

**FACULTY SENATE MINUTES
SAM HOUSTON STATE UNIVERSITY**

19 March 2020

3:30 P.M. – 5:00 P.M.

Via Zoom

Present: Yuan Zhao (COM); Maria Botero (CHSS); Siham Bouamer (CHSS); Nick Lantz (CHSS); Benjamin Park (CHSS); Stephen Rapp (CHSS); Natalie Baker (COCJ); Donald Bumpass (COBA); Jan Taylor Morris (COBA); Vlad Radoias (COBA); Jaime Durán (COE); Mary Petró (COE); Susan Skidmore (COE); Nancy Stockall (COE); Brandy Doleshal (COSET); Dwayne Pavelock (COSET); Kyle Stutts (COSET); Damon Hay (COSET); Samuel Adu-Prah (COSET); Debbi Hatton (CAM); Kevin Clifton (CAM); John Lane (CAM); Carolyn Moore (CAM); Marianne Moore (COHS); Kevin Randall (COHS); Michael Hanson (Library); Lee Miller (CHSS).

Absent: Bobby LaRue (COCJ); Daphne Johnson (COE); Valencia Browning-Keen (COHS).

Called to Order.

3:32 p.m.

Approval of Minutes.

Hay moves to approve minutes for February 27, 2020 meeting; Petró seconds. No discussion. Minutes approved.

Chair's Report.

Presidential Search process update

- At the end of the search process, there will be one finalist. The sole finalist will be announced via TSUS press release.
- State law requires a 21-day waiting period after finalist is announced and before the Board officially appoints the new president.
- The profile for the ad will not undergo further review by the faculty or public. The survey mechanism was created and over 900 comments were received. The search committee members also submitted input for the profile. Input will inform the creation of the profile. The profile should be posted to the Presidential Search webpage next week.
- To date, the search process has not been impacted by COVID-19.

Old Business.

Academic policy review update:

- Last town hall was held the Friday before spring break at TWC.
- Clinical faculty concerns need to be addressed.
- Since COVID-19 crisis, no more information on how/when review process will move forward.
- The next step was to be that the summer policy review committee would review comments and input from 5 town halls and any other input received by senate or the committee members and edit/revise policies.

Q: What were the concerns of clinical faculty?

A: No policy for clinical faculty. They are shoe-horned under standards for tenure-track faculty.

Discussion/comments: There is no written policy for advancement for clinical faculty except in COM. Policy addresses tenured/tenure-track faculty and non-tenure track faculty only. Need policy to address how clinical faculty's different degrees are considered, what service expectations should be, etc. Clinical faculty in nursing are more like medical faculty than regular faculty. The concerns are not new, they started being voiced in 2014-2015. Clinical faculty should be addressed in these policies or in a separate policy.

Q: What happens if the policies are pushed through despite the COVID-19 hiatus?

A: This shouldn't happen. The last step of the process is the vote of the Academic Affairs Council (AAC). Faculty Senate has two votes on AAC. We would object and Chairs (at the very least) would back us up. A new president would also likely object to academic policies being somehow forced through the approval process. But, before any of this happens, we have bi-monthly meetings with the Provost and will discuss.

Discussion/comments: Clarification that the town halls were not run by Senate. Senate representatives were there, as were other members of the summer policy review committee, to help answer questions. The policies were presented to the summer policy review committee and the faculty have provided edits, revisions, etc. to them. We revised the policies we were given. The summer policy review committee is chaired by Deans Lyons and Edmonson.

A: Faculty Senate should be communicating to all faculty about the process. Is this what we are doing? Is this what the administration is doing?

Q: The Provost has to approve all university-wide emails. (That is why we asked senators to send out notifications to their departments/colleges).

Discussion/comments: Consensus is that sending updates to faculty members would be a good idea. But, we need to update faculty on the policy revision process by the end of the semester or the beginning of fall term at the latest. Let the administration know that faculty are feeling overwhelmed at the moment.

Other communication:

Senators are encouraged to provide a heads-up that perception survey is coming out early next week.

