There will be a more comprehensive review of this policy and collaboration with administration as the review happens.

Dr. Cotten encouraged all Faculty Council members to review the policies and share feedback with their college representatives as well as the chair of the appropriate council committee. Everyone is also encouraged to reach out to Dr. Cotten with any questions or thoughts on any of the policies.

Strategic Enrollment Management – Information Item

Dr. Theodori came to provide an enrollment update. She shared that FIC and Transfer cohorts are both ‘up’. She also shared that international graduate enrollment is down; this was explained as a result of having a strong funnel but a weaker yield. Dr. Theodori shared cautious optimism and a desire as SEM moves forward to continue the recruitment momentum while also strengthening persistence. While Dr. Theodori shared some slides in the meeting with data, she will share final slides once the final census data is available.

Library and University Archives – Information Item

Mr. Hilyer shared updates on new and updated information from the library. These updates included:

- Review of the strategic planning process. As a result of reviewing the data collected last year, they are working to identify more quiet spaces for students and looking to improve the collection in ways that were identified by students and faculty in the survey. The third floor of the library will be getting some attention soon.
- Endnote is going away again, and librarians are happy to help faculty or students with a transition to Zotero.
- The Course Reserve system is now online.
- They are looking to add to the Author Display Case, if you have published a work in the recent past, please reach out to Mr. Hilyer to coordinate how a copy can be added to the display.
- Librarians are happy to help faculty and students with their research, feel free to partner with a librarian to support your courses, your students, or your own work.
- The library also has read-and-publish (also known as “transformative”) agreements with several publishers including Springer Nature, Elsevier, and Wiley. These agreements allow faculty to have article processing charges (APCs) waived or discounted when publishing in the covered journals. Please reach out to Mr. Hilyer with questions on this item.

Please see the provided Library Report in teams for additional information on any of these items.

Mr. Peek shared an update on the UHCL University Archives. The University Archives consist of correspondence, records, photographs, publications, periodicals, outreach materials, program materials, oral histories, broadsides, and other materials that document the founding and development of the University of Houston-Clear Lake. If you believe you have any materials that might be relevant or important to the archive, please contact Mr. Peek or the office of the University Archives. They will help you determine if materials you have are appropriate for preservation and facilitate connection with all appropriate offices to ensure materials are housed, retained, and cataloged in the correct manner. If you find something that is associated with the work of UHCL, please do not think that someone does not want it; please reach out to Mr. Peek to ask if the University Archive or other offices might want the materials. They can be reached at archives@uhcl.edu.

Center for Faculty Development – Information Item

Dr. Colley provided a review of the Center for Faculty Development (CFD) Programming Pillars: Teach, Discover, Innovate, and Thrive. She shared updates about a Research academy that is going to launch this fall as well as a Teaching academy that will begin this fall. Faculty Council members were reminded of the NCFDD membership that UHCL has and that a dedicated UHCL page has been created by NCFDD. Dr. Colley shared that there is some work being done to the mid-semester course check-in traditionally done by the CFD as well as potential to work on peer evaluation of teaching. Dr. Colley shared that she is happy to work with faculty in any college regarding suggestions and ideas for needed programming. Please see the attached materials shared by Dr. Colley and reach out to her directly with any ideas or questions.

New Business

1. Dr. Cotten shared that faculty are needed from all four colleges to serve on the Policy Advisory Committee. He asked if anyone from HSH or CoB was willing to serve. Lori Jacobs volunteered for HSH. No CoB volunteer was identified in the meeting. More information will be forthcoming.

2. There was a discussion of potentially splitting out the procedures from the policies as the policy revision work is being done by the Faculty Council. No decisions were made at this time regarding this matter.

Meeting Adjourned

Members in Attendance

College of Business:

- Farzaneh Noghani
- Leroy Robinson
- L. Jean Walker
- Jeff Whitworth

College of Education:

- RJ Davis, online
- Rebecca Huss-Keeler
- Roberta Raymond
- Neelofer Tajani
- Jana Wilis

College of Science and Engineering:

- Krishani Abeysekera
- Kazi Billah
- Ross Niswanger

- Yipeng Yang
- Gene Shan

College of Human Sciences and Humanities:

- Karen Alexander
- Lorie Jacobs
- Angela Kelling
- Steven Sutherland
- Chris Ward

Officers:

- Stephen Cotten, Presiding Officer
- Sheila Baker. Vice Presiding Officer
- Heather Kanenberg, Secretary

Guests in Attendance

- Allison Gillespie
- Matthew Peek
- Lee Hilyer
- Lexi Herrera
- Mohamed Abdelrahman
- Ann Theodori
- Kay Colley
- Christine Walther
- Glenn Sanford
- Jennifer Irvin
- Julia Farmer