

**FACULTY SENATE MINUTES**  
**SAM HOUSTON STATE UNIVERSITY**

September 3, 2020  
3:30 P.M. – 5:00 P.M.  
Remote via Zoom

**Senators Present (31).**

Samuel Adu-Prah (COSET), Mario Aschauer (CAM), Natalie Baker (CJ), Maria Botero (CHSS), Siham Bouamer (CHSS), Timothy Brown (COE), Valencia Browning-Keen (COHS), Patrick Buzzini (CJ), Rhonda Callaway (CHSS), Brandy Doleshal (COSET), Jamie Durán (COE), Debbi Hatton (CAM), Damon Hay (COSET), Soo-Yeon Hwang (NGL), Kevin Lord (COM), John Lane (CAM), Lee Miller (CHSS), Geraldine Monjardez (CJ), Carolyn Moore (CAM), Marianne Moore (COHS), Jan Taylor Morris (COBA), Benjamin Park (CHSS), Dwayne Pavelock (COSET), Mary Petró (COE), Debbie Price (COE), Kevin Randall (COHS), Stephen Rapp (CHSS), Karen Sherrill (COBA), Aneika Simmons (COBA), Susan Skidmore (COE), Kyle Stutts (COSET)

**Senators Not Present (0).**

**Outgoing 2019-2020 Senators (6).**

Don Bumpass (COBA), Kevin Clifton (CAM), Michael Hanson (Outgoing Senate Chair, NGL), Daphne Johnson (COE), Vlad Radoias (COBA), Nancy Stockall (COE), Yuan Zhao (COM)

Maria Botero (CHSS) and Natalie Baker (COE) were also outgoing, but they were both elected for additional terms.

**Called to Order.**

3:30 PM, Remote via Zoom, by Outgoing Chair Michael Hanson. Meeting turned over to current Chair of the Senate, Lee Miller.

**Special Guests.**

Dr. Alisa White, University President

Dr. Richard Eglsaer, Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs

Dr. White and Dr. Eglsaer thanked the current and outgoing Senators, expressing importance of Senate and working together on common goals.

Chair Lee Miller thanked the outgoing Senators, congratulated Donald Bumpass on his retirement, and thanked outgoing Chair Michael Hanson.

Chair welcomed incoming Senators.

Q&A with Dr. White and Dr. Eglsaer.

Question Topic:

Considerations for research, and tenure and promotion, given recent increased faculty workloads.

Summary of President's Response:

- Departments have to look at where a faculty member is in the evaluation process for tenure and promotion.
- For faculty going up for tenure and promotion, departments should consider finding ways to give them a break on workload, provide a GTA, etc., so that COVID-19 should not be a reason someone is not successful.
- Conversation should begin with Academic Affairs.
- Tenure clock can be stopped (Provost: letter was sent in the Spring, but will resend to remind faculty of this option).
- No single point of evaluation; examining the overall pattern.
- Give many ways to prove success.
- There should be accountability, but grace should be given while we get through next few semesters.

Question Topic:

How were university COVID-19 Threat Levels currently decided upon and how they will be in the future?

Summary of President's Response:

- No single factor.
- Most concerned about the number of people sick enough to need hospitalization.
- COVID is going to spread, but we want to keep it from overwhelming system.
- Concerned about students over Labor Day.
- If there were a potentially overwhelming situation after Labor Day, then we could have two-week moratorium [on perhaps face-to-face interaction, but this was not exactly specified, but does seem to include student activities]
- Consulting Dr. Williams and county health professionals.

Question Topic:

What university is doing to communicate what faculty are doing to actually help students through current circumstances, and what it is doing to address a narrative from an anti-university side in the culture war that, e.g., questions the value of higher education in general and thinks there should be discounted tuition.

Summary of President's Response:

- Culture war is bigger than COVID.
- Clear that students with degree have more options, generally.
- Legislators put value of degree on a particular job or salary.
- Higher Ed has not done enough to address this.
- University needs better communication strategy on this.
- State supplements tuition – Students get more than they pay for.
- Look for student engagement. Freshmen having difficult time.
- President is working on improving the communication.

Question Topic:

Shift in narrative of online education at SHSU since arrival of COVID and SHSU being touted as a top online educator missing an opportunity.

Summary of President's/Provost's Response:

- President indicates she will have to take call from Chancellor, but offers to return to meeting if desired. Chair offers Senate to forward questions to her or invite her back to subsequent meeting.
- President has taught online.
- Some students do not feel like they can succeed in online class.  
[President departs; Provost remains]
- Agrees SHSU is leader in online education.
- Emphasizes there is a difference between *online* and *remote*.
- Hope faculty trained in online are helping those who are not make their remote instruction as close to online as possible.

Question Topic:

What kind of testing are we doing on campus? Positivity rate? Currently 67 positive cases according to SHSU webpage.

Summary of Provost's Response:

- Have positivity rates, but distorted due to only testing symptomatic students.
- 67 cases as on SHSU webpage include self-reported cases and those found through testing at Student Health Center.
- Concern about saying something inaccurate and says we should direct questions about cases reported on webpage to Drew Miller.
- Dr. Williams can also answer.

Question Topic:

Rationale administration used to decide not to screen students (clarified: e.g. temperature).

Summary of Provost's Response:

- Decision not to conduct COVID testing based on cost, and need to do it on almost daily basis, with no viable way to do this.
- Some programs do screen for temperature (e.g. Music, Dance).

Question Topic: Cost of Testing. Leftover QEP funds (\$100,000) transferred by QEP Director Brandy Doleshal to help with testing.

Summary of Provost's Response:

- \$70 per test.
- Help students submit insurance claims.
- Finding ways to help students who cannot pay.
- Waiting for new testing equipment.
- Getting clinic certified to collect/submit insurance claims.
- If student cannot pay, Provost thinks they test them anyway.

- Cannot answer question regarding leftover QEP funds – did not come through his office. Drew Miller can answer.

Question Topic:

Free Faculty/Staff flu shots.

Summary of Provost's Response:

- Will be doing them.
- Mistakenly announced to the contrary.

Question Topic:

Concern that University/Administration is not monitoring closely risk associated with COVID. How can university assure faculty?

Summary of Provost's Response:

- President relies on Cabinet.
- Health specifics not reported to Provost.
- Looking at how many and how serious the cases are.
- Until it is more systemic, we are OK.
- On campus people are doing well.
- President is alert and receiving feedback; Provost deals with academic side.
- Looking at many factors.

Question Topic:

Switch to remote if faculty member dies (as result of COVID).

Summary of Provost's Response:

- Not necessarily.
- Lose faculty every year.
- If there were a number of serious cases, then that would be different story.
- Depends on complicating factors leading to it.

Question Topic:

Responsibility in protecting larger community. University contributing to potential harm to the community.

Summary of Provost's Response:

- No one safe in a pandemic.
- Dr. Fauci quoted as saying not good to send students home at this point.

[End Q&A]

Senator Introductions – Each Senator made a brief introduction.

Committee Chair Selections – Committees met in Zoom breakout rooms to select a chair for the committee. The committee chairs reported were:

- Academic Affairs – Jan Taylor Morris

- Committee on Committees – Carolyn Moore
- Faculty Affairs – Maria Botero
- University Affairs – Susan Skidmore.

Trial Zoom Poll and its potential use for handling motions – A trial poll in Zoom was conducted and its use discussed. Concerns about its digital footprint were raised, along with concerns about the hosts of the Zoom meeting being unable to vote in such Zoom polls or in a manner that was the same as everyone else.

**Adjournment:**

The meeting adjourned at 5:05 PM.