Minutes
UCA Faculty Senate
February 22, 2024
Wingo 315, 12:45 p.m.

Attendance: College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences: Mayhew - aa, Mongno - pp, Smith - pp
College of Business: Horpedahl - pp, Otoo – pp, Thomas - pp
College of Education: Rice - pp, Shaw - pp, Trumble - pp
College of Health & Behavioral Sciences: Engle - pp, Langster - pp, Rose - pp
College of Natural Sciences & Mathematics: Chen - pp, Dunlap - pp, Le - pp
Unaffiliated: Hostetter - pp, LeBeau-Ford - pp
At-Large: Booher - pp, Keith - pp, Okoli - pp
Part-Time: Colbert - aa

FS President Scribner - pp, FS VP Shires - pp, President Davis - pp, Provost Poulter – aa, Associate Provost Kurt Boniecki - pp

Guests in attendance: Angela Webster – Chief Diversity Officer

Introduction Items:
I. Call to order: FS President Scribner at 12:45

II. Comments: President Davis
FAFSA is our primary worry between now and August. Academic Affairs put out a communication and we appreciate that. Direct students to the financial aid office if they have questions or issues.
Dunlap – Will it still be March when we can pull down FAFSA data?
Davis – They still say March 15th, but they said January 31st until the morning of January 31st then they said March 15th. For that reason, we are expecting April or May, just to be safe.

III. Comments: Associate Provost Boneicki – No report at this time.

IV. Comments: President Scribner – Thank you for all of your help on the letter, we approved through email review and it is here to be signed. Thank you to the Faculty Affairs Committee and all who contributed to the edits.
An EAB representative will be here at the next meeting, allowing us the opportunity to ask questions and seek clarification from the meeting we attended last time we met.
We continue to work with Provost Poulter to refine language on the strategic plan.

We took care of the Faculty Senate Scholarship this week. One will go to an undergraduate student, and one will go to a graduate student. They will receive $2000 each.

The eclipse is April 8th, the campus will be open to the public, but classes will be held asynchronously. I see it as a good thing to attract folks to our beautiful campus.

LeBeau-Ford – What will the parking situation be with so many guests on campus? Are all parking rules except handicapped spots suspended that day?

Scribner – Yes, it is as if it will be a parking free for all. Events will be happening all over campus, events on the fields, food trucks, etc. This is really a big deal. There will even be a mascot.

Mongno – What is the pre-eclipse party on April 4th?

Davis – That will be a visiting artist and performance.

Scribner – There will also be a movie filmed on campus featuring the eclipse.

Thomas – How do you sign up to be an extra?

Davis – Just be present at the Pet-friendly Eclipse Viewing and Dog Barkanalia on the College of Business Lawn from 1000 – 1500.

Keith – How are we managing the distribution of eclipse glasses?

Davis – We have 35,000 pairs. I know that it will go through the departments for distribution the day of the event. We received a grant to get UCA branded glasses. Faculty in the sciences have been working on this event for the last 18 months. It is well planned. See the website for details about everything happening.

V. Subcommittee Reports

      a.   FS Committee on Committees – VP Shires – no report

      b.   Academic Affairs – Senator Hostetter – We will have recommendations in follow-up to support the survey data we collected. We may be reaching out to Senators for more input. We hope to be presenting recommendations next month.

      c.   Faculty Affairs – Senator Thomas – Thank you to everyone for your hard work. This has been an intense experience. The letter is here for your signatures. Please sign before you leave. I will track down those who are absent for signature collection.

      d.   Diversity, Belonging, Inclusion, and Equity – Senator Mongno – We have an Ombudsman resolution we'd like to discuss. An Ombudsman is an official representing the interests of the public. In this case, the Ombudsman would represent the concerns/interests of the faculty/staff. This goes hand in hand with the anonymous hotline – but it is a person you could talk to (so it's not anonymous). It would be a general position of someone not in authority over you. We have considered a resolution, but thought it best to discuss it here, exploring intent. UAMS has one if you would like to research it.

      Thomas – Who would be serviced by this person?

      Mongno – Faculty and staff

Hostetter – Didn't we discover that we already have one?

Mongno – Who is it?

