

**FACULTY SENATE MINUTES
SAM HOUSTON STATE UNIVERSITY**

9 October 2014

3:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Austin Hall

Members Present (25):

Irfan Ahmed (COBA), Nancy Baker (CHSS), John Breazeale (COBA), Helen Berg (COE), Don Bumpass (COBA), Madhusudan Choudhary (COS), 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), Paul Loeffler (COS), Dennis Longmire (CJ), Sheryl Murphy-Manley (COFAMC), Diana Nabors (COE), Dwayne Pavelock (COS), Lisa Shen (NGL), Stacy Ulbig (CHSS), Douglas Ullrich (COS), Tony Watkins (COFAMC)

Members Not Present (6):

Tracy Bilsing (CHSS), Donna Cox (COE), Jeff Littlejohn (CHSS), David McTier (COFAMC), Gary Oden (COHS), John Domino (CHSS - on leave for Fall 2014)

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

Approval of Minutes: Minutes for October 9 meeting were approved unanimously (22 yes*)

Chair's Report

Academic Policy Review Chart

Dr. Baker shared the Academic Affairs Policy Review Flowchart with senators. The chart was introduced during the Academic Affairs Council (AAC) meeting on October 1st by Provost Hebert.

Several senators raised concerns regarding the final policy approval stage in the flowchart. Specifically, based on the chart, three academic bodies - the Council Academic Deans (CAD), the Academic Affairs Executive Councils (AAEC), and the Faculty Senate – are tasked with reviewing academic policies during the initial revision stage. However, after a proposed policy passes legal edits, only CAD and AAEC, along with AAC, are shown in the chart to be participating in the final policy draft preparation for presidential approval, while the Faculty Senate is not included.

Therefore, to ensure faculty are represented during the final review process of academic policies, senators requested for Provost Hebert to include Faculty Senate in the corresponding stage in the flowchart. Especially, as one senior senator recalled, since the provost had already promised to do so during his visit with the Senate last fall.

**3 senators arrived after the approval of minutes*

Academic Policy 900417 (Reappointment, Promotion, and Tenure)

During past discussions about policy 900417, the provost had shared CAD's preference for keeping collegiality as a fourth pillar in tenure and promotion evaluations. Yet, recently a few senators shared that their dean did not recall such discussion about collegiality with the provost.

Dr. Baker raised these concerns with Provost Hebert, who agreed that the topic of collegiality was not formally voted on by the deans, but reassured Dr. Baker it was most definitely discussed during CAD meetings.

Moreover, the provost pointed out that since the policy is still under review, Senate has the power to solidify its position by submitting a policy draft with collegiality fully removed. Nevertheless, Dr. Baker cautioned senators that since CAD's position is also unchanged, collegiality will most likely be added back into the policy during the revision process, and Senate would miss the chance to define, or reshape the concept.

Given the significance of this revision decision, Dr. Baker asked senators to save all their comments for the Old Business section of the agenda when this topic will be fully addressed.

Same-Sex Marriage Spousal Benefits

The SHSU Administration's position on offering equal benefits for spouses of employees in same-sex marriages is unchanged. As a state institution, SHSU cannot offer equal benefits because same-sex marriage is not recognized under Texas state law. When asked for his thoughts on the "plus-one" benefit option offered at Baylor University, the provost pointed out that unlike SHSU, Baylor is a private institution with a private insurer, which can offer more flexible benefit options.

Even so, Dr. Baker's conversation with Provost Hebert took place before the October 8th Supreme Court decision to let stand appeals court rulings in allowing same-sex marriage in five states. In light of the Supreme Court rulings, Dr. Baker will ask for inputs from the TSUS administration and peer institutes at the upcoming Texas Council of Faculty Senate meeting.

The Faculty Affairs committee had also identified several public state institutions, including UT El Paso, TSU San Marcos, and University Houston, that are working on offering, more inclusive benefits options than SHSU. FA will be looking into the details of these benefit policies.

Faculty Salary Study

Provost Hebert met with David Hammond, the Associate Vice President of Human Resources, to discuss study implementation on October 2nd. The study will include all faculty salaries, starting with the tenured and tenure-track faculty members, followed by clinical faculty and adjunct/pool faculty. The anticipated study time is one year. HR plans to collaborate with an outside third-party consultant in conducting the study, although study details are still pending.

For external comparisons, the provost would like HR to use either the salary survey from the College and University Professional Association for Human Resources (the CUPA survey), or something compatible. The provost would like to see program-based comparisons on the national, regional, and peer institution levels. Lamar University and TSU San Marcos were suggested as examples of SHSU's peer intuitions.

Provost Hebert has also asked HR to develop a system to routinely address market issues. Ideally, any faculty salary that falls below a specific percentage would be automatically identified and addressed by this system, without the need to file individual market adjustment requests. For the same reason, the provost suggested for Senate to hold off on the Salary Equity Committee proposal until the new system is established.

