



**Faculty Senate Meeting
Minutes
Wednesday, October 20, 2021
Via Microsoft Teams
12:00 p.m.**

Faculty Senate President Vallabh Das called the October 20, 2021 Faculty Senate meeting to order at 12:00 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT: (105)

ARCH: G. Chow, D. Froehlich, M. Kyropoulou, P. Peters
ARTS: R. Bush, N. Harren, R. Koontz, S. Matijcio, C. Meals, T. Morgulis
BUS: C. Becker, B. Carlin, N. Celly, M. Murray, J. Porra, F. Sahin
EDU: C. Arbona, S. Gronseth, K. Hassett, M. Lee, April Peters
ENGR: D. Burleson, C. Chang, J. Conrad, K. Grigoriadis, D. Litvinov, H. Love, Y. Mo, D. Shattuck, G. Song, Y. Yao
HRM: T. Legendre, S. Sirsat, D. Christopher Taylor
HSPA: D. Engster
LAW: K. Brem
CLASS: E. Alemán, K. Anderson, F. Bunta, P. Butler, L. Camaj, J. Cortina, M. Goldberg, E. Goodin-Mayeda, S. Grigorian, M. Ivey, J. Kleinheider, M. Knoblauch, L. Maher, D. Papell, S. Pott, S. Scarrow, E. Simas, B. Tamber-Rosenau, C. Tamber-Rosenau, J. Tolliver, Z. Xiao, L. Zhu
LIB: K. Creelman, T. Davis-Van Atta, V. Douglas, S. Thompson, A. Wu
COM: G. Gomez, K. Jones
NSM: M. Almus, B. Bodmann, J. Brgoch, J. Briggs, A. Caglar, R. Capuano, A. Czader, B. Dauwalder, R. Forrest, S. Huang, R. Lee, J. May, A. Medrano, M. Nicol, M. Papadakis, D. Pattison, R. Zhifeng, A. Vershynina, C. Wayne, B. Xhabli
CON: L. McWilliams, P. Schrader
OPT: D. Coates, V. Das, L. Frishman, R. Manny
PHA: D. Chow, G. Cuny, D. Thornton, M. Trivedi, G. Udugamasooriya
RES FAC: O. Bannova
TECH: M. Burns, B. Detillier, M. El Nahas, A. Lendasse, F. Merchant

MEMBERS ABSENT: (35)

ARCH: Z. Qureshi
ARTS: T. Koozin, K. Rigdon
BUS: S. Basu, P. Kumar, S. Werner
EDU: W. Fan, J. Freiberg
ENGR: K. Larin, S. Pei, M. Robertson
HON: D. Gish, D. Price
HRM: Y. Koh, J. Madera
LAW: D. Fagundes, J. Nelson, E. Trujillo
CLASS: R. Boul, S. Craig, S. Deyle, H. Glass, C. Sisk, C. Spitzmueller, A. Vujanovic
COM: K. Rowland

CON: C. Brohard
OPT: S. Modi, J. Porter
PHA: R. Ghose
RES CTRS: S. Chung
GCSW: S. Ali, S. Narendorf
TECH: M. Kidd, X. Yuan

VACANT SEATS: (10) BUS – 3 seats (At-Large); LAW – 1 GPSC seat; CLASS – 1 seat (UC), OPT – 2 seats (At-large); GCSW – 2 seats (At-large) & 1 GPSC seat;

VISITORS: Raymond Bartlett (SVC/SVP, Administration & Finance), Wynne Chin (BUS), Mark Clarke (Associate Provost, Faculty Development and Faculty Affairs), Amr Elnashai (VC/VP, Research & Transfer Technology), Fleurette Fernando (KGMCA), Athena Jackson (Dean, University Libraries), Michael Johnson, (Chief of Staff, UH President's Office), Sarah Larsen (Dean, Graduate School), Jose Peralez (Crabtree Interpreting), Eduardo Reveles (Crabtree Interpreting)

Approval of Minutes: October 20, 2021 Meeting

The October 20, 2021 minutes were approved as amended (attendance).