Webster – I manage many issues, talking it through with people and forwarded HR issues to HR. I do this often for students and I serve as a coach for faculty and colleagues.

Dunlap – (To Senator Hostetter) Do you mean the hotline number we identified last meeting?

Webster – Yes, but that is not person to person.

Mongno – Yes, this would be different.

Hostetter – So what is the difference between a Faculty Senate Representative (representing the constituents and taking their concerns) and DBIE for faculty to call the Ombudsman?

Mongno – I agree, this is part of the reason that Faculty Senate was created. A faculty person stated that we should have a peer with training to address issues. Are people happy with Faculty Senate responses to issues? There is potential there to be better.

Davis – An Ombudsman works well if the issues are not personnel or legal issues (the same with Faculty Senate). In the absence of the role, the Faculty Senate serves this purpose.

Invited Guests: Angela Webster – Chief Diversity Officer

I would like to talk to you about Black History Month here on campus – the remaining week. I will also be sharing the focus group work of Adriian Gardner (School of Communication) and Charles Harvey (Department of Philosophy & Religion).

Bridging the Gap: Students will share culture and cook native foods – connecting students of African descent with one another.

Legacy of Black Mental Health will be on the 28th.

Black men on the campus of UCA are considered the most vulnerable in terms of enrollment, academic success, and graduation. We started a focus group in 2017 and have kept it up with new members each year and updated focus of discussion. In 2017 there were 574 black men enrolled on campus and we had only 13 participants. These results focused on the social and cultural experience at UCA. Project X (providing academic, social, and professional resources to help students get from freshman year to graduation) and BMAC (Black Male Achievement Challenge) resulted. We have received additional funding for Project X due to its success.

In 2019 the focus group turned to conversations of academic success. Enrollment has decreased and the focus group had several recommendations: Increase opportunities for support/mentoring, increase campus awareness, and identify pipelines to address decreasing black male enrollment.

Dunlap – Is the decline in black male enrollment consistent with the overall enrollment decline or is it disproportionate?

Webster – In the last year, retention was up about 2% (86%), Asian male retention was 100%, Hispanic male retention was 90%, and white male retention was 87%.

Thomas – Overall enrollment has gone down, are the black male enrollment rates the same or are we improving?

Webster – We are still declining. There are 230-250 black female first year students on campus and about 100 black male first year students on campus.

Shires – How do we compare to other institutions?

Webster – We have old data but nothing recent. There is a list the Diverse Journal produces each year.

Mongno – Why do you think our numbers are declining? Is there a chance that there are scholarships for black males at other institutions that draw them there?

Boniecki – I don't know, we've seen declining enrollments overall. This is a major driving force. About ten years ago we changed the admission standards and it did have an impact on the black males. We would simply have to look at the data to assess what has been proportional.

Dunlap – Were the 2017 and 2019 recommendations implemented? If so, were they impactful?

Webster – We've been working on it. We've discovered that the black males have zero counseling center use. So, we've started a "Barber Shop Talk" every quarter inviting black men from the community and campus. This mimics the barber shop "counseling" seen in black communities. We have also recently hired a black male counselor; he has been a guest speaker often and works with Project X. He's a great asset. When he isn't available, we are sure to send black students to the black female counselor. It is a cultural thing to want to avoid cross-culture counsel.

Mongno – I believe you said that about 1 in 20 students at UCA is a black male. Is that consistent with our faculty representation?

Webster – For undergraduate numbers, 16% are black students and 5% of the faculty are black.

Scribner – Colby Wilson represents our Student Government Association; he is from Pine Bluff. He said that students there often don't consider UCA, they just go to Pine Bluff. I'm just wondering if we should send people to them – we would certainly want them to feel welcome here.

Webster – Recruitment handles that.

Boniecki – Looking at the Institutional Research (IR) website, the first-time black student undergraduate headcount is as follows:

> 2019 – 17.3%
> > 2020 – 16.6%
> > 2021 – 18.2%
> > 2022 – 19.3%
> > 2023 – 19.2%

So, we have come up about 2%.

Horpedahl – Black male enrollment is down 20% but total enrollment is not down 20%.

Keith – In 2019 every group decreased except the Hispanic group.