Dr. Baker further addressed several faculty questions about the salary study. In particular, there will be no salary reduction as a result of the study; no such reduction happened from the staff salary study, either. As for the concerns that a similar study for academic staff took five years to complete, Dr. Baker believed such calculation included the length of time the study idea was discussed, not executed, as the actual staff study ran from November 2013 to April 2014. Furthermore, the provost has shared his anticipated study completion time of summer 2015 with HR and Senate.

A few senators wished to verify the exact the salary data for the external comparison study. However, the study details are still to be determined. Dr. Baker restated Provost Hebert's suggestion for HR to use the CUPA survey, "or something like it."

Support for Adjunct Faculty

Provost Hebert appreciated Senate's interests in increasing the support for adjunct faculty. Even so, the provost pointed out that SHSU is on par with peer TSUS institutions concerning compensation for adjunct faculty, and the resources available for all the campus areas that could benefit from additional funding is limited.

For instance, Provost Hebert calculated that it would take approximately \$450,000 in additional funds per year to compensate all adjunct faculty at least \$3,000 per course. Offsetting this budget increase would require a 1% overall reduction in merit pay increases, or the elimination of the entire academic affairs new initiatives funds.

A senator inquired whether there is any consistency between compensation for adjunct faculty across college, or by the level of courses (e.g. undergraduate vs. graduate) taught. The ensuing discussion revealed that there is no consistent adjunct salary model across campus, with the lowest compensation amount identified at \$1,800 per course. Given the wide range of adjunct pay at SHSU, one senator asked for the upcoming faculty salary study to examine adjunct compensation at a micro level, since broad salary averages would ignore these significant variations. Dr. Baker will bring this request to Provost Hebert, and also ask for the salary range data of adjunct faculty.

Dr. Baker reminded senators that the provost is still open to offering multiyear contracts for long term adjunct faculty members. Nevertheless, a few senators shared diverse views from their fellow adjunct faculty on multiyear contracts. One faculty member indicated strong preference for part-time, single-year contracts because such flexibility offers better work-life balance. A few other adjunct faculty were concerned that multi-year contract commitments might reduce their autonomy in choosing which courses to teach.

One senator recalled that during the CHSS senators' meeting with Dean Abbey Zink, the dean mentioned the practice of providing a career path with distinct levels and corresponding pay increases at her past institution, Texas A&M University-Kingsville. Dr. Baker observed these options deserved further considerations, and asked all senators to collect more thoughts from their fellow adjunct faculty on institutional support and contract options. The feedback should be sent to the chair of the Faculty Affairs Committee, Debbi Hatton.

Last, Dr. Baker shared the spring 2014 faculty rank statistics with senators. The data was available by headcount and semester credit hours (see Related Documents). The information was provided, at Dr. Baker's request, by Dr. Somer Franklin, the Assistant VP for Academic Planning and Assessment.

Dr. Baker addressed several senators questions about the definition of terms used in Dr. Franklin's report. In particular, full-time equivalent (FTE) was used in the headcount calculation. Therefore, the FTE headcount of teaching assistants would be lower than the total number of (mostly part-time) teaching assistants in most colleges. Furthermore, both adjunct and clinical faculty are included in the category of "temporary" faculty, while "adjunct staff" is defined as staff members who also teach courses such as UNIV 1301, Introduction to Collegiate Studies. Since the same data will be used in the SACS accreditation reports, Dr. Baker asked senators to review the statistics in detail and alert her to any inaccuracies.

SACS Accreditation

A number of committees across the university are working on individual aspects of the SHSU fifth-year interim review for SACS accreditation. The individual committee documents will be submitted to Dr. Somer Franklin by the end of October. Dr. Franklin will compile and review the submissions to ensure all SACS standards are met. The final report will be submitted to SACS in March 2015.

Provost Hebert acknowledged that during the review process, serious concerns have emerged regarding mismatches between faculty degrees and their department or the courses they teach. While the minimum requirement for adjunct faculty is 18 graduate hours earned in the subject area taught, the administration's understanding is that the expectation from SACS for the academic background of tenured and tenure-track faculty is higher.

Some senators pondered the source of the SHSU administration's apprehension towards degree matching, especially since similar issues did not emerge during past SACS reviews. Dr. Baker

felt the anxiety is caused by a combination of changes in accreditation standards and a new SACS liaison contact for SHSU. Another senator asked about the inconsistency in degree matching expectations between different colleges. Dr. Baker responded that Dr. Somer Franklin, who is in charge of compiling the SACS reports, had deferred to individual departments and colleges to provide justifications for the academic backgrounds of their faculty, and each exception has its unique set of circumstances.

