

FACULTY SENATE MINUTES
SAM HOUSTON STATE UNIVERSITY

26 February 2015
3:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Austin Hall

Members Present (19):

Irfan Ahmed (COBA), Tracy Bilsing (CHSS), Jonathan Breazeale (COBA), Don Bumpass (COBA), James Crosby (CHSS), John Domino (CHSS), Karla Edison (COE), Randy Garner (CJ), Deborah Hatton (COFAMC), Richard Henriksen (COE), Mark Klespis (COS), James Landa (COHS), Jeffry Littlejohn (CHSS), Paul Loeffler (COS), Sheryl Murphy-Manley (COFAMC), Gary Oden (COHS), Dwayne Pavelock (COS), Lisa Shen (NGL), Tony Watkins (COFAMC)

Members Not Present (12):

Nancy Baker (CHSS), Helen Berg (COE), Madhusudan Choudhary (COS), Donna Cox (COE), Diane Dowdey (CHSS), Mark Frank (COBA), Joan Hudson (COS), Dennis Longmire (CJ), David McTier (COFAMC), Diana Nabors (COE), Stacy Ulbig (CHSS), Douglas Ullrich (COS)

Called to Order: 3:35 pm in Austin Hall by Chair-elect Lisa Shen

Minutes Approved: Minutes for the February 12th meeting were approved unanimously

Special Guest: Dr. Phillip Lyons, Dean of the College of Criminal Justice

Faculty Evaluation System (FES) Policy Revision

As part of the ongoing effort to revise the FES policy (Academic Policy Statement 820317), in particular the evaluation of teaching effectiveness (FES 1 and 2), Provost Hebert has charged Dean Lyons and Dean Stacey Edmonson with incorporating recommendations from faculty and chairs to develop a revised policy draft. Therefore, Dean Lyons had graciously offered to come to the Senate meeting for input.

The two deans have been looking into how things were working with the current system. Through this process, including a review of the annual Senate Faculty Survey, Dean Lyons observed that faculty generally have confidence in their chairs' ratings (FES 1) in the evaluation system, but are more distrustful of the IDEA scores (FES 2), particularly when administered online. The dean also noted some policy elements in the FES were not well-known or practiced across campus, including:

1. The reading of a statement before administering the IDEA survey
2. The time in class (the first 20-25 minutes) when the IDEA survey is supposed to be administered
3. Having a person other than the faculty administer the IDEA survey
4. Conducting a formal conference between chairs and faculty in May
5. The FES worksheet that chairs use (page 11 of Policy 820317)

While senators appreciated the efforts to gain compliance with the IDEA survey procedures, one senator observed that these issues only concerned the mechanical aspects of the FES, and did not address the content or validity of the system. Other senators noted that at the provost's request, the FES Committee of faculty had proposed three detailed options for a revised FES in Fall 2013, which were submitted to the Council of Chairs for review in Fall 2014. Dean Lyons had not seen these proposed revisions* nor the chairs' feedback. The dean was also unaware of the summary report from the Faculty Senate's investigation of FES during the 2012-2013 academic year. A copy of said report from May 2, 2013, was shared with Dean Lyons.

During the ensuing discussions concerning the validity of student evaluations, several senators remarked that taking the survey was optional for students, yet if only a small portion of the class chooses to fill out the survey, the results are invalid by IDEA's own standards. One senator reminded the group that during their campus in 2013, senior research officers from IDEA had indicated SHSU was using the IDEA system outside the bounds of best practice.

A representative from the SHSU Student Government Association (SGA) mentioned he knows some students who feel bad about answering harshly on potentially irrelevant questions on the IDEA survey (for instance, questions on teaching about culture, team work, etc., that may not be applicable to a particular class) would raise their ratings on other sections of the survey so as not to harm a faculty member's overall score. A senator pointed out that students are unaware of how the scores are tallied and not all questions count towards a faculty member's score. The SGA representative stressed this did not matter, because students were still filling out the survey in a biased way with or without regard to an understanding of the system itself. Another senator observed that this was still another characteristic of the IDEA survey that increased its imprecision.

Other senators inquired about the possibility for a mandatory evaluation system; for instance, some institutions would require students to complete of the course evaluation before releasing their grades. Dean Lyons is interested in the idea and thought a universal implementation across campus would be best. Senators also suggested switching from to the short IDEA form (as the Senate report from May 2013 suggested) to reduce student fatigue and using Blackboard as the medium to increase efficiency and effectiveness of IDEA survey deliveries.

