



UH-Downtown Faculty Senate
Resolution SR# 24-02
Date: 4/30/2024

SYNOPSIS:

Early in the week of April 1, 2024, the College of Public Service (CPS) faculty leaders were notified that Dr. Jonathan Schwartz, Dean of CPS, would vacate the Dean position at the end of May 2024. The vacating of the Dean position would necessitate the identification of an Interim Dean, followed by a formal search for CPS Dean later in 2024.

Faculty and staff in CPS assumed that established UHD practices of identifying an internal faculty candidate to serve as Interim Dean would be followed. UHD has a history of filling high-executive university- and college-level academic positions with internal candidates with only two notable exceptions in recent years. This longstanding practice of leveraging faculty to fill the Interim Dean position helps to foster talent and leadership development amongst the UHD faculty and recognizes the central role faculty play in academic shared and faculty governance.

CPS faculty learned that Provost Bordelon intends to fill the Interim Dean position in CPS by temporarily contracting an external candidate from “The Registry,” a repository of retired past university of administrators, to serve as Interim Dean rather than leverage internal faculty talent. In preparation for a Friday (4/5) faculty meeting called by Provost Bordelon to discuss this plan, the CPS faculty met to discuss the matter and obtain the views of the broad CPS faculty. Following the meeting, CPS faculty leaders developed a poll to solidify the sentiment expressed by faculty at the meeting to present to Provost Bordelon at the Friday meeting. Despite the overwhelming sentiment of the CPS faculty requesting that the Provost adhere to longstanding practice of promoting a faculty member to serve as Interim Dean, Provost Bordelon chose to only consider candidates from “The Registry,” citing only "the stability of the college" for her rationale and without providing any data to show cause or need.

RATIONALE:

WHEREAS, UHD has longstanding practices of promoting faculty internally to serve in Interim Academic Leadership positions with only two notable exceptions in the past five years;

WHEREAS, UHD CPS has internal faculty talent, including the current Associate Dean and current and previous Department Chairpersons with a wealth and breadth of previous administrative experiences, who could serve as Interim Dean;

WHEREAS, forty-two CPS faculty participated in the college meeting to express their views, and thirty-four CPS faculty participated in a survey that demonstrated that 91% of polled CPS faculty preferred an internal candidate rather than a Registry candidate;



WHEREAS, Provost Bordelon cited only ‘college stability’ as a rationale, without data, for not adhering to longstanding practices in promoting internal faculty talent into the Interim Dean position;

WHEREAS, the Office of the Provost possesses a previously utilized, best-practices protocol for consulting college faculty, staff, and students in the naming of an Interim Dean at UHD and has chosen not to utilize it;

WHEREAS, the Provost chose to name an Interim Dean from the Registry without consultation and transparent, collective decision-making, a decision that was dismissive and condescending to CPS faculty;

WHEREAS, Provost Bordelon recently agreed, only upon consultation with the Faculty Senate leadership and not in consultation with the CPS faculty to consider internal applicants for the Interim Dean Position in addition to the evaluation of Registry candidates.

THEREFORE, be it resolved that the Faculty Senate requests that Provost Bordelon 1) revert to longstanding practices of only considering internal faculty candidates for the CPS Interim Dean position and removing any consideration of Registry candidates; and 2) commission a faculty and administrative task force to develop a UHD Policy Statement on appointing interim administrators and hiring academic administrators above the level of Department Chair that adheres to best practices in shared governance, faculty governance, and state law.