UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS AT LITTLE ROCK

University Assembly Meeting

Friday, September 7, 2018

2:00 p.m.

Donaghey Student Center, A/B/C

Minutes (Draft)

I.   Call to order

University Assembly President Amanda Nolen calls meeting to order at 2:02 p.m.

II.   Review of minutes

Motion is made to approve University Assembly minutes from March 30, 2018 meeting

Motion is seconded

Motion approved by unanimous voice vote

III.   Old Business - none

IV.   New Business - none

V.   Remarks by the Assembly President: Amanda Nolen

Nolen: Good afternoon, thank all of you for being here both in person and joining us on the live stream. As this is my first address to the university assembly, I want to acknowledge some folks, before I make my remarks.

First, to my friends and colleagues in the School of Education and in CEHP. I am overwhelmed at the amount of support you have shown me as I step into this role of President of the Assembly. I recognize that serving in this role, while a privilege for me, is a cost to you. Someone has had to take over a course for me and others have taken over many of my committee assignments even when your workload was already full. That makes your support even more valuable to me.

Secondly, I would like to introduce Carmien Penny, a Graduate Assistant dedicated to the Faculty Senate. This is the first time the senate has had dedicated support. I would like to acknowledge and thank Dean Ann Bain, CEHP for funding this position. I know this position and Carmien in particular will prove to be a real asset to the senate.

It seems almost trite to say that these are challenging times for higher education. Most of us are at least somewhat familiar with the assault on tenure and academic freedom in Wisconsin. Attempts in Missouri to eliminate tenure track for new hires. In Iowa to flat-out abolish tenure, even for those who already have it. Similar efforts in Tennessee…and I could go on. State legislators have gone so far as to call tenure "un-American".

In Arkansas, last year we witnessed controversy and lively debates among faculty across the UA System around issues of freedom of speech, academic freedom, tenure, and shared governance. We were faced with proposed changes to board policy that was perceived by the system faculty to be a threat to our core value of tenure. It sounds grim…it felt grim.

But, you also witnessed the UA Little Rock faculty senate respond to the proposed changes boldly, with well-reasoned arguments that focused on the impact of these changes on our ability to fulfill the mission of this institution. In doing so we counter-proposed specific recommendations. Allow me to take a moment to recap the result of our efforts:

- The original proposed changes expanded the scope of "cause" for dismissal of faculty to include subjective and vague criteria such as "unwillingness to work productively with colleagues" and "moral turpitude". We pushed back, those terms were dropped, and the resulting criteria for cause is specific and clear.
- The original proposed changes eliminated the role of faculty in the appointment of department chairs. We pushed back citing both empirical research and the long tradition at our institution. We were successful in broadening the language so that each campus can preserve its own process and scope of faculty input in the appointment of department chair.
- The proposed changes shortened the timeframe for remediation during post-tenure review leading to dismissal. We pushed back citing that faculty are assets to the university and every effort must be taken to restore the faculty member to a performance level of satisfactory. We got that too.
- The proposed changes eliminated the requirement of the department chair to meet with faculty individually during annual review. We pushed back citing the important responsibility of the chair to provide mentoring, guidance, and leadership in the success of the faculty in his or her unit. We got that too.
- Finally, we pushed back on instances of ambiguous language that proposed changes inserted into recommendations for promotion, tenure, raises, etc. Our rationale was that these issues deserve clear language. Yes. We got that too.

I wanted to outline these successes for a couple reasons.

First, by the time the final proposal was approved by the Board of Trustees in March, we were just plain tired of talking about it, even to congratulate ourselves. We must take that moment now.

Second, through reaching out to the system office, listening to their rationale, and their listening to us, we often were able to change minds and develop language that was acceptable to all parties. Diplomacy works even in higher ed.

Finally, we did not get everything we asked for. Non-tenure track faculty are still vulnerable and I regret we could not move the needle there. However, we must not lose sight of the influence we can have when we approach a problem reasonably and unified as a faculty. We made headway in standing up for our core values when our colleagues in other states were not so successful. For that our faculty senate deserves credit and congratulations.