One senator said she had recently met with Dean Edmonson to discuss the perspectives of tenure-track faculty in the FES process within the College of Education. Dean Lyons agreed that untenured faculty members face some unique challenges and rigorous teachers are at a disadvantage when using the IDEA survey to evaluate teaching. A senator remarked that the senior IDEA research officers had also acknowledged that overall IDEA scores are lower for online courses, but only vaguely suggested for SHSU to "account for" the discrepancies.

Moreover, as senators specifically pointed out to Dean Lyons, under the current FES weight assignment (page 12 of Policy 82317), the chair's rating (FES1) and the students' rating, as represented by the IDEA score (FES 2) each accounts for half of a faculty member's overall teaching evaluation score. However, in reality, the IDEA score is frequently used as one of, if not the only, source for the chairs' assessment of faculty teaching, thus making IDEA score the primary determinant of faculty's overall teaching effectiveness. This practice is in violation of

IDEA's own recommended best practice, which stipulates its scores should not be used for more than 50% of the teaching evaluation score.

Dean Lyons acknowledged senators' concerns and said that would share the inputs with Dean Edmonson. However, the dean also noted challenges with alternative forms of chair evaluations of teaching effectiveness; for instance, some faculty are opposed to class observations from their chairs or colleagues. Senators agreed that some flexibility within the FES policy is needed, nonetheless, a senator suggested that a requirement for chair's evaluations "independent of IDEA scores" would be a good start.

When asked about a timeline for his and Dean Edmonson's revision of the FES, Dean Lyons indicated they are tentatively scheduled to submit a draft sometime in March. One Senator pointed out the unreasonable timeline given that the Senate, its subcommittees, and the FES Committee had been working on revisions to the FES for two years.

Senators were also interested in the scheduling of town halls for the general faculty to comment on the FES revisions. Dean Lyons thought that the deans may be holding their own town halls by college. This proposed setup does not match university-wide faculty town halls previously indicated by the provost.

Lastly, Dean Lyons said that the Provost had specifically requested for Dean Edmonson and him to address the issue of collegiality, including an examination or clarification of what it entails, although there are no plans to add collegiality as a FES criterion. The deans also plan to redefine FES 4 (the service component in a more meaningful way, since the number of committee memberships does not truly reflect the amount of services performed by a faculty member.

** Note: The revision options proposed by the FES Committee were shared with the Dean Lyon and Dean Edmonson electronically on February 26, after the Senate meeting.*

Chair's Report

The report was pre-circulated electronically, and, in the absence of Chair Baker, Chair-elect Shen highlighted a few notable topics.

Undergraduate Admission Standards (Academic Policy 840502)

The undergraduate admissions standards were reviewed in early 2012, and the revised standards were approved by the Board of Regents and implemented in Fall 2013. However, the corresponding academic policy that outlines the standards was not updated at the time, so recent efforts were made to correct this error. As one of the bodies that reviewed and approved the 2012 revisions, Senate was informed of the policy revision.

While reviewing the revised admissions policy, senators expressed concerns regarding the requirements for automatic acceptance. The standards Provost Hebert had presented to Senate on April 5, 2012, called for the automatic acceptance of applicants with top 20% class rankings, yet

the policy, and the actual standards in practice, now offers automatic acceptance of applicants with top 25% class rankings.

Some Senators expressed concern that they have noticed a worsening of student performance especially among freshmen. Another senator reminded everyone that graduation rates will affect funding, while another Senator stated that SHSU needs to decide whether it wants to bring in more numbers, thus lowering its admission standards, or if it wants to push more students out to graduate. One senator would also like to track student loan default rates. These questions and concerns will be shared with the Provost.

SGA Resolution S15-10 - The Defense of Students and Protection of Public Speech

The SGA passed this resolution on February 2, 2015, in response to campus visitors who have been publicly addressing the SHSU community with speeches that some have found offensive or misogynistic. As part of the resolution, the SGA has asked for Faculty Senate's endorsement in the matter.

The SGA representative in attendance further contributed examples in which students have felt harassed by speeches from some visitors. However, senators pointed out that the university campus is a public space and free speeches, even if unwanted or unfriendly, cannot be banned. On the other hand, some senators felt that if such acts are harmful to the educational environment on campus, that perhaps some action should be taken. The idea of a free speech zone, which has been deemed unconstitutional due to its implication of limiting free speech outside the designated zones, was also discussed.

