

FACULTY SENATE MINUTES
SAM HOUSTON STATE UNIVERSITY

December 1, 2011

3:30 p.m. – 5:11 p.m.
LSC 304

Members Present:

Tracy Bilsing (CHSS), Len Breen (COE), Donald Bumpass (COBA), Erin Cassidy (NGL), Kevin Clifton (CFAMC), Donna Desforges (CHSS), Mark Frank (COBA), Randall Garner (CJ), Debbi Hatton (CHSS), Chad Hargrave (COS), Renee James (COS), William Jasper (COS), Gerald Kohers (COBA), Lawrence Kohn (COE), Drew Lopenzina (CHSS), Paul Loeffler (COS), Joyce McCauley (COE), Sheryl Murphy-Manley (CFAMC), Dwayne Pavelock (COS), Javier Pinell (CFAMC), Debbie Price (COE), Tracy Steele (CHSS), Ricky White (COS), Pamela Zelbst (COBA)

Members Not Present:

Jeff Crane (CHSS) and Doug Ullrich (COS)

Guest Speaker: None

Call to Order: 3:30pm by Chair Debbi Hatton

Approval of Minutes: The corrected November 10th minutes were unanimously approved.

Chair's Report:

Chair Hatton reported first on the November 30th Calendar Committee meeting. The 2012-13 Academic Calendar needs to be published. The new head of Residence Life said that the dormitories would be ready for occupation by students on the date given by the Calendar Committee (previously Residence Life played a major role setting the start dates for semesters).

Senate Approval was needed on the Drop Date for the University to publish the 2012-13 Academic Calendar. In the discussion that had occurred in the Calendar Committee was the question of the drop date – why had it been pushed to the last day of class. Faculty on the committee pointed out that it was problematic for certain courses like sciences courses that had lab classes. The lab class would end but the student still had another week to drop a science course. Faculty Senators discussed these issues regarding the drop date and paid particular attention to students getting feedback on their progress in a particular course to make an educated decision on dropping courses. Faculty realize that students may only have a certain number of drops in their academic career and that student finances are also a concern. The discussion in the Senate centered on a range of drop of dates in the long semesters from the four to the seventh week.

Resolution passed by the Faculty Senate on the Drop Date (one vote against):

The Wednesday of the eighth week of the regular Fall and Spring long semesters will be the Drop Date.

The Drop Date should be the eleventh class day of each regular Summer term (Summer I or Summer II).

The Drop Date should be the mid-way point for classes that do not fit into the traditional policy for the Drop Date (as outlined for regular Fall, Spring, or Summer terms above). This includes mini-mesters, online, or travel courses that have term lengths different from the dates set by the regular Academic Calendar.

Faculty Senate recommends that for travel courses (either domestic or international) students not be allowed to drop after the class has departed or the mid-point of the non-traditional semester depending on which comes first.

The policy for the Resignation Date should remain as set by the Administration.

Committee Reports:

Committee on Committees: Gerald Kohers (chair of Committee on Committees) discussed the expansion of the Senate in the spring vote to accommodate the new college. The Senate voted unanimously to stagger the length of terms for new Senators who will come in from the new college in the coming election. Senator Kohers will wait until spring to do the poll of University Faculty in regard to committee assignments. The Faculty Handbook as well as University Committees are under review which is why delaying the poll makes sense. Senator Kohers does not believe the delay will hinder the process of appointing Faculty to committees since it is online. The Senator unanimously voted in favor of delaying the Faculty Committee Poll for the Spring Semester of 2012.

Faculty Affairs: Paul Loeffler (chair of Faculty Affairs) distributed his committee's report on Summer School. It was agreed that Items 1 and 2 relate to the SGA and should be sent to them. Item 3 dealt with Friday summer school classes and whether or not they should be hybrid (Friday classes should be online rather than in a physical classroom even though the course is a traditional brick and mortar). This was tabled until more information could be gathered on what the definition of a hybrid course. Item 4 on the committee's report reflected their belief that there should be a variety of minimum class sizes. See handout. The Committee recommended that once a contract for Summer has been signed by a faculty member that the university should pay that individual irrespective of if the class "makes" or not. There was a lively discussion regarding the minimum class size for an undergraduate course which the committee recommended be 20 for core/non-major courses. Members of the committee noted that there had not been complete agreement among committee members either and that the committee was making recommendations only. In the final vote, 2 Senators voted "no"; 5 Senators abstained; the remaining Senators voted in favor and the committee report was accepted.

