

FACULTY SENATE MINUTES
SAM HOUSTON STATE UNIVERSITY

November 10, 2011

3:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.
LSC 304

Members Present:

Tracy Bilsing (CHSS), Len Breen (COE), Erin Cassidy (NGL), Kevin Clifton (CFAMC), Donna Desforges (CHSS), Randall Garner (CJ), Debbi Hatton (CHSS), Chad Hargrave (COS), Renee James (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), Pamela Zelbst (COBA)

Visitor: Jean Bodon (CFAMC)

Members Not Present:

Donald Bumpass (COBA), Jeff Crane (CHSS), Mark Frank (COBA), William Jasper (COS), Doug Ullrich (COS), Ricky White (COS)

Guest Speaker: Provost Jaimie Hebert

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

Provost Hebert's Presentation and Discussion:

Provost Hebert spoke first due to a scheduled conference call.

The Provost was asked to speak on the topic of Promotion, Tenure and DPTAC and he addressed these issues first.

The first question addressed dealt with statistics and IDEA scores. Faculty wanted to know how Hebert viewed the IDEA forms. Provost Hebert stated that student evaluations are important but not just the IDEA score. He feels that we need to listen to students and modify teaching techniques. As a statistician, Provost Hebert does not believe that a single number should be used. He would rely on faculty and chairs to do classroom evaluations and noted that faculty peers are already being used on campus.

Provost Hebert noted that evaluation numbers, whether consistently high or low, tell him to look further as to what is going on with the faculty member. He may look at how students are doing in follow-on classes. He would also consider following up on low evaluations to find out what was happening in the classroom.

There was a question as to whether or not the Provost considered grade distribution when evaluating high or low student evaluation scores. Provost Hebert said that he did not do that at the level of the Provost, but he suggests departments do that to assess evaluations for professors with particularly high or low evaluation scores.

Provost Hebert noted that an average professor's numbers when compared nationally is probably an excellent professor and there was no need to look at those professors too carefully.

Provost Hebert noted that he would be different from Provost Payne. He did not have an absolute score by which he would determine tenure and promotions. He specifically noted that if a professor had a below average IDEA score, in the bottom 40%, he would not automatically deny that professor tenure. Previous use of IDEA scores – averaging the adjusted score – did not account for improvement.

Provost Hebert noted that former Provost Payne did use an average score as a starting point. Hebert agreed with Payne that, if the IDEA average was below average, the Provost should look at the trends – was the professor's scores going up or down. Provost Hebert insisted that he will not use an average of IDEA scores and he WILL look at trends.

Provost Hebert accounted for the differences in approach to the time when Payne was Provost – more scrutinizing was needed. Provost Payne had raised awareness of the responsibility of Faculty to set high standards, so Provost Hebert could be more relaxed (since the high standards were now in place).

The Drop Date and Evaluations:

A question was raised on the Drop Date which is presently on the last day of classes before a final examination has been given. Senators expressed their concern that students could evaluate a course which they intended to drop which may affect the IDEA score. The Provost said that it should be possible to change it. Senator Loeffler noted that years ago the Faculty Senate had indicated to the Administration that Faculty wanted the drop date earlier. Despite this, the Administration had pushed the date to the end of the semester (allowing all students to do evaluations). It was noted that the change in the drop date may have been part of the State's mandate for accountability. Provost Hebert noted that he was not sure of the impact failing students had on evaluations. Finally, Provost Hebert said that he was happy to move the Drop Date and that it was already under discussion.

Research and Scholarship:

Provost Hebert questioned if there was a magic number. The punch line was, according to the Provost: "All numbers are magic!"

Seriously, Provost Hebert noted that the required number had to be discipline specific. He noted that a paper or presentation every year was the indication of an active scholar. There was no real magic number.

Provost Hebert said he was looking for three things for tenure:

1. The professor's ability to do research beyond the dissertation. He noted that this varies by field.
2. He looks for evidence that the professor has a research identity, an agenda. Is the professor developing an identity within his or her field.
3. The third is the hardest to judge: Does the professor have the propensity to continue doing the first two after tenure. Will the professor be a scholar, be active in his or her discipline, will the professor be passionate.

Provost Hebert noted that he is looking for a teacher/scholar. He was not just going by a number.

DPTAC:

Provost Hebert discussed the importance of hiring professors with the intention of tenuring. DPTAC must be serious with evaluations and must be honest with untenured faculty. DPTAC must mentor and encourage. Provost Hebert said that if we, including DPTAC, do our job, everyone should get tenure.

