

FACULTY SENATE MINUTES
SAM HOUSTON STATE UNIVERSITY
November 29, 2012
3:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Austin Hall

Members present:

Nancy Baker (H&SS); Tracy Bilsing (H&SS); Kevin Clifton (FA&MC); Tom Cox (H&SS); James Crosby (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); Joyce McCauley (COE); Lisa Shen (NGL); Tracy Steele (H&SS); Stacy Ulbig (H&SS); Walton Watkins (FA&MC); Ricky White (COS); Pam Zelbst (COBA)

Members not present:

Helen Berg (COE); Don Bumpass (COBA); Donna Cox (COE); Diane Dowdey (H&SS); Debbi Hatton (H&SS); Paul Loeffler (COS); Dwayne Pavelock (COS); Debra Price (COE); Doug Ullrich (COS);

Visitor: John Pascarella, Dean COS

Called to order: 3:30 p.m. in Austin Hall by Chair Tracy Steele

Approval of Minutes: Approval of November 1 minutes was deferred until next meeting, pending edits.

Special Guest: David Hammonds, Associate Vice President for Human Resources and Risk Management

David Hammonds visited Faculty Senate to discuss Affirmative Action and the issue of a hostile work environment.

In short, Affirmative Action is a group of federal regulations requiring an employer to provide every possible opportunity to protected classes (e.g., minorities, women, certain age groups, etc) in order to, for example, gain employment. Numbers are tracked on SHSU employees (both faculty + staff) and progress reports are presented annually.

In addition to AA, there is a federal requirement for pay equity between male/female workers. A study will be conducted to determine whether any pay disparity exists at SHSU, a study which has apparently never been conducted in the history of SHSU. If a disparity exists, the next steps will be to determine where the inequities lie and what would be the best way to address them.

Senators asked Mr. Hammonds whether there is a plan to address underrepresented groups, particularly in faculty positions. Mr. Hammonds indicated that if we can improve the diversity of our applicants, in time the employee base will diversify. It is particularly difficult to get diversity in many faculty positions, given the current academic climate. He also emphasized that AA rules do not consider international applicants a protected class (this is a group that is covered under Equal Employment Opportunity). Senators indicated that diversifying our applicant pool can be done by wider advertising, but this strategy requires money – sometimes considerable – that departments simply don't have when it comes to advertising positions. Unfortunately, even in staff positions – where the requirement is typically only a BA – SHSU still has difficulty achieving any level of diversity.

Senate was also interested in gathering data on relative promotion rates for minorities and relative rates of tenure and promotion for men and women.

With respect to the issue of a hostile work environment, Mr. Hammonds assured Senate that complaints of a hostile work environment are investigated seriously. He did indicate that a majority of time the problem is not so much a hostile work environment but a personality conflict. There seems to be no consistent level of hostile work environment complaints. Additionally, staff generate approximately 85% of the complaints, versus 15% from faculty.

When a complaint is received, the first step is to allow the employee to express his/her concerns. If there is any discomfort talking to a particular HR member, another one can be requested. After the initial session, Mr. Hammonds proceeds on a case-by-case basis, with a concerted effort to work the situation out with the supervisor.

Should an SHSU employee feel discriminated against, there is a time limit to file a formal grievance (14 days from the date of the incident of discrimination). However, there is no time limit to reporting an act of discrimination. Typically Mr. Hammonds is the first point of contact should someone feel he/she is a victim of discrimination.

