

**FACULTY SENATE MINUTES  
SAM HOUSTON STATE UNIVERSITY**

30 April 2015  
3:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.  
Austin Hall

**Members Present (22):**

Irfan Ahmed (COBA), Nancy Baker (CHSS), Tracy Bilsing (CHSS), Jonathan Breazeale (COBA), Madhusudan Choudhary (COS), James Crosby (CHSS), Donna Cox (COE), John Domino (CHSS), Karla Edison (COE), Mark Frank (COBA), Deborah Hatton (COFAMC), Richard Henriksen (COE), Mark Klespis (COS), James Landa (COHS), Jeffrey Littlejohn (CHSS), Paul Loeffler (COS), Dennis Longmire (CJ), David McTier (COFAMC), Sheryl Murphy-Manley (COFAMC), Lisa Shen (NGL), Stacy Ulbig (CHSS), Tony Watkins (COFAMC)

**Members Not Present (9):**

Helen Berg (COE), Don Bumpass (COBA), Diane Dowdey (CHSS), Randy Garner (CJ), Joan Hudson (COS), Diana Nabors (COE), Gary Oden (COHS), Dwayne Pavelock (COS), Douglas Ullrich (COS)

**Called to Order:** 3:35 pm in Austin Hall by Chair Nancy Baker

**Minutes Approved:** Minutes for the April 16<sup>th</sup> meeting were approved unanimously

**Special Guest:** Dr. Jaimie Hebert, Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs

**Special Recognition and Farewell for Dr. Paul Loeffler**

Provost Hebert presented Senator Loeffler, who is retiring at the end of the academic year, with a plaque to commemorate his tenure at SHSU. A former Senate chair, Dr. Loeffler represented his fellow faculty on the SHSU Senate for over 25 years, yet this accomplishment still pales in comparison to his other mentorships and services to students, to faculty, and to the university community. Dr. Loeffler accepted the plaque with standing ovations from the senators.

**Provost's Report**

Dr. Hebert update senators on a number of ongoing University and legislative issues.

**Grievance Policy**

The provost is working with Attorney Beassie to prepare a document to summarize the various type of grievances and their reporting procedures. For instance, individuals wishing to grieve the denial of tenure or non-renewal of contract would present their case to a president-appointed hearing officer. However, those who wish to grieve mid-contract terminations, including the demotion or termination of tenure, would still receive a full committee hearing. This finalized

grievance process “road map” document will be shared with Senate and faculty in the near future.

## **FlashNotes**

The provost has met with Holly Tickner, the University Bookstore manager, to discuss the promotional email that was sent by the Bookstore, with the official SHSU logo, to encourage students to use FlashNotes. Mrs. Tickner confirmed that the email was sent by the Barnes & Nobel (B&N) corporate office through her official SHSU email account. The University Bookstore was not consulted in the decision to send this mass email.

Under the University’s contract with B&N, the University Bookstore has the right to send emails to students who have not opted out of receiving promotional bookstore emails. However, since the Senate meeting on April 16<sup>th</sup> to address the issues with FlashNotes, Mrs. Tickner has requested for B&N to stop marketing FlashNotes to SHSU students, and the regional B&N manager has agreed. In addition, the Office of Student Services is preparing a memo to the student body, reminding them of the importance and responsibilities of respecting the intellectual property rights of others.

Dr. Hebert also plans to discuss the issue with FlashNotes and similar services with General Counsel Dr. Gomez at the next TSUS Board meeting. Not all the system universities have contracts with B&N, but nonetheless, students from at least 17 universities in Texas are already using FlashNotes.

A senator observed that since Senate met with representatives from FlashNotes on April 16<sup>th</sup>, the number of SHSU items for sale on FlashNotes has grown from 12 to 36. The provost indicated Mrs. Tickner is working on “freezing” the SHSU account with FlashNotes. However, several senators with mobile devices confirmed that they are still able to access SHSU materials posted on FlashNotes. One senator even made a successful test purchase for a set of class notes during the present discussion.

The provost will contact Mrs. Tickner about freezing the SHSU FlashNotes content, and update senators on the TSUS Board discussion about FlashNotes.

## **Revision of Academic Policies**

A number academic policies are currently under review, including the policies for faculty workload, for promotion, tenure, and reappointment, and for the faculty evaluation system (FES). The revised policies drafts will be available for Senate to review in the fall.

A senator inquired about status of the FES policy revision. Dr. Hebert confirmed that the proposed revisions, developed by Dean Edmonson and Lyons, will be completed before the end of May. The document will then be reviewed by the deans during the summer, and faculty town halls will be held during the fall semester.

Concerns were expressed about the repeated delay of faculty town hall on FES revisions. The provost explained that based on feedback from the deans and the chairs about the FES revisions, he felt it would more productive to ask the two deans to consolidate all the comments into a single document, then invite the general faculty to review and comment. Therefore, Dr. Hebert wished to reassure faculty that the town halls will take place soon.

### **Guns on Campus**

There are a number of proposed bills on firearms in the current state legislative session. Because of the sheer number of bills and the amendments still being made to each, it is too early to assess the final legislative decision regarding firearms on campus. Nonetheless, the TSUS system is working with campus law enforcement to create a formal report to oppose both open and concealed carry on university campuses.

