



**Faculty Senate
Minutes
Wednesday, October 21, 2020
12:00 p.m.**

Faculty Senate President Jeronimo Cortina called the October 21, 2020 Fall Faculty Assembly & Faculty Senate meeting to order via Microsoft Teams at 12:02 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT: (115)

ARCH: D. Froehlich, M. Kimbrough, M. Kubo, P. Peters, Z. Qureshi
ARTS: T. Chapman, F. Fernando, N. Harren, T. Koozin, S. Matijcio, S. Zalman
BUS: P. Kumar, M. Murray, J. Porra, S. Werner
EDU: C. Arbona, J. Freiberg, S. Gronseth, K. Hassett, L. Hutchison, M. Lee, A. Thompson
ENGR: C. Chang, J. Conrad, L. Grabow, K. Grigoriadis, K. Larin, H. Love, B. Metrovich, Y. Mo, S. Pei, M. Robertson, D. Shattuck, G. Song, Y. Yao
HON: S. Long
HRM: J. Draper, J. Madera, C. Morosan, Sujata Sirsat
HSPA: D. Engster
LAW: J. Heppard
CLASS: K. Anderson, F. Bunta, P. Butler, L. Camaj, M. Dunkelberger, H. Glass, M. Goldberg, E. Goodin-Mayeda, S. Grigorian, J. Kleinheider, M. Knoblauch, L. Maher, L. Oliveira, D. Papell, R. Ramos, S. Scarrow, E. Simas, B. Tamber-Rosenau, C. Tamber-Rosenau, C. Tolliver
LIB: K. Creelman, V. Douglas, C. Gola, S. Thompson
COM: G. Gomez, K. Rowland
NSM: K. Bassler, B. Bodmann, J. Briggs, R. Capuano, A. Czader, R. Forrest, R. Lee, J. May, A. Medrano, M. Nicol, E. Papadakis, N. Rizk, V. Sisson, G. Toti, A. Vershynina, C. Wayne
CON: C. Brohard, L. McWilliams, P. Schrader
OPT: D. Coates, V. Das, K. Fern, L. Frishman, R. Manny, S. Modi
PHA: D. Chow, G. Cuny, R. Ghose, B. McConnell, D. Thornton, M. Trivedi
RES CTRS: S. Chung
RES FAC: O. Bannova
GCSW: S. Jennings
TECH: B. Detillier, M. El Nahas, J. Evans, H. Hutchins, M. Kidd, A. Lendasse, F. Merchant, G. Zouridakis

MEMBERS ABSENT: (24)

ARTS: K. Rigdon
BUS: C. Becker, J. Hess, N. Johnson, S. Leiser
EDU: W. Fan
HON: D. Gish
HRM: Y. Koh
LAW: D. Fagundes
CLASS: E. Alemán, R. Boul, G. San Miguel, Jr., C. Sharp, C. Spitzmueller, A. Vujanovic
NSM: M. Das, S. Gilbertson, S. Huang, V. Lubchenko, A. Quaini, Z. Ren, S. Xu
OPT: J. Porter
GCSW: S. Narendorf

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 – 2 seats (At-large);

VISITORS: Chereece Andrews (Clinical Asst. Professor, College of Liberal Arts & Social Sciences), Raymond Bartlett (SVC/SVP, Administration & Finance), Peggy Blake (Professor, College of Liberal Arts & Social Sciences), Anima Bose (Assoc. Professor, College of Technology), Wynne Chin (Professor, C. T. Bauer College of Business), (Mark Clarke (Associate Provost, Faculty Development and Faculty Affairs), William Conklin (Professor, College of Technology), Amr Elnashai (VC/VP, Research & Transfer Technology), Sabrina Hassumani (Assoc. Provost, Provost Finance & Administration), Lisa Holdeman (VC/VP, University Marketing & Communication), 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), Brian Mehring (Assoc. Professor, College of Technology), Gaston Reinoso (Assoc. VC/VP, Human Resources), Dale Rude (Professor, C. T. Bauer College of Business), Paula Myrick Short (Senior Vice Chancellor/Vice President, Academic Affairs & Provost)

Minutes: The minutes of the September 16, 2020 Faculty Senate Meeting were approved.

