

**FACULTY SENATE MINUTES
SAM HOUSTON STATE UNIVERSITY**

September 17, 2020

3:30 P.M. – 5:00 P.M.

Remote via Zoom

Senators Present (29).

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

Senators Not Present (2).

Natalie Baker (CJ), Kevin Lord (COM)

Special Guests.

Dr. Kristy Vienne, Assistant Vice President, Auxiliary Services

Dr. Glenn Sanford, Associate Dean - CHSS

Dr. Christopher Maynard, Vice Provost

Called to Order.

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

Special Presentation on Bearkat Bundle (formerly, First Day Complete)

Dr. Kristy Vienne and Dr. Glenn Sanford appeared before the Senate to discuss the implementation of the Bearkat Bundle program. Dr. Vienne made a slide presentation to the Senate on the topic. In summary, the program is a contractual agreement between the University and the University Bookstore (Barnes & Noble) in which undergraduate students pay a flat fee of \$23.75 per credit hour in exchange for receiving their textbooks and digital materials for all of their courses. All undergraduate students are automatically enrolled in the program, but students can opt out of the program up to the 12th class day. The stated goals of the program included saving students money and helping to ensure that students had their textbooks on the first day of class. The speaker's presentation slides are attached to these minutes.

Questions and comments were taken from the Senate during and after the presentation. Some of the questions and concerns included the following.

CONCERN (C): Students have experienced delays with the bookstore in getting materials.

RESPONSE (R): There have been supply chain issues. Bearkat Bundle will allow bookstore to justify stocking fully for every course. This is one reason for the requirement of the default opt-in.

C: What if there are book changes due to a switch in faculty teaching a course?

R: This can be done. Student not penalized.

C: Textbooks must be returned at the end of the semester. What is the cost to buy the book to keep?

R: Can be bought back at a “reduced” price. No specifics.

C: What if a student uses the same text for subsequent courses?

R: Student could opt out if it will save them money.

C: There has been much work done with respect to adopting open-access materials. The program appears contrary to this initiative.

R: Program does not derail OER (Open Educational Resource) efforts and could reduce costs further.

C: What does the bookstore get in return?

R: They get to sell to a larger population. More money is retained within the university community.

C: How easy is it to opt out? How many clicks required?

R: Students type in the Bearkat Bundle website, scroll down and click a button. It takes two clicks. During the registration process they can click to go to the Bearkat Bundle website. Accessible outside of MySam so parents can view it easily. Will be highlighted during registration process (Pop-up). Students have to go through a preregistration process where they are given notification of program.

C: How can students get information? What information available?

R: Link to bookstore (FastLinks) to get ISBNs for books so students can look elsewhere if they desire.

C: What follow-up regarding satisfaction and student savings will occur?

R: This will be done through student focus groups and working with Faculty Senate to provide feedback. Debriefs and meetings after launch will occur to continue to work to improve program. Signed up for four long semesters and can then extend or not depending on results.

Dr. Vienne agreed to share presentation slides and to be available for direct contact about concerns and issues that arise.

Faculty Survey Results and Focus Groups for Spring 2021 Planning

Dr. Christopher Maynard appeared before the Senate to discuss the results of the recent survey and focus groups being used to inform planning for spring and how this planning is going forward. Some of the major points Dr. Maynard made included the following.

- Surveys and focus groups were only snapshots. Will need to do more follow-ups.
- Need to get any changes regarding schedule made prior to registration.
- Need to make sure that it is clear to students on what to expect.

- Class rotations (i.e., simultaneous face-to-face & remote instruction) not working for most faculty.
- Options will be streamlined so that things are very clear to the students.
- Trying to have as much flexibility for faculty as possible within those options.
- Deans' suggestions
 - 4 Modalities: face-to-face, online, split week, flex
 - 2 Hybrid Options with expanded flexibility, e.g. could still use rotations.
- Encourage in-person contact for freshmen courses.
- Not enough large enough classrooms.
- Will make use of White Ballroom and LSC Theater.
- Allow more flexibility for faculty wanting to try new things
- This week, begin discussions on what classes want to use the new spaces. Then look at newly freed up spaces, next week. Then finalize schedule by Oct. 1. Depts and colleges may have earlier deadlines.
- Limited changes after students start registering.

A lengthy Q&A followed. Some of the concerns/concerns (C) and responses (R) - summarized - follow below.

C: Students wanting to come to campus conflated with students wanting to be face-to-face in classes.

R: Survey indicates students & faculty generally feel relatively comfortable in classroom. Masks and distancing going well. Students generally want to be on campus and students generally want face-to-face instruction in some form. Survey results similar to national survey results. Seeking balance in schedule, but have clear expectations for students. No exact percentages on face-to-face vs online/remote.

C; Confusion about Flex option.

R: It is the most confusing, because it is the most flexible. No exact percentages beyond the state's definition. However, one-third face-to-face contact is encouraged. Can still do class rotations if desired within this. Split week meets at least once a week.

C: How is this different than this semester?

R: Seven modalities in the fall. The five hybrid models are now two models. Streamlined for students, but definitions are more flexible for faculty.

C: Can students still request fully remote?

R: Yes, and faculty still have the option to grant or deny this request. Hope to get such students into online classes when possible.

C: Face-to-face class is less expensive, which incentivizes students to request remote instead taking online.

R: Yes, there is an online fee. Faculty member can refuse to grant remote option if there are spaces in online classes.

C: Where are the definitions regarding the modalities?

R: *Lessons Learned* document has the four definitions.

C: How is planning going on now?

R: Discussions should be going on at the department level right now about the schedule and modalities. Want faculty to have flexibility, but it has to be coordinated. Adjust schedule to meet needs.

C: Faculty need more IT support and equipment.

R: Mark Adams was sent faculty's suggestions from the survey & focus groups. Working on it. Trying to get better quality cameras and microphones. Expect things to be better by Spring start. Dealing with backorders on equipment. Seeking more personnel (including at TWC), but harder to come by. Faculty should try to get things from their departments which can make purchases.

C: Delays in support from instructional designers.

R: Will check with Bill Angrove. Designers are in high demand. Will check to see what is being done.

The Chair collected questions from the Senators via the Zoom Chat that were not addressed due to time constraints, and will forward them to Dr. Maynard for response.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the September 3 meeting were moved for approval and seconded.

A Senator recalled that Dr. White did not finish addressing some concerns and asked to be invited to the first Senate meeting. The Chair did not recall this, but offered that the issue would be noted and checked. The minutes were approved.

Adjournment:

The meeting adjourned at 5:05 PM.