Mr. Hammonds then handed out Finance and Operations Human Resources Policy ER-4 (Affirmative Action Plan) and Finance and Operations Human Resources Policy ER-7 (Discrimination, Sexual Harassment, and Equal Employment Opportunity [EEO]), which can be found here:
http://www.shsu.edu/intranet/policies/finop/human_resources/documents/ER-4.pdf
http://www.shsu.edu/intranet/policies/finop/human_resources/documents/ER-7.pdf

Chair's Report:

A. HEAF Funds:

Both Senators Anthony Watkins and Debbi Hatton had indicated that there was great concern in their departments about the reduction in HEAF money. We were unable to get to this key issue when we met in Senate on November 1, but during the November 2 meeting, the Provost said that many departments had been using HEAF money for basic operating expenses, which was not the appropriate use of these funds. Finance VP Hooten had determined last year which departments were using HEAF money correctly (such for the purchase of computers or equipment) and how much they needed. HEAF money was distributed this year based what was determined to be the department's need (they realize that they may not have gotten this right and are willing to address those departments who received too little). To cover the loss of operating expenses for departments, VP Hooten is making one-time payments to departments. In future budgets, these costs will be paid by slowly increasing O&M allotments. So, each department should receive supplementary money to replace lost HEAF money, but it has not all been "pushed out" or allotted yet. A sizeable amount of the HEAF money went to IT to cover the cost of computers. Colleges may submit their request for computer-related equipment through Mark Adams and IT to access that HEAF money. In fact, the Provost said, that even more money should be available than under the old system of distributing HEAF money. The Provost indicated that he wants all money spent, but he wants it spent wisely.

According to the Provost, departments that need more money need only to ask for it. For example, if you have broken equipment that needs to be replaced quickly, it needs to be reported to the department chair.

The chair needs to request funds from the Dean who should in turn request funds from the Provost. Money is available, but there is a need for improving communication. \$800,000 was left in College budgets in August for faculty positions. Previously, college Deans used those lines to cover their budgets

since several colleges were underfunded and summer school was not funded at all. Now, everything has been funded adequately and the idea is that Colleges can and should return that money to the Provost who intends to use it for large one-ticket, one-time purchases (one-time since it cannot be guaranteed that next year \$800,000 will be left from this budget line). The Provost has expressed his desire to spend it all (rather than return it to the President), but he wants it spent wisely (not just to be used rather than lost such as buying a new sofa). If a Department Chair feels that the issue needs the attention of the Provost directly, he or she should go to the Provost and talk. The intent is not to “starve” departments of funds but to stop spending HEAF in an un-prioritized, inappropriate manner.

B. Permanent Representative to the Texas Council of Faculty Senates (TCFS) and Budget Increase:

I provided a copy of my Chair’s Report (Nov. 1) and went over highlights that underlined our need to have a permanent TCFS representative. Senator Paul Loeffler was the one who suggested that we may need such a position in order to increase our presence in TCFS. It was noted that we hoped this would increase the likelihood of having an SHSU representative elected to State office (there are four positions that will be open next spring and Senate should probably actively address this). The Provost was very much in favor of having a continuous presence at TCFS. He immediately increased our budget to facilitate this move, with assurance more could be arranged so that the elected could attend public Coordinating Board meetings. The Provost would like SHSU and the Senate to have as much representation at key events in Austin as possible. The spring meeting of the TCFS will not be held at the same time as the Coordinating Board’s meeting, so we might want our “permanent” representative to be present at those meetings. We now have the budget for our new “permanent” representative to attend the next meeting on March 1-2, 2013, as well as to represent SHSU at the next Coordinating Board meeting in Austin that will be held in January of 2013.

C. SHSU General Financial Situation:

The Provost reported that funding from the State had been cut by 4% in recent years. In addition, Hazlewood and other legacy programs are costing the university 4% of its budget. Despite this, SHSU is holding its own. An extra \$2 million (from budget rationalization and increased tuition) had been added to the Academic Affairs Budget. This money has been used for increased O&M, new positions, new initiatives, shifted HEAF allotments, and raises. If SHSU is reimbursed for its Hazlewood outlay and Hazlewood is funded in future, SHSU stands to gain \$15 to \$20 million.

On the subject of internal grants the Provost said that, in fact, none of the internal grants or Faculty Development Leaves has ever had its own line in the budget. Money to cover the costs of these grants has always just been “found.” These items will be funded in future and the Provost hopes that this will help to not only stabilize a set amount to fund these grants but also to make it easier to raise permanently the money set aside for them in future.