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

FS Pres. Jeronimo Cortina thanked all the senators for their service.

Dr. Cortina reported on the following items:

- APeX Talk with Dr. Olivia Johnson, College of Technology, “Preserving diverse voices in social media”, October 28, 2020, 12:15 p.m. via Microsoft Teams.
- Dr. Cortina reminded & encouraged meeting attendees who are Harris County residents to vote on campus.
- The Child Care Needs survey report has been finalized and posted to the Faculty Senate website.
- The Faculty Senate will launch a fall-spring check-in survey to gather information to:
 - Gauge how the fall term is going for faculty
 - Prep for spring 2021 term

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

Pres. Khator reported on the following items:

- UH President’s Fall Address will be held October 28th at 10am
- Met with Texas Medical Center CEOs – there’s a spike in COVID-19 cases in Houston. UH continues to maintain flexibility in the campus community. She encouraged faculty to give feedback/ideas about on-campus instruction for the spring term.
- Student Survey was launched by the divisions of Academic Affairs and Student Affairs & Enrollment Services to obtain student feedback.
- Commencement will be virtual this year
 - Dr. Khator encouraged senator feedback for ideas to help personalize the online event
- UH’s Budget request has been submitted to the state legislature.
- UH Strategic Plan: Pres. Khator will introduce the plan during her fall address. There will be a short summary version for external stakeholders and a long version for the campus community for feedback. She thanked everyone who was involved.
- New Normal Taskforce: The group will be producing a white paper on how UH can best position itself for the future.

Senator Manos Papadakis: He asked if there would be additional cuts to Athletics funding – beyond what has been done so far. Dr. Renu Khator replied that Athletics has taken heavy losses and will continue to take losses in their department. She gave a few examples of the department losses.

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 Short reported on the following items:

- Class scheduling for spring 2021 is in process. Would like to see more in-person classes and her team (along with Student Affairs) is currently gathering data to discuss this issue. Dr. Short emphasized that flexibility for the campus community will be maintained.
- Provost Teaching Excellence Award nominations and the Farfel Award nominations are due by November 9th. Dr. Short encouraged senators to nominate colleagues.
- Provost Short attended the virtual Honors College scholarship and major awards event. She thanked faculty for helping these students achieve success by mentoring, etc. These awards raise the prominence of UH.
 - UH is the top producing Fulbright institution (26 recipients in past three years).
 - Harris S. Truman Scholarship awarded this year: 1 recipient
 - Critical Language Scholarship: five recipients
 - Phi Beta Kappa key for Public Service recipient – first one awarded this year
- UH-led Houston GPS – a regional collaboration of community colleges in the Gulf coast region:
 - Create pathways for transfer students
 - Raise graduation/retention rates
 - This collaboration has been very successful and the GPS has been recognized nationally. The GPS has been invited to be a model for other urban regional areas that have students who have less opportunity to obtain a post-secondary education. Dr. Short gave credit to UH faculty for developing programs to help students succeed.
- UH's withdrawal rates have been the lowest in years. Provost Short again credited the faculty for their work in helping students in their academic endeavors.

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

SVP Raymond Bartlett reported on the following items:

- Mr. Bartlett emphasized that he is looking forward to seeing more activity on campus, but with safety in mind. Campus activity will help support auxiliary operations. His team is working contingency plans to address the losses.

