

FACULTY SENATE MINUTES

SAM HOUSTON STATE UNIVERSITY

March 4, 2010

Members Present

Leonard Breen; Donald Bumpass; Rebecca Bustamante; Erin Cassidy; Donna Desforges; Mark Frank; Deborah Hatton; Mack Hines; Renee James; Hee-jong Joo; Gerald Kohers; Paul Loeffler; Brian Loft; Andrew Lopenzina; Melinda Miller; Sheryl Murphy-Manley; Ling Ren; Tracy Steele; Doug Ullrich.

Members Absent

Bill Brewer; Jeff Crane; Chad Hargrave; Darci Hill; Bill Jasper; Brian Oetiker.

Call to Order

Chair Loeffler called the meeting to order at 3:32pm.

Special Guest: Provost Payne

- Provost Payne provided the Faculty Senate with an overview of the construction projects around campus. Highlights included the development of preliminary plans for a new classroom facility in The Woodlands. The plans involve the construction of a four story building, with the top floor being left uncompleted.
 - It was also announced that UH, UH Downtown, and Prairie View A&M will be pulling out of the University Center in The Woodlands. It is expected that they will re-focus their efforts to the Tomball area (currently, SHSU is exploring the possibility of renting one-quarter of a floor in this Tomball facility).
 - The departure of the three universities from the University Center provides the opportunity for SHSU to offer additional degrees in The Woodlands (only Texas A&M and Texas Southern remain at the University Center).
- Provost Payne also confirmed that the creation of the new College of Fine Arts and Communication will be put on hold due to budget constraints.
- Distance education is moving forward; the university is expecting an enrollment increase of 20 to 30% for the Fall 2010. In addition, support for classroom technology will be centralized across campus to Bill Angrove's office.
- Provost Payne explained the reasoning behind the introduction of eCollege this past year. The provost emphasized the widespread complaints over Blackboard's frequent downtime. Provost Payne also acknowledged that faculty input into this decision was less than what he would have liked, and apologized.
- The university has completed its plans for the 5% budget reduction from the state.
 - The provost indicated that it is probable that there will be an additional cut of similar size for the next fiscal year.
 - Provost Payne also indicated that he does not expect any cuts in either merit pay or market adjustments.
 - Each college determined how they would reduce their own budget, whether that meant not filling vacant positions, or other cuts.

- There are two upcoming receptions for President Gaertner are planned: one in April in the plaza, and a second formal dinner in August.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the February 18, 2009 meeting were approved.

Chair's Report

- Chair-Elect Frank and Senator Miller reported from the February 26-27 meeting of the Texas Council of Faculty Senates:
 - Interim Chancellor of the Texas State University System Board of Regents, Kenneth Craycraft, provided an update on the search for a new Chancellor for the Board of Regents. Dr. Craycraft noted that the application process is now closed, and that a short list of finalists will likely be named at or before the next board meeting (scheduled to be in Huntsville during the month of May).
 - Dr. Craycraft also provided an update of the ongoing SHSU Presidential search. He noted that the application process has about 5 weeks remaining, and that there have been about 20 applications so far. Dr. Craycraft added that he expects most of the applications will be submitted during the month of March.
 - Dr. Craycraft also discussed his views on the Higher Education committee in the Texas House of Representative (chaired by Dan Branch). In Dr. Craycraft view, the Higher Education committee appears to view technology and online education as viable avenues for reducing the pressure for more bricks and mortar at universities in Texas.
 - Interim Chancellor Craycraft also noted that the 5% budget cut plans for this fiscal year have not yet been enacted, but could be at any point in time. Dr. Craycraft also noted that there is a high probability that the 5% cut for the next fiscal year could be increased to 7% or higher. There is also preliminary discussions on moving to a four-day work week during the summer months.
 - The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board is currently considering moving the counting period from the 12th class day to the end of the semester.
 - Dr. Craycraft also noted that the universities in the Texas State University System are vulnerable to being cherry-picked if salary issues are not addressed, particularly in the area of market adjustments. At the presidential level for example, the system looks at peer institutions and benchmarks at the 75th percentile of presidential salaries.
 - It was noted by Dr. Dawn Zimmaro, the Director of the Division of Instructional Innovation and Assessment at UT-Austin, that while handwritten student evaluations comments are exempt from open records requests, typed comments, like those submitted online, are not exempt.
 - During the roundup reports from the public universities in Texas, several common trends were evident: (1) many universities are experiencing hiring freezes, (2) many are experiencing cuts in travel funding, (3) some universities will not be receiving merit pay increases, and (4) many universities experienced a notable growth in enrollment between the Fall 2009 to Spring 2010.
 - Senators from Texas State University reported that during its SACS review, questions were raised over the structure and power of the Board of Regents.

- During the Texas Council of Faculty Senates discussions, several senators reported success in the use of Blackboard for the posting of questions and comments to the Faculty Senate. Several senators also reported success during the development of budget cut plans from having a faculty representative on the university budget advisory committee that has finance or accounting expertise, and is appointed by the Faculty Senate.
- Chair Loeffler reported from the February 22nd meeting with Provost Payne:
 - The provost reported that parking fees are going to be increased in the Fall 2010. Also, the Distance Learning fee will change from \$303 per course to \$101 per credit hour.

Old Business

- The Faculty Senate reviewed the revisions to the Merit Advance in Salary Academic Policy (800722), section 7.02a. No objections were raised to the changes.

Committee Reports

- Faculty Affairs Committee presented a preliminary report on the new Market Adjustment Policy. The report raised concerns over the transparency in the awarding of salary adjustments, and the benchmarking of salaries by rank across the disciplines. After a general discussion of the issues, the report was sent back the committee for further refinement.
- The Committee on Committees accepted edits to the annual Faculty Senate Survey. Also, a list of committee memberships were approved by the senate.

Senate adjourned at 5:15pm

Respectfully submitted,
Mark Frank, Chair-Elect