

**FACULTY SENATE MINUTES
SAM HOUSTON STATE UNIVERSITY**

3 June 2014
2:00-3:30 p.m.

Members present: Nancy Baker (CHSS); Helen Berg (COE); Tracy Bilsing (CHSS); Jonathan Breazeale (COBA); Don Bumpass (COBA); Madhusudan Choudhary (COS); Kevin Clifton (COFAMC); Donna Cox (COE); James Crosby (CHSS); Mark Frank (COBA); Randall Garner (COCJ); Richard Henriksen (COE); Joan Hudson (COS); C. Renée James (COS); Mark Klespis (COS); James Landa (CHSS); Jeff Littlejohn (CHSS); Paul Loeffler (COS); Dennis Longmire (COCJ); David McTier (COFAMC); Sheryl Murphy-Manley (COFAMC); Diana Nabors (COE); Dwayne Pavelock (COS); Debra Price (COE); Lisa Shen (NGL); Stacy Ulbig (CHSS); Doug Ullrich (COS); Mary Anne Vincent (COHS); Anthony Watkins (COFAMC); Pam Zelbst (COBA).

Members not present: Tom Cox (CHSS); Hayoung Lim (COFAMC)

Called to order: 2:00 p.m. in LSC 304 by Chair Renee James

Minutes approved: Minutes for April 24 meeting approved

Special Guest: Provost Jaimie Hebert

Chair's Report

The Provost will be meeting with us today. He will tell us about the Regents' proposed changes to the faculty grievance policy; Dr. James believes the Regents have approved these changes. Dr. Hebert mentioned these proposed changes in the last meeting Dr. James and Dr. Baker had with him. The changes seem to have taken away faculty input into the process of hearing and deciding a faculty member's grievance. The changes have also caused an extreme truncation of the time period in which a person can file a grievance.

Committee Reports

Committee on Committees

The Committee on Committees presented the faculty survey results.

The comments offered a great deal more information than the numerical data. For example, there is considerable disgruntlement and some outrage with SHSU having once again hired the former Dean of Arts and Sciences, Brian Chapman. The degree of anger at rehiring Chapman expressed in the survey was second only to anger at the lack of parking for faculty and the lack of accuracy in the IDEA online teaching evaluations.

One senator asked whether the Faculty Senate's work on the IDEA system (and how it impacts FES) ever resulted in any changes. Dr. Longmire said that his committee made recommendations but does not know whether the administration has taken any further steps. Dr. James suggested we ask the provost about this when he arrives.

The chair of the Committee on Committees said that compared to years past, this year's survey had better participation rates and included longer, more discursive comments.

Another senator asked that the Senate attend the University budget meeting and request a 1% market adjustment raise for everyone at SHSU, not just staff (who get the 1% increase annually, no matter what – whereas faculty depend entirely on merit pay increases). The COBA has had the most market adjustments in the past, with the argument that they have to have competitive salaries to keep their faculty from leaving for business careers.

A senator asked how merit pay increases are decided – is this at the department level, or the college level? Other senators responded that in their experience, the dean has the final say, but that most of the time it seemed deans try to honor the ranking of merit by the department chair. One senator from the COE said that their former dean handled merit pay differently from other deans, but the interim dean has handled things more like other deans at SHSU.

Dr. Rhonda Callaway, sitting in on the meeting, offered her experience as a department chair regarding what the chairs' input is into the merit pay decisions.

A senator asked, when was the last time there was a raise for all faculty on campus? Another senator replied that this occurred during Pres. Gaertner's first year. This senator explained that, technically, it is not legal for SHSU to give everyone an across-the-board raise; raises must be defined as merit pay increases.

Dr. James noted that there were a number of people who stated on the survey that they felt positively about SHSU and were glad to work here.

Senators discussed whether we ought to circulate the written comments on the survey. Anyone could get a copy by filing a FOIA request. The Provost and President will see a copy. In the past, the Senate has not distributed comments, preferring to keep the comments confidential and hopefully therefore more honest and useful. If we want to distribute the comments, we should perhaps make that clear BEFORE the next survey, so faculty can choose to be more circumspect in what they say. The numerical data will be made available on the Faculty Senate website.