Senator Donna Cox, who is also a representative of the Texas Association of College Teachers (TACT), asked whether the University has an official position statement on this issue. TACT is actively lobbying against guns on campus and seeking documents to support this effort. The provost confirmed that the SHSU Administration and the rest of the TSUS all strongly oppose any legislations that would allow for guns on campus, and will look into the availability of an official statement.

### **Campus Diversity**

A senator asked about the best practices for search committees to include diversity in faculty candidate selection. Specifically, the Human Resources department has recommended that diversity should not be taken into consideration until near the end of the search process; if two candidates are very close, then diversity can be used as factor. Are there other ways to encourage diversity in the hiring process?

The system general counsel's position is that if all things are equal, then diversity can be considered. Therefore, the provost felt that HR's suggested method would apply when hiring for a very specialized research area. However, if a department is searching for a generalist in a field with many qualified candidates, then diversity could be considered earlier in the search process.

Another senator remarked that intentionality is the key. SHSU has a diversified student body because the University intended to develop one. However, similar efforts are lacking in the search for new faculty. The provost agreed that the University must increase its effort in representing ourselves as an open and diverse community.

### **Faculty Salary Study**

An external consulting firm has begun assessing the internal and external equity of faculty salary levels at SHSU. The consultants have met with the deans and requested a list of compatible peer institutions for each college and the library. These peer comparisons will also take geographic location and cost of living into consideration.

One senator asked whether the consultants will examine possible gender inequities in salary. The answer is yes. The results of the study will be shared with the Senate, and the provost is committed to address any inequalities uncovered in the report.

## **Budget Outlook**

The provost will meet with Senate sometime July to share updates on funding-related legislation outcomes and the budget outlook for fiscal year 2015-16. To date, the administration is optimistic about the budget and enrollment has been promising. The provost also stressed that as the University develops new programs in the health sciences, every effort will be made to ensure the growth is not made at the expense of other programs.

## **New Business**

### **Senate Charter Change**

In Fall 2014, Senate had passed a recommendation for the Chair-elect to receive a one-course course release during the fall and spring semesters, which was approved by the Provost. In order for the Chair-elect to take advantage of the course-release, senators had determined it would be best to reschedule the chair-elect election from the first fall meeting of the new academic year to the last spring meeting of the previous academic year.

Since timing of the election was stated in the Senate Charter, a referendum question to update the Charter was presented to the general faculty as part of the 2014-15 Faculty Survey. Senator Frank, the Committee on Committees chair, reported that the referendum to reschedule the election had passed with 97% of approval of the voting faculty. The next step was for the change to gain 2/3 approval in the Senate.

*A motion was made to accept the Charter amendment for rescheduling the election for the Senate Chair-Elect.*

*Motion passed unanimously (22 ayes)*

As the last step to solidify the change, Senator Frank will present the amendment to the Charter to President Hoyt for approval.

### **Election for Chair-Elect**

Senator Donna Cox was nominated and elected as the 2015-16 Faculty Senate Chair-Elect (22 ayes, 0 nay, and 0 abstention).

### **Academic Affairs Committee Report – Recommended Revisions for the Financial Conflict of Interest Policy in Research Pertaining to Sponsored Projects**

The proposed new Academic Policy Statement 9050809 was submitted for Senate review by the Office of Research and Sponsored Projects. The Academic Affairs committee had reviewed the policy draft on behalf Senate and submitted a number of recommended revisions. AA's report (please see attached documents) was circulated electronically before the meeting.

*A motion was made to accept the Recommended Revisions to the proposed Academic Policy Statement 9050809 submitted by the Academic Affairs Committee.  
Motion passed unanimously (22 ayes)*

### **Faculty Affairs Committee Reports – FMLA and Year End Summary**

The Faculty Affairs Committee submitted two reports (see attached documents): the committee's assessment of the current SHSU Family and Medical Leave policy, which was circulated during the April 16<sup>th</sup> meeting, and a summary of all the items the committee worked during the 2014-15 academic year.

### **Firearms on Campus**

In support of TSUS and TACT's efforts to highlight faculty's position on allowing firearms on campus. Senators discussed developing a resolution to solidify the SHSU Faculty Senate's position on the matter. A resolution was drafted using a similar document passed by the Texas Council of Faculty Senate last fall.

*A motion was made to adopt the following resolution*

WHEREAS, allowing concealed or openly carried firearms on university campuses threatens our ability to create and maintain a safe, open learning environment for students, faculty, and staff.

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that the Sam Houston State University Faculty Senate opposes any legislation or initiatives that will overturn the present prohibitions on firearms established in Texas.

*Motion passed (21 ayes, 1 nay)*

### **Graduate Faculty Status Policy (#801014)**

Due to time constraint, review of the Graduate Faculty Status Policy will be postponed to the next academic year. Dr. Baker encouraged senators to gather feedback from colleagues about this issue, especially regarding the number graduate faculty levels and the criteria for each.

**Meeting adjourned at 5:00 pm**