Rice – The gains in enrollment of under-represented groups is commendable. We are a public institution serving Arkansas. Until our enrollment mirrors the state population, our work will not be done.

Thomas – I would like to see the percent of demographics for those we hire. Does our demographic match that? Is our pool of applicants in sync with our students?

Scribner – Students need to be able to see themselves in the faculty.

Mongno – We had a great person in first year writing and we lost him due to salary.

Scribner – Often times our people are saddled with so much extra work it is hard to keep them. Especially those on tenure track. We do have diversity issues in our core values.

Dunlap – We need to know the for sure numbers to identify if the issue is retention or recruitment so we can focus on the problem.

Boniecki – Retention declined during the pandemic. Although overall retention appears to be recovering, that recovery appears slower for first-time Black undergraduates.

LeBeau-Ford – On the IR page, is there information about male versus female? Is the more black females than black males enrolled a national trend or unique to us?

Collective – National trend

Boniecki – We are a little less than 2:1

Action Items:

VI. Approval of minutes from Tuesday, February 13, 2024 regular meeting of the Faculty Senate (Keith – motion, Smith – second, Approved – 16, Opposed – 0, Abstain – 2)

VII. Faculty Affairs Letter Signature (Faculty Affairs subcommittee) – Approved via email review; signatures to be obtained today.

VIII. Constituent Concerns

Trumble, Rice, Shaw (COE) – A retired faculty member from the COE contacted us again about the change in email domain for retired faculty members. Additionally, the retired faculty member wants to continue to use UCA library resources. The comment made was "if you are going to take things away when faculty retire, you should tell them that upon hire."

LeBeau-Ford – We are not taking anything away, access to those databases as a UCA Faculty is something they should never have had as a retiree. It is against the contract with the publisher. I do have a call in to the Vice President of the publishing company to gain understanding on why it is this way.

Trumble – Also, there was discussion as to whether or not a Chair can grant access.

Boniecki – We are working on that process.

LeBeau-Ford – IT has concerns that may not work.

Boniecki – We are trying to work through security issues for temporary access. There would have to be a designation that retired faculty are still contributing to the work of the university. We simply have to be very careful with online security.

Trumble – Is there any other way to access the information?

LeBeau-Ford – The state library has a package to allow access. Full access is available in local libraries.

Scribner – The Provost's office is working on this, there isn't anything we as a body can do.

Chen – Are retired faculty our constituents?

Rice – I shared the email about this concern with Senator Langster for the minutes.

Trumble – I commend Senator LeBeau-Ford for her efforts in working with the folks who have these issues.

LeBeau-Ford – It is the librarians as a whole who have worked on this. We work hard to follow correct rules as advised by our legal counsel.

Horpedahl – Just an idea – they can go to any library in the country and get this information. Should we provide ILL for retired people?

LeBeau-Ford – I would like to recommend that the Faculty Handbook Committee address this issue of library privileges.

Chen – I have two:

1. This is a parking lot concern. It is always difficult to find parking. At the College of Natural Sciences and Mathematics we now have a new lot available, then the university converted much of it to paid parking!

2. We have classrooms on the third floor that had blinking lights. We called Facilities to come check it out and they reported that the bulbs placed in the dimmable fixtures were not dimmable bulbs. Instead of replacing the bulbs, they converted the lighting to switches. The lights are either on (too bright) or off (too dark) now, defeating the purpose of the dimmable fixtures placed to facilitate teaching/presentations.

Mongno – I have two:

1. Summer school teaching/pay. There was a committee Provost Poulter told us of that was working on this issue. What is the report of this committee?

Scribner – Nothing officially changed as far as I know, but I think some grandfathering practices exist. Provost Poulter is not here today (ill). It seems that the Chairs were given control at a department level. From what I've gathered, if they can show net profit they can go forward with the summer course. Who else was on that committee? Do you recall anything?

Mongno – I would like to request an official statement from that committee.

Smith – It seems to me that we should show transparency. There are multiple factors with summer courses, I recognize, but the number enrolled to "make" the course varies, the faculty pay (full pay versus partial salary) varies, and we (Faculty Senate) should promote transparency and openness. Clear open accountable expectations for summer teaching seems very reasonable and in the best interest of the faculty AND the students.

