

Faculty Senate Minutes
April 14, 2005

Senators Present: David Bailey; Christopher Baldwin; Jim Carter; Steven Cuvelier; Peggy DeMers; Stacey Edmonson; Mark Frank; Mary Gutermuth; Marsha Harman; Lady Jane Hickey; Joan Hudson; Paul Loeffler; Holly Miller; Philip Morris; Debra Price; Gary Smith; Christopher White; Patricia Williams.

Senators Absent: Jim DeShaw (professional conflict); Deborah Hatton (illness); David Hendersonj (illness); Joe Kirk (professional conflict); Gerlad Kohers (professional conflict); Tom Kordinak (professional conflict); Bill Lutterschmidt (professional conflict); Valerie Muehsam (professional conflict).

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

Corrections to Faculty Senate Minutes of Feb. 24, 2005:

Chair Harman requested that the Faculty Senate Minutes of Feb 24, 2005 be corrected to accurately reflect her charge to the Faculty Affairs Committee concerning Freedom of Information requests currently occurring at SHSU.

The Faculty Senate agreed to Chair Harman's request for a correction. Consequently, the following language should be regarded as a correction of the next to the last paragraph of the Faculty Senate Minutes of February 24, 2005:

“Faculty Affairs was also assigned the task of reviewing Freedom of Information Act requests.”

Chair Mark Frank of the University Affairs Committee also noted a correction of the February 24, 2005 Faculty Senate Minutes. Chair Frank clarified the action taken by the Faculty Senate with regard to prayer on campus and noted that a Faculty Senate vote was taken and the Senate voted to affirm the current policy encouraging non-denominational and non-sectarian prayers.

Chair Harman then recognized Christopher Baldwin as Chair of the Faculty Affairs Committee to make a report on Promotion Stipends.

Chair Baldwin noted that concerns have been expressed about the size of salary increases that occur at the three levels of promotion at SHSU: \$1,000 for Assistant Professor; \$1,500 for Assistant to Associate Professor; and, \$2,000 for Associate to Full Professor. Chair Baldwin reported that the salary step increments have been in place for a period of time at least in excess of ten years and that in comparison with salary-step, promotion increases at other Universities they appear to be at the low end of rewards and incentives for promotion. Chair Baldwin also noted that because these numbers were fixed rates that they contribute to a significant salary compression from rank to rank.

After considerable discussion, the Faculty Senate voted to recommend that future promotion stipends be calculated and awarded at a rate equivalent to 7-10% of the mean salary for the respective ranks across the University. This recommendation will be transmitted to Provost Payne.

The next order of business was a report from Senator Philip Morris of the Faculty Affairs Committee.

Senator Morris reported that over the past several years numerous requests for information have occurred under the Texas Public Information Act and that some requests have asked for information by name about specific untenured faculty members. Senator Morris noted that lengthy requests for information about specific faculty members draws the attention of the administration to those faculty members and, in particular, most untenured faculty members probably do not wish to come to the attention of the administration as the subject of a FOI requests.

The Faculty Senate engaged in a lengthy discussion concerning Freedom of Information requests currently occurring at SHSU. Several Senators expressed concern that FOI requests may be inadvertently placing faculty members in conflict with other faculty members and that untenured faculty members may be placed in particularly vulnerable positions as a result.

The Faculty Affairs Committee made no specific recommendation.

As a result of a relatively lengthy discussion, the Faculty Senate reiterated its support for the right of Faculty members and others to make FOI requests but noted that some attention may need to be paid to ensuring that faculty members who may become involved in the FOI process are adequately notified.

Consequently, the Faculty Senate voted to require that any faculty member whose personnel file or other University documentation may be required to be released under a FOI request be notified as soon as possible that documents relating to their activities at SHSU have been requested and will be released. This recommendation will be transmitted to Provost Payne.

The next order of business was a report from the University Affairs Committee concerning the creation of Faculty Awards for accomplishments in teaching, research and service within one academic year.

Chair Mark Frank reported that the University Affairs Committee recommends the creation of a college-level award to recognize the best research or creative accomplishment by a faculty member during the previous academic year. The award would be \$500 in value and one award should be given in each college annually. Each college should create a committee to establish the award guidelines, accept nominations, and choose a winner. To encourage and facilitate future research among the faculty, each year's award winner should present their award winning research to others in the college.

Chair Frank also reported that the University Affairs Committee recommended an annual college level award to recognize teaching accomplishments and innovations. This award would operate similarly to the research award described above. The University Affairs Committee also recommended an annual college level award to recognize service contributions. This award would operate similarly to the two awards described above.

The Faculty Senate voted to accept the recommendations of the University Affairs Committee and to support annual college level awards on research, teaching, and service excellence as contained in the report. There was one abstention. These recommendations will be transmitted to Provost Payne.

Senator Debra Price then reported to the Senate on a variety of business conducted at the previous meeting of the Academic Policy Council. Senator Price attended as a representative of the Faculty Senate due to conflicts with the timing of the APC meeting and the schedules of Chair Harman and Chair elect Carter.

Chair Harman then reported to the Faculty Senate that a new policy was being drafted to define how and under what circumstances faculty members would be assigned a three course workload or a four course workload. Chair Harman noted that this policy would probably be ready to be implemented by the next fall semester. Chair Harman then appointed a committee to be chaired by Chair elect Jim Carter to participate in the drafting of the new workload policy. The Faculty Workload Committee consists of Patricia Williams, Steve Cuvelier, Joan Hudson, and Lady Jane Hickey.

Chair Harman noted that the time for Faculty Senate elections is approaching and as a result she appointed a Faculty Senate Elections Committee to be chaired by Patricia Williams and composed of Lady Jane Hickey, Holly Miller, David Bailey, Gerald Kohers, and Bill Lutterschmidt.

The Faculty Senate adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by

Jim Carter