

**FACULTY SENATE MINUTES
SAM HOUSTON STATE UNIVERSITY
March 20, 2008**

Chair Debbie Price called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m.

Members Present: Doug Constance; Tom Cox; Bill Edgington; Stacey Edmonson; Renee James; Bill Jasper; Ann Jerabek; Rosanne Keathley; Gerald Kohers; Brian Loft; Paul Loeffler; Bill Lutterschmidt; John Newbold; Brian Oetiker; Debra Price

Members Absent: Tracy Bilsing; Peggy DeMers; Jerry Dowling; Mark Frank; Debbi Hatton; Darci Hill; Emmette Jackson; Tracy Steele; Tamara Waggener; Yan Zhang.

Approval of Minutes:

The minutes of the February 28, 2008 meeting were approved.

Next Meeting:

The next Faculty Senate meeting is scheduled for April 10, 2008.

Chair's Report:

Chair Debbie Price reported on the Academic Policy Council (APC) meeting. It was suggested in the APC meeting that Faculty Senate examine the Faculty Research Grant guidelines and offer feedback to the Office of Research and Special Programs. In addition, the APC had questions regarding the difference between BA and BS degrees, including the following: (1) How many hours within a major can be taken within the core? (2) Should there be a curriculum review cycle? (3) Do the sciences need to be from the same discipline?

Old Business:

Based on discussions from previous meetings, the Faculty Senate unanimously passed the following resolution:

The SHSU Faculty Senate acknowledges and supports the SHSU President's ongoing efforts to enhance academic quality and integrity at Sam Houston State University. In order to maintain academic excellence at SHSU, the Faculty Senate requests that the academic affairs proportion of the total university budget continue to be adjusted towards 50%.

New Business:

The Senate agreed that employees of the Physical Plant who enter faculty offices for work-related reasons should leave a courtesy note or form that notifies the faculty member who has been in the office and for what reason. Chair Debbie Price will take this request to Provost Payne.

The Senate discussed concerns regarding the growing use of text messaging and cell phone use by students in classes. The Senate agreed that there is little that can be done to prohibit such use but that faculty should put forth clear class expectations in their syllabi and class discussions, including expectations that discuss the use of phones and/or messaging in class.

The Senate also discussed potential issues with faculty being alone at night after class with students in their offices. The Senate noted that faculty should be aware of potential problems associated with meeting with students alone, particularly at night; faculty should use their professional judgment

regarding these decisions. It was also noted that the library is open long after classes end, and professors are welcome to meet with students there.

Committee Reports:

The following committee reports were submitted to the Senate:

Academic Affairs. A draft of the committee's report on the Bachelor of Science degree vs. the Bachelor of Arts degree was distributed to the Senate. The committee found that there is no consistency across universities or disciplines regarding the distinction between the two types of degrees. Likewise, there are no guidelines available through the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board or the Texas Education Code. Thus, the committee made its initial recommendations regarding minimum requirements for Bachelor of Science degrees. It was agreed that a B.S. degree includes the social sciences and is in no way limited to degrees in the physical or natural sciences. After discussion, the Senate also agreed upon the following minimum degree requirements for both the B.S. and the B.A.:

Bachelor of Science degree – 16 hours of lab science; 6 hours of math; 3 hours of coursework in programming skills or critical thinking/logic.

Bachelor of Arts degree – 3 hour of math; 8 hours of lab science; 14 hours of language. Individual departments may set more specific guidelines regarding the level of coursework, as well as any discipline-specific requirements.

- *Faculty Affairs.* Because the chair of this committee was absent for professional reasons, the Faculty Evaluation (IDEA) Process Report was postponed and will be discussed at the next meeting. In other business, this committee brought forward a report regarding the Optional Retirement Benefit (ORP) rates at SHSU. The Senate passed the following resolution, with one abstention:
In order to achieve parity among SHSU faculty and to attract and retain quality faculty, the SHSU Faculty Senate requests the SHSU administration amend the Optional Retirement Program policy so that all faculty members currently receiving optional retirement benefit contributions of less than 8.5% receive an annual .25% increase until they reach the rate of 8.5%. All new employees on ORP shall receive the rate at the date of their hire, adjusted each year until reaching 8.5%.
- *University Affairs.* None.
- *Committee on Committees.* The Committee on Committees has the Faculty Senate Survey ready and will be sending it out next week. The survey will be distributed to all tenured/tenure track faculty, not to pool or adjunct faculty. The Committee filled a vacancy on the Admissions, Standards, and Applications Committee. A question arose regarding University committees that do not have a designated chair; when the committee guidelines state that the chair will be selected at the first meeting, who is responsible for calling the initial committee meeting? Chair Debbie Price will take this question to Provost Payne for clarification.

The Faculty Senate adjourned at 4:52 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Stacey Edmonson, Chair-elect

