FACULTY SENATE MINUTES
SAM HOUSTON STATE UNIVERSITY
January 24, 2013
3:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Austin Hall

Members present:
Tracy Bilsing (H&SS); Don Bumpass (COBA); Kevin Clifton (FA&MC); Donna Cox (COE); Tom Cox (H&SS); James Crosby (H&SS); Diane Dowdey (H&SS); Mark Frank (COBA); Randall Garner (CJ); Richard Henriksen (COE); Joan Hudson (COS); C. Renée James (COS); Bill Jasper (COS); Gerald Kohers (COBA); Hayoung Lim (FA&MC); Dennis Longmire (CJ); Sheryl Murphy-Manley (FA&MC); Dwayne Pavelock (COS); Lisa Shen (NGL); Tracy Steele (H&SS); Stacy Ulbig (H&SS); Walton Watkins (FA&MC); Ricky White (COS); Pam Zelbst (COBA)

Members not present: Nancy Baker (H&SS); Helen Berg (COE); Debbi Hatton (H&SS); Paul Loeffler (COS); Joyce McCauley (COE); Debra Price (COE); Doug Ullrich (COS)

Called to order: 3:28 p.m. in Austin Hall by Chair Tracy Steele

Special Guests: Mark Adams, Vice President of Informational Technology, with Mike Steigerwald (Director, Client Services, IT), and Jacob Chandler (Associate Vice President of Enterprise Services)

Mr. Adams came to discuss the centralization of the computer and technology purchasing program and the computer replacement program. He explained that prior to technology centralization, SHSU was spending $1.7 million per year, averaging 1300 devices. Computers and mobile devices (e.g., iPads) should be on a four-year rotation, but the figures indicated that the purchasing was either too frequent or disproportionate to the needs. In the economic climate, it seemed that a centralized purchasing plan would be more efficient and cost effective for faculty, staff, and lab computing needs.

The first year of centralization (2012), IT was given a budget of $1.2 million, and the goal was that everyone across campus would have adequate computing power. With the $500,000 in savings, the HEAF pool was expanded to allocate for other needs.

Part of the rationale for centralization is that IT already had the infrastructure in place for large-volume orders, removing the burden from department secretaries, who would not necessarily be as familiar with the technology needs. IT also looks at overall usage patterns. Some faculty members have been allocated several laptops and multiple iPads, so IT set about determining what is necessary versus what is simply wanted.

The current program allows for each faculty member to have one desktop machine and one laptop, either Mac or PC, whichever the faculty member prefers. A faculty member may opt to get an iPad instead of a laptop. If a faculty member wants an additional device (e.g, iPad and laptop and desktop), the individual college is asked to fund the overage and an "exception" must be applied for. Mr. Adams assured Senate that IT is sympathetic to our individual needs, but that they must also keep the bigger campus-wide picture in mind.

IT keeps track of when technology is purchased, and at the end of the four-year cycle, faculty members should get an email asking whether a new device is desired. To find out the status of one's device, one must log into SamWeb, and then click in the IT@Sam button. At the bottom of this menu there is a "Workstation Look-Up" button which allows you to input an orange tag number or username to find out where devices are in the rotation.

Upgrades have historically been a frustration. While some faculty members legitimately need a better processor, more memory, or a larger hard drive, others simply want the most bells and whistles. In an effort to be more efficient, IT chose durable and high quality computers, but those computers were all identical within a category (all Windows laptops, for example, were a particular type). Special requests require more time and are more expensive, so IT suggests that faculty members consider these carefully. Again, upgrades are considered exceptions that must be funded by the faculty member's department or college, but the funding often goes beyond the cost of the upgrade itself. For example, if a faculty member wants a $100 hard drive added to a $1500 computer, the college or department must fund $1000 (one thousand dollars) of the computer. This strategy ensures that upgrades are seriously necessary (and the department and /or college agree that it is) instead of simply wanted. Even small changes to the base computer can be a difficult process, so options are limited.