Now, let's take this victory lap and not forget this accomplishment as we take on new challenges in the coming year. Like many of you, I am concerned about the enrollment numbers for this semester. The loss of those tuition dollars seems unfathomable when at the unit level we operate on razor thin margins as it is.
How can we absorb this? How can we turn this around? I can't answer that, but let me tell you what I do know: I, and my senate colleagues are committed to partnering with this administration in finding solutions and ways through these challenges.

It is clear that difficult decisions need to be made in the short term in order to sustain us in the long term. This assembly has an extensive committee structure that will ensure balanced representation in that decision making process.

Now is not the time to abandon our governance structures, policies and practices for the sake of expediency in the face of financial challenges. On the contrary. Now is when we must rely upon these structures trusting that in doing so we will achieve a better result, a more sustainable result.

I am resolute that the administration must take advantage of the expertise and the institutional knowledge our faculty and staff have to offer. Working together, we will find our through these challenges and be better for it.

VI. Remarks by the Provost: Velmer Burton

Burton: Welcome. I want to give some updates on faculty affairs left over from spring. I'd like to introduce my associate vice-chancellors: Erin Finzer, Christy Drale, and Daryl Rice.

Burton: Our enrollment is down and this has budget implications. Last year we were down 47 faculty positions compared to 2010. But we have been committed to rebuilding the number of faculty. We carried out 38 faculty searches last year and succeeded in 28 new hires. I'd like to welcome the new faculty members in the room. Please stand up and be recognized. We are proud of our faculty, who allow us to move forward

Burton: We are not a liberal arts institution, but our goal is for students to have at least one signature experience before they graduate. This experiences may be learning communities, study abroad, enhanced internships, or research experiences with faculty. I'd like to introduce Jeremy Ecke (chair of the Student Research and Creative Works Committee) to talk about this year's program to support student signature research experiences.

Ecke: The application process for the 2018-19 student signature experience grants is open. Early applications are due on September 15, final deadline is September 30. My role will be to coordinate the program, culminating in the Student Research Showcase. We want to think about ways the colleges can present their students' research in conjunction with this. This is still a flexible and evolving concept.

Burton: Last year we did 80 of these signature experience awards. This year we can offer 100 awards (of up to $1000 each). We hope to increase this even more next year. Our hope is that this program will benefit both students and faculty.

Rice: Centralized advising update. We still have a mixed model for student academic advising as we transition to more centralized advising. New freshmen and transfers with fewer than 45 credit hours are now advised in

the centralized system. Thank you to everyone for making the new advising system possible. There are an incredible number of moving parts to make this happen. I also want to thank departments for their cooperation. This has not been an easy process. Thanks also to Records, Office of Institutional Research, and ITS. We want to continue to refine the process, iron things out, and will need continued cooperation. We have a name change for the advising office: we are now the Trojan Academic Advising and Support Center. Some of the advantages of this new system are already becoming clear. Since orientation this summer, many students have already come in to talk about changing their majors, some of them multiple times. Rather than requiring the student to visit multiple offices to approve each time s/he changes majors, it is working better for them to visit just one office.

Rice: Another matter concerns the living-learning communities. This year we have two L-L communities each organized around 3 courses. One L-L community focuses on academic literacy, i.e. developmental reading and writing. In this community, we are using a co-requisite model for developmental course work (for students with sufficiently high test scores): students enroll in the developmental course and the mainstream course at the same time. We have had lots of cooperation from faculty. Sue Bowling (Rhetoric and Writing) teaches the academic literacy course, Cheryl Johnson teaches the applied communication course, and Avestine Ward is teaching the first year experience course. The program is integrated. For example, rather than talk about how to read textbooks in abstract, Bowling uses the textbook that Johnson uses. In the second L-L community, Londie Martin from Rhetoric and Writing is teaching the rhetoric course, Adrianna Lopez is teaching a sociology course, and Nora Bouzihay is teaching the first year experience course. Originally these L-L communities were intended to be based in the residence halls. But we have changed this so they can include commuting students. Resident Advisors are taking part in the L-L communities as well. We still some logistics to work out, such as conflicting schedules with the Chancellor's Leadership Corps. Getting the right students into the right courses was a chore, but it would never have happened without centralized advising. My mailbox has 500 emails sorting this out. If we were trying to advise students across multiple campus departments, we couldn't do it.

