

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA IN HUNTSVILLE  
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MINUTES OF MEETING #557, 12 MARCH 2015  
APPROVED 16 APRIL 2015

**Present:** *Wai Mok, Charles Hickman, Jack Schnell, Eric Fong, Xiaotong Li, Jill Johnson, Pavica Sheldon, Joe Conway, Joe Taylor, Linda Maier, John Kvach, Carolyn Sanders, Anne Marie Choup, Eric Seemann, Kyle Knight, R. Michael Banish, Richard Fork, James Swain, Kader Frendi, Babak Shotorban, Mark Lin, Kristen Herrin, Marlena Primeau, Monica Beck, Cheryl Emich, Larry Carey, Luciano Matzkin, Debra Moriarity, Jeff Weimer, Peter Slater, Letha Etzkorn, Grant Zhang, Lingze Duan, Nikolai Pogorelov*

**Absent with proxy:** *Tim Landry, Azita Amiri, Lenora Smith, Udaysankar Nair, John Shriver*

**Absent without proxy:** *Derrick Smith, Nick Jones, Ying-Cheng Lin, B. Earl Wells, Junpeng Guo, Ken Zuo, Ellise Adams, Seyed Sadeghi*

**Guests:** *Provost Christine Curtis, Emanuel Waddell and members from the SIE Committee*

**President Robert Altenkirch was not present.**

➤ Faculty Senate President Wai Mok called the meeting to order at 12:45.

Michael Banish motions to suspend the rules. Marlena Primeau seconds.

➤ Administration Reports

❖ Provost Curtis

President Altenkirch is recruiting today so he is not here. Provost Curtis thanked everyone for participating in Student Day. Guidance Counselors from the general area are on campus today and they are very interested in UAH and our programs. We are hoping they will communicate that interest back to their students.

#### **Academic Titles Policy**

Background: This came out of an initial request made by the President before I came here. The Faculty Senate answered his request with a recommendation on lecturers, which left us, the administration, to create something for librarians.

This Academic Policy includes all titles. It draws from Chapter 7 of the Faculty Handbook. Please look at it and consider it very carefully. Having the titles and what they mean, and the opportunities for different groups, is essential for our institution.

#### **Faculty Handbook**

Chapters 1, 2, 3 and 5 of the Revised Faculty Handbook have been sent back to the Senate. Chapters 1 and 3 have been totally re-written because they were out of date. Chapter 1 discusses the History of the University. Chapter 3 discusses the positions within the University. Chapter 5 was substantially revised because research is constantly changing.

Chapters 4 and 6, along with Appendices A and B, are with the President. Those sections have already gone through Legal. Once the President reviews them and gives his input, they will go to the Senate. I do not know when that will be, though.

### **Departmental Visits**

I have had the opportunity to visit several departments for an in-depth discussion of retention and graduation rates. I'm still trying to reach as many departments as I can. A message from the President last night stated that our graduation rate is hurting us in our recruiting efforts. Students question their future here and compare it to other universities. We need to help our students reach the high expectations we set for them.

### **"Clear the Path" Task Force**

The task force I set up, called "Clear the Path," began yesterday.

Students find some of our process and policies archaic and impractical. The task force is a small group. The people in the task force are working on the nuts and bolts of the university's structure and how we go about doing things. They will meet with the Deans and advisors, and anyone else the Deans want to bring into the room, to discuss how to streamline and make friendlier the processes. The purpose of this is to eliminate the holes that students encounter. Their timeline is very short. By May 10<sup>th</sup>, they will have their recommendations to me. Orientation is May 20<sup>th</sup>, so we need to clear the path, both the structural and infrastructural path, in terms of their success by then. If you have any ideas bring them up now. We are looking for things that would help our students move more freely through the system. Send me an email and I will pass it along to the committee.

Michael Banish applauds Provost Curtis for the task force. He states that he recently read a report on graduation rates that broke graduation rates into socioeconomic classes. Michael Banish asked Provost Curtis if she had statistics on where UAH students fall.

- Provost Curtis: Not yet. I know a couple of things. We have a 33% Pell Grant rate, which is higher than Auburn and Alabama. It's not higher compared to other major institutions. We do have students who are in need. That means we need to work harder to make them succeed. Some of the problem lies with financial aid, too.

Provost Curtis thinks Michael Banish is right in that administration needs to look more closely at UAH students in terms of socioeconomic class versus graduation rates. She said that Christy Motter and her models will help administration with this.

- Provost Curtis: We are in the process of looking at one college right now. There are generalities in the statistics, but it's more than just grades.

In your colleges, each of you will have opportunity to reach your students in the first year course. I think that course is going to be instrumental in assisting our students. You are the most important people on this campus to them.