Rice – I remember part of the conversation being that summer school had to pay for itself. I wonder if the different department issues are related to different department salaries?

Boniecki – Here is what I know – This conversation has been in the Council of Deans. It is true that summer courses should "pay for themselves, plus". This means overhead, salaries, etc. It is very complex. Now, some majors require a course and that has lots of complexities such as preventing a graduation if not offered. The Chairs have to justify the cost. Stephanie Watson, the Chair of Accounting put together a spreadsheet (a tool to use) for enrollment numbers to look at summer money generated. It helps identify productivity. It is on the Provost's website and you can see it there. Department Chairs are encouraged to use this to "make the case" for summer courses. We are trying to best figure this out in the Council of Deans; the spreadsheet is helpful. You may want Stephanie to come show it to you.

Dunlap – It seems a large part of this is planning – when does this happen? When is the decision made for what classes will be held?

Boniecki – There is no easy answer to that. Each faculty should talk to their Chair. Forecasting is difficult. Summer classes should be up for enrollment now.

2. Evaluations are going out on the Chairs, Associate Deans, and Deans. A faculty member (non-tenure track) noted that although these have been received in the past, they were not received this year. Has there been a change for who receives these evaluations?

Boniecki – We saw that concern today. This person must be a visiting professor?

Mongno – Yes

Boniecki – In the transition from Dr. Glenn, there was some confusion by a staff person about who receives the evaluations. All full-time faculty receive them; the person sending the evaluations out did not recognize that a visiting professor might fall into that category. They have been informed about it and the issue has been corrected for future releases, unfortunately, we cannot re-release evaluation requests already sent. It was the Associate Dean evaluations that went out, unintentionally missing some folks. Moving forward, they will receive them.

Shaw – Reporting that someone from our department left for a job K-12 administration that is double the salary they were paid here.

Trumble – We cannot retain tenure track faculty at this level of pay.

Shaw – Search for tenure track school library faculty had to be scrapped (no one would take it due to salary) and now we have a clinical position. We've had several reach out to us about it but they won't come, again due to salary. I have been a program of one with adjuncts for two years. We are bringing money in.

Scribner – this validates the letter we've written – this is why we've done it.

Shaw – I am making my program work and my students are still here, but I am tired.

Smith – We are paying for the outside market and equity comparison report. Are they comparing us to other institutions (like institutions) or to the public sector jobs we could have with like degrees/certifications?

Scribner – Like institutions only.

Smith – We should have other comparisons.

Thomas – Push back – we should ask for that. Peer institutions and compared degrees to the civilian world.

Chen- I echo the summer salary issue here – I don't understand how the classes aren't beneficial if the students need the classes. Just because one class doesn't make money doesn't mean another class isn't making up for it. Either way – all the students getting what they need is important.

Mongno – Yes, it impacts international students as well. If they can't get the classes they need they have to return to their home country. This issue impacts students and that is huge.

Scribner – It plays to the complications Kurt addressed. How much is enough? Cost plus what? 15%? 50%? What is the goal?

Boniecki – The spreadsheet reports the enrollment needed to cover the instructor's pay for the course and double the instructor's pay for the course

Mongno – If summer classes are $760/hour and have 10 people enrolled, that is almost $23,000 for a three-hour course. Faculty are paid $2700.

Trumble – Pay is 6% of salary.

Scribner – The College of Business would need more enrollees then to cover the cost of a course (just an example), one size does not fit all.

Otoo – Would this impact what the student pays? College to college I mean.

General response – No

Scribner – and in-person versus online courses vary.

Boniecki – Undergraduate is $328/hour.

Trumble – Is this a systematic issue within the university? (Referring back to salary and salary for summer courses)

Scribner – I think we go back to what Senator Smith said – It is good that we talk to each other.

Trumble – Today I had a constituent comment with continued concern about the imbalance between colleges for salaries at the same rank, which also impact summer pay. We can see people of the same rank making double our salary in the College of Education. My point is focused on equity and viability and what that means for us as an institution.

Scribner – Comparing our own salaries to those of others in other departments can be a slippery slope--can sow divisions. We are all in this together.