Faculty Affairs Committee report

Academic Policy 900417 (Reappointment, Promotion, and Tenure)

Faculty Affairs Committee Chair Dr. Donna Cox identified a great number of typographical errors in the original policy.

Dr. Donna Cox pointed out a lack of consistency in the policy's language; in 5.01a4, collegiality is included as one of five areas in which someone must demonstrate competence and effectiveness. This does not align with Section 2.01, 1.1, where the categories listed are teaching, research and service.

Section 4.01 needs the list of tenure units to be updated; the last update was on November 13, 2103. Is the COHS included in the list? Dr. Donna Cox will contact the Assistant Provost, Dr. Eggsaer, to let him know the list of tenure units needs updating.

Section 4.05, 1.3 needs to be expanded and/or clarified. Can prior service at SHSU be credited towards someone's tenure? (A faculty member could bring in prior years at another institution, but what about if that person worked at SHSU as a VAP for a year?) Another senator suggested we look at what the AAUP has to say on this issue.

Section 5.01 was last updated regarding the status of professional librarians in 2004. Should this be updated?

Section 5.02 1.1 states that success in all four categories does not guarantee tenure. Why? How can someone meet all four criteria and NOT earn tenure? Dr. James explained that this is a statement to give the university options, so it is not likely to be changed.

Dr. James took a moment to clarify a point made in an earlier meeting about tenure. When someone is denied tenure, the letter that person receives does not state the reason why. Senators discussed the process and whether there is documentation provided by the department DPTAC, the chair, the dean, etc. There was some disagreement, suggesting there may not be a standard way of handling this university-wide.

Section 7.03 does not align with sections 7.01 or 7.02.

Section 7.04 does not state that a written document needs to be generated for the tenure, just a vote count.

Section 7.05 needs to be clarified. The requirement for a DPTAC letter summarizing the situation appears to be about the third-year review only. Does this apply to tenure, too?

Dr. James thinks the entire section 7 is murky and may need an overhaul.

Section 11c states that the recommendation for/against tenure needs to be communicated, with a tally – but no written assessment is required.

Section 11d appears to refer to a second recommendation letter, rather than the same one mentioned earlier.

Section 8.01 needs revision. In discussion, the senators concluded that, as there are full professors without tenure, they should be added to the ranks listed.

Dr. James thinks Faculty Affairs should start from the beginning and write a brand-new version of this policy, as it is a mess.

Section 9 needs to be clarified. Department chairs, deans, and Vice Presidents are not eligible to serve on DPTAC. There was some discussion about this.

The Faculty Senate voted to postpone the vote on whether to accept the Faculty Affairs Committee report, as several senators wanted further discussion of the report and the recommendations, and the allotted time for this had ended with the provost's arrival at the meeting.

Dr. Donna Cox asked what the next step should be. Dr. Cox will send the report to Dr. James, who will forward it to Vice Provost Dick Eglsaer, so the easier items to fix can happen more quickly.

The Provost's Visit

Tenure and Promotion

The provost reported that there were forty-seven decisions in the tenure and promotion process this year. Of those, forty-three were affirmative and approved all the way up through the Board of Regents. The provost felt that the rate of success and the consistency in documentation of probationary faculty members' performances was excellent. The provost would like to see a tenure success rate of 100%, because that would mean faculty members were doing what they need to in mentoring and identifying problems and addressing them early on in someone's career.

Thirty-three assistant professors went up for tenure to associate professors; twenty-nine were approved, and four were not. Thirteen out of thirteen associate professors were promoted to full professor. One associate professor was granted tenure.

Budget

The provost stated that the final numbers for the budget were determined today. There will be a 3% merit pool this year. Compared to our sister schools, we have 1% higher merit pay; compared to schools outside of Texas, we're probably 3% higher, the provost said.

