

**FACULTY SENATE MINUTES
SAM HOUSTON STATE UNIVERSITY**

January 21, 2021

3:30 P.M. – 5:00 P.M.

Remote via Zoom

Senators Present (24).

Samuel Adu-Prah (COSET), Mario Aschauer (CAM), Natalie Baker (CJ), Siham Bouamer (CHSS), Timothy Brown (COE), Patrick Buzzini (CJ), Rhonda Callaway (CHSS), Brandy Doleshal (COSET), Jamie Durán (COE), Debbi Hatton (CAM), Damon Hay (COSET), Soo-Yeon Hwang (NGL), Lee Miller (CHSS), Geraldine Monjardez (CJ), Carolyn Moore (CAM), Jan Taylor Morris (COBA), Benjamin Park (CHSS), Mary Petró (COE), Debbie Price (COE), Kevin Randall (COHS), Stephen Rapp (CHSS), Aneika Simmons (COBA), Susan Skidmore (COE), Kyle Stutts (COSET).

Senators Not Present (6).

Maria Botero (CHSS), Valencia Browning-Keen (COHS), John Lane (CAM), Kevin Lord (COM), Dwayne Pavelock (COSET), Karen Sherrill (COBA).

Special Guests.

Vice President of Student Services Drew Miller

Called to Order.

3:30 P.M., Remote via Zoom, by Chair Lee Miller.

COVID Update - Dr. Drew Miller

Dr. Miller noted that he will now be coming to the second Senate meeting of the month going forward. He remarked that Texas and the nation are seeing a spike in COVID cases, and this is being watched closely by the university. A new variant of the virus has shown up. The vaccine apparently is still effective against it. Statewide data suggests case rate are slowing and decreasing. A flurry of students contacting university won following proper COVID protocols indicate they are taking communications from university seriously. Only a couple of students are in quarantine housing on campus. There has been no increase at the SHC with students with symptoms. Case rate of student athletes appears to be predictive of case rate amongst general students. Only 3% returning student athletes were positive. The Curative booth ran out of state funding. Testing being taken over by student health center using a national lab for processing tests (PCR test). There will be no out-of-pocket costs. This will be available to faculty & staff in about a week and a half. The university is working to answer definitively if there is a limit to the number of tests a person can receive. Dr. Miller anticipates there will be no limit.

Vaccines are coming. The university is approved to be a vaccine distribution center. No indication of when, though. The university will be given a 48 hours notice when it is our turn to receive vaccine. which is also when we will find out which of the vaccine we will be getting. It could it be early February, but it is reasonable to expect by end of February, or possibly later. The state is asking the university to target people in tier 1A and 1B. If you currently have access to other vaccination hubs, then you should sign up and try to exercise those possibilities. We are

anticipating a normal start to the fall semester, thanks in part to the vaccine. A campus survey of 3500 participants (70% of which were students) indicated most people want the vaccine.

There has been a moratorium on student events, but not on athletic events. The moratorium is set to lapse on Wednesday. The work group / Cabinet will make a recommendation to let it lapse or extend it. The purpose was to prioritize classroom setting. Some athletic events were already contracted. Spacing at athletic events provided more appropriate spacing than general student events.

Faculty with questions can contact Dr Miller directly. Faculty were encouraged to read the COVID newsletter.

Approval of Minutes.

The minutes of the December 3 meeting were approved. However, there was discussion beginning with the accuracy of the phrase “the floor was given to Dr. White and Dr. Maynard following a prompt for their views on the recent Senate recommendations,” especially since, to many in the Senate, the President or Interim Provost did not actually or directly address the Senate’s recommendations in the meeting. A number of senators expressed great concern and disappointment that the Senate did not receive a formal response to the recommendations, especially since the Senate took the extraordinary and generally infrequent action to vote on and approve such formal recommendations. Senate leadership was asked to follow-up with the administration on the recommendations. The Chair agreed to bring these concerns to the attention of the President and Interim Provost and to make sure that future recommendations explicitly request a response in writing.

Chair’s Report.

The Chair led a discussion on the Chair’s Report which was distributed ahead of the meeting. In particular, there is a request for volunteers to serve on three Academic Affairs workgroups: a hybrid course work group, work group for IDEA technology questions, and a work group to combine two academic policies regarding faculty workload.

New Business.

There is a work group on **academic integrity**. Senator Doleshal is in the work group due to her position in PACE. She gave an update on the group’s work. In particular, she indicated that there is talk of adding a module to Blackboard on academic integrity. Other senators expressed not wanting this put into every single Blackboard course, but perhaps putting it in there once before students are able to access their Blackboard courses for the first time. A desire for a robust code of student conduct and honor system was also expressed. The work group is talking about such an honor code. Concern was also raised about the vagueness of the current policy and that it perhaps needs to be rewritten. Ideas on this matter can be sent to Senator Doleshal.

Issues with the **Bearkat Bundle (BKB)** were discussed. Senate leadership will meet with Dr. Kristy Vienne to go over list of concerns. Many senators expressed problems with the BKB. There were problems with late materials, access codes, students enrolled in the BKB spending additional money out-of-pocket to get missing items, electronic resources not loaded into Blackboard, the bookstore running out of books, access codes being mailed on a card, instead of by email, etc. One

senator who worked very closely with a publisher reported a very smooth experience with BKB. Students who spent additional funds should be reimbursed. There is a desire for clarification on who is responsible (B&N or SHSU) for the current problems. There is a need for a standardized procedure (email address?) for students to follow if there are problems. Some student report encountering a link on Blackboard saying “there are no books” for a course for which there are indeed required books. One senator felt that the BKB has taken away participating students’ agency, since they cannot look elsewhere if they have not opted out. Several senators commented on the poor communication surrounding the BKB. It was suggested that students use the email on the BKB webpage to resolve issues, and for faculty to directly contact Dr. Vienne. Concern was also raised about the benefit to the university of its relationship to the bookstore. It was noted that the BKB is being piloted for eighteen months. Any additional feedback on the BKB can be sent to the Chair or Chair-Elect.

Adjournment:

The meeting adjourned at 4:48 P.M.