- Charles Hickman: COB allows students to drop up until finals, for both graduates and undergraduates. That is adversely affecting students.

Provost Curtis thought it was only allowable until week 10.

- Charles Hickman: Right now there is a policy that you can drop anytime in extreme circumstances.

- Provost Curtis: There is a lot of controversy about drop dates. It is a philosophical and a practical debate. If the Senate wants to bring this up, it will be welcome.

Provost Curtis said to give early feedback to the students. She said transfer students, whether they are 24, 48, or 60 hours, are just as vulnerable as first-time full-time (FTFT) freshmen. She wants faculty to think within their college what they can do to help transfer students succeed.

Jeffrey Weimer asked how transfer students are counted in our statistics.

Provost Curtis answered according to the national norm, as FTFT freshmen. We, and most institutions like us, have an extremely vested interest in transfer students.

Jeffrey Weimer asked if our rebuttal to our graduation rate being on 50% is because of transfer students.

- Provost Curtis: Probably not. 45% of our total students are FTFT freshmen. We have to make our students successful.

Peter Slater congratulated whoever decided to distinguish lecturers. He asked if there would be a salary raise for each level.

- Provost Curtis: The plan is to have a bump from lecturer to the other two.

➤ Guest Speaker: Emanuel Waddell, SIE Committee Chair

We were asked to look at the old SIE forms. We generated a list of the questions that were being asked across all of the colleges. The committee met several times and developed questions applicable to all colleges. We set a goal of 12 to 13. We wanted to minimize the number of questions students were asked. We also wanted to leave room for colleges and departments so that it didn't get over 20. These are fairly objective questions regarding the fulfillment of the objectives and outcomes on the syllabus. We have requested individual meetings with the colleges. Each college is represented on the committee. My interpretation of this challenge is to get this started now. This isn't set in stone, though. The beautiful thing about the software is that we can look at trends.

- Carolyn Sanders: The helpful thing about SIEs for us in Music is the opportunity to receive written feedback. Is there the opportunity for that with the new SIEs?
- Answer from SIE Committee member: There will be a space at the end of each question so that the student can elaborate if they want.

Carolyn Sanders expressed concern over the return rate of SIEs now that they are being administered online. She stated that faculty have to rely heavily on SIEs for reappointment, and so to get a low return is a disservice.

- Emanuel Waddell: We brainstormed several ideas to avoid low return rates. We never came to a consensus on one. One of the best practices I personally heard is to employ the same model we now use for paper SIEs—use some time in class to complete it. You can also use raffles, giveaways, or hold a grade.
- Jack Schnell: So you're relying on them having computers in the class?
- Emanuel Waddell: Mobile devices are compatible. It doesn't have to be a computer. The software is compatible with both Apple and Windows.
- Answer from Committee member: Students aren't limited to just that class-time period, either. We give them x weeks.

- Emanuel Waddell: It is also possible for the instructor to see the response rate for each class.
  - Jack Schnell: Ones that do put forth the effort into completing SIEs have a grudge. So the results will be skewed.
  - Answer from Committee member: It happens the same way with the paper ones.
- Both Jack Schnell and Michael Banish disagree.
- Eric Seemann: Isn't there literature on skewed results? The literature also cautioned against using a punishment model.
  - Emanuel Waddell: Yes, and we do have access to that.
  - Reply from Committee member: The first year that we use it, there will be a drop in the responses. But those will increase over time.
- Anne Marie Choup: Are we separating the faculty questions from the instructor questions?
  - Emanuel Waddell: The faculty questions are gone, but your Dean or Chair could put them back in.
- Lingze Duan: Can we give credit to students who submit SIEs?
  - Emanuel Waddell: It's not encouraged.
- Luciano Matzkin: Is there a website for instructors to see the SIE results?
  - Answer from Committee member: No, the results will be viewable the same as they are now.
  - Luciano Matzkin: Why not? It's a more standardized way than ratemyprofessor.com.
  - Answer from Committee member: I don't know if it is something that the software will produce.
- Linda Maier commented that she wouldn't like having results published for the public to see because there are possibilities of anomalies. Carolyn Sanders agreed with Linda Maier. She sees more pitfalls than benefit.
- Emanuel Waddell: I will bring this to the Provost's attention—whether it should be published online or remain in the library.
- Kader Frendi: Make the SIE straddle the Final Exam. That way we can administer it before the Final Exam and then if the student hasn't responded by then, give them 10 or so minutes before they can take the Final Exam to respond to the SIE.
- Some College of Nursing faculty, including the Dean, met to get feedback for the Nursing senators on these questions. For number 2, instead of the way it reads now, "... and evaluation," remove "grade" before evaluation because CON doesn't necessarily grade that. Also, for number 11, add "in a professional manner." We want to add professional to the instructor. There was discussion regarding the terminology "professional" versus "helpful" versus "effective." Deb Moriarity suggested "in a professional and effective manner."
  - Michael Banish suggested moving number 11 to follow number 5. Peter Slater wanted to keep them separate, because if they are put together, then students will just answer them the same. Eric Seemann stated that he will take a look at it.