When laptops were first introduced, there was a common conception that faculty members were more interested in portability over power. However, some would like power, while others want the portability option, so IT will be adding another "line" to the laptop options so that faculty members can make that choice.

The down side to centralization is that faculty members have lost the freedom to choose. Before the centralized technology, a faculty member could choose specific machines with specific features and the only limitation was the departmental funds. Currently the only way to get an exception for upgrades or any variation from the "standard issue" device is for a department or college to pay $1000. Right now the focus is on improving the budgeting, efficiency, and more even distribution of funds. However, Mr. Adams indicated that in the future, the power might be returned to the departmental level. He did emphasize that in the two years of centralization, SHSU has saved $1 million, which should benefit faculty in other, visible ways.

Since faculty members are not the only beneficiaries of the purchasing of devices and software, there are procedures for obtaining student-used technology. For software issues, faculty members should contact 4HELP (x 44357) or Mike Steigerwald in the Client Services Group. IT requests that faculty members allow several months for licensing issues, etc. to be sorted out. Thus if a faculty member wants to have software for students in the fall semester, the request should go in during the spring semester.

Currently $2 million of software is funded annually, of which $500,000 is ERP/Banner and the rest is academic software. Money for lab software or class-related software comes from a student computer usage fee, so student IT requests that software purchases benefit a large student population. There is not a fixed number of students; software requests will be determined on an individual basis.

Senate asked for the appropriate contact person to find out if something in the current IT computer inventory matches what a faculty member needs. Mr. Adams said that Mateo Zuniga oversees the asset management group, and that he or someone in his department will be able to provide guidance. Senate suggested that it would be helpful if there were a special link on the IT website for faculty concerns, as it is often cumbersome to navigate the usual helpdesk lines.

A concern of Faculty Senate was that departments are required to fund $1000 for an upgrade of only $100 if that upgrade is deemed necessary. Mr. Adams indicated that if something is truly needed, the department should be willing to demonstrate as much by covering a large portion of the cost. Administratively IT feels such upgrades are not always a wise investment, so it is up to the departments to assess the real need.

Some members of Faculty Senate expressed concern that more problems are being created by the centralization than were eliminated. For instance, departments might not have the flexibility to cover $1000 for an exception, regardless of how necessary it is. Furthermore, several computers are for student use, but show up as belonging to a particular faculty member, complicating purchases for that faculty member. These are issues that IT is working on, and the Provost's office is partially or fully funding many exceptions.

When informed that exceptions are being approved without being read, Mr. Adams indicated that the spirit behind exceptions was not to be a rubber-stamp process. If that is what it has become, then the program needs to be scrutinized. IT is meant to meet the needs of the faculty, so perhaps a deeper look into those needs is required. Last year $150,000 in exceptions were requested, and these included iPads, extra computers, upgrades, etc. However, there was no breakdown for how many devices and upgrades this actually entailed.

Beyond computers and iPads, there is a state mandate that all technology purchases must be approved through IT. This would include such items as cameras, scanners, printers, and technically even flash drives. However, Mr. Adams realizes the futility of having every single technology related item purchased centrally. A list of items that will require IT approval is being generated.

Faculty Senate indicated that sometimes there is inconsistency in information; not all IT employees are on the same page, and so sometimes they give conflicting answers. In the past, IT was staffed by student helpers who had a high turnover rate and limited experience, but IT is becoming staffed by fulltime employees. This should improve consistency in answers. Faculty can aid in this process by answering work order surveys that go out after every completed work order.

There were a number of unresolved questions that Senate would like to revisit, specifically: How are faculty members affected by the exception "penalty" of $1000? What procedures are in place for faculty members who need devices for student use? Mr. Adams said that he would explore these issues and other concerns.