Summer School is now funded in the budget. Vice President Hooten has added 4.9% to the summer budget, reflecting the increase in enrollment for Fall 2012.

NEW BUSINESS:

Senator Mark Frank unanimously elected to be the ‘standing’ representative to the TCFS meetings. The Committee on Committees was charged with drawing up specific guidelines, duties, and limitations of the position.

Huntsville Economic Study meeting – In one of several focus groups, faculty living both in Huntsville and outside of Huntsville discussed what the city of Huntsville could do to attract more faculty. It was unanimously agreed that Huntsville schools need improvement, but senators felt that there was little discussion about viable solutions to this problem. Instead more discussion focused on issues of cosmetics and beautification. One senator suggested that a major underlying issue is the lack of addressing of racial

inequality in Huntsville, something that will continue to be an issue. Senators were reminded that this was only one of several meetings that the City of Huntsville is hosting in order to gather information and find out which projects are most supported/supportable, etc.

It was mentioned that there is funding to send a senator or two to the upcoming IDEA ‘training of trainers’ session in San Antonio in early February. This is something that will be revisited.

The perennial issue of the late drop date was discussed. The reality seems to be that the late drop date serves to save administrators’ time, but in return it takes up the time of the professors. One rationale to have the drop date be the last class day is to help students succeed when they retake a class, the logic of which was discussed vigorously. An additional concern is that if the drop deadline is too early in the semester, students might use up their drops too early in their academic careers and adversely affect later years. Again, though, if one of our missions is to teach personal responsibility, it would seem that effective academic planning would be preferable. The University Affairs committee was given the task of exploring the drop date issue.

CORE Report: Debbi Hatton – no updates.

Committee Reports:

1. Academic Affairs Committee [see attached report on recommendations for IDEA representative visit]. When the AA Committee met with Dean Mitchell Muesham, there was concern that Senate was requesting two identical sessions for faculty members and no sessions addressing such issues like using IDEA for accreditation (e.g., SACS). The committee asked whether it is possible for IDEA to come for a 2-day visit so that they may address both faculty issues and administrator issues.

Online courses: [see attached for the full report on online offerings]. For online courses, there is a \$300 fee paid by the students to cover course development, scholarships, graduate assistantships, and other things that assist in the creation and implementation of an online course. Senators questioned why students would continue paying such a high fee, but the overall feeling was that if they wanted to pay this known fee, that was the prerogative of the students.

2. Faculty Affairs Committee

This committee is looking into adjunct pay and status. One issue revolves around the possibility of “resurrecting” the title of lecturer for full-time adjuncts. Senate did not know what the specific rights of adjunct faculty were, nor whether there was a formal body of adjuncts with whom issues could be discussed. These questions will be explored.

Faculty Affairs has been conducting a survey on teaching compensation practices, the results of which will be brought up in a future Senate meeting.

Finally, the Faculty Affairs Committee reported on privacy issues with the email server [see attached]. The upshot of their findings is that SHSU (or individuals with access to a given email account) can wipe emails from mobile device by following directions within the , which would be nice if phone/iPad were stolen.

3. Committee on Committees

The committee preference email has been sent out to all faculty members. All faculty members interested in running for Faculty Senate should check the appropriate box.

Old Business:

Report on “visioning” meeting (Loeffler, Frank, or Murphy-Manley). The day-long session seemed more to focus on small sound bites and advertising points rather than plans to increase academic excellence. The impression from the meeting was that academic affairs is not the focus of the “visioning” process.

Upcoming Scheduled Visitors:

Norma O’Bannon, Travel; Marsha Harman (PACE) on Dec. 6

Mark Adams, Vice President for Information Technology, on Jan. 24

Next Senate Meeting: December 6, 2012 in Austin Hall

Adjournment: 5:02 pm