

**FACULTY SENATE MINUTES  
SAM HOUSTON STATE UNIVERSITY**

20 November 2014

3:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Lowman Student Center, Room 304

**Members Present (21):**

Irfan Ahmed (COBA), Nancy Baker (CHSS), Tracy Bilsing (CHSS), Jonathan Breazeale (COBA), Don Bumpass (COBA), Madhusudan Choudhary (COS), Donna Cox (COE), James Crosby (CHSS), Karla Edison (COE), Mark Frank (COBA), Richard Henriksen (COE), Mark Klespis (COS), James Landa (COHS), Jeffry Littlejohn (CHSS), Dennis Longmire (CJ), David McTier (COFAMC), Sheryl Murphy-Manley (COFAMC), Dwayne Pavelock (COS), Lisa Shen (NGL), Stacy Ulbig (CHSS), Douglas Ullrich (COS), Tony Watkins (COFAMC)

**Members Not Present (10):**

Helen Berg (COE), John Domino (CHSS - on leave for Fall 2014), Randy Garner (CJ), Deborah Hatton (COFAMC), Joan Hudson (COS), Paul Loeffler (COS), Diana Nabors (COE), Gary Oden (COHS)

**Called to Order:** 3:30 pm in LSC 304 by Chair Nancy Baker

**Minutes Approved:** Minutes for the November 6 meeting were approved unanimously (21 yes).

**Chair's Report**

(Please see Related Documents for the full report, which was emailed to senators before the meeting.)

**Policy 820317 Faculty Evaluation System (FES) – Rewrite**

A committee was recently established in the College of Education to revise COE's FES policy. Given the ongoing university-level FES policy review, a senator wondered if timing of the COE revisions is of concern. Dr. Baker felt that the concurrent reviews reflected the provost and the deans' efforts to improve the consistency and effectiveness of the FES process. Conflicts should be minimal because the university policy is meant to provide general guidelines, while the college and departmental policy is meant to address specifics of the evaluation process.

Some senators were troubled by Provost Herbert's plan to ask two deans to rewrite the FES policy, particularly since the provost had articulated to the Senate on multiple occasions that recommendations for FES revisions should come from the faculty. Dr. Baker reassured senators that the new plan is meant to make the revision process more efficient. Moreover, the provost had specifically tasked two new deans who are former chairs with the rewrite to ensure the faculty's perspective is not lost in the process.

Senators also inquired about plans for faculty FES town hall meetings. Dr. Baker confirmed that the town halls will take place in spring 2015 and she had specifically confirmed this matter with the provost. The revised FES policy from Dean Lyons and Dean Edmonson will be shared with

the general faculty through town hall meetings before going forward in the policy review process. Since the town halls were originally scheduled for spring 2014, some senators expressed frustrations about this delay.

Another senator asked about the status of the Faculty Evaluation Committee. After making FES revision recommendations in December 2013, the committee has not met nor received any feedback since. Dr. Baker will find out about the status of this committee.

A few senators shared an idea that arose from a discussion with their dean about policy reviews. The current academic policy review process has uncovered inconsistencies both within and between various policies, which some felt may be better addressed by a one-time comprehensive review of all academic policies.

Therefore, the senators would like to suggest asking a group of faculty with expertise in technical writing and policy revision experience to take on this task during the summer. The group members would serve as third-party consultants and receive compensation for their efforts.

A number of senators supported taking advantage of the expertise of fellow faculty members and providing some financial incentives given the scale of the review. Other senators noted it should be made clear that the purpose of the group would be to align and edit, not rewrite, all the academic policies. Dr. Baker will share the suggestions with the provost.

#### **Policy 900417 (Tenure and Promotion)**

A senator wished to verify the provost's response regarding timetable for a faculty member to withdraw an application for tenure to avoid the "denial of tenure" status on his/her record. Dr. Baker confirmed that a faculty member can withdraw his/her application by submitting a resignation letter any time before the president submits the list of faculty names to the TSUS Board of Regents.

Another senator asked whether the resignation letter submission would prevent faculty from receiving the courtesy one-year contract offered to those who were officially denied tenure. The provost has stated that he believes a courtesy year should be extended to any faculty member who presented a competitive case for tenure considerations. The senator then expressed support for a guaranteed courtesy contract year for all faculty who withdrew their tenure applications.

#### **Policy 820317 Faculty Evaluation System (FES) – Recommended Revision Options**

Dr. Baker wished to address questions about the recommended options for FES revision. Specifically, there is concern that the options, currently under review by the Council of Chairs, has been presented as a submission from Senate, even though it was developed by the Faculty Evaluation Committee.

Dr. Baker clarified that even though the revision options did not originate from Senate, they were presented to Senate in a Faculty Affairs Committee report for review during the May 2, 2013 meeting. The report was then accepted by a majority vote. Unfortunately, the meeting minutes

and related documents for this particular meeting is not currently unavailable online. Dr. Baker is working on locating the FA report.

A senator pointed out that distinctions should be made between accepted and endorsed reports. Dr. Baker will ask the provost to clarify the wording used to describe Senate's association with FES revision options, and verify content of the documents submitted to the Council of Chairs.

A different senator was troubled by the recent appointments of ad hoc policy review groups and task forces. These appointments appeared to be bypassing the established policy review process and undermined faculty governance. Dr. Baker felt the ad hoc committees appointments were a temporary measure to get the review process back on track because of the number of overdue policy reviews. Moreover, even though faculty may not be directly represented on all the ad hoc committees, all the revised policy drafts will be submitted to Senate for review.