The provost explained that revenue projections are \$5.5 million; merit pay comes out of this, based on enrollment increases, not on tuition increases. (Tuition was not increased.) Once merit pay is taken out, \$3.5 million is left. Academic Affairs will get \$2.5 million of the \$3.5 million; this averages out to five Vice Presidents splitting the \$1 million left. Some revenue will be generated from fund balances. The provost explained that usually deans submit a HEAF request, and this year computer and technology equipment (not agreed to be funded by IT) will be funded by IT's budget. This is because there are some major infrastructure repairs on things that are not up to code and have not been done in over forty years. The cost of these upgrades will use up some HEAF funds but is a worthwhile investment to avoid disaster in three to four years, when all HEAF monies might be needed to deal with infrastructure.

Next year, we will have to submit the SACS 5th year report. Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs Dr. Somer Franklin is chairing this project. She has been working with a sub-committee for the last year, so SHSU is in excellent shape re: the standards we need to meet. We will need a SACS committee, and Dr. Nancy Baker will be the Faculty Senate representation. Assessment of academics is the focus for the 5th year report. Assessment of items outside of academics was the only thing SHSU was criticized for in the last SACS report. In the near future, SACS is going to push for more substantive assessment; the provost says SHSU is going to be trying to address this now, to get ahead of the game. The fifth-year report should proceed smoothly. Somer Franklin may be in touch with faculty if she needs help with specific items, and the provost requested that faculty offer Dr. Franklin whatever assistance she needs.

TSUS Faculty Grievance Policy

Dr. Fernando Gomez, TSUS system counsel, has revised the system rules and regulations regarding faculty grievances, and the Board of Regents approved his revisions. SHSU was given only twenty-four hours to review the proposed changes.

Faculty grievances regarding termination at the end of a contract (example: a lecturer not re-appointed, a TT faculty member denied tenure) have been changed substantially. Faculty in this position who wish to grieve have the right. However, the grievance committee will no longer be a part of the process. The faculty member does not have the right to grieve the tenure decision unless they feel that their civil rights have been violated or the correct process was not followed. Therefore, it is more within the authority of attorneys and Human Resources staff to assess the grievance. The

proceedings of the Faculty Grievance Committee were misleading, as the provision to allow lawyers to be present caused the hearing to become a judicial hearing. There was no verdict; the group of peers made a recommendation to the president. The president had the right to have an advisory committee come in to advise her. Dr. Hebert assured the Senate that the Senate will be involved in re-writing the SHSU policy. There are still a few shades of gray in Dr. Gomez's revised policy that SHSU will need to clarify. If a lecturer is fired mid-semester, or if a faculty member is fired without cause, then these would both be granted a tribunal hearing.

There have been two drafts of the revised policy circulating; one draft stated that a faculty member with a grievance not related to termination could still proceed with a grievance committee. Another draft stated that this use of a grievance committee would also no longer be allowed.

A senator asked why the timetable was changed from 90 days to 10 days. Another senator expressed concern re: "10 days from the initiating event." What does this mean? The provost says it means the date on which the faculty member receives and reads the letter. A couple of senators commented that this is unclear and could cause problems. (Campus mail, a faculty member who comes in on teaching days only, how to document when a faculty member read the letter, etc.)

Another senator asked how the provost handles a split vote on tenure. The provost says that if there appear to be discrepancies in the recommendations and the candidate's record, he will trace back to the dean or even the chair of a DPTAC involved in order to determine why there is a discrepancy and how to understand the recommendation.

The provost depends upon DPTAC members to assess the quality of publications, teaching, etc.; the DPTAC summary letter is extremely important in the provost's decision making.

Dr. James asked what happens when a grievance is based on not following procedure; is this still grievable? Dr. Hebert is not sure. He needs to confirm which version of the revised policy the Board of Regents approved.

SHSU will continue to follow its current grievance policy until a new one is drafted, approved, and in place.

Senators asked the provost why the Board of Regents made this policy change, and what had been the problem for the Regents in allowing universities to follow their grievance policies as they existed? The provost answered that, at some universities, the TSUS had to assign a TSUS attorney to a university to represent the university in grievance committee hearings. Basically, the provost explained, because this was not handled well at some schools, all schools have to change their policies.