There was further discussion on hybrid courses and Friday courses. Hybrid courses have a \$110 fee. The university earns more money for the courses but not all deans approve of what some call "flexible Fridays" (hybrid courses that do not meet physically on Fridays but online). SGA would like a flexible day to be part of the regular Academic Calendar whether it be Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday or Friday to allow students to work, etc. Students prefer not to have a 5 day a week course schedule. The University Administration would like the university to be student friendly and convenient, but there is no consensus on the idea of "flexibility", "hybrid", or a four day a week schedule. Senators indicated that they would like guidance from Provost Hebert regarding his thoughts on hybrid courses and the related issues. The topic was tabled until the Spring semester.

University Affairs: Erin Cassidy (chair of University Affairs) provided a handout of summarized the committee's work report but did not provide recommendations. Cassidy's hand out was unanimously accepted by vote of the Faculty Senate. Cassidy discussed Texas State University (TSU) specifically. Why is TSU's Hispanic population growing. TSU says more are applying. TSU got special status as

Hispanic serving. Senator Kohers suggested that we put this issue before the Enrollment and Retention Committee that has been formed by the Provost.

Cassidy distributed a report on the university becoming Green Friendly. To start, the Newton Gresham Library would like to curtail free printing by students. The Library also prefers in future to have students submit digital theses rather than bound. The Senate unanimously approved these suggestions, but not the entire Green Friendly proposal.

Cassidy raised the issue that had been brought to her committee the van for the van pool. The university entity that had been paying the \$600 fee for the parking space for the van pool van is no longer able to pay. The Senate unanimously approved that the university find other funds to pay this fee for the van pool van.

There was a discussion regarding the Green Friendly proposal. Senators generally approved of the idea, but agreed that it needed to discussion to figure out what changes would be needed and feasible (ie: should the Senate continue to serve bottled water at the meetings).

Chair Report: Chair Hatton reminded Senators to RSVP to President Gibson's Christmas Party. Hatton explained the University's new policy on campus Christmas parties. "OPEN" parties where departments or other entities invite the entire campus community are no longer allowed. Only "closed" parties where members of the department only are invited are allowed. Apparently, the "open" parties took too many key staff and faculty members away from their work for a two-week period every December.

Instructure: Chair Hatton announced that a new LMS (Learning Management system) program was under consideration. Faculty were invited to look over Canvas program at its website: www.instructure.com. Presentations on the program will be given in January 2012 to Faculty and the Senate and DELTA would like our input.

Motion to close the meeting passed unanimously at 5:11 PM.

New Business:

There was no new business.

Committee Report:

There were no committee reports

Adjournment: 5:11 PM

Recommendation Regarding University Support of Employee Vanpools

Background:

The University Affairs Committee was tasked with evaluating ways to promote 'green' activity on campus. Since 2006, the College of Business Administration (COBA) has been supporting a vanpool from The University Center by paying for a parking space in the parking garage. Initially the primary users were COBA faculty so COBA funding was reasonable; however, the current ridership is now diverse and represents most of the colleges and administrative units on campus. Most vanpool riders continue to purchase campus parking permits, thereby contributing to parking revenue while rarely occupying campus parking spaces; in five years of operation, this van pool has saved the university 6,890 parking spaces, while also saving the planet 26,527 gallons of gasoline. In addition to supporting this existing campus-wide vanpool, the committee wishes to see incentives provided for future vanpool formation.

Recommendation:

The Faculty Senate recommends that the Department of Public Safety (contact: David Kalpalko, Assistant Director), as managers of the campus parking garage, designate free covered parking spaces for vanpool parking equivalent to the number of vans. A vanpool is defined as an organized group of 6 or more riders in a single vehicle. The vanpool is subject to an annual audit of ridership in order to retain the designated covered garage parking space.

Committee Report
Faculty Affairs Committee of Faculty Senate
Meeting of October 31, 2011

Faculty Affairs met to discuss five issues relating to summer school. These were assigned items that had been generated by the annual faculty survey or issues that had been raised during Senate meetings last year. The list of topics evaluated were:

1. The 12-hour issue - What is the appropriate maximum number of student semester hours allowed in one summer term or during the full summer session?
2. The fee issue – What is the appropriateness of summer term fees in comparison with long semester fees? Should the fee structures be identical?
3. The hybrid-schedule proposal - Who is empowered to schedule summer terms with four in-class days and one online day of instruction (e.g. Friday)?
4. The question of standardizing minimum class size requirements - Should the Faculty Senate consider supporting a standard minimum class size requirement for all summer classes?
5. The faculty compensation issue - Should Faculty Senate reconsider the proposal to modify faculty compensation for summer instruction?