- Anne Marie Choup: Was Number 7 part of the discussion that the student might not even know the course objectives? Can we leave room for the instructor to list the course objectives?
- Jill Johnson suggested that they offer How-to's on the SIE in the written portions because some students like to use SIEs to vent anger or frustration, when SIEs are supposed to be used to provide suggestions on improvement. Emanuel Waddell agreed that helpful suggestions over courses are more productive.
- Carolyn Sanders: In the past, it was just a blank space for the written comments, so now is there going to be some guidance to the students as to what to write?
- Kristen Herrin: On the comments section, I tell my students to give examples. It produces a lot more comments. If the students just say a good teacher or a bad teacher, we can't utilize those comments.
- Anne Marie Choup: Will this be in place for the spring?
- Emanuel Waddell: It has to be. But these questions aren't set in stone.

➤ Approval of Faculty Senate Meeting #556 Minutes from February 12, 2015

Kader Frendi **motions to approve** Minutes 556. Peter Slater seconds.

Ayes carried motion

No oppositions

*Motion to approve Faculty Senate Minutes 556 **passes***

➤ No FSEC Report from March 2015 to accept

➤ Committee Reports

❖ Governance and Operations Committee Chair James Swain: Continuing with elections.

- Wai Mok strongly encourages Senators to run for President-Elect.

❖ Faculty and Student Development Committee Chair Linda Maier: We will have a Committee meeting next week to discuss the proposal regarding the new Academic Titles Policy.

❖ Finance and Resources Committee Chair, Charles Hickman: RCEU has received all proposals. I am putting them into a format for easy rating. I will get that out by Monday for the F&R Committee. I have received 1 application for the Speaker Series. Encourages faculty to submit proposals. There's \$2000 available. The Provost offered to fund 8 speakers.

- Jack Schnell offered a hypothesis for why the committee has only received 1 speaker proposal. He thinks it is because the proposal requires the submission of 5 pages simply to submit one name.

❖ The Personnel Committee is taking up the bill that was submitted by the Physics Department senators.

➤ Academic Titles Policy

A draft was sent to Wai Mok from the Provost. This policy includes 3 tiers to the Lecturer ladder. Wai Mok thinks the Faculty and Student Development Committee is going to look at it and give a recommendation to the full Senate, which we will formally discuss. If you have a comment, let them

know. Wai Mok wants everyone to take a really close look at this policy because it will have a major impact on the faculty.

- Charles Hickman commented on the Non-Tenure Track Faculty Appointments being given a 1-year appointment or up to 3 years. He can't figure out what that means. Charles Hickman: This says we can get up to 3 years, but it has to be renewed annually. Jill Johnson agrees that it is very confusing.
- Deb Moriarity: It's an out. You have a 3-year appointment, but it is renewed every year. It is not a review, just a renewal.
- Joe Conway: Why should we give them that out?
- Eric Seemann: Charlie's point is fundamentally that it isn't a contract then. The term "renew" is used in both situations.
- Jeffrey Weimer: Why even have Item #1 then?

➤ Additional Business

1. After the last meeting, several people told Wai Mok that he misinterpreted the By-Laws VIII.
  - Wai Mok: I apologize for misguiding the Executive Committee. I also apologize to the Physics Senators. I declared myself out of order and asked them to vote again. The Executive Committee has no power to reject a bill. There was a unanimous vote to send the bill to the Personnel Committee. The Provost said Chapter 4 and Appendix B would come to us soon. She said today that it has passed Legal and is now with the President. Once he okays them, she will formally turn it over to us and I think then would be a good time to review it. If we are okay with it, it will go to the Chancellor for approval. It does not need to go to the Board of Trustees.
2. We got the reviewed edition of Chapter 1 of the Faculty Handbook. I haven't forwarded it to you guys yet. It is totally new. I need to figure out a way to review it and get it approved through the Senate. This has been seven years in the making. So whatever is approved now will stand.
3. The avalanche of reviewed policies is here. Myuah is the Policy Site for Review. There are 6 pages. The President asked me for comments before May 1<sup>st</sup>. There is only one new policy: Communicable Disease Policy.

➤ Kader Frendi **motions to adjourn**. Deb Moriarity seconds the motion.

Faculty Senate Meeting #557 adjourned  
March 12, 2015, 2:05 P.M.