Rice: Early Academic Alert System. A memo went out to all the faculty in August about this experiment. I sent out another memo this morning that is more condensed. We are using the grade report portal to make quick judgment on how each student is doing at week 4: Credit means student is on the right track to completing the course successfully, No Credit means the student is already showing signs that s/he is struggling. This will provide a way to do outreach to students early on through the advising center. It also illustrates another advantage of centralized advising.

Jovanovic: I have a couple questions. I am very concerned about advising for engineering programs. Our programs are different from those in other colleges. For example, we can delay most general education requirements, but the math and science courses cannot be delayed. Staff turnover in the centralized advising office will create problems if new staff are not familiar with the idiosyncrasies of engineering curricula and we can't be in training mode with centralized advising all the time. We have tried centralized advising numerous times in the past 22 years and have always had problems. My other concern is that in our department we have 7 programs that are not just different, but are hierarchically organized. Two programs have two national exams that must be passed, another has one national exam. If a student wants to change majors, we have a process for helping students do that smoothly. Under centralized advising, it might be easy for students to get frustrated and as a consequence we would lose them as engineering students to another college. Just voicing my concerns.

Rice: You are prejudging this new advising system. You say we have done this countless times, but we have not done it countless times. We have done something even remotely like this only once in the past. We expect as much stability and turnover in our office as in other units. Engineering requirements are complicated, but not impossible to understand. We just met with the EIT college office this week. It is not going to happen that engineering students run into a wall and are then encouraged to switch to another college. We will refer them back to your college to talk with a faculty member before allowing a change. Centralized advising is not going to talk students out of particular majors or colleges. Don't prejudge it. Give it a chance. There are complications in the curricula of many programs. I am looking at Stephanie Thibeault….her program requires auditions.

Jovanovic: I am not trying to prejudge, but I am skeptical. We had a meeting with Trojan Advising a year ago about how this is supposed to work. I haven't received even one inquiry from centralized advising. I find it hard

to believe that there are no questions.

Rice: Engineering has other people to contact besides you. We have worked closely with Amy Frets in EIT for example.

Cheatham: Is it possible to have a computer system to record advising information so I can check that?

Rice: Banner will have the name of the advisor at Trojan Advising Center. We are aiming to get to a point where Banner can have additional information specific to the department.

Burton: Thank you Daryl. He works hard. Next we want to talk about HLC re-accreditation. Progress has been made, and I want to thank everyone for their expertise and help, especially Brian Berry, co-chair of the HLC accreditation team. I also want to recognize April Chatham Carpenter who will run the Assessment Academy this year. I also want to ask Erin Finzer and Chasse Conque to discuss the Institutional Effectiveness committee. I'm going to have Brian come up and give a report on the HLC process.

VII.   Report on HLC Accreditation - Brian Berry and Erin Finzer

Berry: Thank you. I want to talk today about progress we have made towards HLC re-accreditation. A year ago, I had zero knowledge of accreditation. I thought it was just a rubber stamp. It is actually a lot of work, but I've enjoyed getting to see how this institution works. Two other people have been instrumental in this process: Dr. Erin Finzer and Dr Christy Drale. They have been fantastic. Our website, https://ualr.edu/accreditation/ has all the information we have been putting together, including graphical representation and committee membership.

Berry: Accreditation is our chance to demonstrate to our stakeholders that we are doing our due diligence and doing what we say we do. It is our opportunity to showcase our finest moments and what we do well. Also a time to reflect on what we don't do well.

Berry: The required HLC self-study has the form of an assurance argument. The assurance argument consists of a relatively brief narrative (35,000 word limit) and is supported by a massive evidence file. The document needs to cover 21 core components, categorized into five main criteria. Conducting the self-study is a massive undertaking. The process is led by a steering team, with subcommittees addressing particular criteria. These include an Accreditation Compliance Task Force, led by Angela Hunter, which deals with particularly difficult issues. We also have to do a federal compliance report that documents compliance with federal requirements (e.g. obeying credit hour policies). We are on an open pathway, which means that we are required to select a project for special focus. Our focus for the open pathway is a decision-support system; the data warehouse is a piece of this. Cody [Decker] has taken charge of this. Lots of amazing data on the Office of Institutional Research website that has resulted from this (https://ualr.edu/institutionalresearch/).