Items 1 and 2

Following a brief general discussion, it was decided by consensus that items 1 and 2 were principally student concerns. It is recommended that the Student Government Association (SGA) address these issues to determine if there is a problem with student enrollment of over 12-hours per session and if the fees paid during summer are perceived to be disproportionate to charges during the long semesters. If Senate leadership elects to send these items to SGA then we would recommend that Faculty Senate revisit the issues with the option to endorse/support SGA recommendations. (With respect to lowering summer fees, however, the senate should proceed with caution since it was our consensus last year that salaries paid for summer teaching should be on par with salaries paid during the long semester.) It is noted that both of these issues appear to result from limited Banner capabilities.

It is the committee's recommendation that the Senate Chair forward these issues to the Student Government Association with the understanding that Senate will revisit them upon request.

Item3

For item 3, the committee felt that the question suggested other uncertainties about broader issues and current policies. Many of these must be answered before the issue of hybrid classes offered during the summer can be addressed. What constitutes a “hybrid” class? Is the faculty member empowered to decide that his/her class is to be presented in a mixed mode or is this decision the responsibility of the dean or chair? Is the procedure to develop the on-line components the same as that of full on-line courses? Does the syllabus need to state “hybrid course” and explain the activities? If not, can a professor decide mid-semester to inject “some” irregularly scheduled, online classes? Does “hybrid” connote exclusively creating a

course through the Delta center? Can faculty schedule Delta taping sessions or can the material be created within the department settings? If Delta (or the department) is involved is the faculty member, as the “expert” on course content and pedagogy, in control of his/her course or is someone else an “equal” partner?

Thus, the question of the appropriateness of 20% summer-school instruction being required as “hybrid” has greater implementations concerning the evolution of instructional delivery at this university and the role of the faculty in the decision process.

It is the committee’s recommendation that the decision to modify the summer schedule mandating Fridays for online instruction be postponed until fundamental issues are resolved.

Item4

In terms of standardizing the minimum class size for a summer class to “make,” the committee felt the answer was clearly “no.” Upper-level courses required of majors/minors are certainly different than lower-level core-only courses. Graduate courses are clearly different than undergraduate courses. Graduate courses in disciplines with large summer enrollments are different than those in departments where the summer enrollee is the same as the academic-year enrollee, and program size is often dictated by number of university-provided assistantships. Thus the Faculty Affairs Committee agreed on four general standards of minimum summer course sizes:

Major/minor upper-division:	10 students
Major/minor lower-division:	14 students
Core/non-major courses:	20 students
Graduate courses:	5 students

In addressing the question of how the actual decision is to be made, the extent of flexibility, and who determines minimum numbers for “making” classes in a college, the committee remained undecided. It was felt that although the deans have budget responsibility they should not have sole authority. Ideally, the chairs within a college should have collective input and the dean should be charged with achieving general agreement on a college-wide standard for similar courses. In addition, the Council of Deans, under the supervision of the Provost, should make certain that inappropriately distributed summer budgets are not the root cause of inequitably distributed enrollment minima. No formal committee recommendation was made.

Item5

The fifth issue of how payments to faculty are made during summer school, and is one that was addressed last year by the Senate. It was explained then that the “new” procedure of designating “summer school” as one unit (a single summer session), regardless of the actual summer term taught, was a Banner issue. Our immediate recommendation is that the university should purchase the requisite Banner module such that summer courses can be paid in correspondence to the length of the course (i.e., mini-terms, five-week courses, ten-week courses, etc.). However, if

the Banner's inadequate summer accounting is going to continue to drive decisions about summer, then the following recommendations was agreed to:

If the faculty member receives a contract to engage his/her services at the beginning of the summer session, then the university should be obligated to pay that individual for the summer regardless of whether or not course enrollment subsequently materializes. If a second summer term class does not make for a contracted faculty member, the Provost should initiate a reassigned-time appointment, for example to engage the faculty in research and scholarship for the remained of the summer session. At the conclusion of the second summer term, the faculty member should be required to submit a deliverable formal report (similar to those required by: Faculty Development Leave or Faculty Research Grant programs.) Moreover, the "depending on funding" statement should be deleted from all summer contracts.

The secondary issue of fixed-fee payments to faculty for summer instruction was also addressed. The committee is unanimously opposed to modifying the faculty pay structure for summer school. The procedure should remain one that computes full summer compensation as one third of the nine-month contract salary and defines a full teaching load as two courses per summer term.

The committee recommends that summer salary or summer faculty compensation remain as it has been implemented.

As an endnote, discussions concluded with an acknowledgement that last year Texas State experienced a 4.7% increase in enrollment and offered its faculty 3.0% raises while Sam Houston grew by 2.3% and offered its faculty 0.0% raises. We look forward to continued growth and accompanying salary increases.

Respectfully,

P. A. Loeffler
Chair
Faculty Affairs Committee of
University Faculty Senate