Senator Manos Papadakis: He asked if there is a possibility to rollover certain loan payments by extending the loans towards the end of the loan for relief. This would perhaps save UH some money and could divert those funds to other areas of UH – primarily the academic side. SVP Bartlett responded that his team (along with UH's external financial advisor) has looked at UH's debt portfolio and monitors interest rates regularly. His team does look for refund opportunities. UH has maximized its refunding opportunities last year, which allowed UH to lower interest rates on certain bonds. As the result of the new tax laws a few years ago, the provision was eliminated that allowed UH to refund debt that is not due within 90 days. However, the University would have to turn it into taxable debt (in other words refund at a higher rate), which wouldn't make any economic sense. UH continues to monitor for opportunities, but it doesn't make any economic sense at this time to maximize UH debt (UH has already maximized its refunds up to this point).

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 on the following items:

- Service:
 - DOR launched Tableau (new data platform); Presented to Assoc. Deans for Research (ADR), University Centers & Institute Directors and the Senate Research & Scholarship Committee (RSC); Links have been sent to the ADRs for their use.
 - Further expanded the Office of Grants & Contracts (OGC) Portal: Added a large number of functions requested by faculty
- Technology Transfer:
 - Launched the TECH Map: DOR-invented software that shows interactively all entities related to technology/innovation (i.e., wet labs, incubators, venture capital, etc.) located in Harris County. This high-quality map has attracted much attention to UH. Also, the map was adopted by Houston Exponential and the mayor's office of Innovation.
 - Completed a ten-year strategy for the Technology Bridge
- Research Enterprise Status and Data:
 - Research Enterprise is doing well.
 - UH Research was the first to reopen in Texas and continue business
 - Expenditures are up (3-4%).
 - Research Income: Weekly record is \$14.7M this week.
 - This fiscal year, 34 grants approved (\$1M and above)
- Research Leadership
 - Re-negotiated contract with McAllister & Quinn
 - With the consultants help, two major proposals were approved & funded.
 - DOR shares the contract cost (60%) and the rest of the cost is shared by five other colleges (CLASS, EDU, NSM, ENGR, TECH)
 - Federal Priorities:
 - Realignment of UH research priorities

UHS Retirement Changes Update from and Discussion with the University of Houston System Associate Vice Chancellor & University of Houston Associate Vice President for Human Resources: [Gaston Reinoso](#) and [Dale Rude](#), Associate Professor, Dept. of Management, C. T. Bauer College of Business

AVP Gaston Reinoso presented changes to the ORP & TDA Retirement Plans.

- Historical Background: Mr. Reinoso briefly outlined how the retirement plans transitioned over time.
 - 2013 -The University of Houston System (UHS) embarked on an exercise to review the 403(b) plans that included review of our retirement vendors, employee fee analysis and investment lineups.
 - 2014 -The creation of the UHS Retirement Plan Investment Oversight Committee was formed which consisted of faculty and staff from each campus.
 - 2015 – UH System CHROs partnered with Multnomah Consulting to assist in the review process.
 - UH still partners with this consulting firm
 - 2016 – This led to the establishment of a consolidated four vendor platform with reduced employee fees and secured fiduciary best practices.
 - 2017 – The UH System Retirement Plan Advisory Committee (RPAC) was formed.
- RPAC – Retirement Plan Action Committee: Meets on a quarterly basis and its membership consists of faculty and staff from each campus appointed by the CHROs. The role of the RPAC has been & continues to be fiduciary responsibility as well as policy review, fee benchmarking, fund lineup review, vendor performance and employee education and communication.
- Current Challenges: What are some of the challenges that employees have faced when selecting an ORP vendor?
 - What vendor is the best? Cost?

- Investment industry is already confusing for the average person
- Too many fund options across all vendors
- Understanding different types of fees
- Difficulty understanding future value of money
- Upcoming Improvements
 - Standard fund menu regardless of vendor selection
 - Simpler and diversified menu of options
 - Easier to understand total fees regardless of vendor selection
 - Changing vendors made easier
- Investment Menu: different tiers of investment options
- Best Practices and Upcoming Presentations
 - Explanation and presentation of new fund line up and fees to employees both faculty and staff
 - Offer presentations for all employees across UHS campuses
- New Record Keeping Fee Structures
 - Fidelity - \$0 for balances under \$5,000 and \$150/year (37.50 quarterly) for balances over \$5,000
 - TIAA - \$0 for balances under \$5,000 and \$150/year (37.50 quarterly) for balances over \$5,000
 - AIG – 23 basis points, 0.23%
 - Voya – 38 basis points, 0.38%
 - These fees are in addition to any fund fees and advisor fees paid.

