



**Faculty Senate
Minutes
Wednesday, January 20, 2021
12:00 p.m.**

Faculty Senate President Jeronimo Cortina called the January 20, 2021 Faculty Senate meeting to order via Microsoft Teams at 12:01 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT: (116)

ARCH: M. Kubo, P. Peters, Z. Qureshi
ARTS: F. Fernando, N. Harren, T. Koozin, S. Matijcio, C. Meals, T. Morgulis, S. Zalman
BUS: C. Becker, N. Celly, J. Hess, N. Johnson, M. Murray, J. Porra, F. Sahin, S. Werner
EDU: J. Freiberg, S. Gronseth, K. Hassett, M. Lee, A. Thompson
ENGR: C. Chang, J. Conrad, L. Grabow, K. Larin, H. Love, B. Metrovich, Y. Mo, S. Pei, D. Shattuck, Y. Yao
HON: D. Gish, S. Long
HRM: J. Draper, Y. Koh, J. Madera, C. Morosan, Sujata Sirsat, C. Taylor
HSPA: D. Engster
LAW: K. Brem, J. Nelson
CLASS: E. Alemán, K. Anderson, F. Bunta, P. Butler, J. Cortina, S. Craig, H. Glass, M. Goldberg, E. Goodin-Mayeda, S. Grigorian, M. Ivey, J. Kleinheider, M. Knoblauch, L. Maher, L. Oliveira, R. Ramos, S. Scarrow, C. Sharp, E. Simas, C. Sisk, B. Tamber-Rosenau, C. Tolliver, Z. Xiao
LIB: K. Creelman, V. Douglas, C. Gola, S. Thompson, A. Wu
COM: G. Gomez, K. Jones, K. Rowland
NSM: K. Bassler, B. Bodmann, J. Briggs, R. Capuano, A. Czader, R. Forrest, S. Gilbertson, J. May, A. Medrano, M. Nicol, A. Quaini, Z. Ren, N. Rizk, V. Sisson, G. Toti, A. Vershynina, C. Wayne
CON: C. Brohard, L. McWilliams, P. Schrader
OPT: D. Coates, V. Das, L. Frishman, R. Manny, S. Modi, J. Porter
PHA: D. Chow, G. Cuny, B. McConnell, D. Thornton, M. Trivedi
GCSW: S. Narendorf
RES CTRS: S. Chung
TECH: B. Detillier, M. El Nahas, J. Evans, H. Hutchins, M. Kidd, A. Lendasse, F. Merchant, G. Zouridakis

MEMBERS ABSENT: (26)

ARCH: D. Froelich
BUS: P. Kumar, L. Silva
ARTS: K. Rigdon
EDU: C. Arbona, W. Fan, L. Hutchison
ENGR: K. Grigoriadis, M. Robertson, G. Song
LAW: D. Fagundes
CLASS: R. Boul, L. Camaj, D. Papell, G. San Miguel, Jr., C. Spitzmueller, C. Tamber-Rosenau, A. Vujanovic

NSM: M. Das, S. Huang, R. Lee, V. Lubchenko, M. Papadakis, S. Xu
RES FAC: O. Bannova
GCSW: S. Jennings

VACANT SEATS: (7) COTA – 1 seat (GPSC); LAW – 1 seat (At-large), CLASS – 1 seat (UC), OPT – 2 seats (At-large); GCSW – 2 seats (At-large);

VISITORS: Raymond Bartlett (SVC/SVP, Administration & Finance), Wynne Chin (Professor, C.T. Bauer College of Business), Mark Clarke (Associate Provost, Faculty Development and Faculty Affairs), Amr Elnashai (VC/VP, Research & Technology Transfer), Sabrina Hassumani (Assoc. Provost, Administration & Finance), 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 Affairs), Cindy Mejia (Chief of Staff, Provost's Office), Paula Myrick Short (Senior Vice Chancellor/Vice President, Academic Affairs & Provost), Stephen J. Spann (Vice President, Medical Affairs & CoM Founding Dean)

Minutes: The minutes of the December 9, 2020 Fall Faculty Assembly & Faculty Senate Meeting were approved.