Berry: To give a brief timeline, the draft assurance argument is due in December (Christy, Erin and I are responsible for this); a quality assurance report is due in August [2019]; mock site visit also in August [2019]. The real site visit is in February 2020. Massive amount of work still needs to be done.

Berry: We have also developed a heat map to visually display areas of concern along each of the five main evaluation criteria. The axes on the map are difficulty of conducting and degree of concern. We have a lot of stuff in the green, such as policies related to teaching and to research integrity. But there are several core components we are concerned about. A few things are easy to fix, including recruitment and retention targets (criterion 4c), and criterion 3e, which is about assessment of co-curricular activities (don't have an assessment process). A more difficult issue involves the resources and planning criterion. We have not had a significant history in conducting integrated planning. To address this, we held an integrated planning retreat this summer, led by a consultant (Larry Goldstein) who lead us through some integrated planning exercises. We have made some measurable progress on these criteria since April because of the planning retreat. This coming year, the newly formed Institutional Effectiveness committee will move us further towards where we need to be. We are still behind on criteria related to human resources. This has gotten worse because we have had some critical departures in that area. We will need additional training programs and professional development for faculty and staff to make progress here. I think we will make even more progress in meeting

criteria 5d and 5c over the next year, as well as on 5a. We are concerned about 5a because some of the preliminary financial indicators do not look healthy. We are ok on this at the moment, but if the numbers dip HLC will have some questions for us. Questions?

Finzer: Good afternoon. We have launched a new committee called the Institutional Effectiveness Committee. I want to talk about this. HLC criterion 5 (resources, planning and institutional effectiveness) presented us with problems. It includes four core components: resources, collaborative governance, systematic and integrated planning, and systematic continuous improvement. What HLC considers integrated planning is when you have unit plans that integrate with institutional-level plans (including the university strategic plan) and when these plans inform resource allocation, broadly defined to include finance, human resources, technology and space. WE are hopeful, too, that an integrated planning process will help us to more effectively respond to our current enrollment challenges.

Finzer: The Institutional Effectiveness committee co-chairs are Chasse Conque and myself (we are both ex-officio members). Chancellor Rogerson named 24 committee members from among the 45 participants in the integrated planning retreat. The people on this committee are committed to a trustee perspective, i.e. long term success of the campus rather than representing the interests of their individual units. Thirteen of the 24 members are from academic affairs (ten of whom are faculty). All 24 are willing to serve. The committee's charge is to 1) serve as clearinghouse for all planning, resource allocation, and continuous improvement processes on campus; 2) review all plans, resource requests and continuous improvement proposals and to make resource recommendations to senior leadership (the body will not make decisions, but act as an advisory body to the Chancellor and Chancellor's Cabinet) and 3) cultivate through shared governance a common understanding of mission as a metropolitan-serving university, as well as the financial structure to support this endeavor. We will work closely with the budget office, office of institutional research, human resources, and continuous improvement. We will appoint task forces and bring in subject matter experts as needed. We want a participatory process. We want to provide as much transparency as we can. We will be starting with a strategic resource allocation study in February. This study will look at every program and unit on campus. We will be making recommendations on the allocation of resources, given the strategic plan. We are looking to develop an annual process for the IE committee, and want to have this process in place by the start of the next academic year. We expect to finish the first cycle of the committee's work at the time of the HLC site visit. We expect to rotate members off annually. We have a listserv: iec@ualr.edu. We plan to have a live website that allows for feedback, and a Blackboard site. We will have a contact us button. Ed Anson, I know you will be using that! We will post minutes, agenda, and the project charter. We will hold focus groups, task forces, town halls, brown bag sessions. We have scheduled two upcoming town halls: Monday, September 24 and Tuesday, September 25, both in the SSC auditorium from 2:00 – 3:00 p.m.

