

FACULTY SENATE MINUTES
SAM HOUSTON STATE UNIVERSITY

10 October 2013
3:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Austin Hall

Members present:

Nancy Baker (CHSS); Tracy Bilsing (CHSS); Jonathan Breazeale (COBA); Don Bumpass (COBA); Madhusudan Choudhary (COS); Kevin Clifton (COFAMC); Donna Cox (COE); Mark Frank (COBA); Randall Garner (COCJ); Richard Henriksen (COE); Joan Hudson (COS); C. Renée James (COS); Mark Klespis (COS); James Landa (CHSS); Hayoung Lim (COFAMC); Jeff Littlejohn (CHSS); Paul Loeffler (COS); Dennis Longmire (COCJ); David McTier (COFAMC); Sheryl Murphy-Manley (COFAMC); Diana Nabors (COE); Lisa Shen (NGL); Stacy Ulbig (CHSS); Doug Ullrich (COS); Anthony Watkins (COFAMC); Pam Zelbst (COBA); Matteo (IT) was also present.

Members not present:

Helen Berg (COE); on leave: Tom Cox (CHSS); James Crosby (CHSS); Dwayne Pavelock (COS); Debra Price (COE); Mary Anne Vincent (COHS).

Called to order: 3:30 p.m. in Austin Hall by Chair Renee James

Approval of minutes: September 26 minutes approved.

Provost Jaimie Hebert attended this meeting as a special guest and gave a presentation on how SHSU is governed. He also entertained questions from the senators on a number of topics.

Governance of Higher Education System

The provost explained that SHSU is a member of the Texas State University System (TSUS), the first university system founded in the state of Texas (1911). Eight universities in the system share in centralized, streamlined services such as legal counsel, accounting, auditing, academic program planning, contract administration, government relations and communications services.

The eight schools are: Lamar University, Sam Houston State University, Sul Ross State University, Texas State University, Lamar Institute of Technology, Lamar State College –Orange, Lamar State College –Port Arthur, Sul Ross State University Rio Grande College.

The TSUS system is headed by Chancellor Brian McCall. He is elected by the Board of Regents. Vice Chancellor Perry Moore is the chief academic officer. The Board of Regents has ten members appointed by the governor and confirmed by the Senate.

(One of these ten is a student from one of the eight universities.) Vernon Reaser III is the regent who represents this region's needs (and, hence, SHSU's needs).

The provost showed a detailed organizational chart of how the TSUS system works, who is in which position, and who answers to whom. SHSU has a TSUS system attorney located on campus, Rhonda Beassie. Sean Cunningham and Mike Wintemute provide information on developments in the State Legislature to the SHSU administration.

Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board

The provost stated that SHSU also operates under the Coordinating Board. The Coordinating Board was established later, after most of the university systems that exist in Texas. The original mission of the Coordinating Board was to coordinate degree offerings throughout the state and to eliminate the duplication of effort in different places throughout the state. The Coordinating Board's mission grew over time, quite extensively. For example, to promote efficiency, the Coordinating Board examined low-performing programs, and they required universities to receive approval to even propose a new program. In the last session of the Texas State Legislature, many of these expanded powers were removed from the Coordinating Board.

In general, the Coordinating Board members do not work closely with SHSU administrators (the way some of the regents do).

Workforce, Academic Affairs and Research Division (the "WAAR" division) is the one SHSU has the most contact with, when changes to SHSU's programs or curricula are proposed. SHSU takes such programs to the Board of Regents; once the Regents approve it, then it must go to the WAAR Division of the Coordinating Board to be approved there. The provost spends a lot of time working with this process for all changes at SHSU (even small things like changing a course number must go through this process). Two people with whom SHSU works frequently are: Stacey Silverman, Interim Assistant Commissioner of Universities and Health-Related Institutions, and James Goeman, Assistant Director. At the moment, the legislature's trimming of the Coordinating Board's powers has led to some uncertainty as to how involved the Coordinating Board will be in future proposed program changes.

The Coordinating Board and the Board of Regents could change whenever there's a gubernatorial election – our university is heavily affected by who sits in the governor's seat.

Academic Affairs Policy Review and Revision Process

The provost addressed the issue of the university's policy review and revision process. The provost said that SHSU has good processes in Academic Affairs, but none of the processes have been written down. In the past, SHSU had less change in faculty and administration, so everyone relied on institutional memory being located in individuals. The provost would like to write down the policy review process; the provost presented a draft of the process he envisions.

Technically, every single policy should be reviewed every 3 years, according to the policy on policies. SHSU has not been doing this review process and needs to start doing it.

The provost explained the process he envisions as follows. Anyone can propose a policy to the provost. The provost will bring it to Council of Academic Deans (CAD), Academic Affairs Executive Council (see below for membership list of AAEC), and the Faculty Senate. After these groups have suggested changes, the policy will be sent to the legal department for vetting. Then, the policy will go back to CAD and the AAEC for a final draft and approval. From there, the policy goes to the Academic Affairs Council (the Academic Affairs Council is comprised of CAD, AAEC, Senate Leadership, all of the chairs, all of the deans, plus additional representatives who have something relevant to say, such as the registrar, for example) for final approval. Lastly, the approved policy is sent to the President. Then, the revised policy will be posted and an e-mail sent to Faculty Senate to announce that the revised policy has been posted. (Cathy Gillette is in charge of all of these things.)