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

FS Pres. Jerónimo Cortina welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked the senators for their service. Dr. Cortina thanked senior administration for their commitment to shared governance.

FS Pres. Cortina reported on the following items:

- Faculty Senate Service Award:
 - The FAC subcommittee (co-chaired by Senators Paul Butler & Sandra Zalman) established the Faculty Senate Service Award (recognize outstanding service to the Senate).
 - Two awards sponsored by the Faculty Senate
 - New Senator Award (2-6 years of service)
 - Senator Lifetime Achievement Award (for longer serving senators)
 - Awards will be awarded in alternating years
 - Call for nominations will be forthcoming
 - Dr. Cortina thanked the co-chairs and subcommittee for their work.
- Athletics Data Request:
 - FS leadership is following up on a senator's request to figure out UH's financial contribution with regards to USA Today's data: the percentage of distribution in terms of scholarships
 - The data has been given to Senate leadership and the BFC is currently analyzing. Analysis will be presented at the next Faculty Senate meeting.

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

President Renu Khator wished everyone a happy new year and a good start to the spring term.

Dr. Renu Khator reported on the following items:

- Federal Support:
 - Stimulus Bill (\$60 million for education)
 - \$18M to \$20M – direct to students

- The rest to support student success
- Enrollment in spring 2021
 - Small increase
 - Commended Provost Short, Dean Sarah Larsen, and College Deans for their academic leadership
 - Graduate enrollment has increased and is healthy
- State Budget:
 - Estimate: shortfall is a little under \$1 billion (remaining cautious)
 - UH won't know the final amount until April 2021
- UH Strategic Plan: implementation teams began work
- COVID-19 Update:
 - On-campus, free testing began today
 - By appointment only for students, faculty, and staff
 - UH applied for two vaccine distribution centers
- UH Athletics:
 - UH Basketball is ranked in the top 10
 - Game tonight against Tulsa

Update and Discussion with the University of Houston Vice President for Medical Affairs & Founding Dean of the College of Medicine: [Stephen J. Spann](#)

Dr. Spann presented the COVID-19 pandemic update to the Faculty Senate.

- Statistics of COVID-19 global impact (96M cases), national (2,059,921 cases), state (1,872,614 cases), and local (286,356 cases); Confirmed cases in Harris County has decreased.
- Comparison Data in Harris County and Texas
 - Age distribution of confirmed cases & fatality rate in Texas
 - 1st and 2nd surges in Harris County
 - Test positivity rates
- UT COVID-19 Modeling Consortium
 - Predicts probability of growth
 - Daily COVID-19 hospitalizations
- COVID-19 Cases Reported at UH
 - Total confirmed COVID-19 Case Rate to Date
 - Texas (6.02)
 - Harris County (5.64)
 - UH (1.19) – case rate is only 20% reported of reported case rate in the county. UH is doing well due to campus community following safety protocols.
- Vaccines
 - Two approved vaccines in distribution
 - Johnson & Johnson one-dose vaccine in the FDA approval cycle
 - Hoping to see 1C distribution, but date is still unknown
 - UH has applied for vaccines for the Lone Star Circle of Care and the Student Health Center
- On-campus COVID-19 Testing Kiosk
 - Allows easier access for campus community
 - Capacity 270 tests/day; Able to expand testing/day if there is more demand
 - Requires appointment
 - Self-administered mouth-swab test (90% sensitivity rate)

Q&A Session:

Senator Ferenc Bunta asked about the effectiveness of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine. Dr. Spann responded that he seen the efficacy data on the vaccine yet and he wasn't sure if it has been published yet. However, he felt that it would be comparable to the Moderna vaccine (90% efficacy rate).

Senator Giulia Toti asked when the vaccine distribution would be available for faculty. Dr. Spann responded that he was not sure of the date for vaccine distribution for educators. However, he felt that higher ed faculty is a part of the school system distribution.