VIII.   Discussion Item – Amanda Nolen

Nolen: I would like to recap progress we have made in adapting to the changes to Board Policies 405.1, 405.4, and 407.1, which go into effect July 2019. At the final Faculty Senate meeting in April, two proposals were brought to the floor to address the changes to UA Board policies on tenure, annual review, post-tenure review, and dismissal of faculty. The Senate voted to refer these motions back to committee and seek faculty input at the beginning of the new academic year. College assembly presidents were asked to facilitate a discussion at their respective fall assemblies around three fundamental questions germane to these proposals:

A. As a campus, do we want the promotion and tenure process to require external review or prohibit it? If we decide to require external review where is the appropriate level to define the process, at the university or college level?

B. How do we define "peer" in "meaningful peer evaluation" in the annual review process? How can we assure faculty will receive meaningful peer review in units that have faculty from varied disciplines?

C. What is the floor for "satisfactory" performance in teaching, scholarship/creative activity, and service? How can we broaden the evidence base for teaching beyond student evaluations?

The college assembly presidents reported back the feedback that they received. To summarize:

Issue 1 --- External review: Colleges that favored a requirement for external review: EIT, CALS, CSSC (CSSC reported its results by department, most, but not all, departments were in favor of an external review requirement, and Library (though this body also raised administrative concerns). Against external review: COB.

CEHP's feedback was split down the middle: half of responses favored an external review requirement unequivocally; the other half unequivocal rejected such a requirement.

An important question for us to resolve then is whether we define external review as a common university practice, or instead leave the matter to the discretion of individual colleges and units?

Issue 2 --- Defining peer evaluation: No clear consensus or pattern of response came from the reports of the college assemblies.   The EIT assembly felt peer review should not be anonymous, particularly with respect to tenure decisions. The CALS assembly recommended that peer review might draw on clusters of faculty that transcend departments (as a way to manage diversity in disciplinary standards for tenure). The CSSC assembly indicated that "peer" should generally be considered to be members of one's department rather and exclude those in other departments in the college. The CEHP assembly indicated that both discipline and rank are relevant in considering who should be considered to be a "peer."   The Library and Law assemblies indicated that supervisor or dean may be considered to be a peer for purposes of peer evaluation.

Issue 3 --- Satisfactory floor: The assembly responses had consensus that student evaluation of courses is not sufficient or appropriate as the sole evidence for evaluating teaching. Many comments focused on evaluating different degrees of performance. However, it is important to remember that the main task we face is to simply identify the floor between satisfactory and unsatisfactory performance.

Anson: Not clear on why these issues need to be decided at the university level. Shouldn't we let units decide this on their own? Looking at what came from the Board of Trustees, setting the standard for satisfactory vs. unsatisfactory is the issue. We don't want to go beyond what the board wants. We may be making this more difficult than we need to.

Silverstein: I agree strongly with Ed Anson. We should aim to create maximum flexibility for colleges and departments. Disciplines vary a great deal in accreditation and other standards. We may need some minimum university standards, but with maximum flexibility to units. My own experience is in a small college with faculty who often don't have the background to appropriately review my work (which is in bankruptcy law). Some units then may need external review, others may not. With respect to peer review in the law school, the law dean is considered to be a member of the faculty. Our process calls for peer review by the Dean alone at the level of consideration for full professor; at levels below that, the peer review process includes others in the law program. That works well for us and in legal education in general. We would like an appeals process. Other departments may want something different. On the issue of satisfactory vs. unsatisfactory, we should just use the standard AAUP [American Association of University Professors] sets for competence/incompetence.
.
Jovanovic: We had a discussion on external review in EIT that is not reflected in the slides. We are concerned that external reviewers cannot be made to do reviews. What happens if a tenure candidate can't get external

reviews because reviewers are too busy, etc.? It may not be possible in all cases so we need to have a plan for this contingency.

Nolen: An option is paying reviewers for their work.

Comment: We discussed this at our CEHP meeting. We felt that an external review requirement should be implemented slowly and perhaps not university-wide. The process can be complicated in some disciplines, such as in trying to find reviewers.