Report from and Discussion with the Faculty Senate President: [Vallabh Das](#)

FS President Vallabh Das welcomed everyone to the meeting. He thanked the senators for their work and dedication.

a. In-person faculty senate meetings from November

- Dr. Das stated that he would open the floor to discuss meeting format after the updates.

b. Faculty senate internal projects

- Revitalizing the Faculty Senate website so that it becomes the destination for relevant information for senators and faculty.
- FS Leadership Pipeline: Encourage senators to run or become nominated for Senate leadership positions.

c. Faculty senate conference in Spring 2022

- Led by the Community & Government Relations Committee (CGRC)
- January 27-28, 2022: evening keynote speaker & reception on the first day; morning panel sessions ending with lunch on the second day
- Theme: Rising Together – Advancing Higher Education through Equity & Innovation
- CGRC Chair Susie Gronseth presented a few more details about the conference
 - i. Fostering student success through pandemic challenges
 - ii. Role of UH in Community Engagement
 - iii. Achieving Equity at UH

d. Faculty senate agenda for 2021-2022

- UH Strategic and FS involvement – senators involved in implementation planning
- Enhanced Performance Evaluation Policy (EPE)
 - i. Campus comments are being reviewed by the Provost Office
 - ii. The Provost has offered to share updates with the Senate.
- UH Population Health Initiative: How can the Senate be involved? Chief Population Health Officer Bettina Beech plans to speak more about this initiative at a Senate meeting.
- Big 12 Conference – How can the UH community benefit?
- FS Pres. Das encouraged senators to bring forth any agenda items they feel important to consider to FS leadership.

FS President Vallabh Das opened the floor for discussion regarding future Senate meeting formats.

Senator discussed topics of the pros and cons of each meeting format, offered suggestions, and aired various concerns/opinions. After the discussion, senators participated in an informal straw poll via MS Forms. FS President Vallabh Das said that the discussion and poll would provide additional information to the Executive Committee and the decision about the November meeting would be finally made by the Executive Committee.

Informal Vote Results:

88 total votes

12 for in-person meeting format

46 for online meeting format

30 for hybrid meeting format

FS Pres. Vallabh Das said he would take these results back to the Executive Committee for further discussion.

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:

- Additional funding from State's 3rd special session: UHS received a total of \$389M for additional funding.
 - UH received: \$145M for three buildings: \$60M for a medical research facility (UHS), An academic building at UH Sugar Land, a building for the Hobby School of Public Affairs, and a building for the IDEA Lab;
 - \$50M for institutional enhancement (biennial basis, UH) – promote academic excellence; the hope is to make this a permanent investment in the next biennium (part of Goal 5 of UH's strategic plan)
- COVID-19: Cases remain low at UH and the trend is staying low (average: 3.4 cases as of October 19, 2021); UH's cases is half compared to Harris County's cases (per 100)/ Curative contract was extended to November 20, 2021 (hours extended to 8am-6pm); Test result turnaround is averaging under 24 hours.
- Lab Renovations:
 - Task Force has been meeting monthly; At the next meeting, primary agenda item is to review the first draft MAPP (addresses roles/responsibilities and incorporates/identifies opportunities for process improvement). The goal is to have this draft of report available for campus review at the end of November.
- Capital Projects:
 - Continues to progress
 - Rise in inflation rate has permeated construction costs
- Facilities Update:
 - Customer service initiative: FIXIT Call Center was out sourced to the Lighthouse of Houston.
 - Establishment of customer service liaison: A bridge between call center and technicians to follow-up with customer on service issues.
 - Will continue to engage with the Research & Scholarship Committee (RSC) and Council of Chairs for feedback
- Staffing Lab Maintenance Group:
 - Focus on lab maintenance: Goal is to address lab issues/concerns within a two-week period; Seven-day turnaround for classrooms

FS Pres. Das thanked Raymond Bartlett for the work he and his team has been doing.

Q&A Session:

Sen. Benjamin Tamber-Rosenau asked if it is possible to obtain aggregate data from Curative (positive rates) given that self-reporting (students) is optional. Also, can UH incentivize students to report if they have positive test results. Mr. Raymond responded that the best option UH currently has is data from Curative even though self-reporting is optional. He said he would follow-up on Dr. Tamber-Rosenau's question regarding incentivizing self-reporting.

Sen. David Papell wanted to make sure everyone understood that inflation and building costs (current supply and demand issues) is not confused with the long-term (i.e., next ten years). SVP Bartlett agreed with Dr. Papell's comment.