Senator Amaury Lendasse asked if the vaccine is effective against COVID-19 variants. Dr. Spann replied that experts believe that the vaccines should be effective against the variant strains.

Senator Bret Detillier mentioned that three of his students got COVID—19 but didn't report. He asked if there can be stronger communication to report in the future. Dr. Spann responded said he would look into expanding communication across campus.

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:

- Houston GPS initiative's - Equity Walk: Building a post-secondary blueprint for equity in the Texas Gulf Coast region:
 - Initiative will create strategies to close equity gaps in higher education
 - Collaborative partnership among local 2-year & 4-year institutions and generously funded by:
 - \$300k – Greater Texas Foundations
 - \$200k – Houston Greater Endowment
 - \$200k – Trellis Foundation
 - \$100k - Kresge Foundation
 - \$100k- Powell Foundation
- Implementation of UH Strategic Plan Committee: “Together we rise, together we soar”
 - Dr. Bettina Beech (College of Medicine) and Mr. Greg Bean (C. T. Bauer College of Business), co-chairs
 - Strategic Plan Goals
 - Goal 1: Student Success (Co-leaders: Drs. Richard Walker & Teri Longacre)
 - Goal 2: Nationally Competitive Research (Co-leaders: Drs. Amr Elnashai, Jeronimo Cortina, & Ramanan Krishnamoorti)
 - Goal 3: Social Responsibility (Co-leaders: Dr. Stephen Spann & Ms. Toni Benoit)
 - Goal 4: Nationally Relevant Athletics (Co-leaders: Mr. Chris Pezman & Dr. Paul Pavlou)
 - Goal 5: Competitive Funding (Co-leaders: Mr. Raymond Bartlett, Ms. Eloise Brice, & Mr. Jason Smith)
 - There will be additional working groups to help in these strategic plan goals.
 - Target completion date: December 2021
- Enrollment
 - Graduate headcount enrollment is up by 67% (doctoral enrollment up by 6%); SCH has increase by 75%
 - Fall 2021: Graduate applications 37% at masters level, 21% at doctoral level

Q&A Session:

Senator Anna Vershynina asked if the implementation committee will have representation from all college/departments. Dr. Short replied there should be representation from across the colleges & departments in the short-term working groups. Also, there will be townhalls held throughout the spring term to collect feedback from the campus community. She encouraged Senator Vershynina to check the Strategic Plan website since there will be updates posted.

Senator Anna Vershynina also asked what the reasoning was for not offering an interim grading policy in spring 2021. Jeronimo Cortina responded that the faculty represented in the Undergraduate Committee (UC) voted to not offer the interim grading policy this term and recommended this decision to the Provost.

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](#)

Mr. Raymond Bartlett reported on the following items:

- Federal Stimulus:
 - \$43M is available for other student support
 - Auxiliary area is improving where most of the loss has occurred. Continue to monitor progress (i.e., housing occupancy & parking permit sales) and trying to reduce the \$95M loss considerably.
 - Second stimulus package (\$1.9 trillion): Hope that funding for state & local governments is included.
- UH Financial Plan:
 - Working on multiple scenarios: will have better information after ORD.
- Capital Construction: proceeding on schedule

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:

- Research & Innovation Forum:
 - DoR hosted its third forum last Friday (62 attendees)
- Financial Plans
 - Planning to increase past \$200M mark
 - Focus on 10-year strategic plan for the Technology Bridge
- DoR Budget
 - Came up with different scenarios for post 2023 (when IP income is reduced significantly)
 - It was emphasized that there will be no reduction in service.