One senator asked the provost if new hires could be more carefully advised to track whether they are being mentored/assessed properly.

Another senator asked the provost whether the committee recommendation on IDEA (and alternative measures to be used on FES) has gone anywhere. The provost said that the recommendations went to Council of Academic Deans (CAD) and the deans had some concerns. The CAD sent it to the Council of Chairs to let them work with it. The provost asked the Council of Chairs to give him a quick turn-around. The provost is hoping to hear back from them soon, at which point he would like to move forward with revising how teaching is evaluated this year. One college is adamant that they want to use adjusted IDEA scores, not raw, and this is a bit of a problem; the provost is not sure how it will be resolved. The provost says he knows this is taking some time, but he feels it's worth it.

Market adjustments

The provost announced that market adjustments are based on current revenue projections, which have been estimated on the low side deliberately, which we will have a clearer picture of for the fall by the end of June. President Gibson hopes to see \$200,000-300,000 to become available for market adjustments in the fall. The deans have been asked to start considering a pool of people for the market adjustments.

Intellectual Property

A senator asked what has happened with the recommendations made to the TSUS Board of Regents re: intellectual property rights for faculty? The provost says that the Regents are going to attempt one system-wide revision, and the Regents will discuss this further in August. San Marcos, Lamar and SHSU all had different revision recommendations, and the Regents wanted to do this once, consistent system-wide.

Parking

A senator told the provost that the faculty survey has indicated displeasure with parking, and the senator asked what are the parking plans for SHSU? As new buildings are being built, we have lost parking. The provost says that all surface parking will remain stable or grow as new building occurs. A senator said that parking is a real problem and cannot continue to go unaddressed. The provost would like to see gated parking because it controls the flow and use of parking and causes more efficiency, but this idea has not been received well here. Finance and Operations make these decisions and they don't like gated parking. We have a new Acting Vice President of Finance and Operations, Dr. Carlos Hernandez. He may have a different perspective on this, as his previous schools may have had gated parking. The provost will talk to Dr. Hernandez and tell him that gated parking came up at our meeting and that he (the provost) likes it, and see what Dr. Hernandez thinks.

Tuition Revenue Bonds (TRBs)

The Provost says that SHSU is submitting 4 TRBs, of which he thinks we have an excellent chance of getting one and a good chance that we will get two. Getting more than two is unlikely. The top priority for the TRBs is the biology/nursing/allied health building (predominantly expanding biology, to meet the needs of Allied Health). The second priority is the Allied Health/ Health Sciences facility in the Montgomery County area (location to be determined). The third priority is a new art complex; the provost is pushing hard for this, as SHSU has needed a new art complex for a long time. The fourth TRB is a library renovation. The third and fourth priorities will probably not occur this legislative session; it usually takes more than one session for a TRB to happen. But by publicly stating SHSU's needs and seeking state funding, we can have SHSU development staff engage in fundraising for the buildings, to get funding for a new building started. For example, the new building SHSU is starting now was possible thanks to a \$10 million donation, which Dr. Gibson was able to match by securing \$10 million in bonds, thus funding the entire project. The new building will be on the corner near the Post Office, behind the Tokyo Grill.

A senator asked if a university faculty/staff lounge could be created, to allow for a central place for socializing and collegiality. The provost said he supports this idea; he has seen it in place at the LSC, and it seemed to work well. The problem is that with the premium on space right now, setting aside space for such a lounge is not likely to be approved.

A senator asked what has happened to the building near campus that formerly housed Shipley's donuts; the provost said that SHSU has bought it and is trying to decide what to do with the space. Dr. James Landa suggested that SHSU turn the Shipley's space into a coffee shop that would be operated as a co-op and staffed by nutrition students, pro-golf students, and business students. Another senator brought up the idea of a food pantry for students with food uncertainty and the trouble they are having finding a location; a different senator replied that the Episcopalian student ministry is offering a space for the pantry.

Meeting adjourned at 4:14 pm.

Revised 09-11-2014, 1:17 pm