

HSU Staff Senate Minutes
Wednesday, October 12, 2016

Members Present: Brian Bagwell, Yvette Bragg, Phyllis Cogburn, Christopher Golston, Chanda Hooten, Catie Lusby (proxy for Pam Ligon), Randy McCauley, Troy Mitchell, Sheri Phillips, Carrie Roberson, Veronikha Salazar, Vicki Shipley, Beth Taggard.

Members Absent: Shelia Hollis, Forrest Schultz

Guest: President Glen Jones

The regular meeting of the Henderson Staff Senate was held on Wednesday, October 12, 2016 in the Cabe Room of the Garrison Center. President Beth Taggard called the meeting to order at 10:02 a.m.

- I. President's Report: Beth Taggard welcomed President Glen Jones to our meeting. President Jones attended in order to receive feedback and to answer any questions in response to our budget prioritization campus forum held on October 11. Senators posed the following questions and comments to President Jones regarding the budget prioritization meeting. His responses follow:
 - i. **Does the State of Arkansas follow a budget prioritization process like Henderson is about to undergo?** No, the state does not do full budget prioritization each year. In the past, the state has frozen positions or made direct cuts where needed in an effort to run more efficiently. The state has eliminated approximately 350 positions, but higher education, in particular, has grown by more than 200 positions. In the next year or so, we will be realigning our resources and prioritizing our budget. This is a proactive, not reactive, step to prepare for a change in the state funding model (moving from income-based to outcome-based funding – graduates not enrollment).
 - ii. **Are they (State) looking at graduate rates?** Yes, they are looking at graduate and retention numbers; the SREB states the average. HSU is below average for whatever reasons. We hope to increase the graduation rate from 30% to 40% in 6 years. We also want to retain lower income students and students of color. These are the students who fit into more than one "at risk" category. We must make investments in these kids. We will also look at non-instructional outcomes.
 - iii. **A senator commented that the chart presented in the campus forum was not peer or institutionally demographically similar.** President Jones agreed, but reminded us that the benchmark schools that we use are more like Henderson. He responded further that for every \$1 spent, only 1/3 of our students are graduating. It is easy to look problems at other schools, but it is not easy to determine problems with higher education. Parents expect some kind of return, so we are now getting into more analytical measuring. We do not use much data here at Henderson. We also need to do a better job communicating to the campus what we are doing. He discussed further that we now have a \$25 admission fee for undergraduate

students. This fee was imposed as a consequence of many schools using our admission application simply as an example of how to complete college admission applications. We need to gain insight on who is really interested in our school, so we hope the admission fee will help with this.

- iv. **What is the main reason students leave our campus?** We don't have that data. Sometimes it's money. Some students do not want to incur any student debt. He has had conversations with students about finances and has suggested they ask themselves if it is really helping them to work 40 hours a week and stay in school. He suggested that some educational debt may be worth accumulating.

President Jones suggested that we have to find out why we are not retaining students, because we can only raise tuition so far, before we price ourselves out of the market. Is it the Henderson shuffle? Is it scholarships that are based on merit? Is it the state lottery? The lottery does not work for the have nots who play the lottery. Their kids do not get any of the money. Another reason may be that first generation students simply know nothing about college. We also need to spend more time on diversity.

- v. **A senator commented that times have changed. Students are here Monday through Thursday, and then they are gone. There is nothing here for them to do.**

President Jones suggested that we need feedback from students on what activities they want. We have not ever come up with a solution. We need to plan more activities for them, but they have to be the right activities.

- vi. **Once the review process is done, stopping a non-academic program would be easier than an academic one. Would we immediately pull-the-plug on an academic program if it is underperforming? Would students in that major/program have to transfer?**

We would never do anything to hurt or disadvantage our students. We will ask the questions – “Is everything in line?” – “How does this advance HSU's mission?” – “Am I doing what I want to do or what needs to be done for the University?”

- vii. **A senator pointed out that Dr. Powell, in the staff forum, had discussed faculty pay and merit-based pay. The senator suggested that we need to retain staff by raising their pay, because every 3-5 years we lose really good people as a result of not receiving raises.**

President Jones pointed out that the state is re-doing the classified pay plan, but that they never give us funds to pay for raises. He pointed out that if the state addresses classified salaries, then it needs to be for all classified staff – including higher education.