Due to limited meeting time and the need for additional information, the University Affairs Committee was asked to look further into this issue for the next Senate meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 5:00 pm

**Faculty Senate
Chair's Report
02-26-2015**

Academic Policy # 840502 (Admissions Standards)

As members of Faculty Senate know, Cathi Gillette of the President's Office requested last week that the Faculty Senate review and approve Academic Policy # 840502 on Undergraduate Admissions Standards by the beginning of this week. Ms. Gillette told me that this compressed timeline was necessary in order for the AAC to have a chance to review and approve the policy, and for SHSU to have all updated policies posted to the website in time for a March 2 deadline for the 5-year interim SACS accreditation review.

Faculty senators raised several objections and questions regarding this policy. Chair-elect Lisa Shen and I spent considerable time seeking more information and answers to these questions. In the process, I contacted the provost's office with some of the questions; the provost has been in Austin on university business, but scheduled a conference call meeting with Chair-elect Shen and me. We spoke yesterday afternoon.

The provost apologized for the confusion and for his miscommunication with Cathi Gillette about what was needed from Senate. **The provost said that no action was needed on the Senate's part**, but that he had wanted Ms. Gillette to send the policy to Senate to inform us that the official policy document was finally being updated to match the policy revision that had been completed in 2012-2013.

The admissions policy went through the entire official policy review process in 2012. Recommendations on how to change the standards came from the Strategic Enrollment Management Committee, co-chaired by Dick Eglisaer and Trevor Thorn. The committee used "success data" to align admissions standards with students who proved to be successful on campus; this meant increasing the percentage of automatic admissions from the top 20% of a high school's graduating class to the top 25% (the data showed such students in the additional 5% were likely to be successful and more likely to attend SHSU than those in the top 20% alone).

The policy revision was taken to all of the appropriate bodies that have a role in the policy review and approval process, including the deans, the Faculty Senate, the President and the President's Cabinet, and the TSUS Board of Regents.

The Faculty Senate minutes of April 5, 2012 show that the provost presented the revisions to the Senate in person and received unanimous support. There is some question as to whether he presented the change from the top 20% to the top 25%, or whether Senate agreed to the top 20% as the new standard. This discrepancy is something the provost suspects occurred further along in the process, but will try to

determine. He has asked Kandi Tayebi to locate the documents sent to the TSUS Board of Regents for approval. (It is also possible this is an error in the Senate minutes that no one caught at the time.)

The policy I received and sent out to Faculty Senate last Friday reflects the official, current admissions standards, implemented for the first time in Fall 2013. These standards appear on the SHSU website and in the SHSU Undergraduate Catalogue. The official policy document was simply never updated to reflect these standards, and that is what is occurring now.

The provost stated that in the next one to two years, SHSU will have a data-driven review of these admissions standards, to gauge whether the change yielded the desired results. This would also be the appropriate time to make further adjustments, if needed, to the admissions standards. SHSU is not able to change its admissions standards without TSUS Board approval.

The provost took full responsibility for the miscommunication in this situation, apologized, and thanked the Faculty Senate for their vigilance in protecting their role in the policy review process. The provost has offered to attend our next meeting of Senate to discuss this situation and hear any feedback on it.

Faculty Senate Resolutions

1. Merit & Evaluation

BE IT RESOLVED THAT Evaluation practices in all Colleges must adhere to Academic Policies 820317, 800722, and 900417, when assessing faculty and awarding merit salary increases. It is expected that all Colleges develop properly vetted and published criteria for faculty evaluation of merit salary increases, and present the criteria to faculty before the evaluation period begins.

The above resolution has been officially delivered to the Provost. He agrees that merit pay should be based on FES, and this is the reason he is conducting his own study of the degree of correlation between FES scores and merit pay increases awarded. The provost will share this resolution with the Council of Academic Deans, once his study is complete. He feels giving CAD the resolution and the data together will lead to a more productive discussion than presenting the resolution alone.

- 2. Senate Endorsed Committee Resolution – Privacy Room for Nursing Mothers**
The Faculty Senate Committee on Faculty Affairs recommends for SHSU to expand the number of privacy rooms on the main campus to three, and establish one additional room each at The Woodlands Center and University Park (Tomball) campus.