Senate Committee Chair Updates:

- **Jim Briggs on behalf of Norman Johnson, BFC Chair**
 - BFC Responsibilities
 - Membership
 - 2020 Areas of Focus
 - Financial TF – provide input to scenario models
 - New Normal TF – provide input on financial implications of changes
 - UH Online Initiative – inputs on the revenue sharing model
 - 2021 Areas of Focus
 - Continued involvement in the response to pandemic
 - Involved in in budget aspects of UH strategy
 - Budget planning for the next fiscal period.
- **David Shattuck, UC Chair**
 - UC Responsibilities
 - Review proposals (degrees, courses, policies, etc.)
 - UC Membership
 - Presented by subcommittee membership

- Rebecca Forrest subcommittee
- Michelle Ivey subcommittee
- Holley Love subcommittee
- Ana Medrano subcommittee
- Amber Thompson subcommittee
- Other UC Members
- Current UC Activities
 - Processed more than 500 proposals last year and 350 proposals this year.

Motion for Consideration regarding the Washington, DC events of 1/6/2021: [Eduardo Alemán](#)

FS President Jeronimo Cortina brought forth the motion which was it was seconded and was approved by the Senate. The floor was opened for Senator Eduardo Alemán to present the motion and for Senate discussion. Dr. Alemán briefly explained his reason for drafting the following statement.

On January 6, 2021, a violent mob stormed the Capitol building in an attempt to overturn the results of the presidential election. The use of violence to undermine our republican institutions and disrupt the peaceful transfer of power was an attack on our democratic system of government. The Faculty Senate of the University of Houston strongly condemns this violent insurrection and the dangerous propagation of falsehoods that fomented it. The preservation of democracy is a matter that affects its members directly as citizens and educators. The hard work of finding common ground and unifying the country lies ahead.

Concerns regarding timing, political nature, and language of the statement were raised and discussion ensued. Senator Regina Capuano suggested to remove “and the dangerous propagation of falsehoods that fomented it” from statement. She felt that doing so would make the statement more agreeable to most of the Senate.

FS President Jeronimo Cortina brought forth a motion to amend the current statement and it was seconded. Senator Kerry Creelman asked if an opportunity to debate the proposed amendment would be allowed before voting. FS Pres. Cortina opened the floor to discussion of the amendment and debate followed.

After discussion of the proposed amendment, the Senate voted on the adoption of the motion to delete “and the dangerous propagation of falsehoods that fomented it” from the statement. The vote results were as follows:

38 in favor
35 against
11 abstain.

The adoption of the amendment was carried forward and FS Pres. Cortina opened the floor for discussion of the whole statement. Senator Medhat El Nahas suggested to replace “strongly condemns this violent insurrection” with “condemns the insurrection at the U.S. Capitol.” Dr. Cortina then brought forth the motion to discuss the proposed amendment and asked for a second. The motion did not have a second and the motion was not carried forward for debate.

The floor was opened for discussion of the statement as a whole. Concerns of the timing were brought up and debated.

After the discussion was closed, the Faculty Senate voted on the motion to adopt the following statement:

On January 6, 2021, a violent mob stormed the Capitol building in an attempt to overturn the results of the presidential election. The use of violence to undermine our republican institutions and disrupt the peaceful transfer of power was an attack on our democratic

system of government. The Faculty Senate of the University of Houston strongly condemns this violent insurrection. The preservation of democracy is a matter that affects its members directly as citizens and educators. The hard work of finding common ground and unifying the country lies ahead.

The Senate vote results were as follows:

64 in favor

11 oppose

8 abstain.

The motion was adopted by the Faculty Senate.

Adjournment.

Meeting was adjourned at 1:53 p.m.



Spring/Summer 2021 Faculty Senate Meetings

February 17, 2021

March 24, 2021

April 14, 2021 (Spring Faculty Assembly & Faculty Senate Meeting)

May 12, 2021

June 16, 2021 (if called)

July 21, 2021 (if called)

12:00 - 2:00 p.m.

Online Meeting via Microsoft Teams



The next [APeX Speaker Series](#) event features **Virmarie Correa-Fernandez, Ph.D.**, College of Education, on “**Addressing tobacco-related health disparities among Latinx adults: Community engagement and intervention research**” on:

Wednesday, January 27, 2021

At 12:15 p.m. via [Microsoft Teams](#)