Jovanovic: I had a couple more general comments. The satisfactory/unsatisfactory standard matters because it triggers post-tenure review. We need some way to get rid of someone refusing to teach their classes. It is about who can be fired after tenure for cause.

Anson: And the way it is written by the board, it is overall unsatisfactory.

Silverstein: It so happens that it was very easy to find external people to review my work. In our field (law), peer review typically can include both academics and practitioners. But this may not be the case in every discipline. This is a great example for why these matters need to be decided at the college or unit-level.

Wright: I have a couple general comments. One thing is that we as faculty need to engage in service to department, college and university and we should have minimum satisfactory standards for that. Some faculty are refusing service all together and it harms the university. Service is part of the job. Also I think that all presidents and past presidents of the assembly should get automatically be considered satisfactory.

Cheatham: As someone who has reviewed many department governance documents, we have done a good job in departments in deciding what is satisfactory.

Nolen: Part of what we have to do in Senate is to work out these criteria for generic governance documents covering departments where unit guidelines don't exist (such as with new units).

Jovanovic: AAUP opposes post-tenure review because universities are already allowed to fire tenured faculty for cause. The Board of Trustees is forcing post-tenure review on us so AAUP guidance on firing for cause is probably the best we can do.

Anson: I think we should be fine. We need to avoid doing damage to ourselves with the language we choose.

VanderPutten: I am in favor of external review. It is an opportunity as well to invite administration to participate in shared governance. The review process needs to include consideration of workload relative to one's salary. I don't know anyone who would come to School of Education if they had to teach three courses on my salary.

McMillan: I was on the roles and rewards committee a few years ago. Departments do go through times when they have resource issues and are understaffed and this affects a faculty member's research productivity. Maybe this is another reason to set review criteria at the department level. Departments should have flexibility to choose reviewers who are in similar positions to one's own department.

Barrett: There are many different ways of implementing external review. Some processes allow committees to include wild cards (reviewers not chosen from a list prepared by the tenure-promotion candidate). We need to consider how external review will be implemented, not just whether we do it.

Nolen: Additional comments?

Wright: I promised no more comments, but… in terms of external review, one more thing. External review can

be a big negative. We are an R3. Reviewers from an R1 will have very different expectations about what constitutes research. We want to have some ability for the candidate and department to find appropriate reviewer that fit our circumstances. Faculty should take control of this issue because lacking any guidance, a person can make up his/her own rules. It is in our purview as the faculty to make these decisions.

Comment: In cases where a unit faculty lack expertise to evaluate a peer's research, then the faculty member up for review is usually best person to identify appropriate external peer reviewers. Best practice would then be for the faculty member being reviewed to have input on external peer reviewers.

Silverstein: At the law school, they looked at the people I cited and asked for my opinion on whether they were appropriate. A campus wide rule might be that units/departments need rules to cover all contingencies.

Nolen: We will take all this back to committee. What comes back to the Senate may not reflect all individual opinions, but hopefully will reflect the whole. I encourage everyone to attend Senate meetings to follow up.

IX.   Open Forum

Jovanovic: If I were a student or staff member, I might think this was an interesting meeting, but I would wonder what was relevant to me. This is a University Assembly meeting. Maybe people who are not faculty members have different concerns.

Question: Where did these three prompts come from?

Nolen: These were distilled from the comments at the April Faculty Senate meeting.

Nahrwold: I would hate to be someone this year going up for tenure and promotion given that everything seems to be in flux. What are those people supposed to do? Wait? I am asking for them.

Nolen: I am also concerned with people operating under ambiguity. I hope to have something to Senate by December. At that point, departments and colleges can decide what to do. We are not trying to re-do all the governing documents or annual review processes. We are making specific changes to build in protections. We are hoping for thoughtful, meaningful and forward moving on this process.

Nahrwold: When I went up for tenure, I had to have all materials in by October 15. How will this happen by October 15?

Nolen: The policy changes don't go into effect until July. So we still have time. It won't affect people this year.

X.   Adjournment

Motion to adjourn is made

Motion is seconded

Meeting is adjourned at 3:45 pm