



**Faculty Senate
Minutes
Wednesday, June 17, 2020
1:00 p.m.**

Faculty Senate President Jeronimo Cortina called the June 17, 2020 Faculty Senate meeting to order via Microsoft Teams at 1:02 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT: (99)

ARCH: M. Kubo, M. Kimbrough, P. Peters
BUS: D. Currie, N. Johnson, P. Kumar, M. Murray, J. Porra, S. Werner
COTA: F. Fernando, N. Harren, T. Koozin, S. Zalman.
CLASS: E. Alemán, W. Breslin, F. Bunta, P. Butler, J. Cortina, M. Dunkelberger, J. Fix, H. Glass, E. Goodin-Mayeda, S. Grigorian, K. Hopkins, M. Ivey, J. Kleinheider, L. Maher, D. Papell, R. Ramos, G. San Miguel, S. Scarrow, B. Tamber-Rosenau, C. Tamber-Rosenau
COM: G. Gomez, K. Rowland
EDU: C. Arbona, J. Freiberg, S. Gronseth, K. Hassett, L. Hutchison, M. Lee, A. Thompson
ENGR: J. Conrad, L. Grabow, K. Grigoriadis, H. Love, M. Nikolaou, D. Shattuck, G. Song, Y. Yao
HON: S. Long
HRM: J. Draper, C. Taylor
LAW: J. Heppard
LIB: K. Creelman, N. Dethloff, C. Gola
NSM: K. Bassler, B. Bodmann, J. Briggs, R. Capuano, R. Forrest, S. Gilbertson, S. Huang, R. Lee, J. May, A. Medrano, E. Papadakis, A. Quaini, C. Ratti, N. Rizk, V. Sisson, G. Toti, C. Wayne
CON: C. Brohard, P. Schrader
OPT: V. Das, K. Fern, L. Frishman, R. Manny, S. Modi, J. Porter, J. Wheat
PHA: D. Chow, G. Cuny, R. Ghose, B. McConnell, D. Thornton, M. Trivedi
RES FAC: O. Bannova
GCSW: P. Leung, S. Narendorf
TECH: B. Detillier, M. El Nahas, J. Evans, H. Hutchins, M. Kidd, F. Merchant, G. Zouridakis

MEMBERS ABSENT: (30)

ARCH: Z. Qureshi
BUS: S. Basu, J. Hess, O. Miljanic, L. Silva, G. Smith
COTA: T. Chapman, K. Rigdon
EDU: A. Thompson
ENGR: J. Chen, M. Robertson
HON: D. Gish
HRM: J. Bowen, J. Madera, C. Morosan
LAW: B. Evans, D. Fagundes, A. Michaels
CLASS: S. Craig, C. Sisk, C. Spitzmuller, C. Tolliver, A. Vujanovic, J. Wingard
NSM: V. Lubchenko, Z. Ren, S. Xu
OPT: D. Currie
GCSW: S. Jennings
RES CTRS: S. Chung

VACANT SEATS: (12) COTA – 2 seats (GPSC); BUS – 2 seats (UC); HRM – 2 seats (GPSC/UC); LAW – 2 seats (GPSC); COM – 1 seat (GPSC); GCSW – 3 seats (At-large/GPSC);

VISITORS: Raymond Bartlett (Sr. Associate VC/VP, Finance), Mark Clarke (Associate Provost, Faculty Development and Faculty Affairs), Dona Cornell (VC/VP Legal Affairs & General Counsel), Amr Elnashai (Vice Chancellor/Vice President, Research & Technology Transfer), Sabrina Hassumani (Associate Provost, Finance & Administration, Provost Office), Lisa Holdeman (VC/VP, Univ. Marketing & Communications), Michael Johnson (Chief of Staff, Office of the Chancellor/President), Renu Khator (Chancellor/President), Sarah Larsen (Vice Provost & Dean, Graduate School), Teri Longacre (Vice Provost & Dean, Undergraduate Student Success & Dean), Cindy Mejia (Chief of Staff, Provost Office), Scott Sawyer (University Registrar), Paula Myrick Short (Senior Vice Chancellor/Vice President, Academic Affairs & Provost)

Minutes: The minutes of the May 6, 2020 Faculty Senate Meeting were approved.

