UHCL Faculty Assembly Meeting – October 9, 2013 Minutes

Bayou Building – Forest Room

Meeting was called to order at 11:45am, October 9, 2013.

The Faculty Senate Spring meeting Minutes approved.

President Staples addressed the Assembly. He commended the faculty for their contribution to the success of the university. He stated that survey indicate 90% of students would recommend UHCL to family and friends. He thanked the faculty for participating in events such as Open House and recruiting international students, in addition to other activities outside of the classroom such as faculty sponsorship of student organizations, research, trips, community engagement, clinics, and others. President Staples also thanked the faculty for their important role in shared governance and committees.

Dr. David Garrison introduced the panel of speakers: Dr. Beth Hentges, former UHCL Faculty Senate President 2010-2011; Dr. Terry Dupler, former UHCL Faculty Senate President 2005-2006, and Dr. Monica McHenry, former UH Faculty Senate President 2011 (calendar year).

Dr. Dupler recounted how the shared governance system was restructured to its current form during his tenure. Before, all issues for the campus were approved by the Faculty Senate. The role was changed so that Faculty Senate focused on issues related to faculty. He reminded the faculty that they are only advisors that provide recommendations to the administration. He also reminded the faculty of the importance of communication of faculty representatives with the rest of the faculty.

Dr. McHenry highlighted some differences in the UH Faculty Senate structure. The UH Faculty Senate has recently doubled in size from 50 to 100 senators. This has added some inefficiency to the system. Dr. McHenry stressed the importance of having many meeting with key individuals to keep communication channels open. The UH Faculty Senate has a good relationship with the Chancellor, who herself is a former faculty senate president. It is important to have a collaborative relationship with shared goals.

Dr. Hentges also stressed the importance of communication. Not only should representatives disseminate information to faculty, they should solicit feedback so that they can make informed decisions. It is important for faculty to know what the Faculty Senate is doing because the process is slow. The faculty should realize that the Faculty Senate is only one step in the shared governance process and that just because something passes in the Senate, it may not pass the other levels. She pointed out that while the Faculty Senate is only an advisory committee, it still plays a very important role in shaping the direction of the university.

A Q&A session followed in which many topics were discussed such as the role of Faculty Senate in developing policy, how to get faculty involved in shared governance, and the role of Faculty Senate in university wide vs. school level decisions. Following the discussion, Dr. Garrison announced that the Spring Faculty Assembly was scheduled for April 9, 2014 in the Forest Room.