In this new proposed process, the Academic Policy Council would be eliminated. It has been a subset of the AAEC. Removing the APC removes one layer of bureaucracy. Instead, the Faculty Senate would be formally included as an integral part of the process (not simply an optional part of the process).

The policies and procedures website has been revamped to look neater. In the future, the provost will have added a window entitled "Policies under revision," and Cathy Gillette in the provost's office will update this frequently to show where in the process a policy under review is.

Kandi Tayebi (with a committee) is working on creating a similar flow chart for the curriculum process. The provost has asked other staff to create a flow chart for the process of hiring of faculty. The provost said other Vice Presidents will be asked to develop flow charts for their processes; the provost would like all of SHSU's business to have a documented process.

The Academic Affairs Executive Council (AAEC) is comprised of Associate Vice Presidents (who are not deans): Jerry Cook; Bill Angrove; Somer Franklin; Dick Eglsaer; Kandi Tayebi; Mary Robins.

One senator suggested perhaps a senator ought to sit on the AAEC and the CAD, but the provost said he preferred to have the different groups providing a system of checks and balances on each other.

The provost says the process is a “first draft” and subject to changes if, as we go along, we realize changes are needed. His goal is to streamline the process and ensure the independent and collaborative aspects of the process.

One senator raised the question of time limits or time lines for the process. The provost has discussed this with the associate provost, and they decided that at times there will be more time needed or more revisions/reviews needed in order to achieve a consensus, so timelines are not something the provost wants right now.

Other groups the provost explained could be part of the policy process included:

CAAD – Council of Associate Academic Deans (meets with Dick Eglesaer and Kandi Tayebi on a regular basis);

COC – Council of Chairs (a new committee, starting soon);

IDPAC – Interdivisional Policy Advisory Group (this includes the registrar, etc. – people who are outside of the academic policy process but who can play an advisory role; they will meet with Dick Eglesaer and Kandi Tayebi on a regular basis)

Other

Cabinet

These are all other independent groups that can be brought into the process if needed, but they are not slated to be a regular part of the policy review process.

One senator asked, “Does the Open Meetings Act apply to CAD, the way it applies to the Faculty Senate?” The provost said yes.

Another senator asked about policy changes that are not strictly academic but which affect academics. (Ex: Summer courses had to be done differently due to changes to the Banner system, and this caused problems.) The senator asked, is there any way to stop this or warn people before problems are caused? The provost explained that IDPAC has people from the registrar’s office, from IT, and from other positions that would have information on such changes; this is why Kandi Tayebi and Dick Eglesaer meeting with them regularly will allow everyone to prepare better for changes.

Another senator asked about the part of the policy review process that included only CAD and AAEC; why is Faculty Senate not included a second time here, for purposes of writing a final draft of a policy and approval of that policy? The provost said CAD and APC previously handled this part of the process, and this allowed CAD more power than faculty. The provost said he will add Faculty Senate to the box in the chart showing CAD and AAEC, to allow Faculty Senate to have a look at a final

draft and the right to final approval (before the policy is sent to AAC and then the president).

A senator asked if SHSU would be reviewing all policies every three years; the provost said yes, we are required to do this. All policies now have dates listed for the last date of review. This has revealed a number of policies are in need of review.

One senator asked if the flowchart is going to be turned into written procedures, to ensure that the process set up is actually formalized. The provost said yes.

Non Disclosure Agreement

A senator raised the issue of the Non Disclosure Agreement, on which all are required to do training and then sign. The terms of the NDA seem poorly defined and the NDA overreaching. The Faculty Senate provided the Provost with a copy of the Non Disclosure Agreement. The provost will review the policy.

Student Rejection Letters

A senator asked about transfer students and the lengthy process in communicating to such students whether they have been accepted or rejected. The senator stated that the rejection letters need to have the language toned down, with information provided to the student on with whom to follow up to find out what the issue is that caused them to be rejected. (Some students' transcripts did not arrive in time, etc.) The provost said SHSU does not categorize its rejections. There is one form letter, which is not adequate for the many different reasons and situations that could result in a rejection. A consulting firm examining this says SHSU is pushing away many qualified students who would like to come here and are qualified to, simply because some are missing a transcript, etc. The provost says this is under review; Mary Pascarella and Diane McCormick are working on this for undergraduate and graduate admissions. Now that SHSU is larger, we need to understand our pool of candidates better, with more nuance, beyond simply labeling students as accepted or rejected.

The provost told the senators that, over a 10-year period, SHSU has rejected 10,000 students who would have come here if they had been handled differently (for example, SHSU could have sent these students more nuanced rejection letters). This is a bigger pool than we could ever build through marketing activities, according to the consultants who have looked at this. Heather Thielemann agrees and is going to be working on this.

Teaching Evaluations of Online Courses versus On-campus Courses

One senator raised the issue of online versus on-campus courses in teaching evaluations for FES. The provost says Bill Angrove is collecting data on this, and Bill Angrove will be coming to talk to the Faculty Senate about it. The provost might attend that meeting if his schedule permits, as he is interested in knowing more about the discrepancy between online and on-campus scores.

Meeting adjourned at 4:57 pm.