FACULTY SENATE MINUTES
SAM HOUSTON STATE UNIVERSITY
25 September 2014
3:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Austin Hall

Members Present (26):
Irfan Ahmed (COBA), Nancy Baker (CHSS), Helen Berg (COE), Tracy Bilsing (CHSS), John Breazeale (COBA), 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), Jeffry Littlejohn (CHSS), Paul Loeffler (COS), Dennis Longmire (CJ), David McTier (COFAMC), Sheryl Murphy-Manley (COFAMC), Gary Oden (COHS), Dwayne Pavelock (COS), Lisa Shen (NGL), Stacy Ulbig (CHSS), Douglas Ullrich (COS), Tony Watkins (COFAMC)

Members Not Present (5):
Joan Hudson (COS), Mark Klespis (COS), James Landa (COHS), Diana Nabors (COE), John Domino (CHSS - on leave for fall 2014)

Called to Order: 3:30 pm in Austin Hall by Chair Nancy Baker

Minutes Approved: Minutes for the September 11 meeting were approved (26 yes)

The senators took a few minutes to introduce themselves. Dr. Baker also gave special thanks to Senator James Landa, who made name cards for all the senators.

A thinking-of-you card for past chair Tracy Steele, who is on medical leave, was available for senators to share encouragement and goodwill with Tracy.

Chair's Report

Faculty Development Leave (FDL) Policy

When the FDL policy was revised this past April, the minimum required time between leaves was reduced from 7 to 5 years. However, the "ineligible list" of recent FDL recipients distributed by the Office of the Provost in early September still followed the old 7-year rule.

The corrected past FDL recipient list has been sent to all the deans after Dr. Baker alerted Julie Schwab of this error.

A senator inquired whether the updated list will also be sent to the general faculty. Dr. Baker felt such was the intention of the Office of the Provost in sending the list to the deans, and encouraged senators to ask their deans during the college dean-senator meetings.

FES Revisions

Dr. Baker reassured senators about Provost Hebert's commitment to revise the Faculty Evaluation System for teaching effectiveness (FES 1 and 2). The proposed revisions, developed by the Faculty Evaluation Committee, have been submitted to the Council of Chairs for review. The council will meet in early October to elect a new chair of chairs and review the proposed FES changes. After the chairs share their feedback, the provost will schedule town hall meetings with the general faculty in late November or next January, as time permits. Consequently, any resulting FES revisions will be implemented, at the earliest, during the next academic year.

Provost Hebert recognizes the faculty's frustration with the lengthy review process. Nonetheless, active participation from the faculty, the chairs, and the deans, is crucial to the success of the FES revision. Therefore, the provost would like to advise patience, so "we will get this right."

EEOC and Same-Sex Marriage Spousal Benefits

Regarding Senate's inquiry into offering the same benefits for spouses of employees in same-sex marriages as spouses of employees in different-sex marriages, the provost's response was a definite no. As a state institution, SHSU cannot offer equal benefits to spouses of employees in same-sex marriages, because same-sex marriage is not recognized by Texas state law.

As an alternative, Senator Debbie Hatton and the Faculty Affairs Committee have found a "plus one" benefit option at Baylor University. This option is available to any family member of an employee, including children, parents, siblings, and same-sex partners.

A senator noted that Baylor's benefit options are discussed and offered during hiring, and asked for SHSU to make its "plus one" benefits, if offered, available to both new and existing employees. Dr. Baker will ask the provost for his thoughts on "plus one" benefits.

Consensual Relationships Policy

Provost Hebert will verify with David Hammond, Associate Vice President of Human Resources, regarding the status of the Consensual Relationships Policy, and ask Mr. Hammond to provide Senate with a sampling of peer institutions' polices on consensual relationships.

Academic Policy 900417 (Reappointment, Promotion, and Tenure)

Addressing questions raised during the last meeting about where to submit suggested edits for academic policies, Dr. Baker verified that recommended revisions should be send to either Provost Hebert or Vice Provost Eglsaer.

