

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

11 September 2014  
3:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.  
Austin Hall

**Members Present (29):**

Irfan Ahmed (COBA), Nancy Baker (CHSS), Helen Berg (COE), Tracy Bilsing (CHSS), Don Bumpass (COBA), Madhusudan Choudhary (COS), Donna Cox (COE), James Crosby (CHSS), Karla Edison (COE), Mark Frank (COBA), Randy Garner (CJ), Deborah Hatton (COFAMC), Richard Henriksen (COE), Joan Hudson (COS), Mark Klespis (COS), James Landa (COHS), Jeffrey Littlejohn (CHSS), Paul Loeffler (COS), Dennis Longmire (CJ), David McTier (COFAMC), Sheryl Murphy-Manley (COFAMC), Diana Nabors (COE), Gary Oden (COHS), Dwayne Pavelock (COS), Lisa Shen (NGL), Stacy Ulbig (CHSS), Douglas Ullrich (COS), Tony Watkins (COFAMC)

**Members Not Present (2):**

John Breazeale (COBA), John Domino (CHSS - on leave for Fall 2014)

**Called to Order:** 3:30 pm in Austin Hall by Chair Renee James

**Minutes Approved:** Minutes for June 3 meeting were approved unanimously (29 yes)

**Special Guest:** Provost Jamie Hebert

Provost Hebert attended the meeting to recognize outgoing senators and outgoing Chair, Dr. Renee James, for their service.

Outgoing chair Dr. James officially passed the Senate gavel to incoming Chair Nancy Baker.

**Committee Assignments and Election**

Senators elected Lisa Shen from Newton Gresham Library as the new chair-elect with a simple majority vote.

The senators broke into standing committees assigned based on preference, and elected chairs for each. The committee chairs are:

- Academic Affairs (AA) - Dwayne Pavelock
- Committee on Committees (COC) - Mark Frank
- Faculty Affairs (FA) - Debbie Hatton
- University Affairs (UA) - Tony Watkins

Dr. Baker encouraged the committees to consider issues they would like to focus on for this academic year. Dr. Baker also plans to hold biweekly Executive Committee meetings with the standing committee chairs and chair-elect to ensure goals for the individual committees and goals for the Senate are achieved in a coordinated fashion.

## **Chair's Report**

### **Faculty Development Leave Policy**

The FDL policy was revised in April 2014, when the time frame between development leaves was reduced from 7 to 5 years. Dr. James noticed that in the FDL information distributed by the Office of the Provost on September 3, the list of past FLD recipients ineligible to reapply for another leave still followed the old 7-year timetable.

Therefore, Dr. James and Dr. Baker have brought this issue to the Provost's attention during their last meeting. Dr. Baker will also follow up with the Provost's office and ensure a revised FDL recipient/ineligible applicant list is sent to the deans, chairs, and faculty.

### **Grievance Policy**

During the June 3 meeting, Provost Hebert informed senators the Board of Regents had approved revisions to the TSUS Faculty Grievance Policy proposed by system counsel, Dr. Fernando Gomez. SHSU administration was given only 24 hours to review the proposed changes. The revised policy reduced the grievance reporting period from 90 to 10 days and eliminated the grievance committee hearing for issues related to termination at end of contract, including denial of tenure or non-reappointment of a lecturer.

Dr. Baker addressed faculty concerns raised since Provost Hebert's announcement. In particular, since the revision was approved on June 1, 2014, grievance issues, including denial of tenure, occurred during spring 2014 will still proceed under the existing SHSU grievance policy. Grievance issues arising on or after June 1 will be covered by the new policy.

A senator asked how the reporting period of "10 days from the initiating event" will be determined. Based on the June 3 meeting minutes, Provost Hebert stated the timetable would start on the day the faculty member received and read the letter. Several senators felt this interpretation leaves too much ambiguity and could cause problems.

Another senator asked whether racial and gender discriminations concerns related to denial of tenure would fall under the new grievance policy. Dr. Baker will ask the provost for clarification regarding both the definition for the 10 day period and issues covered by the new policy.