Rice – A summer graduate course doesn't cost the university anything except my salary. I teach from home, use my own computer, etc. There is no university "overhead".

Otoo – Do they have a threshold for students in Blackboard?

Scribner – I have heard President Davis say that it takes roughly $500,000/day to run this university.

Smith – I understand the complicated nature. Pro-rated pay is my big issue. This should not be placed on faculty. It is unfair to ask us to take a portion of pay, oh, and by the way, if you don't teach the class a student won't graduate. It is unfair. The Chairs should make the decisions and the pay should be equitable. There is room for transparency.

Scribner – The summer issue really does create a lot of anxiety for families who depend on that money.

Mongno – I was under the impression that the committee was going to report back to us.

Shaw – I too was on that committee. We only had a couple of meetings. They decided that for last summer it would be business as usual, and colleges could do what they wanted.

Scribner – Thank you, I was struggling to remember what all happened in those meetings. I remember that now and we just didn't meet again.

Shaw – The provost is leaving so I think the committee got disbanded.

Scribner – I don't feel great about the colleges all handling this differently. As I said earlier, we need to be in this together.

Trumble – Timing is huge on this. Instructors have emotional connections. There are things I've done to help students that I don't get paid for. We must be equitable to faculty and students in preparation grading, etc. It is all relevant.

New Business: None

Reminders:
- The next regular meeting is on Tuesday March 12, 2024 at 12:45 p.m.
- Fall Planning: Senators should not schedule Tuesday/Thursday courses during Faculty Senate hours

Adjourn by 2:30 p.m. (Keith – motion, Smith – second, approve – 18, oppose – 0, abstain – 0)

CONSTITUENT CONCERNS

1. Feb. 19, 2024 (received via email)
   a. The constituent expressed frustration with the challenges they have faced obtaining specialty drugs since changes in insurance coverage due to a third-party company, Payer Matrix. Dealing with cancer, the individual has been without medication since January, with the paperwork process taking over two months. The constituent anticipates being denied funding based on income, and despite knowing this, they must still go through the formal denial process for insurance coverage. The writer finds the situation burdensome and questions the necessity of the prolonged process, suggesting better communication could have allowed

for adjustments to their medical plan. The writer is contemplating reaching out to HR for assistance and is currently awaiting updates on their paperwork status from Payer Matrix.

      i. I forwarded this information to Amy Whitehead.

2. Feb. 15, 2024 (Online Form Submission)

    a. I've been giving a lot of thought to this idea of having a faculty lounge/club and I think this should be a low priority item for the Faculty Senate. Wouldn't it make more sense to put resources into a child care center for faculty, staff and students? This would do a lot more to help people on campus that having a central social center for faculty. Drop the faculty lounge idea and work on a project that will actually help people: a child care center that goes beyond what we can do with our current child study center and can serve more people.

      i. I will bring this idea forward!

1. Feb. 8, 2024 (Online Form Submission)--From College of Business

    1. Less of a concern and more a potential area for future study. I use Google Classroom for all my classes. Personally, I find Blackboard cumbersome. Classroom does everything I need and integrates neatly with other Google programs, which our students frequently use. Further, a large percentage of our students used Classroom in high school, which reduces technological barriers. Given UCA uses the Google Suite, I assume Classroom is free whereas Blackboard isn't. Does Blackboard provide significant functionality not found in Classroom? I recognize switching would impose a temporary burden on Blackboard fans. However, if there's not a significant loss of functionality, everyone might be willing to switch if those monies could be used for other purposes (salaries, benefits, student support, etc.). Just a friendly suggestion for future study or IT comment. Thanks!

NOTE: On March 3, another constituent from CAHSS reached out to second the above motion.

      1. I reached out to Trevor Seifert, Chief Information Officer. He replied:

        1. The below information is a summary of some of the differences between Blackboard and Classroom. This is not to say Classroom doesn't have a place on this campus. The list just provides a handful of the reasons why we feel like Blackboard is needed. I would also call out this wasn't solely an IT decision, there was an RFP with faculty on the committee. I have copied Tonya McKinney on this email, she is the manager of Instructional Technology within IT and created the list of data points.

