

FACULTY SENATE MINUTES
SAM HOUSTON STATE UNIVERSITY

April 19, 2012

3:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.
LSC 304

Members Present:

Tracy Bilsing (CHSS), Donald Bumpass (COBA), Erin Cassidy (NGL), Kevin Clifton (CFAMC), Jeff Crane (CHSS), Donna Desforges (CHSS), Diane Dowdey (CHSS), Mark Frank (COBA), Debbi Hatton (CHSS), Renee James (COS), William Jasper (COS), Gerald Kohers (COBA), Lawrence Kohn (COE), Paul Loeffler (COS), Sheryl Murphy-Manley (CFAMC), Dwayne Pavelock (COS), Javier Pinell (CFAMC), Tracy Steele (CHSS), Dough Ullrich (COS), Ricky White (COS), Pamela Zelbst (COBA)

Members Not Present: Len Breen (COE), Randall Garner (CJ), Chad Hargrave (COS), Joyce McCauley (COE) and Debbie Price (COE)

Called to order at 3:30 by Debbi Hatton

Minutes of the April 5, 2012 meeting were approved with Amendments with two abstentions.

Committee Reports:

Academic Affairs:

Faculty Handbook - Renee James, chair of the committee, reported that her committee had reviewed the Faculty Handbook's online table of contents and its links. A vast number of links to websites failed to connect to a "live" website. Not only were there numerous inactive links, but the committee suspected that the links did not always go to the newest, updated policies. Gerald Kohers noted that the last major revision of the Handbook had been in 2009. There followed some discussion as to who or which office was responsible for maintaining the Faculty Handbook. Should it be the Provost's office or a faculty member? It was decided that the issue would be raised by Chair Hatton with the Provost at their next meeting to find a permanent home for the Faculty Handbook where the staff would be responsible for its maintenance and upkeep. This will be important because in the next academic year, another committee will be charged with reviewing the whole Faculty Handbook. The Senate voted unanimously to accept the committee's report.

Committee on Committees:

University Committee Appointments - Gerald Kohers, chair of the Committee on Committees, handed out proposed nominations to university committees for those positions which are either directly appointed by the Senate or recommended by the Senate for appointment to serve. There followed some discussion as to whether or not the Senate should appoint faculty to the Women's Advisory Committee which has been defunct (or inactive) for at least five years. There followed a general discussion as to whether or not to nominate faculty to any committee that is known to have never met. It was determined not to appoint new committee members to defunct committees with the proviso, that if there was a request for a committee to be appointed, it would be done. Other topics related to the appointment of university committees were related to reward committees – such as excellence in teaching. There was some question as to whether appointees needed to be tenured. Also, there was discussion as to whether past winners should be the members (again, teaching was the example used). After a discussion regarding the Curriculum Committee and other modifications, the Senate voted unanimously to forward the committee's nominations with some modifications.

Faculty Senate Survey – Gerald Kohers distributed copies of the survey results for 2011-12. A general discussion followed. It was reported that the number of respondents was considerably lower this year – in the 20% range which is down from 37% the previous year. It was noted that there had not been a follow-up e-mail reminder to faculty which may account for the lower response rate. Senators reviewed the survey to identify possible issues for the Senate to address in the coming Academic Year (2012-13). High among the concerns of the faculty who responded to the survey were:

1. IDEA
2. Communication
3. Graduate Support
4. Parking – Senators thought they should concentrate on the cost of parking decals and the increased fees rather than simply the number of parking spaces in relation to the number of decals sold which has been investigated previously.
5. Investigate if Sam Houston has a culture of intimidation, sexism, racism, ageism which can make it a hostile environment in which to work.

There followed a discussion regarding typed comments on the Faculty Senate Survey. Senators reviewed the comments with an eye not only to the issues raised but also to determine if an individual could be identified by the comments, i.e., were they sufficiently specific that the anonymity promised by the Senate for respondents could be jeopardized. Finally, Senators agreed to insert lines after each comment so it would NOT be evident that a number of comments came from the same source. Comments

will simply be organized by college. Self-identifying comments (as determined by Senators) were redacted also to insure privacy of the individual. Copies of the survey with the numerical results will be posted on the Faculty Senate's Website. Copies of the written comments will be given to President Gibson and Provost Hebert. The Senate voted unanimously to accept the full report as redacted.

