



**Fall Faculty Assembly & Faculty Senate Meeting
Minutes
Wednesday, January 19, 2022
via Microsoft Teams
12:00 p.m.**

Faculty Senate President Vallabh Das called the January 19, 2022 the Faculty Senate meeting to order at 12:02 p.m. He welcomed everyone to the meeting and gave well wishes for the new year. Dr. Das reminded attendees of the virtual meeting rules.

MEMBERS PRESENT: (118)

ARCH: G. Chow, D. Froehlich, M. Kyropoulou, P. Peters
ARTS: R. Bush, N. Harren, R. Koontz, T. Koozin, S. Matijcio, C. Meals, T. Morgulis, D. Politzer, T. Van Kekerix
BUS: S. Basu, B. Carlin, N. Celly, A. Lish, M. Murray, J. Porra, F. Sahin
EDU: C. Arbona, S. Brower, S. Gronseth, K. Hassett, M. Lee, April Peters
ENGR: D. Burleson, C. Chang, J. Conrad, K. Grigoriadis, K. Larin, D. Litvinov, H. Love, Y. Mo, D. Shattuck, G. Song, Y. Yao
HON: D. Price
HRM: Y. Koh, T. Legendre, S. Sirsat
LAW: K. Brem, E. Trujillo
CLASS: K. Anderson, A. Bencomo, F. Bunta, P. Butler, L. Camaj, J. Cortina, H. Glass, M. Goldberg, E. Goodin-Mayeda, S. Grigorian, M. Ivey, J. Kleinheider, M. Knoblauch, L. Maher, D. Papell, S. Scarrow, E. Simas, C. Sisk, 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, K. Rowland
NSM: M. Almus, B. Bodmann, J. Brgoch, J. Briggs, A. Caglar, R. Capuano, B. Dauwalder, R. Forrest, S. Gilbertson, S. Huang, R. Lee, J. May, A. Medrano, R. Meisel, M. Nicol, M. Papadakis, D. Pattison, Z. Ren, A. Vershynina, C. Wayne, B. Xhabli
CON: C. Brohard, L. McWilliams
OPT: D. Coates, V. Das, L. Frishman, R. Manny, S. Modi, J. O'Brien, J. Porter
PHA: D. Chow, G. Cuny, D. Thornton, M. Trivedi, G. Udugamasooriya
RES CTRS: S. Chung
RES FAC: O. Bannova
GCSW: S. Ali, S. Narendorf
TECH: A. Conklin, B. Detillier, M. El Nahas, A. Lendasse, F. Merchant, X. Yuan

MEMBERS ABSENT: (28)

ARCH: Z. Qureshi
ARTS: K. Rigdon
BUS: C. Becker, P. Kumar, S. Werner
EDU: W. Fan, J. Freiberg
ENGR: S. Pei, M. Robertson

HON: D. Gish
HRM: J. Madera, C. Taylor
LAW: D. Fagundes, J. Nelson
CLASS: S. Craig, S. Deyle, S. Pott, C. Spitzmueller, A. Vujanovic
NSM: S. Gilbertson
CON: P. Schrader
PHA: R. Ghose
TECH: M. Kidd

VACANT SEATS: (4) BUS – 1 seat (At-Large); GCSW – 2 seats (At-large) & 1 GPSC seat

VISITORS: Raymond Bartlett (SVC/SVP, Administration & Finance), Mark Clarke (Associate Provost, Faculty Development and Faculty Affairs), Amr Elnashai (VC/VP, Research & Transfer Technology), Lisa Holdeman (VC/VP, Univ. Marketing & Communication), Athena Jackson (Dean, University Libraries), Michael Johnson (Chief of Staff, Presidents' Office), Renu Khator (Chancellor/President, UH), Sarah Larsen (Dean, Graduate School), Teri Longacre (Vice Provost/Dean, Undergraduate Affairs), Cindy Mejia (Chief of Staff, Provost Office), Michael Pelletier (Exec. Dir, Aspire Institute), Paula Myrick Short (SVC/SVP, Academic Affairs & Provost), Stephen Spann (VP of Medical Affairs & Dean, College of Medicine)

Approval of Minutes: December 8, 2021 Meeting

The Senate approved the December 8, 2021 minutes as distributed.