### **Family and Medical Leave Policy**

Dr. Baker reported that both the provost and president are eager for revisions to the current policy and would like to offer the "broadest coverage with deepest support" possible, including a full semester's parental leave with salary and benefits. Dr. Baker asked Faculty Affairs Committee to review the current policy and make recommendations.

## **FES Revisions**

Dr. Baker reassured senators that university administration has not forgotten the proposed FES revisions. The recommended revisions from the Faculty Evaluation Committee have been submitted for review to the Council of Chairs. Unfortunately, the chair of chairs left the University this summer, so the review will resume this fall after election for the chair of chairs.

## **Merit Pay Raises**

Dr. Baker noted that Provost Hebert has expressed interests in more standardization in the merit process and shared some questions for senators to consider. For instance, who should receive merit pay increases? Everyone who achieved a set of defined standards, or only those who outperformed their peers? Also, how would merit be calculated? As a percentage of salary or in fixed amounts?

Several senators pointed out that faculty merit raises and market adjustments have not been updated on the Senate website since 2010. Therefore, Dr. Baker will ask the Provost to share this information so the Senate website can be updated.

## **Old Business**

### **Academic Policy 900417 (Faculty Reappointment, Promotion, and Tenure)**

During the last meeting on June 3, Senate had voted to postpone the vote on whether to accept the Faculty Affairs report on policy 900417, submitted by Donna Cox, FA chair at the time. The approval vote was postponed as several senators wished to have more time to discuss recommendations made in the detailed report.

Some concerns were raised about the treatment of collegiality in the FA report. During the April 2014 meeting, Senate had already voted and approved a report from the Committee on Committees regarding the treatment of collegiality in policy 990417, in which the recommendation was to remove collegiality as a separate category for tenure consideration, and instead to incorporate collegiality as a component in the evaluation for teaching, research, and service.

While the FA report identified many typographical errors in the policy, collegiality was left unchanged as a fourth category. Therefore, a few senators wondered whether voting to approve the FA report would result in conflicting recommended policy changes from Senate. Dr. Baker will ask the Provost about the status of the COC report, and find out who would be responsible for implementing the edits proposed by FA.

Another senator pointed out that policy section 4.1 needs to be updated since some tenure units have changed over the summer, with the Department of Family and Consumer Science moving from the College of Humanities and Social Sciences to the College of Science.

## **Bearkat OneCard**

Dr. Tracy Bilsing and Dr. John Breazeale, chair and member of the University Affairs Committee during the last academic year, met with Dr. Christie Vienne, Director of Bearkat OneCard to discuss concerns raised by faculty with the new card, issued by Higher One last spring. However, review of the resulting UA report was postponed due to time constraint at the June 3 meeting.

Dr. Bilsing summarized the UA report on behalf of Dr. Breazeale (absent) and concluded the partnership with Higher One is beneficial for SHSU as it greatly improves the operating efficiency and generates significant cost savings for the University. Dr. Vienne expressed surprise when learning about faculty concerns with the new card, but did acknowledge the close resemblance between faculty and student cards, and promised to look into making changes in the future.

One senator pointed out that UNT, also a partner with Higher One, offers a school ID and a separate Higher One card, and suggested a similar solution for SHSU. Another senator shared that Higher One still refuses to remove false information she was instructed to provide during the required new card activation process. These comments were followed by more discussions about the limitations of the Bearkat OneCard, including issues with activation and updating account information, such as difficulty with removing outdated addresses and credit card information.

Dr. Baker observed that there are a number of residual concerns with Bearkat OneCard, and asked the new University Affairs Committee to take a second look at this issue.

*A motion was made to accept the University Affairs Committee report on Bearkat OneCard.*

*Motion passed unanimously (29 yes).*

## **EEO and Same-Sex Marriage Spousal Benefits**

A senator recalled a past senate discussion on recommending that the university offer the same benefits and rights for spouses of employees in same-sex marriages as for spouses of employees in different-sex marriages, and inquired about the current status of the recommendation. Dr. Baker will ask the Provost for an update on this issue.

