

**FACULTY SENATE MINUTES
SAM HOUSTON STATE UNIVERSITY
February 28, 2008**

Chair Debbie Price called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m.

Members Present: Tracy Bilsing; Doug Constance; Jerry Dowling; Bill Edgington; Stacey Edmonson; Mark Frank; Debbi Hatton; Emmette Jackson; Renee James; Bill Jasper; Ann Jerabek; Rosanne Keathley; Gerald Kohers; Brian Loft; Paul Loeffler; Bill Lutterschmidt; John Newbold; Brian Oetiker; Debra Price; Tamara Waggener

Members Absent: Tom Cox; Peggy DeMers; Tracy Steele; Yan Zhang.

Approval of Minutes:

The minutes of the February 14, 2008 meeting were approved.

Next Meeting:

The next Faculty Senate meeting is scheduled for March 20, 2008.

Guests:

Mark Adams, Associate Vice President for Information Services, spoke to the Senate regarding concerns with computer services. He discussed staffing issues, including the loss of most of the computer services staff and the change in associate vice presidents. Mr. Adams emphasized that Computer Services needs to be aware of what faculty need in order to meet professors' needs; if faculty are planning to use a certain program or software in their classes, Computer Services needs advance notice of that in order to provide appropriate support. Computer Services also plans to conduct a survey to help gauge the needs and to solicit feedback from faculty. Some Senators mentioned specific issues with campus email, including messages that are not delivered (but are in the sent file and do not bounce back as undelivered); Associate Vice President Adams noted that 12 new node clusters are being put in place to help with this problem. He emphasized that faculty need to notify Computer Services when they experience these problems and should complete a work order so that the problem can be corrected. It was noted by Senator Waggener that the staff in Computer Services was always professional and courteous when contacted by faculty. Senators encouraged Computer Services to poll department chairs and/or attend the Academic Affairs Council meeting in order to solicit their input as well. Furthermore, Senators noted that when the semester is busy, SamMenu and Blackboard do not always function reliably. Associate Vice President Adams noted that they were also working on this problem with new servers; the current hardware was not equipped for the kind of volume of users that occurs during registration and grade entry periods. Computer Services directors Nancy Sears, Jacob Chandler, and Grady Mangum also attended and answered questions specific to their areas.

Provost David Payne addressed the Senate in response to questions that had recently arisen regarding the need to cut course sections at the beginning of the semester. He explained that eight years ago, using measurements established by the Board of Regents, the SHSU faculty to student ratio (FSR) was 1:23. After that time the administration made a commitment to add a faculty line for every 20 new students, beyond the first 100 new students. In the last four years, we have added 282 new courses and deleted 74 courses. Thus, over the course of seven years the faculty to student ratio has decreased to 1:18. In addition, some departments have relied on pool faculty or adjunct professors, and some have lowered the upper level cap on classes. Thus, the number of freshman level seats available has decreased, in spite of the University having 120 more freshmen this past fall than the year before. As a result, new freshman sections will be added immediately to accommodate these incoming students. The University has also

used fund balance monies in recent years to help meet academic needs. We have now reached the point where we must raise the FSR back to 1:23. Deans have been instructed to offer the same number of available seats as last fall. This means that classes will have larger numbers of students, classes will not be allowed to be split, and some upper level courses may have to be offered less often (once a year rather than every semester). The University must move to a more fiscally conservative approach. The academic deans were made aware of this in November and were told then to cut their spring schedule as possible. In answer to questions regarding increased class sizes, the Provost noted that classes may not be taught in the building where a faculty member's office is located. More large classrooms are trying to be developed, and new software has been purchased that will help match class sizes to the size of the classroom assigned.

Provost Payne then addressed concerns regarding the equitable distribution of funds when the new college (Humanities and Social Sciences) was developed. Money flows from Academic Affairs to the academic Deans, who then distribute monies to the departments. When the new college was established, each department kept the same proportion of the instructional budget from the previous year. Each Dean keeps a percentage of the money allotted to them from Academic Affairs for their own use; how much they keep is each Dean's choice, and the amount does vary among colleges. To help alleviate difficulty in meeting new faculty salaries, \$20,000 new money was devoted to one college's budget; the following year, \$258,000 was also transferred from discretionary money to the same college's budget, again to help with faculty salaries.

Provost Payne addressed the question of how much of the University's total budget is allocated to Academic Affairs. Since President Gaertner arrived, 65% of new money has gone to Academic Affairs (AA); no other university in Texas devotes that much money to AA. The President is very supportive of academics and takes an "academics first" approach. While the University's total commitment to AA is approximately 45% (the "typical" amount for universities is 50% of the budget dedicated to AA), the lower amount is based on 70 years of administrative decision-making. Again, the Provost emphasized that President Gaertner is working to increase these amounts.

Regarding summer school, Provost Payne has asked the Deans to be as responsible as possible in planning for summer school awards. While there has been rumor of a 25% reduction in summer school, the Provost has not asked for any specific figures. If summer school is offered in identical loads from last year, the colleges will range from a surplus of \$350,000 to a deficit of \$429,000. Still, the Provost is sensitive to the fact that we have more students than before and also have added pressure for students to complete their degrees in four years. This is also a "counting" summer, which means that our enrollment impacts future funding allotments. SHSU ranks 34 of 35 universities in money generated per student credit hours taken. This low formula funding is a problem that also impacts other universities in the Texas State University System. If SHSU moved to 17th of 35, then all of our budgetary concerns would be resolved. We also do not have "big money" programs on the SHSU campus, such as engineering and medical programs. Our current legislative representative, Lois Kolkhurst, is aware of this issue and has vowed her support to change SHSU's current status regarding formula funding.

In additional matters, the Provost reported that the President fully expects to offer merit pay this year. He also noted that the Commissioner issued a proposal in which funding would be based on student completion rates rather than the number of students enrolled on the 12th class day. All presidents from across the state were hostile towards this proposal.

Chair's Report:

Chair Debbie Price reported on the Texas Council of Faculty Senates (TCFS) meeting. According to the TCFS, faculty senates should report directly to the university president, not to the provost. The SHSU

Faculty Senate reports to the Provost. This was mentioned to Provost Payne, but a change is not expected. Chair Price also noted that the TCFS reported how academic freedom rests with the university, not with faculty. Another issue that came up at the TCFS meeting was the expected accountability movement for higher education, in which universities will be evaluated on data such as their completion rates, minority enrollments, and assessments of the core curriculum.

Old Business:

none

New Business:

none

Committee Reports:

The following committee reports were submitted to the Senate:

- Academic Affairs. A draft of the committee's report on the Bachelor of Science degree vs. the Bachelor of Arts degree was distributed to the Senate. This report will be discussed at the next meeting.
- Faculty Affairs. The Faculty Evaluation (IDEA) Process Report will be discussed at the next meeting.
- University Affairs. None.
- Committee on Committees. The Committee on Committees sought input on the Faculty Survey.

The Faculty Senate adjourned at 5:13 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Stacey Edmonson, Chair-elect