Dr. Baker also updated Senate on the status of Committee on Committee's (CC) report on the treatment of collegiality in Policy 900417. CC's report was approved by Senate in April 2014

and submitted to Provost Hebert. The provost indicated the Council of Academic Deans (CAD) has considered CC's recommendations, but would still like to keep collegiality as a standalone category for tenure consideration. A senator inquired whether CAD was aware that CC's recommendation was not to eliminate collegiality altogether, but to incorporate collegiality into the evaluations of teaching, research, and service. The answer was yes.

Instead, Provost Hebert would like Senate to develop a clear definition of collegiality. The provost also suggested finding alternative wordings for the term to avoid confusions between collegiality and congeniality. Lastly, Dr. Baker would like to remind senators the provost feels strongly about not quantifying collegiality.

Grievance Policy

Provost Hebert addressed a number of questions raised during the last meeting about revisions to the TSUS Faculty Grievance Policy. Since the changes took effect on June 1, 2014, grievance issues that occurred during the past spring semester, including denial of tenure, will proceed under the existing SHSU policy. Grievances that occurred on or after June 1 will follow the new policy.

Dr. Baker also shared the provost's interpretation of the new policy reporting time limit of "10 days from the initiating event." In the case of tenure denial, the 10-day count will begin when the tenure decision letter is delivered face-to-face to the recipient. The provost will also discuss the delivery of tenure decisions with the deans to ensure consistency of practice.

A senator inquired whether merit pay raises assigned without adherence to a previously agreed merit assignment process using on FES, can be grieved, and, if so, how to calculate the 10-day reporting timetable? A lively discussion ensued. One senator pointed out that a decision can only be grieved if it is considered to be a violation of university policy. Other senators wondered if there are policies governing the assignment of merit raises, or do such documents only serve as general guidelines for merit assignments.

Additional concerns were raised about the determination of the "initiating event." In instances where face-to-face delivery of a decision is not feasible, would certified mail suffice? What if the recipient refuses to sign for the delivery? Dr. Baker will bring these questions to the provost's attention. Senators were also asked to continue the discussion on merit raises during the New Business section of the agenda for the new salary equity committee proposal.

Market Adjustment and Merit Pay

During his Senate visit last spring, Provost Hebert stated he and President Hoyt hoped to see $200,000 available for market adjustments in the fall. However, the most recent budget estimate from Dr. Carlos Hernandez, VP for Finance and Operations, is less hopeful. Due to tuition waivers and exemptions, Provost Hebert is unsure whether there will be any budget for market adjustments.

Senators from CHSS and COS shared similar responses about market adjustment from their deans. A senator remarked that the frustration from faculty is heightened by the initial promise of fund availability, because much time and effort were spent to prepare the market adjustment requests with the understanding that funds would be available.

Dr. Baker also shared the provost's plan to conduct an internal equity and external market comparison study for all faculty, which has received approval and support from President Hoyt. The study was prompted by a similar initiative to review staff salary across campus. A one-time budget of $95,000 was spent to address equity issues uncovered from the staff assessment.

Provost Hebert envisions using the study results to group faculty members into categories by the urgency of their market adjustment needs. Starting with the group with the most urgent needs, the provost plans to address each group's equity issues in rolling three year terms.

A senator questioned who would conduct the faculty salary study. The provost plans to ask a third party outside of the Office of Academic Affairs. Recognizing this interpretation of third party includes the Human Resources Department, a few senators would like to encourage the provost to consider using an external party outside of SHSU.

Another senator asked whether internal equity between gender groups will be considered. Dr. Baker said yes, a specific request to include gender in the study was made during the chair and chair-elect meeting with the provost.

A different senator wondered if anyone's salary was reduced as a result of the staff study, while others made suggestions for salary statistics for the faculty study, including annual faculty salary published by the Chronicle of Higher Education, geographically specific data, and data from discipline-specific bodies such as AACSB. Dr. Baker will share these comments with the provost.