Sen. Bret Detillier asked if FIXIT is available on the evening and weekends. Sometimes he experiences HVAC issues where he teaches. Mr. Bartlett replied that he will look into this concern. However, the current system is set-up to address the issues at least with a turnaround is 24 hours.

Sen. Almus Melahat asked if there is any data on how many people are contacted by UH's contact tracers. SVP Bartlett replied that he could provide data on how many people UH's contact tracers have contacted.

Sen. Rebecca Forrest asked what the percentage is of the vaccinated campus community (data from the vaccine incentive program). SVP Bartlett replied that over 21,000 responded affirmatively to the program (keeping in mind that not everyone will report).

Sen. Anna Vershynina asked what the timeline is for the Cullen Blvd road construction. SVP Bartlett responded that the target end date is 2024.

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:
 - 2021 Research Expenditures: increased a little \$203M in the past year (2% increase); research income has increased by 27% (highest since 2017)
 - UH Strategic Goal 2: Research Preeminence
 - Final implementation report was submitted to the Provost, 45 pages with 18 recommendations, progressing well
 - Presidential Frontier Faculty Program:
 - Hire additional 100 research-oriented faculty
 - 22 approved out of 25 assistant professor lines
 - Deans made bids for these lines
 - Ads have been sent out already
 - Core Facilities:
 - Large equipment will be centrally managed
 - Surveyed current UH inventory
 - \$20M committed for equipment
 - Hoping to secure \$50M funding for a new core facilities building

Q&A Session:

Sen. Anna Vershynina asked if these additional hiring lines permanent. VP Amr Elnashai replied affirmatively that these tenure system lines are permanent. He added that if a line is vacated, then that

position returns back to the Provost office. The priority is to manage the matrix of societal challenges/research tools and to fill in the gaps as they occur (colleges doesn't have priority).

Sen. Doug Thornton asked how the evaluation criteria will be for these additional faculty. VP Elnashai responded that these faculty members will be subjected to UH's normal tenure review process. However, tenure will be managed by the faculty member's primary college if there's a joint hire assignment with another college. The other college will be consulted during the tenure review process. Also mentoring guidelines have been incorporated into this program.

Sen. Donna Pattison asked if there is a plan to address the massive imbalance of teaching loads (student/faculty ratio). VP Elnashai replied that teaching falls under the purview of the provost. His department is responsible for only research start-ups.

Sen. Diana Chow asked if the hiring of 22 additional faculty is a reallocation of existing lines. VP Amr Elnashai responded that these additional lines are new and is permanent. Dr. Chow also asked if the faculty member who committed to multiple colleges will need to define upfront their tenure home. Dr. Elnashai said that the tenure home is already defined in the guidelines. The proposal process is collaborative. FS Pres. Das commented colleges may be impacted with regards to replenishing existing lines or new lines: colleges may not be able to come up with their portion for funding start-up packages. Colleges then would have to make choices. VP Elnashai replied that this would be a priority issue of the colleges. The same cost sharing formula for start-up packages was applied to the RFP guidelines to encourage significant start-ups and discourage unnecessary requests. As college funding request increases, their cost sharing amount increases. SVP Raymond Bartlett commented that UH is looking at a plan to address cost sharing, etc. (funding mechanisms) in the long-term. Dr. Mark Clarke echoed VP Amr Elnashai's and SVP Raymond Bartlett's comments regarding the program's hiring plan and that this program is a university-wide initiative.

Sen. Anna Vershynina asked what it meant by "normal hires". Are the salary ranges the same for all 25 lines? Or are the salaries ranges are in accordance to the different departments? VP Elnashai replied that the Provost office uses various salary tables that are used to determine faculty hiring salaries and also that tenure home dictates the salary. Associate Provost Mark Clarke said that internal and external benchmarks (i.e., APLU) are used for baseline faculty salaries for incoming faculty (relative to Tier-one institutions and within the discipline). These salaries are competitive relative to the national level (relative to internal level).

New Business

None

Announcements

- FS Pres. Vallabh Das mentioned that the next APeX talk will be presented by Dr. Lauren Gilbert (College of Medicine), October 27, 2021, 12:15pm via Microsoft Teams. Dr. Gilbert is the first APeX speaker from the College of Medicine.
- UH President's Fall Address is on October 28th. FS Pres. Das encouraged everyone to attend.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 1:49 p.m.