## **Committee Reports**

### **Texas Council of Faculty Senate (TCFS) Meeting**

Chair-elect Lisa Shen submitted a summary report (please see Related Documents) from the October 2014 TCFS and TSUS meeting. In particular, the TSUS system will be focusing on funding for Tuition Revenue Bonds, Higher Education Assistance Fund (HEAF), and Hazelwood exemptions during the new legislative session. Senators expressed support for the TSUS System's efforts to increase funding, especially for Hazelwood exemptions.

### **SHSU's Sexual Misconduct Policy (University Affairs Committee)**

Tony Watkins, Chair of the University Affairs (UA) Committee, presented UA's findings on the university's policies and processes for handling reports of sexual assault and sexual misconduct on campus (please see Related Documents for full report). A senator asked about the reason for the policy review. The request to examine the policy was out of general concern and did not originate from any specific incident.

Overall, the committee concluded that the university has reasonable measures in place to address the incidents of sexual assault and sexual misconduct. There are multiple points of contact available for reporting a complaint and a number of trainings available for both students and employees. Jeanine Bias, the Associate Dean of Students and Title IX Coordinator, was very helpful in addressing FA's questions regarding the campus sexual misconduct policy and has offered to visit Senate.

The FA committee members have also spoken to various campus departments involved in handling sexual misconduct incidents, and noted that there are specific reporting rules for university employees in different positions. For instance, health service and counseling professionals are bound by a code of ethics to protect patient confidentiality and would keep all information private. In such cases, only the fact that an incident had occurred would be reported, without any personally identifiable information, for basic statistics tracking. In contrast,

University Police may also choose to release limited information on cases with pending criminal charges.

In addition, while university employees have an obligation to report knowledge of sexual misconduct incidents to the campus Title IX coordinator, the decision to contact law enforcement belongs to the actual complainant. Some senators were concerned about unreported incidents, although others pointed out that students are adults with the autonomy and responsibility to make the reporting decision.

A senator asked whether the university has an obligation to discipline the perpetrator. For instance, if the both parties involved in a sexual misconduct complaint lived in the same student residence building, would one or both the parties be removed from the residence?

Senator Watkins responded that the general disciplinary procedures are outlined in the TSUS policy and an internal investigation will be conducted by the Title IX coordinator, regardless whether the student chooses to contact law enforcement. Also, Wayne Bennett, the Director for Student Discipline and Risk Management, stated that students who are deemed as a threat to others or have a history of issues would be removed from student housing.

Another senator inquired about cases involving domestic violence. Do university employees have an obligation to report knowledge of any incidents involving students to the Title IX coordinator or the police? Does the procedure differ whether the domestic partner is a student? What if the couple lives off campus?

Senators decided it would be best take advantage of Dean Bias' offer to visit Senate. Dr. Baker will invite the dean to address questions regarding the sexual misconduct policy at an upcoming Senate meeting.

### **New Business**

A request was made for senators to share all documents electronically before Senate meetings. Senators' preferred organizational methods vary, and providing both electronic and print copies of relevant documents would help everyone to keep abreast of all the discussion topics.

### **Intellectual Property Policy**

A senator inquired about faculty's property rights regarding recorded video lectures for online courses. For instance, if a faculty member leaves the university, can this person stop the university from using video lectures bearing his/her image in the future?

During their Senate visit to address this topic last spring, Rhonda Beassie, the TSUS Attorney, and Bill Angrove, the Associate Vice President for Distance Learning, stated that under the TSUS policy, the university holds a perpetual license for all online course content. However, faculty members can take a copy of their course with them if they leave the university. Ownership of a faculty member's image was not specifically addressed.

Other senators offered ways to discourage the reuse of old lecture videos, such as incorporating current events in the lectures and registering all the material for copyright. In addition, a senator recalled that Mr. Angrove had indicated that best practices is to only use course material for up to one year after the departure of the original faculty content developer.

Nonetheless, these methods do not prevent the reuse of previously developed course materials for extended periods. Senators also had questions about whether there are any pending revisions to the TSUS Intellectual Property Rights Policy.

Another senator pointed out that with the increase in science and engineering technology courses, patent ownership will also be of concern. Dr. Baker will ask the provost regarding the university's policy for addressing ownership of patents developed in class through faculty-student collaborations.

### **Grading Scale**

Senator Watkins shared instances in which a more refined grading scale would help to distinguish good performances. For example, students with final grades of 89% and 80% would receive the same letter grade under the current grading system, even though the former deserves more scholarships and other academic considerations.

A few senators suggested taking a student's trend of performance into account when assigning final grades. If there is evidence of continuous improvement, then perhaps a higher grade would be assigned. Other senators indicated that at least one college is encouraging faculty to save detailed grading records, independent of the official grade scale, in anticipation of situations that call for such information.

Senators also discussed alternatives to the current grading scale, including assigning the exact grades in percentages and adding "+" and "-" to the current letter grades. However, some senators pointed out that the broad letter grades are the most common grading scale amongst other TSUS universities and other comparable SHSU peers. Dr. Baker will share Senator's comments with Provost Herbert and ask for his thoughts.

**Meeting adjourned at 5:00 pm**