Moreover, after learning of the faculty study, one faculty member cautioned Dr. Baker it took 5 years for the staff study to come to fruition. Therefore, Dr. Baker will also ask Provost Hebert about a tentative study timetable.

During this discussion, a question was raise about the unavailability of SHSU employee salary through the Texas Tribune website. This is likely because Paige Smith, who was responsible for running these data, has left the Office of Finance and Operations. As a result, it is taking longer to make salary information, including merit raises and market adjustments, available.

Data on Adjuncts

At Dr. Baker's request, Dr. Somer Franklin, Assistant VP for Academic Planning and Assessment, is preparing data on the number of teaching faculty at each level of academic ranking on campus. The information will be available for Senate review at the next meeting.

President's Roundtable on Creative Confidence

Dr. Baker provided a brief summary of the roundtable discussions and encouraged senators who did not attend the roundtable to refer to the handouts on creative confidence, available as an attachment in President Hoyt's roundtable email invitation.

Old Business

Academic Policy 900417 (Reappointment, Promotion, and Tenure)

In light of Dr. Baker's report, a senator wondered if Senate should wait for the Council of Chairs' feedback on the proposed FES changes before resuming the discussion on this policy.

In response, some senators pointed out that the Faculty Affairs report, first submitted to Senate last spring, highlighted many much-needed typographical corrections to the current policy. A few senators further recommended for the provost to remove the current policy from the Academic Affairs website altogether until corrections are made. On the other hand, some senators felt that copyediting academic policies should not be a task for the Senate.

After much deliberation, senators tentatively agreed that typographical errors in the current policy should be corrected as soon as possible, regardless of any anticipated substantive changes. However, senators also voiced reservations with voting to accept the FA report for submission to the provost. The vote of approval would signal Senate's endorsement for the entire report, which includes policy content beyond grammar and spelling corrections.

Bearkat OneCard

Chair of the University Affairs Committee (UA), Tony Watkins, shared his conversation with Dr. Vienne, Director of Bearkat OneCard Services, about a number of card issues raised by faculty. Dr. Vienne acknowledges issues with expired cards and reassures Senate her office is working with employees and students on resetting user accounts. The process takes 5-10 minutes.

Holders of non-activated cards will be unable to use their cards to access the HKC, athletic events, and locked buildings that they are authorized to enter afterhours. However, Dr. Vienne believed non-activated card holders might be able to use the library. A senator for the library confirmed that the SHSU community can access library resources without activating their cards.

When asked to consider offering two cards - one for ID, one for those who wish to use Higher One services - Dr. Vienne cited university policies to streamline processes and improve efficiency as reasons for not issuing separate cards. This reply differed from Dr. Vienne's comments from a previous meeting with UA representatives, when she agreed to look into

improving the Bearkat OneCard design to reduce its resemblance to a credit card, and to differentiate faculty and student cards.

Dr. Vienne acknowledged hearing about some faculty concerns with the new Bearkat OneCard, but said she has not received any concrete examples of card problems. Therefore, Senator Watkins has shared the email from a concerned faculty member who was required to use his SSN to reset his account password with Dr. Vienne, and is waiting for her response.

In addition, Dr. Vienne has accepted FA's invitation to visit Senate during the October 23 meeting. UA would like to encourage faculty to provide specific questions and instances of problems with the card for Dr. Vienne to address. Current examples included one senator who found her bank information listed in her account upon reactivating her card, and another senator who was asked to provide false information in order to complete the account activation.

One senator pointed out that security concerns, such as outdated ID photos, were the primary reasons for issuing new cards. However, another senator shared that the Bearkat OneCard office had politely persuaded her against taking a new ID photo when she asked to do so. Lastly, a different senator has requested a new card without the credit card-like features and will keep Senate updated on the status of this work order.

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

This matter was originally raised by Dr. Frank Fair, who felt annual contracts limited a department's ability to provide support and opportunities for non-tenure-track faculty members who have been teaching for the department for many years. The provost shares this concern and is open to offer multi-year contracts for non-tenure-track faculty, which, as he found out recently, is not illegal. Since Senate had limited time to discuss this topic during the last meeting, Dr. Baker encouraged senators to share their thoughts.