Report from and Discussion with the Faculty Senate President: [Jeronimo Cortina](#)

Dr. Cortina welcomed senators and guests to the online meeting. He reported that shared governance has been at its best the past few months at UH and that:

- the Faculty Senate has been involved in many policy changes and faculty has been represented in every major taskforce at UH.
- the Senate leadership will continue to be committed to the principles of shared governance and transparency while representing the views and concerns of UH faculty.
- continued support to/collaboration with senior administration to strengthen the mission of UH will be guided by flexibility, compassion, and the health of the UH community.

On behalf of the Faculty Senate, FS President Cortina thanked Provost Paula Short, SVP for Administration & Finance Jim McShan, and VP for Research Amr Elnashai for their support and collaboration. He also gave a special thanks to President Renu Khator for inviting the Faculty Senate to participate in many of the campus taskforces and for keeping an open ear to faculty recommendations.

Lastly, Dr. Jeronimo Cortina thanked the senators for their service and commitment to the faculty and UH.

Vote on Face Coverings: [Jeronimo Cortina](#)

Pres. Cortina reported that the Provost had asked the Faculty Senate for input regarding two versions of a face coverings policy. One version requires face coverings on campus and the other version strongly encourages face coverings on campus. He gave an overview of the policy (when to wear face coverings, exemptions, non-compliance, enforcement, etc.). These policies were distributed to the senators earlier to review and vote on during the Senate meeting.

Dr. Cortina opened the floor to senator comments and the debate followed. After a lengthy discussion a question was brought forth that the University of Houston should adopt a policy requiring face coverings or adopt a policy that strongly encourages face coverings on campus. Secretary Susie Gronseth made available a voting link in the chat for senators to officially cast their votes. Results: 86% of senators voted in favor of requiring face coverings on campus.

Report from and Discussion with the University of Houston System Chancellor and University of Houston President: [Renu Khator](#)

- Pres. Khator thanked the Senate for their productive debate & positive voting results of the proposed UH face covering policy.
- Dr. Khator met with Greater Houston Partnership:
 - Data of COVID-19 hospitalizations are increasing: social distancing, hand hygiene and face masks are important

- UH will promote culture & positive campaign of wearing face masks. Dr. Khator asked the senators to be ready to take a stand when someone doesn't abide by the mask policy on campus.
- Pres. Khator thanked the senators for their thoughtful and strategic questions. The plan is to answer the questions and post them on the COVID-19 website to be accessed anytime. She would also send the answers to the Faculty Senate.
- Faculty Questions: Dr. Renu Khator announced that she would focus on addressing the more complex themes from the questions asked. She felt it would be a better format for in-meeting discussion and more productive.
 - Reopening: Health & Safety (guiding principles):
 - The primary objective is to provide options to the campus community with flexibility and compassion. Students, faculty, and staff will have choices to study/work remotely or study/work face-to-face on campus.
 - There is a safety group drafting a detailed health protocol for when an outbreak occurs within the campus community. Sanitation, social distancing, testing, contact tracing, etc. are part of this protocol planning. The group is working with local and state authorities for guidance. UH will hire an occupational nurse to address COVID-19 related inquiries and concerns.
 - UH has been part of many emergency preparedness tabletop exercises held by the City of Houston and the Greater Houston Partnership (GHP). UH is preparing as much as it can for different emergency scenarios.
 - COVID-19 testing for UH campus community: The test is only good for the day the individual was tested. Individuals would need to be tested frequently and so it's not feasible to provide this service at this time (the same situation for antibody testing).
 - Budget:
 - 25% sweep for academic reserves: Reserves are for initiatives (directly invest in the University). Also, the university needs liquidity for emergencies (i.e., make 3 months of payroll).
 - Dare to Dream strategic planning will finish in December and will need to fund some initiatives in the beginning of 2021.
 - Fund initiatives in the division of Research and Academic Affairs
 - 50% sweep for administrative reserves:
 - During the spring term UH took losses on the administrative side. Reserve funding may be used to fill in the funding gaps due to the pandemic.
 - Budget Cut:
 - Houston has three factors significantly affecting its economy: 1) COVID-19 related shortfall, 2) oil crisis, 3) global economic slowdown
 - State has asked UH to return 5% of the funding. However, UH decided to cut its budget 2.5% percent further (total 7.5%) to:
 - Build base funding for GTF
 - Create permanent base for summer
 - Help fund Hobby School of Public Affairs (new college)
 - Any extra funds left can be returned to the units or spent toward funding the strategic planning initiative
 - Taking the extra 2.5% cut now helps UH be proactive in saving a small amount of funds (i.e. hire more faculty/advisors, etc.).
 - The 5% budget cut was for the current biennium. UH has spent funding from the first year. Even though UH is in its 2nd year, it had to return the 5% from last year. The sweep will help UH mitigate some of the losses.
 - College of Medicine:
 - Has its own separate account – not mixed with instructional accounts and will be audited annually.
 - They have their own budget cuts, etc. However, the college needs to carry on with enrollment or they won't receive funding for the biennium if enrollment is decreased.
 - Athletics:
 - Athletics had to take a 7.5% budget cut.