        2. While Google Classroom is a great tool that meets the needs of some UCA instructors, there are many things that higher ed

needs that Google Classroom may provide with additional upgrades in licenses or simply cannot provide.

3. Classroom will allow faculty to create exams; however, the question types are limited to 9, whereas Blackboard offers 17. It is not possible to have question pools or import question pools into Classroom.

4. UCA uses Respondus LockDown Browser for exam proctoring and cheating determent. This product is not compatible with Classroom. In Classroom, the teacher can set the exam to Locked Mode, but this only works on Chromebooks that are managed by the school.

5. While you can add videos to Classroom, UCA uses Kaltura, and it is not possible to embed a Kaltura video in Classroom and still have the Kaltura analytics that are available when using Kaltura in Blackboard.

6. Classroom will work with screen readers, but it cannot use the Ally accessibility checker that UCA has purchased. Ally also offers an alternate format download for students on any document uploaded to Blackboard.

7. Many faculty use the Groups, Journals, Discussions, Wikis, and Blogs tools that are available in Blackboard. I was unable to find these tools in Classroom.

8. UCA manages Blackboard course creation and enrollments with Banner. It is not possible to link Banner to Classroom.

9. Faculty can archive Classroom courses they teach, but there is no way for UCA IT to manage the archiving of Classroom courses for grade disputes or Financial Aid reporting. If a faculty member leaves the university and does not assign their Classroom courses to another faculty member, no one has access to those courses.

10. It is not possible to restrict a dropped student from having access to a Classroom course and still maintain their coursework and activity. This is imperative for grade disputes. It is also necessary to keep coursework when a student is dropped for non-payment so that their coursework is still intact when payment is made.

11. Many Blackboard faculty link their textbooks and textbook assignments to their Blackboard courses. The grades on these assignments also sync with the Blackboard Grade Center. Classroom works primarily with K12 textbooks unless an upgraded license is purchased.

12. Many faculty have TAs or SIs (Student Instructors have no access to the Grade Center, but have access to course materials and can post and interact with students in a Blackboard course.) or Graders in their Blackboard courses. Classroom only allows users as a student or teacher.

13. Many faculty use the Blackboard Grade Center to post grades for things that are not assigned in Blackboard. All gradebook columns in Classroom must be associated with an assignment posted in the Classwork section of the course.

1. Feb. 27, 2024 (Online Form)
   a. **Subject: Concerns Regarding Additional Mandatory Responsibilities and the Culture within the College of Education**
   b. Dear Members of the Faculty Senate Committee,
      i. We are writing to express our deep concerns over recent policies and the prevailing culture that have significantly affected our professional responsibilities and our sense of belonging within the college. Our concerns are twofold and pertain to the newly implemented "mandatory" professional development policies and the lack of a supportive and inclusive environment for faculty, especially those from historically underrepresented backgrounds.
   c. Additional Mandatory Responsibilities:
      i. The College of Education has recently implemented a new professional development policy that mandates all faculty members to attend a minimum of five hours of UCA-sponsored professional development, explicitly excluding credit for any external professional development activities, such as those sponsored by professional organizations in our field. This policy contradicts existing tenure and promotion guidelines and imposes an undue burden on our schedules. The requirement to complete these hours by the end of the spring semester, with the imposition of additional mandatory development in May should this not be met, was introduced without any discussion or agreement with the faculty.
      ii. This increase in mandatory trainings, including but not limited to professional development meetings in January and May, bi-weekly Coaching Circle Meetings, monthly Tech Tuesdays, and various other required trainings throughout the academic year, has significantly reduced our ability to engage in meaningful professional development opportunities, such as those offered by CETAL. The cumulative effect of these requirements has left us feeling overwhelmed and has encroached upon our time for research, teaching preparation, and student engagement.
   d. No Culture of Belonging:

      i.   Moreover, we are increasingly concerned about the lack of a culture of belonging within the College of Education, particularly for faculty of color and those from historically underrepresented backgrounds. Despite participating in mandatory Diversity, Belonging, Inclusion, and Equity trainings aimed at better supporting our students, it appears similar efforts are not being made to support and retain diverse faculty members. The high turnover rate among these faculty groups is alarming and contradicts the values of inclusivity and diversity we purport to uphold.