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

Pres. Khator welcomed everyone to the meeting and wished all a Happy New Year. She expressed her appreciation of faculty member's efforts in getting the spring semester started.

Pres. Renu Khator reported on the following items:

- She has been attending fundraisers to help secure some permanent source of additional source funding to back UH's strategic plan. Next year, the state legislature will be in session and UH has major agenda items for consideration.
- COVID Situation: Referred this update to Dr. Stephen Spann for latest report and Provost Short regarding academic issues/logistics.
- Enrollment: 43,000 students are currently enrolled; Will wait for the ORD numbers. UH is running 2.5% behind in SCH (compared to spring 2021).
- Athletics:
 - Football is ranked #17 in the post-season poll.
 - Basketball is currently ranked #10. UH beat Univ. of South Florida by 19 points last night.

Update on COVID-19 Variants by University of Houston Vice President for Medical Affairs and Founding Dean for the College of Medicine: [Stephen Spann](#)

Dr. Stephen Spann presented the latest data and news regarding the current COVID-19 situation with the recent Omicron surge.

Q&A Session:

FS Pres.-elect David Shattuck asked for Dr. Spann's opinion about new cases being potentially inaccurate due to people using home tests and not having a systematic way of reporting. Dr. Spann said he couldn't give the magnitude of underreporting. With home testing increasing, he believed that there are significantly more cases than what is being reported.

Sen. Benjamin Tamber-Rosenau commented he sees many people on campus wearing low quality cloth masks. He asked if it would be useful for UH to distribute high quality surgical or N95 masks. Dr. Spann replied that there is data to suggest that some cloth mask or not as protective as the higher quality masks. Surgical masks aren't as protective as N95 masks, but they offer good protection. He said distributing higher quality masks would be a cost issue and referred Sen. Tamber-Rosenau to SVP Raymond Bartlett. Dr. Spann said that UH would need to encourage individuals to wear as good a mask as they can.

FS Pres. Vallabh Das commented that he saw two news items: government distributing free home tests and free masks. He asked if Dr. Spann knew when these items would be available. Dr. Spann responded that he wasn't familiar about the plans to distribute masks, but said that would be great if it happens. As for the home tests, Dr. Spann that the website (covidtest.gov) open for people to order the tests (limit of four per household).

Presentation by 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 faculty for their compassion and resiliency towards the students and the academic enterprise this spring term. She also expressed her appreciation towards President Das and President-elect Shattuck for their counsel.

Prov. Short commented that UH does have COVID leadership team that meets weekly and have been meeting every week through the summer. The team uses data to help to make the best decisions possible for the health and safety of the UH community.

Provost Short reported on the following items:

- Bill & Melinda Gates funded research study in collaboration with the American Association of Colleges, University Educators (ACUE):
 - This group focuses on helping faculty become evidence based, driven in their teaching quality/teaching design, and focus on student achievement/closing the achievement gap.
 - UH faculty (along with seven other universities) have the opportunity to participate in the study and earn a credential (the only credential recognized by the ACUE).
 - Training will begin spring and fall of 2022 to earn this credential. The study is looking for faculty who teach undergraduate gateway classes (91 slots available).
 - Faculty interested in this training can contact their department chair, Dr. Lacey Schmidt (FED) or Dr. Leslie Coward (FED).
- Accomplished Leader Forum (March 3, 2022, 1pm-2:30pm, held virtually): Featured speaker is Dr. Gilda Barabino, President, Olin College of Engineering, and Professor of Biomedical and Chemical engineering.