Discussion about perception survey during COVID-19 transition. New president needs input from faculty; the perception survey is one of the key points of shared governance; increases accountability. Hope that survey results will not be totally discounted because of COVID-19. Is it possible to frame survey so question(s) about COVID-19 can be separated out from responses to standard questions? Consensus is to include two questions at the beginning of survey: one scaled and one open-ended.

Something like: "Do you feel the university's response to the COVID-19 virus was appropriate/adequate?"

Strongly disagree to strongly agree (or vice-versa, consistent with the other survey questions).

Then include a similar open-ended question on the university's COVID-19 response.

Other updates

- Spring commencement cancelled, plan to hold a joint spring/summer commencement;
- Campus buildings are open and faculty my work in offices;
- Counseling is available for students and faculty;
- Reminder to check the COVID-19 webpage;
- The SHSU food pantry is open;
- Zoom is now available through BlackBoard;
- All events are cancelled;
- IDEA – how will scores be used? Administration is looking at this. Note that several colleges seem to have said that they will not be used toward FES or P&T. Is this college by college or university wide?
- All open, non-essential staff and faculty searches are on hold;

Concerns:

What staff are deemed essential vs. non-essential?

What is the estimated financial toll of COVID-19 on the university?

Will tenure-track faculty have the **option** to pause the tenure clock because of COVID-19? Comment that current policy allows for tenure-track faculty to pause the tenure clock for significant events (this is an **optional choice**).

Since we are no longer allowed to travel to conferences, how can those funds be used? May they be rolled over for use in the next year?

How does the COVID-19 crisis affect service expectations?

Study abroad programs – not all are reporting refunds to students.

Discussion about scholarly work during COVID-19. Suggestion that presentations that were ACCEPTED to a conference should count, even if the conference did not actually happen. Faculty should include in CV; Deans and DPTACS should be instructed to count these presentations.

What do we know about the \$18 million? Provost asked Senate to formulate specific questions about finances that he can pass along to Dr. Hernandez.

Senate Chair-Elect election process

Concern that the process is rushed and confusing. Request that candidates be given time to prepare comments. Request that senators be provided more time for thoughtful consideration of candidates before voting. Proposal to consider adjusting the process to increase transparency and inclusion. Please refer to the language on elections in the Senate Bylaws and Charter (we sent that out for reference). We must adhere to the rules, but have some leeway.

Nominations could happen earlier meeting, then statements and voting could happen at the last regular meeting of the Senate in the spring semester as indicated by the Charter.

This proposal would mean that nominations would be put forward at the April 2 meeting and statements and voting would happen at the April 16th meeting.

Stockall moves that we adopt the modified proposal above. Hay seconds.

Discussion centered around the need to expand period for nominations beyond one senate meeting to have time to consider the nominees and perhaps round out the slate with additional nominees to ensure diversity and inclusion. Suggestion to accept nominations on April 2nd during the meeting and for one week following. Senate Chair would then announce the full slate to all senators prior to the final regular meeting. At the final regular meeting of the spring semester, all nominees will have a chance to make statements, and a vote via secret ballot will be held.

Some discussion of need to discuss the guidelines for nominee statements (length of time allotted, verbal and/or written, do we need to stipulate a particular format, etc. Consensus was to decide on the voting process now and discuss the statement guidelines at the next meeting.

Stockall amends (and Stuttts seconds) the original motion to state that “Nominations for Chair-Elect will be taken from the floor beginning at the April 2nd meeting and will extend through April 10th.. The Chair will then communicate the slate of candidates to the entire Senate. At the final regular meeting of the spring semester, April 16th, nominees will make statements and voting will take place via secret ballot.

No further discussion. Motion passes.

Note that if you would like to nominate someone, please alert the nominee so they can think about whether or not to accept the nomination prior to the April 2nd meeting.

Given the late hour, guidelines for nominee statements will be discussed at the next meeting. Think about amount of time to talk, any guidelines for comments, and any guidelines for written statements or supplementary materials.

Petrón moves to adjourn. Stockall seconds.

Adjournment: 5:15 PM