## **Consensual Relationships Policy**

Several senators have inquired about the proposed Human Resources policy concerning consensual relationships (Finance & Operations Human Resources Policy ER-10, Consensual Relationships), which was first submitted for Senate input during the January 23, 2014, meeting.

There were a number of concerns about the policy draft, including the definition for consensual relationship, concerns for privacy, including sexual orientation, and the level of discretion supervisors can exercise. Therefore, Senate had requested that the head of Human Resources,

David Hammond, provide a sampling a peer institutions' polices on consensual relationships. Dr. Baker will ask the Provost for an update on this proposed policy.

## **New Business**

### **Committee on Committees**

*A motion was made to approve Senate nomination for Rick White to the Research Council.*

*Motion passed unanimously (29 yes).*

### **Family and Medical Leave**

Presently, the SHSU Employee Leaves Policy (B-1) offers a federally-mandated 12-week, unpaid leave under the Family & Medical Leave Act (FMLA) for employees. In light of Provost Hebert's charge to improve family and medical leave options, one senator suggested a survey of the system policy and policy of peer institutions. A faculty member had also pointed out to Dr. Baker that Lamar University's policy is different from the SHSU policy, suggesting there could be some flexibility within TSUS.

In a related matter, there are also faculty requests to make breast pumping stations available (currently there is only one on campus) for the campus population. One senator suggested both issues should be considered with EEOC in mind. Dr. Baker would like the Faculty Affairs Committee to examine the Family and Medical Leave Policy and the related issues.

### **Center for Academic Computing**

Senator Madhusudan Choudhary reported that The Office of Research and Sponsored Programs (ORSP) has sensed increased high performance computing needs for both faculty and staff. Examples of academic computing include high performance research computing infrastructure and big data analysis technologies. Therefore, Dr. Choudhary would like to ask Senate to support the initiative to survey the need for an academic computer center on campus.

*A motion was made for the Committee on Committees to survey the needs for a center for academic computing.*

*Motion passed unanimously (29 yes)*

### **Gender Equality in Tenure, Pay & Promotion**

A number of senators voiced concerns for gender equality issues on campus. As an example, one senator pointed to the new calculation for merit pay introduced in the College of Fine Arts and Mass Communication last year. This calculation uses a percentage of salary as a faculty member's merit. However, since historically female faculty members' salaries are, on average, lower than their male counterparts', this seemingly equitable merit assignment had resulted in

lower actual merit pay for female faculty members who were awarded the same percentage merit increase as their male colleagues.

Other senators also raised concerns in possible discrepancies in tenure denial statistics by gender. One senator cautioned that equality issues are not always so unequivocally male versus female; factors such as one's perceived status or marital status should also be considered to avoid overly simplifying the issue. Dr. Baker would like the Faculty Affairs Committee to take the lead in examining issues and statistics related to gender equality in tenure, pay, and promotion.

### **Promotion and Career Track for Non-Tenure-Track Faculty**

Dr. Baker noted Dr. Frank Fair would like to share his trepidations concerning the lack of professional development support and merit pay for non-tenure-track teaching faculty with Senate. A lively discussion followed, with senators sharing similar issues in their respective departments and colleges.

Many senators agreed the practice of hiring "cheaper" teaching faculty on annual contracts or contract-by-course basis has created an environment that lacks stability and job security for adjunct faculty to pursue professional development, and for departments to invest in their non-tenure-track faculty members. Moreover, there are pool faculty members who have been teaching for the same departments at SHSU for many years, but are still offered annual contracts.

For the interest of time, Dr. Baker asked senators to continue this discussion at the next meeting. Dr. Baker will also ask the Provost for his input on this issue.

### **Constitution Day Celebration**

Outgoing senator Tom Cox shared a flyer and event information about the upcoming SHSU 2014 Constitution Day Celebration on September 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> to encourage faculty and student participation.

**Meeting adjourned at 5:02pm**