FS Pres. Vallabh Das thanked Provost Short for her kind words about the faculty. In addition, he mentioned to her that the ACUE study was published in the Senate's Weekly Top 5 last Friday.

Q&A Session:

Sen. Stella Grigorian asked about extending the spring soft opening. Prov. Short replied that the COVID leadership team will meet Monday and that information will communicate information early next week.

Sen. Papadakis asked if faculty have the discretion to switch their class to any type of delivery as they see fit if there is an incidence of infection in their class. Prov. Short responded that if there were a safety question in class, the faculty would need to discuss it with their department chair.

Sen. Benjamin Tamber-Rosenau commented that the university probably has information on students who have tested positive in his class. However, he has not received such information. He asked if the university could be freer with the case information with faculty who have had students who tested positive. Prov. Short mentioned that UH does have reporting protocol and referred him to SVP Raymond Bartlett. SVP Bartlett said that administration has worked with the COVID leadership team and General Counsel on the issue of releasing health information to others. Administration has been advised that this falls into the area of personal health information and should not communicate such information. Dr. Tamber-Rosenau said he did not want disclosure of any individual student's health information. Rather a message informing faculty that an individual in their class tested positive and attended the class within a certain timeframe would be helpful information. SVP Bartlett replied that UH is trying to balance between CDC and UH COVID guidelines while complying with the state mandate.

Sen. Papadakis commented about a COVID situation in his classroom. FS Pres. Das responded that he should discuss that situation with the department chair.

Sen. Zhifeng Ren said that the today's New York Times article said that even though the Omicron variant is more contagious, the death rate is much lower than the regular cold and flu. If that is the case, why be afraid of Omicron? FS Pres. Das responded that just by the sheer numbers of people who are being infected, the hospitals could still potentially become overrun.

Sen. Rebecca Forrest mentioned that plexiglass in the classroom she taught in yesterday was taken down. She asked if this action was specific to only that classroom or is this campus-wide. SVP Bartlett asked Dr. Forrest to send him the details of the issue or contact her building coordinator.

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

FS Pres. Vallabh Das wished everyone a Happy New Year and hoped everyone had a peaceful and restful holiday break despite the pandemic.

FS Pres. Das reported on the following items:

- Faculty Senate Conference: Due to the Omicron variant surge, the event was moved from January 27-28 to March 31-April 1. CGRC Chair Susie Gronseth gave further details about the conference (i.e., change in venue, panel sessions, etc.). Dr. Das asked the senators to encourage their colleagues to attend.
- RSC Resolution on Animal Research:
 - RSC senators representing NSM presented a resolution that was discussed and passed unanimously within the RSC.
 - The resolution was to communicate the difficulties faced by researchers located on the West side of campus and using animals (located in the East side of the campus) in their work. The EC has communicated this issue to administration for consideration.

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:

- UH Vaccine Clinics (in partnership with HEB, UH HR, & UH Student Health Center):
 - January 20, Bayou City Room, Student Center South, 8am-4pm
 - January 26, communication will be forthcoming on the details for this clinic
 - February 3 (tentatively scheduled, depending on Jan. 26th clinic turnout)
- Curative Testing Kiosk:
 - Test availability: there's 200 to over 700 slots available for testing.
- Post Pandemic Plans: SVP Bartlett's team has begun the conversation about how a future UH would look like in an endemic state (from a protocol standpoint).
- Lab Renovation Task Force: The group developed a policy draft and has been submitted to the UH Policy Management Office for campus-wide feedback.
- Branded Carts:
 - Many of the facilities carts have been branded "@ your door in 24" motto
 - Concerted effort to focus improving the quality of facilities, customer service, and the quality/timeliness of the work
- ePerformance Process: A taskforce was created to review and help improve the evaluation process for staff. Work has culminated in a series of recommendations.

