

**FACULTY SENATE MEETING MINUTES
SAM HOUSTON STATE UNIVERSITY**

March 19, 2026
3:30 P.M. – 5:00 P.M.
Austin Hall

Senators Present (22) Hosam Abdelhady (COM), Robert Alvarez (CHSS), Emma Bullock (COSET), Jennifer Child (CHSS), Miltonette Craig (CJ), Kevin Crouch (Associate Chair), Magdalena Denham (CJ), Owen Kelly (COM), Naomi Krawzik (COSET), Nick Lantz (CHSS), Victoria Lantz (Secretary), Kimberly LaPrairie (COE), Ali Mchiri (COBA), Hannah Menendez (NGL), Olga Minich (COSET), Ricardo Montelongo (COE), Audrey Murfin (Chair), Andy Noble (CAM), Erin Owens (NGL), Berna Rahi (CHS), Darren Williams (COSET), Willow Yang (COBA).

Senators Not Present (7): Michael Arrington (CHSS), Traci Austin (COBA), Patrick Buzzini (CJ), Debbi Hatton (CAM), Erica Pasquini (COHS), Xiaobo Belle Wang (CHSS), Rebecca Wentworth (COE).

Guest:

Dr. Falguni Mukherjee, Associate Dean for Graduate Student Success, University Ombuds

Special Guest Comments and Q&A

Senate chair introduced Dr. Falguni Mukherjee.

Ombuds Office Presentation:

- Received brochure for the SHSU Ombuds Office.
- Dr. Mukherjee introduced mission and definition of the ombuds. SHSU has an organizational ombuds, which is a conflict resolution office and is a neutral, independent resource for facilitation of internal conflicts.
 - Based on International Ombuds Association practices:
 - Confidential
 - Impartial
 - Independent
 - Informal
- The ombuds supplements other offices on campus (HR, Title IX, etc.). Certain offices on campus, like HR, are official and will have documented results. Ombuds office does not have the required documentation and grievance filing, etc. It is a resource that may resolve issues or help person/s go to formal/official channels.
- The framing of an ombuds office is a place to receive consultation without fear of retaliation.
- Dr. Mukherjee listed the roles of the ombuds:
 - Neutral sounding board and listener.
 - Navigate and brainstorm issues for faculty and staff.
 - Resource provider and identities options for resolution.
 - Additional resources on university policies and procedures.
- Dr. Mukherjee explained what the ombuds cannot do:
 - Cannot change office/department decisions.
 - Cannot offer legal advice.
 - Cannot start legal action or conduct internal/external procedures.
 - Cannot be part of Title IX investigation.

- Cannot testify in official procedures.
- Dr. Mukherjee explained when to contact:
 - Discussion off the records.
- The ombuds office does not maintain records with any individual/identifiable information; nor disclose content of conversations.
- However: there are exceptions – As a mandated reporter, any crimes, abuse, or Title IX violations must be reported.

Senator Questions:

- Can we get a PDF of material to share with faculty? Yes.
- Can we get a list or sense of issues for faculty to apply to our faculty source material? Yes. Dr. Mukherjee will share material with Senate Chair.
- Question on student of concern form and reference to ombuds. Dr. Mukherjee explains that the office can be a source for helping faculty understand what steps are being taken or help faculty feel supported.
- State ombuds office: it is really a reporting agency. The university office is a resource for resolution.

Approval of 3/5/2026 Minutes:

Approved (vote)

Senate Committee Reports

Committee on Committees: Progress on Committee Preference Survey

- Will be working on it for the next two weeks.

Unfinished Business

1. Update and discussion on proposal for classroom management:
 - A single APS policy might not capture the individual issues that may come up and could limit faculty ability to manage classroom space or create potential issues or violations.
 - How is speech not behavior? How is speech being separated from conduct when it comes to disruption?
 - The student code of conduct might be a resource to apply some guidelines.
 - The CTL are providing workshops to departments/units, and working on a university-wide workshop.
 - What are the actual strategies that the workshops provide?
 - Can students have training videos or something they have to sign off on to make sure they are introduced to when they start at SHSU?
 - Senator gives multiple examples of troubling behavior from online students and the lack of resources for faculty.
 - Senator brings up a similar lack of admin support.
 - Senator relates this back to the A&M issue of disruption and faculty dismissal from the fall.
2. Continue discussion of website concerns:
 - The President and Provost would like these changes to move quickly.
 - Senator asked about the workflow and how do we get changes if there is obstruction on the part of the college liaison or the office.
 - Chair says to send actual errors or changes to her by Monday 3/23, 5pm.
3. Creation of faculty source book:

- The faculty handbook is a collection of APS policies.
 - What would be a source book look like?
 - Email Senator N. Lantz or V. Lantz if interested in committee. If a small amount of people, Faculty Affairs Committee can take it up.
4. Faculty for workgroup APS 990407, Student Resignations:
- This committee is a priority so please send the senate chair with faculty recommendations.
5. First Year Community classes:
- How are these classes designated? How do faculty have access or control of these classes?

Adjournment: 4:59 PM.