One senator suggested making opportunities available for non-tenure track faculty by creating more tenure-track positions to replace adjunct positions. Another senator is concerned about the way visiting assistant faculty positions are converted into tenure-track faculty lines. While it is good to increase tenure-track lines, the practice of taking funds from different sources to supplement the tenure-track line budget is awkward. A different senator suggested that budget is the true cause of these issues; if non-tenure-track faculty are compensated adequately, then this group would stop being a low-cost solution for the administration.

Speaking from past experience as an adjunct faculty, a senator felt the responsibility for career advancement and professional development of non-tenure-tracked faculty should primarily lie with those faculty themselves. Other senators pointed out that in some colleges, including Education, graduates from SHSU are working as adjunct faculty because college culture excludes them from considerations for tenure-track positions. This practice is not applied university-wide; a number of tenured and tenure-track Criminal Justice faculty hold doctoral degrees from SHSU.

A few senators questioned whether it is appropriate to discuss a faculty group not present at the meeting, and whether adjunct faculty have representation. Even though adjunct faculty do not serve on Senate, since all teaching faculty are eligible to vote in Senate elections, Faculty Senate would serve to represent all faculty, including non-tenure-track faculty.

Other senators raised concerns about the overall treatment of adjunct faculty. For instance, pool faculty in the Department of English has not received any raises in 20 years, while the College of Business Administration recently terminated the contracts of a number of adjunct faculty who have been teaching for SHSU for many years because of accreditation requirements. Another senator recalled when Provost Hebert was asked about providing raises for adjunct faculty at past Senate meeting, he had answered no repeatedly. Lastly, one senator remarked that, regardless of the solution, the limited campus resources available cannot adequately address the needs of all faculty, regardless of tenure status.

Dr. Baker asked the Faculty Affairs Committee to review the comments shared by senators and explore options to provide support for non-tenure-track faculty, including multi-year contracts.

New Business

Revised New Committee Proposals

During the last academic year, Senate approved proposals for two new committees: the Online Course-Development Support Committee and the Computer and Technology Standards Committee. The proposals were submitted to Academic Affairs for review. Dr. Tayebi, on behalf of Academic Affairs and the Committee Book, would like to ask Senate to include an additional representative on each committee. The new members will be nominated from either Graduate Studies or Academic Planning and Assessment.

Dr. Mark Frank, the chair of CC, presented the revised proposals for Senate. A few questions were raised about the proposal content, though none about the additional committee members. After some discussion, Dr. Frank reminded senators that the proposals themselves have already been reviewed and approved by Senate. The current review should focus on the revisions.

> *Motion was made to approve the revised proposals for the Online Course-Development Support Committee and the Computer and Technology Standards Committee. Motion passed (23 yes, 3 no, 0 abstention).*

The revised proposals will be reviewed at the next CAD meeting for final approval.

Proposal for New Salary Equity Committee

On behalf of faculty from the College of Science, Senator Paul Loeffler proposed forming a new committee to address internal salary equity issues related to market adjustment and merit pay increase. At the former institution of Dr. Loffler's colleague, such a committee served to represent the general faculty in reviewing the fairness of market and merit assignments, independent from a faculty member's department, chair, and dean.

A senator questioned who the proposed committee should report to. Dr. Loeffler felt the committee should report to the provost, which provides an alternate channel of communication from the deans. Another senator thought this committee could serve to address the merit assignment issue raised during the grievance policy discussion.

Other senators were concerned about the scope of the committee charge. Would the committee focus on the procedure of merit assignments? Or the actual salary amounts? A number of senators, including Dr. Loeffler, believed the committee should focus on violation of policy and procedures, since salary levels varies between academic disciplines. However, others questioned if there are policies available for salary and merit reviews.

Taking all the comments into account, Dr. Baker asked Committee on Committees to look into forming a proposal for the salary equity committee.