Report from 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:

- Progress on Core Facilities:
 - Investing \$20M in forming five core facilities
 - Created five working groups who drafted recommendation reports, outcomes were summarized by VP Elnashai and presented to the Pres. Khator. Total cost is \$21.3M over the four to five years.
- Physical Space for Core Facilities
 - Gathered inventory data: UH has \$75M in equipment
 - Creating a map to see which equipment is relevant to the five facilities.
 - Analyzing research space on campus
- Presidential Frontier Faculty Program
 - Progressing well
 - Provost and VP Elnashai continue to review the shortlist of faculty to visit UH.
- Office of Contracts & Grants (OCG):
 - Office is short-staffed (45-45% personnel); Department has been re-structured and will be hiring more staff.
 - VP Elnashai asked for the faculty's patience in OCG turnaround times.
- 50-in-5 Celebration event scheduled for February 5, 2022 (in-person)
- UH Higher Education Research Database has been published. Database contains national rankings of research universities (i.e., research expenditures).

Q&A Session:

Sen. Manos Papadakis asked about the College of Medicine business plan that mentioned a significant amount of money (\$9M) that would be coming in for research expenditures. His

understanding that UH COM currently has zero. VP Elnashai replied that he didn't have the exact dollar amount, but it is not zero. There is money coming in: mostly through partnerships between faculty in COM, NSM, ENGR, and PHA. Both Dr. Papadakis and VP Elnashai decided to discuss the topic further in a separate meeting.

Presentation by the University of Houston Founding Executive Director, Aspire Institute for Global Engagement: [Michael Pelletier](#)

FS Pres. Vallabh Das gave a brief introduction about Ambassador Michael Pelletier.

Amb. Pelletier presented a short video about the Institute for Global Engagement. He expressed that the institute is there to help support students. Amb. Pelletier discussed a few projects his office is working on:

- Starting up Learning Abroad program again and expanding to more non-traditional programs
- Awards and funds to support internationalization of content and curriculum
- Will do more Fulbright programs: specialist programs and longer term lecturer/researcher programs

Amb. Pelletier encouraged everyone to send him recommendations and that he looked forward to working with the senators and their colleagues.

Q&A Session:

Sen. Susie Gronseth pointed out that the Global Faculty award and the Global Faculty Development Fund are specifically for tenured and tenure-track faculty. She suggested that these opportunities could be expanded to clinical faculty in global engagement and outreach. Amb. Michael Pelletier replied that he has started this conversation already and felt it made sense to grow and expand in this way.

Sen. Zhifeng Ren presented a situation about two international students from China and the issues they had with entering the U.S. in 2021 due to COVID control measures. Amb. Pelletier replied that he had heard only a little bit about that story. He added that the issue of international student mobility in general has been a challenge and difficult. He said that the office of International Students is not part of the Institute. However, Michael Pelletier said he works closely with the director, but the office of international students and scholars are better suited to working with students on those specific situations. As a whole, his office is in support of and protecting international student mobility.

Sen. Elizabeth Trujillo asked about the scope of his office concerning research and the support that can be offered to faculty. Amb. Pelletier responded that he would like to grow a number of MOU agreements focused on joint research/joint teaching.

Sen. Manos Papadakis expressed that UH needs to vet students/faculty coming to UH with their own money from China because he believes money from that government is unclean. He mentioned this because he would like to protect faculty and academic freedom. Amb. Pelletier responded that UH would want to create partnerships and want to have academic exchange with everybody. Nevertheless, UH would want to do it in a way that is smart and protects everybody. He said he is not an expert in this situation Dr. Papadakis mentioned. However, faculty who would like to create such program, would need to work with their college dean and he could possibly coordinate with them.

FS Pres. Vallabh Das thanked Amb. Michael Pelletier for taking time to visit with the Senate.

New Business

None.

FS Pres. Das reminded senators that the next APeX talk is next week, Wed. January 26 12:15pm via Teams. The speaker is Dr. Daryl Robinson from the Kathrine G. McGovern College of the Arts and his topic is Pipe Organs: The most complex machines before the Industrial Revolution.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 1:57pm.