University Affairs Committee:

Online Courses and IDEA – Erin Cassidy, chair of the University Affairs Committee, distributed a report on IDEA and online classes. Her committee found that there is general agreement across the university that students score IDEA differently if a course is face-to-face or online. For online courses, students tend to score IDEA based on the organization of the course and its material. In face-to-face classes, students tend to score IDEA based on the professor. The Committee concluded that there should be a separate instrument to evaluate online courses than the IDEA form which was created to evaluate face-to-face classes. Senator Cassidy noted that, across the university, there was no consistent approach for dealing with the disparity between IDEA scores for online or face-to-face classes. Online tend to be lower. Some colleges adjust IDEA scores, others do not. The Committee made several recommendations:

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SHSU BASED ON COMMITTEE FINDINGS:

1. A study should be run in each college on the disparity between online and on-site course scores.
2. SHSU should create or adopt a distinct evaluation form for use in online courses.
3. SHSU should explore ways to improve student response rate to online course evaluations and should educate faculty on the best practices for posting course evaluation announcements and reminders.
4. Consistent guidelines should be recommended to chairs and deans for how to compare evaluation scores from on-site and online courses.
5. SHSU should provide faculty with more training, focused not just on the technologies of online education, but on skills and best practices for how to move away from the "digital correspondence course" model and instead develop skills in online pedagogy and build rich, interactive online courses.
6. Greater consistency should be observed in when IDEA evaluations are opened and closed, especially in online classes.
7. A standardized process should be consistently followed for returning to faculty the student comments received from IDEA; these are often not received by faculty, despite the fact that they are a critical source of feedback.

There followed a broader discussion of evaluations. One Senator reported that faculty may contact Martha Blume to set when the evaluations for online courses open and close. From the general discussion Senators realized that there was a considerable discrepancy on which evaluations for face-to-face classes were distributed and the time and date by which they were to be returned. Chair Hatton warned that some IDEA

forms are re-cycled if the front page was not filled out. She and others in her department found in the spring of 2012 that their packet included IDEA forms which had been partially filled out (but only the back page). It was generally acknowledged that Faculty should look out for this. The Senate also noted that there was a discrepancy in terms of how much course specific information was pre-filled in the IDEA forms. For example, the course number, etc. Some come filled out with this identifying information and others do not.

As the discussion of evaluations continued, it became clear that there is a discrepancy among colleges and departments regarding the return of written comments by students. Some faculty reported that they do not receive any comments from students back and others received either copies of hand-written comments or typed comments.

Ultimately, the Senate voted unanimously to accept the committee's report with amendments that called for consistency and standardization on distribution and collection as well as the dissemination of comments to faculty.

Online Compensation - Erin Cassidy's committee also reviewed the compensation for creating online courses. Her committee found that there was great variation across the university in terms of compensation for creating online courses. There were several variations but it was particularly noted that some colleges give \$2000 and others do not pay anything for the creation of a new online course. The committee called for more consistency in compensation but its recommendations are not binding. The Senate voted unanimously to accept the report.

Chair Report:

Core Curriculum - Chair Hatton reported on the progress of the Core Curriculum Review Committee. The committee will work through the summer. Chair Hatton reported that they were presently working on forms to be sent to Departments to add courses to the Core. Departments should submit these forms by October 1. The University Curriculum Committee should make recommendations by February 1 of 2013. It will continue up the chain of command to the Coordinating Board in February of 2014 and will be in place by the fall of 2014. Dean Tayebi and Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs Eglsaer are co-chairs of the 27-member committee. Chair Hatton reported that the intent is to create a smaller CORE that will give students a level foundation of information – what all students should know.

Raises – Chair Hatton reported that they are still possible. Faculty should know by early June. SHSU's budget for 2012-13 was based on 0 Enrollment growth but the university expected growth of 2 to 3%. More students applied in the first four months of

2012 than in the entirety of 2011. Pay increases will come if the Board of Regents approves the increases in fees and designated tuition at their May meeting.

Summer Enrollment - Chair Hatton noted that enrollment for summer courses is down and scholarships are now being offered for summer courses.

CFAMC Dean Search – Chair Hatton reported that an outside firm has been hired to help with this dean search. This company should help to widen the pool of applicants and help with the vetting process only. The final decision on the hire will be in line with previous practices. It is expected that a new dean will be in place by August of 2013.

COS Dean Search – Chair Hatton reported that this search was progressing but there was no new information to report.

Summer Meeting – Chair Hatton reported that the Provost would like to meet with the Senate at some point in the Summer (perhaps July) to provide an update on budgets, raises and other issues. Senators generally agreed on Tuesday or Wednesday after 2 PM during Summer II.

Announcement by Erin Cassidy, NGL:

“The Library is seeking student research posters for public display in the Dan Rather display cases in the library lobby. If you have a student doing excellent research, encourage them to consider turning it into a poster presentation to build their resume and promote the student research at SHSU. More info, examples, templates, and contact info at: <http://shslibraryguides.org/studentdisplay>.”

Adjournment at 4:55 PM