Dr. Dale Rude commented that UHS has only four vendors (Fidelity, TIAA, Valic, Voya). If any employees are with Valic or Voya, they'll be paying half a percent for the advisor over and above the fees the employee will be paying. He (along with RPAC and AVP Reinoso) felt that there's no reason to be with Voya or Valic in the new set-up paying the extra money. Dr. Rude mentioned that AVP Gaston Reinoso has done a great job in promoting these new changes.

FS Pres. Cortina thanked Gaston Reinoso and Dale Rude for the updates. The presentation materials were shared via the Teams chat and posted on the Faculty Senate website.

Reports from Faculty Senate At-Large Committees:

- **Community & Government Relations Committee Chair: [Susie Gronseth](#)**

Dr. Susie Gronseth presented the CGRC's purpose and responsibilities.

- About CGRC
 - "The Community and Government Relations Committee shall serve as the Faculty Senate liaison to the university community, external communities, and governmental entities." – Faculty Senate Constitution
 - Dr. Gronseth mentioned that she took over as chair this summer: she was serving as a committee member. Professor Fleurette Fernando was the former CGRC Chair.
- CGRC 2020 Senators
 - A membership list was presented (current senators and newly-elected senators).
- Activities and Responsibilities of the CGRC
 - **Weeks of Welcome (WoW):** Senator Megan Robertson contributed to virtual UH welcome events sharing ways to be a successful UH student and discussing faculty expectations in their freshman year.
 - Emphasizes having a faculty presence at freshman events

- **APeX Lecture Series:** The Assistant Professor Excellence Lecture Series (APeX) aims to showcase the breadth and depth of groundbreaking research, scholarship, and creative activity by UH early career faculty across disciplines.
 - Sub-committee co-chairs: Vassiliy Lubchenko & Doug Thornton
 - Nine applications were received from across the campus representing seven different colleges
 - Four applicants were selected to present via Microsoft Teams
 - Prof. Andrew Michaels, LAW, September 23, 2020
 - Dr. Olivia Johnson, TECH, October 28, 2020
 - Dr. Virmarie Correa-Fernandez, EDU, January 27, 2021
 - Dr. Vijaykrishna Raghunathan, OPT, February 24, 2021
- Upcoming
 - Faculty-to-Faculty Race Relations Café Conversations – event will be posted to the Weekly Top 5, dates will be forthcoming
 - 2021-2022 APeX Call for Nominations – will occur in spring 2021 (Feb/Mar)
 - 2021 Faculty Senate Conference will occur next fall. The CGRC is currently planning for this biennial event.

CGRC Chair thanked the CGRC members for their work.

- **Faculty Affairs Committee Chair:** [Paul Butler](#)

FAC Chair Paul Butler talked about how the Faculty Affairs Committee (FAC) works in smaller groups taking up various charges on behalf of faculty. Also, Dr. Butler briefly explained the current tasks the subcommittees are focused on for the 2020-2021 academic year.

- Student Evaluations Subcommittee – reviews student comments that may trigger EOC compliance reporting issues in connection with the new state-wide Sexual Discrimination policy
- Faculty Service Award Subcommittee – developing a Senate-sponsored award to recognize outstanding service of a senator. Also, looking at a possible university-level award for faculty service in the future.
- Pipeline for future Senate leadership Subcommittee – develop a pathway to help build potential leaders within the Senate
- Faculty Senate Website Subcommittee – re-envision the Senate website.

Dr. Butler thanked the committee members for their hard work. He also thanked the Senate leadership in assisting the group when needed.

Adjournment:

Meeting adjourned at 1:14 p.m.