One senator wondered about the administration's view on interdisciplinary degrees, especially given the current push in cross-disciplinary research and collaborations. A few senators shared examples in which exceptions were made based on faculty members' professional experience or background. However, other senators shared instances in which justifications for exceptions were rejected, and pointed out that interdisciplinary degrees may not be accepted in some colleges, including CHSS.

Grievance Policy

In the recent TSUS Grievance Policy revision, which was approved by the Board of Regents and came into effect on June 1, 2014, the filing period for grievances related to tenure denial or non-renewal of contract was reduced from 90 to 10 days. In addition, instead of presenting the issue to the faculty grievance committee, the faculty member will now meet with a grievance hearing officer designated by the president.

Dr. Baker shared several faculty questions about the policy revision with senators. First, the revised policy does not address the process for grievances regarding matters other than tenure denial or non-renewal of contract – should those issues still be addressed by a grievance committee? Moreover, how should the 10-day grievance filing period be calculated?

Provost Hebert has addressed the filing time calculation by creating a letter template for acknowledgement of understanding of tenure decisions. The letter will include signatures from the president, the provost, the dean, and the chair. The recipient faculty member will then be asked to sign the acknowledgement letter upon delivery of tenure or contract renewal decisions. The provost has shared the letter template with the deans and chairs at the recent AAC meeting.

Dr. Baker had pointed out to Provost Hebert that a faculty member might be reluctant to sign the acknowledgement letter on the spot, right after learning of an unfavorable tenure decision. The provost in turn indicated he would be willing to accept a reasonable response time of 1 to 2 days.

Nonetheless, the current procedure for non-tenure-related grievances is still unclear under the revised policy. Furthermore, there appears to be confusion about the exact content of the TSUS revisions. Dr. Baker pointed to two versions of the policy, both downloaded directly from the TSUS website (<http://www.tsus.edu/about/policies.html>), with the Senate. In the policy downloaded on September 26th, the grievance filing time was 10 days. However, in the policy downloaded on October 3rd, the same filing time had been extended to 30 days. Moreover, additional edits to the October 3rd version of the policy seems to suggest that all grievance

matters will be handled by the president-appointed grievance officer instead of a grievance committee.

Provost Hebert is waiting to hear back from the TSUS system attorney regarding these inconsistencies. Dr. Baker has requested updates from the provost and will also ask for inputs from peer TSUS institutions at the upcoming Texas Council of Faculty Senate meeting on October 24th and 25th.

Merit Pay

Provost Hebert has asked CAD to address the lack of consistency in determining merit pay raises. The provost does not wish to standardize merit pay assignment all across campus, but would like the deans to improve its consistency within each college.

Bearkat OneCard

Both the Faculty Affairs Committee and the senator who had placed a work order for an ID card without the MasterCard logo have been sent on frustrating runarounds. The Bearkat OneCard Services, its external integrated financial service partner, Higher One, and the Office of Academic Affairs, all felt they do not have the authority to offer a new card.

Therefore, Provost Hebert will ask the President's Cabinet regarding feasibility of offering an academic ID card for those in the SHSU community who do not use or wish to have Higher One service accounts. Currently, those who wish not to activate their cards by creating Higher One accounts would also lose their privileges to access the gym, enter locked buildings afterhours, and attend SHSU athletic events for free.

In preparation for the upcoming Senate visit from Dr. Vienne, Director of Bearkat OneCard Services, on October 23, Senator Tony Watkins, the chair of the University Affairs Committee, would like to invite faculty to share any issues with using the current Bearkat OneCard for Dr. Vienne's attention. Some examples include the faculty member who was required to use SSN to retrieve account login info, and faculty members who were questioned or denied access at other universities, including at the Yale University Library, because of their Bearkat OneCard's credit-card-like appearance.

Course Load Reduction for Chair-Elect

Provost Hebert will ask CAD for the deans' thoughts on offering a single-course load reduction for the chair-elect of Senate.

Consensual Relationships Policy

There are no updates on this policy draft. Senate is waiting for HR to provide a sampling of peer intuitions' policies for comparison. A reporter from the Houstonian who contacted Dr. Baker about the policy was referred to HR and Mr. Hammond.

FES Revisions

The Council of Chairs has begun meeting to review the proposed FES revisions. The chairs will provide their thoughts on the revisions to the provost by the end of December. Dr. Baker also shared that Vice Provost Eglsaer has begun reviewing FES 4 to improve fairness and effectiveness in the evaluation of faculty's service contributions.

Upon initial review, some chairs have expressed trepidations about the additional efforts needed to implement the proposed changes. In response, Provost Hebert has asked the chairs to focus on the value and benefits generated by the changes rather than the cost. The provost also asked the chairs to propose the types of support and resources they would like Academic Affairs to provide in order to implement the revisions.