Provost Hebert noted that DPTAC is where the tenure decision is made but his job is to double check. He does not consider that he has veto power. He said that if a Dean or Chair has a different point of view from DPTAC, then the Dean or Chair should go back to DPTAC for discussion.

In response to a question on Academic Deans who might seek to change a DPTAC vote, Provost Hebert said that a Dean can vote differently from DPTAC but not change its vote. He noted again that if the Dean disagreed with the DPTAC, that he or she should discuss it with the committee.

Strategic Plan:

In response to a question, Provost Hebert noted that he likes what President Gibson is doing on the strategic plan. Furthermore, he said that what was presently occurring was really strategic reporting – the planning would come later. He said that the process more than the planning was being worked on at present since the goals and initiatives produced will be the structure for future strategic plans.

Strategic planning and initiatives will start in February for next year. Then there will be a budgeting process. In 2013 strategic planning will occur in January. In December 2013, the strategic plan will be done for 2014/15.

Finally, Provost Hebert said that he was happy to return to visit with the Senate again. He would be happy to meet with or talk to individual professors who may have questions also.

Before he departed, Provost Hebert addressed a final question related to tenure. A Senator asked if faculty should go up early for tenure. Provost Hebert said: "No." A professor going up early must be head and shoulders above others coming up for tenure. Finally, he stressed that a faculty member who chooses to come up for tenure early will not get a second chance if the first bid is unsuccessful.

Approval of Minutes: The October 27th minutes were unanimously approved.

Chair's Report:

Chair Hatton discussed the Smoke-Free Campus Policy. It was noted that it needs to be more clear on whether you can smoke in a personal vehicle which is on university property. Chair Hatton thought you could not smoke in a personal car on campus, but will follow up with Provost Hebert on this and other concerns. She noted that there will be four "smoking areas". Chair Hatton noted that the policy came from the Regents. The purpose was to save money on insurance since allowing tobacco use on the campus implied that "everyone" on campus smoked and insurance premiums would be based on this assumption. This increased premium could perhaps be double what it is currently. If the new Smoke-Free Campus Policy is not implemented, the faculty may have to pay the difference in the higher premium. Chair Hatton noted that students were already upset about the policy's planned implementation in June of 2012 and were planning to protest. The students had indicated to Chair Hatton that smoking was a right, but Faculty were not certain that was the case in regard to smoking on campus. There was general concern about enforcement and whether or not faculty would be responsible. It was recommended that "professors" be removed from the list as to whom one should report smokers. There was additional discussion on Gibbs Ranch and if it was exempted from the policy. Chair Hatton explained that the Golf Course and the Gibb's Ranch Conference Center were probably exempted. It was noted that other universities in our system had already begun to implement the policy and Sam Houston State University will be the last. In a vote for Senate support for this policy which it was acknowledged was to comply with a standard imposed by Blue Cross/Blue Shield insurance, there were 2 abstentions, no negative votes and all remaining votes were in favor.

Chair's Report on the Texas Council of Faculty Senate Meeting in Austin the last weekend of October:

Sul Ross issued a complaint at an early session which set the tone for the meeting. The Sul Ross representative charged that Texas State University at San Marcos and Sam Houston State University got everything. The crux of the matter was the loss of low-performing programs at Sul Ross and

Lamar. The Chancellor of the System noted that no one could force students to attend Lamar and Sul Ross where enrollment has declined. Chair Hatton noted that SHSU had lost 2 low performing programs compared to Sul Ross that had lost 13. Lamar was in equally poor shape. Interestingly, Sam Houston representatives bonded with those from Texas State over the issue. Representatives from Sul Ross did not attend the rest of the day's meetings.

Chair Hatton reported that the State of Texas is facing a 12 billion dollar short fall in the next Legislative Assembly. A special session may be necessary. One reason for the larger-than-expected short fall was the fact that the current budget had not funded TRS and public school teachers' retirement. Also, the Texas public school system had been under-funded and was now facing lawsuits. So the Chancellor said that we should brace for further cuts. He thought new building bonds would not be approved. Texas State had gotten a 200 million bond approved previously, but conference attendees were told that TSU's system had better growth and graduation rates than any other systems in the state. Chair Hatton will e-mail reports from schools on what is happening on their campus to see how they are dealing with low-performing students. Sam Houston had done well but there was some discussion as to how low performance was determined – 10 undergraduate/ 6 graduate/ 4 Ph.D. students in a three year. In two years, it was noted, that low performing programs would have their requirements doubled. In a discussion on how the Faculty Senate should respond to the challenge of low performing programs, a Senator pointed out that money for graduate assistantships was needed, particularly in chemistry. There was a general consensus that more money was needed for this and Chair Hatton would discuss this aspect with Graduate Dean Kandi Tayebi.