- Board of Regents sets the tuition to take care of the whole university (national & state practice); 70% of instructional funds goes to colleges and 30% goes to central administration; Athletics isn't subsidized by the colleges.
- Summer 2020 Enrollment:
 - Enrollment is up by 27%. However, Dr. Khator mentioned that the 27% increase doesn't equate to 27% revenue increase. Students received a 20% discount due to UH waiving mandatory fees for pandemic relief. Any overage will be forwarded to the Provost (i.e., reward college performance, etc.).
- Research:
 - Pres. Khator announced that she authorized \$1 million for faculty research grants. The Division of Research will draft the guidelines and announce by Monday.
 - \$500K for research related to racial equality
 - \$500K for COVID-19 research

Dr. Khator wrapped up her update by informing the Senate that UH will focus on health and the state legislative session. She encouraged faculty to put their best foot forward to show the state legislature why higher education is paramount for the future and hopefully obtain extra funding.

Q&A Session:

Senator Manos Papadakis: He commented that he respectfully disagreed with Dr. Khator's budget analysis of Athletics. Dr. Papadakis explained how UH's subsidy to Athletics comes directly from tuition funds and he felt that this needs to be trimmed significantly. He also offered to serve on the Budget Transparency initiative. Pres. Khator thanked Senator Papadakis for his feedback.

Senator Randy Lee: As RSC Chair, Randy Lee understood that the Division of Research (DoR) is part of the 50% budget cut since it is considered an administrative unit. Would DoR also endure an extra 30% cut? Pres. Khator explained that the 50% cut is the sweep meant only for the reserves. Reserves can be used for initiatives to promote UH research enterprise. However moving forward, only 25% will be swept from budgets to go to the university reserves annually. Raymond Bartlett added that only centrally allocated funds are swept and DoR doesn't receive a lot of centrally allocated funds. Dr. Lee thanked everyone for their feedback.

Senator Holly Hutchins: She asked how the budget cuts are made relative to budget allocations and transparency review done last fall. The College of Technology received the lowest budget allocation (31%). She's getting questions/concerns about additional cuts relative to the low allocation amount. Dr. Hutchins asked what is Dr. Khator's perspective and what can she tell her colleagues. Pres. Khator responded that she's aware of the cuts and said that there are two ways to look at this situation: 1) do disproportionate cuts to units that are producing or 2) do cuts to all units and give the overage to units who have better performance. Dr. Khator said that UH tries to utilize option 2.

Senator Vallabh Das: His understanding is that 25% sweeps are to be continued yearly. However, he said that a 25% sweep is not returning much money to UH. The sweep can incentivize colleges to spend down money as much as they can (which is still good – esp. for initiatives). How does it help in building a "rainy day" fund? Dr. Khator replied that most universities sweep all of their reserves to force colleges to invest money in initiatives. If colleges don't spend the funds toward their initiative, etc. then the money is swept. So the funding that the college receives will be an incentive anyway and this move colleges to even spend down their reserves. She said she would like to try a 25% sweep for a few years to see what can happen.

Report from and Discussion with the University of Houston System Senior Vice Chancellor and University of Houston Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost: [Paula Myrick Short](#)

Provost Paula Short thanked the senators for their hard work and for participating in the various groups to help UH move forward in its mission during the pandemic.

Dr. Short reported on the following items:

- Fall Instructional Delivery:

- Driven by three principles: 1) health & safety of students/faculty, 2) preserve fall enrollment, 3) students have what they need to complete their degrees in a timely manner
- Gathered data and integrating this data regarding faculty preferences indicated via the preference survey, data on the current class schedule & how to modify it, availability of limited class space, enrollment caps, how to optimize etc.
- July 15 is the deadline for the revised fall schedule which will take into account faculty and student preferences.
- Will hold a meeting with department chairs about the class schedule.
- Provost Short informed the Senate that there will be faculty training for the Hyflex model which will be hosted by the FED. Also, a best practices guide will be available online for faculty.