President Jones discussed further that higher education goes back to the days of the GI bill, which was viewed as a public benefit. We need to foster innovation and creativity. Instead,

we are still in the 70s and 80s way of thinking. Also, there is nothing unique about our classified funding issues. Other state universities have the same problem. Bonuses could be an option as resources become available, but we have to align our resources accordingly. We need to ask ourselves, “What do we need to stop doing?” In 6-8 months, we will know from the data. Let’s accept what the data tells us. We will access the data and try something else.

President Jones commented further that in prioritizing our budget, for example, when we look at fringe benefits – we cannot do year to year stuff anymore. We must do what is best for the whole group and ask, “What are the alternatives?” What was good for us 10 years ago may not be good for us 10 years from now. Measuring efficiency and effectiveness can create heartburn and angst, but we must do it. The data will drive the decisions we make.

viii. **Are there tools to collect data for career development? Students do comment regularly that they drop out because our academics programs are not lined up with their career goals. The state has a system. Why can we not use that system?**

Most universities have data, but we do not. There is disconnect. Workforce development has tools. So should we. We do not really talk with students about their calling or purpose in life. We just ask them what majors they want to pursue. We also need to know what percentage of kids get jobs after graduation. This goes back to the state’s questions about retention and post-graduate success.

President Taggard commented that we rely on a lot of self-reporting.

- ix. A comment was made by a senator regarding our graduation application. It was suggested that the application be updated in order to capture more data on students who are graduating.
- x. President Jones expressed his thanks to the Senate for its participation in this important discussion. We thanked him as well, and he exited the meeting.
- xi. General discussion was held regarding the request to form an advisory board for career development. The charge for the committee and how the committee should be populated needs to be sent to the Shared Governance Committee, which now serves as the Committee on Committees.

II. Minutes from the September 2016 meeting were approved as amended by email vote and are already posted on the website.

III. Old Business

- i. Staff Senate Constitution: The senators provided Beth with feedback on her draft of the constitution revisions. She will email it again to all senators and alternates for additional feedback. Senators were asked to provide feedback as soon as possible so we can vote electronically and route to Dr. Jones for approval.
- ii. A discussion ensued about senator assignments to staff. Concerns remain about which staff members our senators are assigned to for communication purposes.
- iii. A motion was made and seconded to approve utilizing a new method to populate the Staff Senate. There will now be 1 senator for every 10 staff members within a division (rounded up). The goal is to increase the number of senators to appropriately represent each department within the university.
- iv. President Taggard commented that past-president and treasurer positions have been created and added to the revised Staff Senate Constitution.
- v. As discussed in last week's staff forum, a support system for staff has been established. The Staff Emergency Fund, which will be handled by the HSU Foundation, has been established to assist staff in their times of need.

Next week the development office will launch a faculty & staff giving campaign. That letter will come from President Taggard. She encouraged everyone to participate in giving back, reminding the senate that these gifts are not a gift to HSU, it's gift to the students or, in the case of the Staff Emergency Fund, a gift to support our own staff. Gifts are tax-deductible. There is strength in numbers. President Taggard gave an example of how gifts of just \$5/month could add up to \$30K/year, if the entire campus were to participate. She also described how small gifts to the Henderson Fund have funded big projects for our students, like providing money for student study tours.

- vi. Senators have been tasked with looking into how other universities manage their staff emergency funds. Senators should report their findings in our November 2016 meeting.
- vii. President Taggard elaborated on her comments at the Staff Forum about attending Board of Trustee meetings. This has not been a practicing part of the Staff Senate President for at least 3 years, but it is in the constitution, and she will begin attending with the next meeting.

IV. Other Questions, Concerns or Comments

- i. Faculty Senate Report — Due to Pam Ligon's absence, there was no report from the Faculty Senate. Faculty Senate minutes are posted on My Henderson.

V. Adjournment

- i. A motion to adjourn was made and seconded. The meeting adjourned at 11:26 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Yvette Bragg, Acting Secretary