Core Curriculum:

Chair Hatton reported that Core Curriculum continues to be addressed at the State level. There are six Core Learning Outcome Objectives and Corresponding Definitions"

1. Critical Thinking Skills - to include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation and synthesis of information
2. Communication Skills - to include effective written, oral, and visual communication
3. Empirical and Quantitative Skills - to include applications of scientific and mathematical concepts
4. Teamwork - to include the ability to consider different points of view and to work effectively with others to support a shared purpose or goal
5. Social Responsibility - to include intercultural competency, civic knowledge, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities
6. Personal Responsibility - to include the ability to connect choices, actions and consequences to ethical decision-making.

Texas Preparedness Standards:

The TAKS test is coming to an end. There was concern that by the time the Core Curriculum has been changed, the post TAKS test students will be our Freshmen. They must pass four of fifteen tests to graduate and score up to 1000. In the future, English, Mathematics, and Science cannot have remedial courses at the college-level. In the future, students will be ready for college.

Focus on Future College Students:

The State has identified three target groups for enrollment in two and four year colleges:

1. The 25 to 45 year olds who have some college credit but never finished their degree.
2. Hispanics – a growing minority in the State who are underrepresented in colleges and universities.
3. Incoming Freshmen.

There are problems with each one of these groups. A potential problem with the first group of mature, non-traditional students is that they may not have read books with college-level vocabulary for years. They will be Core complete and will come in as Majors immediately. The potential problem with the

second group, Hispanics, is literacy and language. Many speak English but not well and many women in particular do not like to leave children at home. Day care may be an issue that will need to be addressed by universities. Core Curriculum changes that will affect the third group, True Freshmen, have yet to be finalized. It appears that there will be measured outcomes for English and Math. Science will have six required hours and no labs. The six hours of Core Curriculum in History and Government are outlined in the State's Constitution and not expected to change.

Chair Hatton's Report on Meeting with Provost Hebert:

HEAF money has yet to be distributed. Faculty should let the Provost know if this is problematic. Provost Hebert said that a KatSafe message regarding a Date Rape was sent out due to a requirement by federal law. Faculty had noted that a fire in COBA had not triggered a KatSafe alert. Provost Hebert responded to a question on why there was a report of a 4.1% increase in student enrollment and he noted that by the 12th class day that had dropped to a 2% increase. Provost Hebert reported that Student Credit Hours (SCH) were more important than the actual number of students enrolled in terms of funding and Sam Houston was down in two colleges in SCHs. Also discussed with Provost Hebert were Low Performing Programs, the ongoing Dean Search for COS, the House Bill which requires two clicks to reach IDEA scores, syllabi and curriculum vitae for faculty (this is not yet fully functional), smoking on campus, excellence awards, and the meeting of the Board of Regents on campus November 17th and 18th to which faculty are invited to attend certain meetings.

New Business:

Law on Percentage of Adjunct or Contingent Faculty:

This was discussed in terms of how it affects departments. The State wishes to cut down on the number of these types of faculty. This is a problem for Sam Houston in academic departments such as English that utilize large numbers of adjunct faculty. The cap of 25% was discussed as to whether it was measured by the university as a whole or by department. Some departments hire adjuncts for only one or two classes rather than four courses since the school would then have to pay for insurance benefits.

There was discussion regarding the Central Purchasing Survey and whether or not faculty members were using lap tops or desk tops. This will be followed up with Provost Hebert.

There was a discussion of what developmental students are selecting for their majors – General Business or Criminal Justice.

In regard to the Marketing Committee, it was noted that Provost Hebert had said that a Faculty Senate member would be represented but word was that the committee was meeting the following day and no Faculty Senate member had been appointed. Chair Hatton will follow up on this.

Senator Erin Cassidy raised the issue of the Newton Gresham Library's Holiday Schedule. Provost Hebert had indicated that he wanted Faculty Senate input on approving it. There was general support amongst the senators that the library be closed from Christmas to the New Year. This will be followed up with Provost Hebert.

Senator Loeffler reported that the Social Media Policy which had been under discussion since the start of the Academic Year had been withdrawn; a whole new policy will be created.

Committee Report:

There were no committee reports

Adjournment: 5 PM