Old Business

Academic Policy 900417 (Reappointment, Promotion, and Tenure)

Since the provost and the deans felt strongly about keeping collegiality in the policy for faculty reappointment, tenure, and promotion, Dr. Baker asked senators to focus the discussion on the available options for Senate to revise the role of collegiality in the policy. One option is to remove collegiality from the policy. While this method would solidify Senate's position, the reality is collegiality will mostly likely be added back into the policy by the administration. Another option is to recognize the inclusion of collegiality in the policy, and develop a new definition for it to minimize misuse. The provost is also open to renaming the evaluation category for collegiality altogether to avoid confusions between collegiality and likability.

One senator wondered how collegiality can be used in the 6th year tenure decision when it is not assessed in any annual FES reviews along the way. Another senator recalled that the provost did not want a separate category for collegiality in FES reviews. A different senator thought such practice sends inconsistent messages to the faculty. Even though FES and tenure evaluation are two separate systems, they are both meant to assess faculty's effectiveness in their professional performance. Therefore, how can one system uses collegiality as the "4th pillar" for evaluation, while the other system never addresses it?

On the other hand, a few senators felt collegiality would be a poor fit for FES reviews. FES is meant to document performance, and faculty should not be required to provide evidence for collegial behavior. Dr. Baker also reminded senators that Provost Hebert does not wish for collegiality to be quantified. On the other hand, a senator pointed out that a faculty member's

lack of collegiality can certainly be documented. Perhaps it should be the DPTAC's responsibility to provide evidence for a faculty member's lack of collegiality. Furthermore, this practice would echo Provost Hebert's push for departments to improve review documentations for all non-tenured and probationary faculty. If a faculty member was refused tenure, there should be records to support the decision.

In the ensuing discussion, it appeared there are wide variations on whether, and how, collegiality is addressed by each department leading to the tenure vote. In some DPTACs, collegiality is discussed during tenure-track faculty's third year reviews, and those who may be wanting in collegiality are assigned tenured faculty mentors. The mentors' reports are then reviewed for collegiality considerations during the tenure vote. In other DPTACs, the question of whether a faculty member is a good departmental citizenship is considered during annual reviews. This "departmental citizenship" definition also matches closely with the provost's view on equating collegiality with ability to help the department move forward and achieve the goals of the tenure unit.

However, some senators felt departmental citizenship is still an abstract term that can lead to misinterpretation. For instance, as one senator pointed out, since cultural norms vary, employing vague terms like collegiality or department citizenship may put international faculty at a disadvantage. Another senator echoed the sentiment and further reminded senators that American culture itself is not homogenous. The term collegiality simply carries too much negative connotation for some minority groups.

Dr. Baker asked senators if they had a chance to discuss the topic of collegiality during the dean-senator meetings for their colleges. A number of senators shared their deans' comments. Even though the deans are mostly in support of including some assessment for collegiality, none concisely defined the criteria for evaluation. Some of the reoccurring themes mentioned were contribution to the mission of the department and college, not "poisoning the well," demonstration of mutual respect and civility, and fit with the department, college, and institutional culture.

Yet, as other senators pointed out, similar to the terminology of departmental citizenship, the deans' definitions are also abstract concepts that can lead to the same misuses as collegiality. Moreover, would any of these changes actually affect how faculty vote? Some senators thought not. Tenure votes are recorded, but the DPTAC does not have to provide explanations for the votes. On the other hand, the tenure decision is a professional judgment made by the tenured peers of a faculty member. Requiring DPTACs to justify their decisions would undermine the authority of tenured faculty.

One senator suggested creating operational definitions for whatever the category for collegiality will be renamed as. Just as there are IDEA scores for teaching and impact factors for publication, there should be quantifiable behavioral outcomes for the assessment of collegiality or departmental citizenship.

As a starting point for defining collegiality, a senator then shared the existing policy's definition, which states that collegiality "addresses the faculty member's ability to function as an effective

professional in accomplishing the goals of the tenure unit (or academic department) and the university.” While senators do not disagree with the definition, most felt it is too subjective as an assessment criterion. Another senator also wondered if the revision actually matters, since, according to the same policy: “Meeting of the above criteria, especially the first three, does not guarantee or confer an entitlement to tenure and/or promotion.”

Nevertheless, many senators agreed that requiring DPTAC to provide evidence of non-collegial behavior would protect faculty from misuse of collegiality. A different senator further suggested providing examples of how collegiality should not be applied, to prevent misuse. Other senators would also like for collegiality to be reviewed on an annual basis, so a faculty members deemed wanting in collegiality would have a chance to address the issues and improve.

As it was already close to 5pm, one senator proposed for Dr. Baker to designate a future meeting time specifically to defining collegiality. Since Dr. Vienne is already scheduled to visit Senate during the next meeting on October 23rd to discuss the Bearkat OneCard, Dr. Baker will allot time for further discussion on collegiality during the November 6th Senate meeting.

Meeting Adjourned at 5:03pm