      ii.   Recent instances, such as the non-renewal of a highly valued faculty member of color who played a crucial role in advocating for and supporting our students of color, without offering any plan of support, further illustrate the disregard for nurturing an inclusive environment. The continuous addition of mandatory trainings and expectations, coupled with a pervasive sense of micromanagement and mistrust, has eroded our faculty's morale and sense of belonging.

e. Recommendations:

      i.   Review and address the contradiction between the new mandatory professional development policies and existing tenure and promotion guidelines.

      ii.   Facilitate a dialogue between the College of Education's administration and its faculty to revisit and potentially revise these policies, ensuring they are developed with meaningful input from faculty members.

      iii.   Conduct a comprehensive review of the culture within the College of Education, with a particular focus on practices affecting the retention and support of faculty from historically underrepresented backgrounds.

      iv.   Work with us to develop strategies that genuinely foster an inclusive, supportive, and engaging working environment for all faculty members.

f. We believe that addressing these issues is crucial for the well-being of our faculty and the overall health of the College of Education. We are committed to working collaboratively with the administration and the Faculty Senate Committee to find solutions that support all faculty members.

      i.   ***I relayed this information to Dean Groves-Scott, Associate Dean Mills, and Provost Poulter. Dean Groves-Scott replied:

          1. **Professional Development Requirements:**

               a. In reference to the constituent concern communicated to us on March 4, we would like to emphasize that there has been a misrepresentation regarding the professional development requirements. Contrary to the concerns raised, faculty members are indeed allowed to apply professional development activities offered by the Center for Excellence

in Teaching and Learning (CETAL) towards the 5-hour requirement. The college only requires that the PD be UCA-specific, and the college highly values the services CETAL offers to our faculty.

b. Further, the contention that the PD requirements contradicts the Tenure and Promotion guidelines of the college lacks the full context of the professional development policy. Faculty are not limited from engaging in professional development from external organizations. Rather, the policy puts forth the expectation that UCA-specific professional development be part of a faculty member's overall professional development. This is meant to support faculty, noting the Tenure and Promotion Guidelines specifically require "Documentation of professional growth activities undertaken to improve teaching expertise (e.g., **developing mentoring relationships with more experienced colleagues**, active participation in seminars, training programs and/or institutes, etc.)" (p. 7).

c. Notably, presenting faculty with a variety of options for meeting their PD requirements was partly in response to earlier faculty feedback requesting more flexibility and choice in fulfilling professional development needs. We value this input and have strived to offer a diverse suite of options that align with our commitment to continuous learning and excellence in education.

d. Moreover, the requirement for ongoing professional development falls within the scope of responsibilities encouraged by the college's administration. Such policies are not only common but essential, especially in the field of education, where staying abreast of innovative practices and pedagogical advancements is vital. The emphasis on continuous learning contributes significantly to our faculty's reputation for pioneering best practices in education.

e. I'd like to add that the requirement for professional development was approved by both the Provost and University Council. It's within our purview to require a reasonable amount of professional development.

2. **Culture of Inclusion and Belonging:**

a. Addressing the concerns related to the culture within the College of Education, particularly regarding the support and inclusion of faculty from historically underrepresented backgrounds, is of utmost importance. It is critical to clarify that the non-renewal of a faculty member of color is a complex personnel matter, and related to shifting responsibilities/positions within the College. However, it is important to correct the narrative that suggests an "alarming" turnover rate among faculty of color. Such statements are misleading and without substantiation.
   b. Ensuring a culture of belonging and inclusivity is a core value of our college. To this end, we are committed to reviewing our practices and policies continuously to enhance support for all faculty members. The implementation of Diversity, Belonging, Inclusion, and Equity training is one of many steps we are taking to foster an environment where every faculty member feels valued and supported.
3. **Moving Forward:**
   a. We are dedicated to engaging in constructive dialogue with the faculty to address any discrepancies between professional development policies and tenure and promotion guidelines. In the spirit of collaboration, we invite representatives from the Faculty Senate Committee to join us in reviewing and potentially revising these policies with meaningful faculty input.