Approval of Minutes: Approval of November 30, December 6 minutes (as amended)

Committee Reports:
> **Academic Affairs Committee – (see attached)**
> The AA committee reported on the agenda for the upcoming IDEA visit. The original agenda for the 2-day visit was modified after having been sent to IDEA. The committee revised this changed agenda to reflect a return to concerns that were brought up by faculty in Fall 2012, so that these issues now have been reinserted into the newest agenda sent to IDEA for the planned February 25-26 meetings.
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> The Academic Affairs Committee requested a vote from Faculty Senate to support reinserting these issues into the Agenda. The vote was unanimously passed.
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> IDEA sessions will be recorded for anyone unable to attend, but faculty members are highly encouraged to attend at least one session.

New Business: There is a campus-wide move to increase standards in post-tenure review, and Senate suggested that new faculty members and potential employees be made fully aware of the revised guidelines. This issue was delegated to the Faculty Affairs Committee.

Adjournment: 5:08 pm

Next Meeting: February 14, 2013, with guest Dean John de Castro, College of Humanities and Social Sciences, who will address proposed changes to the Faculty Development Leave Policy.

Academic Affairs Committee Report
Sam Houston State University
Submitted by Sheryl Murphy-Manley, Chair of the Academic Affairs Committee
January 24, 2013
Members: Sheryl Murphy-Manley (CFAMC), Kevin Clifton (CFAMC), William Jasper (COS), Paul Loeffler (COS), Rick White (COS), James Crosby (CHSS), Doug Ullrich (COS)

I. IDEA visit is scheduled for Monday, February 25th from 8 am to 5 pm and on Tuesday, February 26th from 8 am to 3 pm. The modified proposed schedule is attached.

II. Kandi Taybei will be attending our subcommittee meeting on February 28th to discuss graduate student issues and LPPs. Please send by email by Tuesday January 29th additional questions you would like the Academic Affairs Committee to present to Dean Taybei. (Send to Sheryl at mus_skm@shsu.edu) Proposed topics include:
   A. Why are graduate student stipends different among colleges/departments?
   B. What is being done to increase the number of assistantships and stipends offered?
   C. Why do other universities offer tuition reimbursement as part of the recruiting package and SHSU does not?
   D. How will the University support growth in graduate programs? (reduced rate for graduate dorms?; equipment and supplies?; increased stipends? (since A&M is an hour away with stipends much higher than ours); increased teaching loads for graduate faculty; and how this increased load will be handled on merit forms?)
   E. Who decides on the numbers of GAs we have?
   F. What can we offer to make SHSU a desirable place to come?
   G. How can SHSU help with placement of our students?
   H. Will SHSU provide monies to pay for items such as a person to keep instrumentation running?
   I. How are LPP programs specifically determined? What is concrete in this determination, and is there flexibility in situations? Has the coordinating board backed down on their promise to increase number requirements?
   J. What has been considered concerning those graduate programs that contribute to departments in which much of the substantive undergraduate education is experience-based, and often provided by graduate students (science labs for one)? [For example in contrast, for on-line, coursework masters programs with little operational interaction between learning community members, little mentoring occurs. The progress of the student through these programs can be simply maintained through accumulation of courses/hours without the requirements for group work, sharing and serving, teaching and mentoring, or opportunities for leadership roles. Degrees can be obtained without group work in concert with others. However in disciplines such as chemistry, faculty, graduate students, and undergraduates gravitate toward research groups and the laboratories. Masters-level students are critical to the undergraduate lab experience.]
   K. What is the plan of action for addressing Low-Producing Programs at SHSU?
   L. How does SHSU define a low producing program, and is that definition different from THECB's definition? Is importance to the University

considered as a factor?

M. How is the university going to aid in this process? (Higher stipends?) If so, how will that be decided?

N. How will recruiting for low producing programs be accomplished? It seems as if one of the first questions to be examined is: Do we want a program in "X"? Why? And if so, how can this be carried out? The committee believes that our first goal should be to strengthen SHSU, and since all majors have their strengths and weaknesses, it is not simply a numbers issue.