Provost Paula Short thanked the Senate for their thoughtful discussion on the face covering policy. She also thanked President Jeronimo Cortina for leading the discussion.

Q&A Session:

Senator Rebecca Forrest: She asked if a decision has been made as to which software will be used for Hyflex classes. Dr. Short replied that she didn't have that information on hand and referred Dr. Forrest to Jeff Morgan. She said currently classrooms are being outfitted with equipment for the new instructional delivery.

Senator Vallabh Das: He asked if there will be any guidance on faculty intellectual property associated with online teaching (i.e., recording of classes, etc.). Provost Short responded that that issue has been discussed in the instructional taskforce. There will be a guide that will be communicated to faculty in the next few weeks.

Report from and Discussion with the University of Houston System Senior Associate Vice Chancellor and University of Houston Senior Associate Vice President for Finance: [Raymond Bartlett](#) on behalf of Jim McShan

- Mr. Bartlett echoed Dr. Short's appreciation on the face covering policy discussion.
- He mentioned that he is encouraged by seeing the culmination of the hard work of individuals involved in the Budget Transparency Initiative. Being more transparent helps the UH community make better decisions and have better engagement in discussions. He thanked the Senate for giving administration for opportunity to answer faculty questions that were submitted to them.

Report and Discussion with the University of Houston System Vice Chancellor and University of Houston Vice President for Research & Transfer Technology: [Amr Elnashai](#)

VP Amr Elnashai reported the following items:

- Division of Research (DoR) operations:
 - Nineteen employees returned to campus on June 8 (phase 2 of reopening). Also, personnel of the Centers & Institutes (the ones that report to DoR) returned to work on campus.
 - DoR operations is generally going very well.
 - Dr. Elnashai said to email him if anyone is experiencing issues with DoR
- SERC building COVID-19 situation:
 - Two employees exhibited symptoms Tuesday of last week and immediately were asked not to come to campus. They were both tested and results were confirmed as positive on Friday.
- DoR sent out email communication about sanitation details that were performed after this incident. DoR is working on a communication policy with the Division of Marketing & Communications.
- Faculty question: How will the Division of Research manage with the budget cuts? Will this affect faculty-related support programs? Dr. Elnashai said that all faculty-related programs will not be affected (especially if there are no further cuts).

Q&A Session:

Senator Randy Lee: With regard to the SERC incident, Dr. Lee expressed his concern that SERC building occupants weren't notified sooner of the outbreak (they weren't notified until Friday the test results were available). He said this is a problem for the university when there's an outbreak and wanted to know what are the plans to mitigate the risk. Dr. Amr Elnashai replied that the Reopening taskforce is working on a communication policy with other key partners (i.e., COVID-19 coordinator, Legal Affairs, etc.). There needs to be a balance between informing people and causing significant alarm. He emphasized the health and safety remain a top priority. VP Elnashai then taskforce member Vallabh Das to comment on today's meeting.

Dr. Das added that the UH website has a COVID-19 information page as a start for communication (i.e., reporting potential exposure, etc.). Kelly Boysen is the COVID-19 Coordinator appointed by the President. She is currently drafting a series of communication policies/protocol (i.e., sanitization, etc.). The policy is forthcoming. AVP Raymond Bartlett commented that Jim McShan, Kelly Boysen, and David Oliver (FG&C) met this morning to discuss drafting a comprehensive communication policy. The SERC incident was taken into consideration.

Senator Manos Papadakis: Regarding the SERC incident, Dr. Papadakis asked what was the spread. He said that the SERC building has good ventilation (some campus buildings don't have good ventilation). Dr. Lee added that he had a student who wasn't feeling well this Monday and was immediately told to go home. He also notified the fifth-floor occupants in which the ill student was working. Dr. Lee sent his research group home to self-monitor themselves. The student was tested yesterday and the results should be ready tomorrow. FP&C office isn't doing a deep cleaning yet until the results are in.

New Business

Senator Papadakis suggested that UH faculty bring forth a collective concern to the State legislature regarding the suspension of visas, OPT program, etc. and its negative effects (i.e., loss of talent, etc.).

FS Pres. Jeronimo Cortina mentioned that the Graduate School and the Provost Office are monitoring the situation. Provost Paula Short commented that VP for Government Jason Smith should be consulted about advocacy.

Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 2:45 p.m.