SACS Accreditation

A number of faculty have raised concerns about SHSU Administration's interpretation of the SACS Accreditation requirements. For instance, in the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, it was determined that faculty members' degrees must match their departments' names or titles of the courses they teach. Consequently, a faculty with a PhD in American Studies can no longer teach courses in Political Science or History. Similarly, at the College of Fine Arts and Mass Communications, a tenure-track faculty line remains vacant because the type of terminal degrees held by candidates best suited for the position did not meet the administration's interpretation of SACS Accreditation requirements.

Dr. Baker wished to ascertain the extent of such issues in each college. A few senators pointed out that in the College of Criminal Justice, instead of "matching" a faculty's degree with courses taught, justifications can be made based on a faculty's experience and expertise. On the other hand, some departments in the College of Science are encountering SACS interpretation issues similar to those in CHSS.

Sharing of Senate Meeting Details

A senator inquired whether, or when, it would it be appropriate to share details of the Senate meetings? After approval of meeting minutes? And in how much detail? Dr. Baker replied that

since Senate meetings are open to the public, senators should feel comfortable sharing anything transpired during the open meetings. Other senators agreed.

Course Load Reduction for Chair-Elect

Another senator shared that, while consider running for Senate chair-elect, he was surprised to learn about all the responsibilities associated with the position. Therefore, the senator would like to see similar administrative support offered to the Senate chair, specifically the reduction in course load, extended to the chair-elect. Several senators, including past Senate chairs, voiced support for the idea.

> ***Motion was made for the Senate to recommend the Office of the Provost to offer a one-course reduction per semester for the Senate chair-elect.***
> ***Motion passed (25 yes, 0 no, 1 abstention).***

Meeting Adjourned at 5:00pm

(Proposed) Computer and Technology Standards Committee

Category   Faculty Affairs

Appointed by   President
Reports to   Vice President for Information Technology

Number of Members 12
      Chair   1
      Faculty   8
      Staff   3

Purpose

Serves in an advisory capacity in establishing Information Technology (IT) standard equipment specifications for faculty, including desktop and mobile devices; provides a forum for effective communication of faculty concerns regarding university technology standards.

Appointments

The committee will consist of 12 members. The IT Asset Management Coordinator will serve as chair of the committee for an indefinite term. Members will be appointed by the President to serve three-year rotating terms. Appointees should be selected from nominations provided by the deans, Faculty Senate, and the IT asset management. Committee membership should include at least one faculty member from each of the colleges/library, one member from IT asset management, one member from the Distance Education and Learning Technologies for Academics (DELTA Center), and one member from the Office of Graduate Studies.

(Proposed) Online Course-Development Support Committee

Category   Academic Affairs

Appointed by   Director of the Professional and Academic Center for Excellence (PACE)
Reports to   Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

Number of Members   11
        Chair   1
        Faculty   8
        Staff   2

Purpose

Serves in an advisory capacity to department chairs and faculty regarding the pedagogy of online teaching and learning. To that end, the committee would:

- Provide research-based methods/strategies for teaching in the online setting
- Help insure the rigor and quality of online instruction is on par with face-to-face instructional practices
- Offer faculty workshops/presentations/suggestions for best practices in online teaching and learning
- Coordinate peer-evaluation of online courses
- Provide a forum for sharing ideas, resources, concerns, and questions about teaching and learning in the online format

Appointments

The committee will consist of 11 members. The Director of the Professional and Academic Center for Excellence (PACE) will serve as chair of the committee for an indefinite term. Members will be appointed by the Director of PACE to serve three-year rotating terms. Appointees should be selected from nominations provided by the deans, the Faculty Senate, and Distance Education and Learning Technologies for Academics (DELTA Center). To the degree possible, committee membership should include at least one faculty member from each of the colleges/library, one member from the Distance Education and Learning Technologies for Academics (DELTA Center), and one member from either the Office of Graduate Studies or the Office of Academic Planning and Assessment.