The above resolution and the Faculty Affairs committee report were given to Dr. Hebert, who felt this is “a reasonable request.” The provost will discuss the request with Dr. Carlos Hernandez (VP of Finance and Operations) and the President’s Cabinet.

Childcare facilities on Campus

The provost will discuss with the President’s Cabinet the Senate interest in re-establishing a childcare facility on campus.

The provost recalled the history of the prior childcare facility (the Bearkitten Academy), which was run by SHSU (Student Affairs, not COE) and closed down due to the cost/efforts involved, including complications with ADA compliance. Provost Hebert suggested we check with Frank Parker for details on why the facility closed. One concern moving forward with re-establishing childcare on campus is to avoid competition with private businesses in town (the university has a non-competition clause with Walker County).

The provost also informed us that there is a proposal in the works for a new Charter School (pre-k to 3rd grade), which would involve a collaborative effort between the College of Education’s Early Childhood program, Montgomery County, and Harris County. However, a similar institution cannot be established in Walker County due to the University’s non-competition clause. Nonetheless, the provost recommended that Senate should check with Dean Edmondson for her thoughts on on-campus childcare. As the Senate’s Faculty Affairs committee (FA) moves forward in studying this issue, it could be useful for FA to contact Dean Edmondson.

Student Government Association Resolution S15-10 re: The Defense of Students and Protection of Public Speech

The SGA passed a resolution on February 2, 2015 and submitted it to me after our Senate meeting on February 12, 2015. Part of the SGA Resolution asks for Faculty Senate endorsement; I will put this item on the March 19 meeting agenda.

We discussed with the provost this resolution and the situation that led to the resolution, in which visitors to the campus have spontaneously, publicly addressed the SHSU community with speeches that some have found offensive or misogynistic.

The provost stated that the university can ban acts that prohibit the pursuit of educational opportunities on campus, but cannot ban any unfriendly/unwanted speech.

The Houstonian report on the issue included the following comments from Associate Dean of Students Jeanine Bias re: why Title IX doesn't apply: "...in order to be an actual violation of Title IX," Bias said. "Whatever gesture [that is considered sexual harassment] has to be obscene. It also has to be severe, pervasive and consistent. If it only happened on one day, it doesn't mean that it rises to the level of being Title IX worthy." <http://houstonianonline.com/2015/02/04/sga-passes-legislation-defining-free-speech-sexual-harassment/>

In addition, courts have deemed free speech zones on campus unconstitutional, because such practice would actually limit free speech (by implying free speech is not allowed elsewhere on campus).

"Open Carry" Gun Bills

The Senate may wish to consider a resolution on the bills in the State Legislature regarding the carry (concealed or open) of firearms on college campuses.

Recently, I have heard from several senators about their opposition to the bills in the State Legislature permitting concealed or open carry of firearms on college campuses, such as the "open carry" Senate Bill 17

(<http://www.capitol.state.tx.us/tlodocs/84R/billtext/pdf/SB000171.pdf#navpanes=0>).

SB17 would permit the licensed "open carry" of guns on campus, to be kept in one's car, and would forbid public universities from adopting individual institutional rules against what the bill allows.

Other than "open carry," there are also two other bills that state legislators have filed: Senate Bill 11

(<http://www.capitol.state.tx.us/tlodocs/84R/billtext/pdf/SB000111.pdf#navpanes=0>) and House Bill 937

(<http://www.capitol.state.tx.us/tlodocs/84R/billtext/pdf/HB009371.pdf#navpanes=0>), both of which allow for concealed firearms on campus and forbid public institutions to adopt individual institutional rules against what the bills allow (except in dorms).

In the recent past, the Texas Council of Faculty Senates has repeatedly passed resolutions objecting to the concealed carry of firearms on campus (2009, 2011, and 2014).

Chair-elect Shen and I discussed the gun bills with the provost, and he stated that he, the president, the SHSU University Police Department, and the Texas State University System administrators are adamantly against guns on campus. He also told us that most Texas state university system chancellors oppose the "open carry" of firearms on campuses. The sole exception appears to be Texas A&M Chancellor John Sharp, who has just backed the campus carry bill (<http://www.chron.com/about/article/A-M-chancellor-backs-campus-carry-bill-6078017.php>).

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Baker, Chair